

Jay Family Association

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Jay Family DNA Project Obtains DNA Results from the line of Founding Father and Chief Justice John Jay

by Vince King

The Jay Family Association (JFA) has recently obtained the DNA results from America's most famous JAY family...that of the Founding Father and 1st Chief Justice, John Jay, grandson of French immigrant Augustus Jay.

Related to Someone Famous???

As background, it seems that most American Jay families have tradition and family stories that state they either descend from or are kin to the Chief Justice. This is understandable as people generally like to speculate or ponder if they are indeed related to someone famous...and in this case, John Jay, President of the Continental Congress certainly fits the bill. One can see how it happened as old great-grandpa or great-uncle Jay might have weaved a wonderful tale to a young wide-eyed descendant explaining that the family was surely related to the America Patriot from New York in some manner. This is not unlike the tales concerning relationships to Cherokee Indians that abound throughout the Southern Jay lines.

Matching the Jay Lines

With the advent of Y-chromosome DNA testing, the family researcher has been given a tool that enables "family lines" to be sorted into boxes...the ability to determine whether certain lines are "related" or "not-related". While specific dates, names and places cannot be determined, DNA is used to include/exclude lines and individuals.

Specific to JAY family genealogy and by 2006, JFA researchers had identified roughly **13 Colonial JAY families** that could not be "tied together" by traditional research or documentary evidence at that time. Were all JAY families related???... or not??? Who was related to whom??? Over the past 5 years, the project has tested over 30 JAY surnamed males and linked a few of the family lines.

Of the identified 13 Colonial JAY lines, descendants from 8 of the lines have been tested and 6 distinct unrelated JAY lines have emerged. Testing of the remaining 5 lines is still a top priority.

The DNA for the family of Augustus Jay, grandfather of John Jay

Due to his public notoriety, we have been working diligently to obtain a DNA sample from a descendant of the Chief Justice, to determine the genetic fingerprint of his family. Unfortunately, John Jay has left very few JAY surnamed male descendants. At one point, project researchers thought perhaps only one male candidate existed (fortunately he has a son AND a grandson), but within the past year we have located another.

In March 2010, we received the results from a descendant of Augustus Jay (1850-1919) who descends from immigrant Augustus Jay (1655) as follows...

*Augustus JAY 1655 > Peter JAY 1704 > John JAY (the Chief Justice) 1745 >
Peter Augustus JAY (I) 1776 > Peter Augustus JAY (II) 1821 > Augustus JAY 1850*

Then in December 2010, we received the results from a descendant of John Clarkson Jay (1808-1891) who descends from immigrant Augustus Jay (1655) as follows...

*Augustus JAY 1655 > Peter JAY 1704 > John JAY (the Chief Justice) 1745 >
Peter Augustus JAY (I) 1776 > John Clarkson JAY 1808 > John Clarkson JAY 1844*

Both DNA sequences match each other. Additionally, these sequences match no other previously tested JAY lines and as a result it can be categorically stated that the line of the Chief Justice is not related to any previously tested JAY lines. The following is a list of the uniquely identified Colonial JAY lines that have been tested to date. The number in [] is that JAY lines' "marker mismatch" to the descendant of Augustus JAY. If a four [4] DNA marker number mismatch (or greater) occurs, it can be stated that those families are not related.

- [22] Line of Thomas JAY bca 1779 of Bedford Co. PA
- [21] Line of William JAY b1767 m. Anne King (s/o David JAY/GEE)
- [19] Line of Moses JAY of Sussex Co. NJ (also John GEE of Westchester Co. NY)
- [22] Line of John F. JAY of PA
- [14] Line of the Broome Co. NY JAY family
- [33] Line of William JAY bca 1711 of Frederick Co. VA (also Joseph JAY of Burlington NJ)

As can be seen by the marker mismatches, the tested descendants of Augustus JAY are not related to any of the previously tested JAY lines.

The Importance of Obtaining Two Distinct Samples from any Line

Why is it important to have two samples from each line??? With any new unique non-related line discovered, there is always a possibility that the number mismatch from other JAY lines might be a result of an adoption or illegitimacy. While these events are rare and we certainly did not expect that in the line of the Chief Justice, it is ALWAYS good to have two DNA samples from different descendants of the same ancestor. Those two samples should "match" and by doing so will confirm that the first sample was not an "outlier".

The JFA is grateful for the help provided to the Association from two male descendants of one of America's "founding families". Their donation will forever benefit JAY genealogists, researchers and JFA members alike. The JAY DNA marker results can be accessed through the JFA website at www.jayfamily.org.



John Jay (1745-1829)

John Jay (1745-1829) American politician, statesman, revolutionary, Founding Father; first Chief Justice Supreme Court; twice Governor of New York State; President of the Continental Congress, co-author of the Federalist Papers; negotiator, Treaty of Paris and the Jay Treaty; first US Secretary for Foreign Affairs; Chief Justice of New York State; drafted the first New York State Constitution; President of the Manumission Society. Grew up from infancy at the Rye NY farm, began his education there with his mother as teacher, attended school in New Rochelle, and also tutored at home by George Murray; then attended Kings College (Columbia); pursued the private practice of law until age 28; committed to public service from then until his retirement in 1801.

He was Governor of New York from 1795 to 1801 and became the state's leading opponent of slavery. His first two attempts to pass emancipation legislation failed in 1777 and 1785, but the third succeeded in 1799. The new law he signed into existence eventually saw the emancipation of all New York slaves before his death.

He married Sarah Livingston and inherited the Jay Property in 1813 from his older brother "Blind Peter", but because he had by this time retired to his Katonah property, he had his son Peter Augustus Jay (I) maintain the Rye farm with his widowed Aunt Mary. In 1822, John Jay conveyed the property to Peter Augustus. In accordance with his wishes, John Jay was buried in a private cemetery on the Rye property in 1829 where his body remains today along with those of other Jay descendants. The cemetery is still privately used and maintained.

Peter Augustus Jay [I] (1776-1843) Elder son of John Jay. Like his father, he graduated from Kings College, studied for the law, established a practice in New York City and carried on family tradition of public service. He served as President, Society for Manumission of Slaves; President, Board of Kings College, New York Hospital; New York State Assemblyman (active in arranging the financing for Erie Canal); he was a Westchester County NY Judge; a founder of the Bank for Savings (thereby establishing New York State



*Peter Augustus Jay
(1776-1843)*



*Mary Rutherford Clarkson
(1786-1838)*

savings bank system); private secretary to his father in London for the Jay Treaty and President of the New York Historical Society. He married Mary Rutherford Clarkson.



**John Clarkson Jay
(1808-1891)**

John Clarkson Jay (1808-1891) Eldest son of Peter Augustus Jay (I). Graduate of Columbia College and College of Physicians and Surgeons. Served both institutions as Trustee. Briefly practiced medicine; devoted himself to the study of natural science. A foremost conchologist, he learned about shells at the shore of his Rye farm as child. His collection of 50,000 shell specimens and 1,000 volume library of natural science, including his own catalogues according to Lamarckian order, become the nucleus of The American Museum of Natural History's collection of shells. He was President of The New York Historical Society; a founder of the Lyceum of Natural History and of the New York Yacht Club. He married Laura Prime. John Clarkson Jay inherited the Jay Property from his father in 1843.

Peter Augustus Jay [II] (1821-1855) no image. Youngest son of Peter Augustus Jay (I). He died fairly young and researchers at the JFA have found little biographical information on Mr. Jay. One remembrance is recorded in "The Jay Family of LaRochelle and New York Province and State, A Chronicle of Family Tradition" by Laura JayWells

One of the most interesting chronicles of New York in the middle nineteenth century, and on into the early part of the twentieth, is the book, "As I Remember", by Mrs. Marion Gouverneur, published in 1911. She knew Washington Society, as well as New York Society, and of Peter Augustus Jay's marriage, and the family into which he married, she wrote:

"I often recall with pleasure the days spent by me at Brentwood, a fine old country seat near Washington. Brentwood was the home of Mrs. Joseph Pearson [P.A. Jay's mother-in-law], who dispensed its hospitality with ease and elegance. For many years it was a social Eldorado, where resident Society and distinguished strangers, were always welcome. Although it was then remote from the heart of the city, most of its numerous visitors were inclined to linger, once within its walls, to enjoy the charmed circle which surrounded the Pearson family. Both the daughters of this house, Eliza who married Carlyle P. Patterson, Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey, and Josephine, who became the wife of Peter Augustus Jay of New York, were Washington beauties. Mr. and Mrs. Peter Jay began their married life on the northwest corner of F and 21st Streets."

Then Mrs. Gouverneur speaks of Elizabeth Jay, giving another picture of a famous hostess, whom we already know, "Still another friendship which I formed at Madame Chegaray's school was with Elizabeth Clarkson Jay, which through life was a source of intense pleasure to me and lasted until her pure and generous spirit returned to its Maker. She was the daughter of Peter Augustus Jay (uncle Peter who married Miss Pearson, - Ed.), who was a highly respected lawyer, and she was a granddaughter of the distinguished statesman John Jay. She was a

deeply religious woman and died a few years ago in New York after a life consecrated to good works. The school I attended where I met Miss Jay was regarded as the most prominent girl's school in the country. It was a large establishment at the corner of Houston and Mulberry Streets."

Peter Augustus Jay who married Miss Pearson was considered one of the most charming men of the period. He was born October 23, 1821 and died in 1855, ten years after his marriage. Gen. John Watts De Peyster was a very great friend of young Jay and they were contemporaries, each being born the same year. Out of his great admiration for his boyhood friend, General De Peyster, who considered "Gussie" the finest type of the celebrated French school of colonial gentlemen of which his great-grandfather, Etienne De Lancey was his beau ideal, wrote: "He was a perfect specimen of the typical old French nobility, pure blood; handsome; well-made; graceful; easy, agreeable and as full of elegant wickedness as an egg of meat. Women, lovely woman adored him and of every class; he was a charming fellow; not able but attractive."