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descendants & allied families of John & Altha (Judd) Hamilton

THE JOHN & ALTHA (JUDD) HAMILTON DNA STUDY

# What Our DNA Remembers

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**A**round 1818, in New York, John D. Hamilton married a young woman named Altha Judd. They started their family of nine children in western New York, then moved west to Illinois, where their last three children were born, before both died around 1840. They left behind very little on paper and no record of John's parents. What they did leave is carried today, in small pieces, by hundreds of their descendants. Each of their descendants holds a few fragments of John's and Altha's DNA, and with them fragments of the families they came from.

This study puts those fragments side by side. Read together, they are beginning to answer questions that the documents never could.

## The family

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John D. Hamilton was born between 1781 and 1785, most likely in Connecticut, though some sources say Massachusetts. Altha Judd was born about 1800 in Delaware County, New York, the daughter of Supplina Judd and Jemima Pooler. They married around 1818. Their first six children were born in New York: Elizabeth and Roxie about 1820, Hiram about 1822, Heman in 1824, Mary about 1827 and John Pooler in 1829. The last three were born in Illinois: Supplina in 1832, and the twins William and James in 1834. John and Altha both died around 1840, in Illinois.

Six of those children have known living descendants: Elizabeth, Roxie, Hiram, Mary, Supplina and William. Their families spread west across Illinois, Iowa, Oregon and Washington, and it is their descendants who make this study possible.

## Where John came from

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One part of John's story is already settled. Y-DNA, which passes from father to son almost unchanged, shows that John's male-line descendants and those of Thomas Hamilton of Cape Cod share the same rare branch of the Y chromosome, haplogroup I-Y14194. Thomas may have been born in the 1640s, so he was not John's father, but he was almost certainly John's male-line ancestor several generations back.

What we do not know is the path between them: who John's father and grandfather were, and how the family came from colonial Cape Cod to Connecticut and New York.



## How the DNA can tell the two sides apart

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The study rests on one simple idea. Seven of the DNA kits belong to descendants of Thomas Hamilton and Lydia Wing through other branches of the family. They are distant cousins on John's side, and they are assumed to share relatively little or nothing with Altha's Judd and Pooler family. Twenty-six kits belong to descendants of John and Altha themselves, and they carry both sides.

So a family connected to Altha should match the children's kits but almost never the Thomas kits, and a family connected to John should match the Thomas kits as well. Three more kits, from people unrelated to the family, serve as controls: they show what no connection at all looks like.

### Checking that the method works

Before trusting any result, we tested the method on families whose answer we already know. Every person in the study was compared with each of the seven Thomas kits, one kit at a time; each comparison is one check.

- **People from the Thomas and Lydia line should match the Thomas kits, and they do.** Sixteen of every hundred checks found shared DNA, and about half of these people matched at least one Thomas kit. Distant cousins share detectable DNA only some of the time, so sixteen in a hundred is a strong signal.
- **People from Altha's Judd and Pooler families should not, and they don't.** Fewer than one in a hundred of their checks found shared DNA, no more than for families unrelated to the Hamiltons.
- **The control kits set the baseline.** They matched only about one check in seven hundred. That is the level of chance, and every result in this report is measured against it.

The method separates John's side from Altha's exactly as it should, and that is what lets it answer the questions below.

## What we have found

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### Two families from two different immigrant backgrounds

John's and Altha's families came from different places, and the DNA shows it clearly. Ancestry groups people into communities by where their ancestors lived. More than half of the Thomas and Lydia line belong to a Nova Scotia community, and about seven in ten to a Northern New England one. Not one person from Altha's Judd family is in the Nova Scotia community; two thirds of Altha's relatives belong instead to an Early Connecticut and New York settlers community.



The Thomas and Lydia family looks like a Cape Cod family whose descendants went north to Nova Scotia and northern New England. Altha's family looks like a Connecticut and upstate New York family. John's closest relatives in the study, Joseph's family, look like Connecticut and New York people too, which fits a branch of Thomas's descendants that moved to Connecticut while others went north.

**CONFIDENCE: STRONG.**

## **The Peterson family are Supplina and Jane's descendants**

Roy Albert Peterson was born in 1890 near Waitsburg, Washington. The DNA evidence suggests that his biological father was a son of Supplina Hamilton and his wife, Jane Sumpter.

Think of three fingerprints. Descendants of Supplina and Jane carry John's family, Altha's family, and Jane Sumpter's family. Descendants of John and Altha's other children, like William, Roxie or Hiram, carry the first two but not Jane's. Jane's own Sumpter relatives carry only hers.

The first test is Jane's fingerprint. If Roy's father was Jane's son, Roy's descendants should match Jane's Sumpter relatives the way Supplina's other descendants do, and they do. The kit of one of Roy's granddaughters matches about a third of the Sumpter-family testers, within the range of Supplina's other descendants. One of the two Sumpter-family kits matches half of Roy's tested descendants, more than the one in four of Supplina's other descendants that it matches, and only 5 of 246 descendants of John and Altha's other children. Roy's descendants also share matches with Sumpter relatives about as often as Supplina's other descendants do.

The second test is John's and Altha's. The same granddaughter's kit also matches Altha's Judd relatives and the descendants of Roxie, Hiram, Mary and Elizabeth, people whom Jane's Sumpter relatives never match. And it shares a great deal of DNA with Supplina's family: six of their kits share between 104 and 285 centimorgans with hers, far more than Jane's own relatives share with them. Roy's other descendants tell the same story. The Peterson family carries all three fingerprints.

What the DNA cannot yet say is which of Supplina and Jane's four sons, Duron, Heman, Frank or Judd, was Roy's father. All four carried the same mix of their parents' DNA, and the total amount of DNA people share cannot tell brothers apart. Heman has no living descendants to test. The answer, if it can be found, lies in chromosome-by-chromosome comparisons on sites that show them.

**CONFIDENCE: STRONG THAT THE PETERSON FAMILY DESCENDS FROM SUPPLINA AND JANE.**



## Joseph was probably John's brother, or close to it

Descendants of a man named Joseph Hamilton match the Thomas kits about three times in a hundred checks: well above Altha's family and the controls, and through two separate branches of Thomas's descendants. That puts Joseph firmly on John's side of the family. How close? On the kits of John and Altha's descendants, Joseph's descendants match about as often as the descendants of Altha's own brothers and sisters do. That is what a brother of John would look like. A half-brother or a cousin is not ruled out. Joseph's family also belongs to the Connecticut and New York community, which fits where John was thought to have been born.

CONFIDENCE: MODERATE.

## A lead on the path back to Thomas & Lydia (Wing) Hamilton

The seven Thomas kits come from three separate families. John and Altha's descendants match almost only one of them, the Perry-Roberts family. That could mean the Perry-Roberts family descends from the branch of Thomas's family closest to John. But the Trowbridge family, whose place in the tree is still a puzzle, shows exactly the same pattern, so part of that tie may run through a shared Trowbridge or other ancestor instead. More research and testing are needed.

CONFIDENCE: A LEAD, NOT YET A FINDING.

## Trowbridge came in above John and Altha

Trowbridge descendants match the descendants of all of John and Altha's children about equally. A family that married in later would show up in one child's line only, so the Trowbridge connection must sit above John and Altha. Which side it belongs to is still open; apart from the Perry-Roberts pattern, it looks like Altha's Connecticut and New York relatives.

CONFIDENCE: MODERATE FOR WHERE IT ENTERS; ITS SIDE IS OPEN.

## DNA is not evenly distributed between John and Altha's children's lines

In principle, the descendants of each of John and Altha's children should carry John's side and Altha's side in about the same balance. So far they do not all look alike: Mary's descendants connect to John's relatives more often than Supplina's do, and Roxie's and Hiram's somewhat less. This is an observation, not a conclusion. Mary's and Elizabeth's lines have no DNA kits yet, Roxie's and Hiram's kits each come from a single family, and only a small share of the people tested have been placed in family trees. More data will tell us whether the pattern is real.

## Hundreds more of the family are already in the data

Between them, the 26 kits from John and Altha's descendants share DNA with nearly 195,000 people at Ancestry. Most are related through other branches of those testers' own families. The ones that matter here share DNA with descendants of several of John and Altha's children at once, which is the mark of a fellow



descendant: about 1,165 people match kits from three or more of the children's lines, and about 720 of them have not yet been studied. About 14,000 more match kits from two of the lines; some of them are descendants too, while others are relatives through John's or Altha's own families.

So far the study has looked closely only at the 1,698 matches on its research list. Of the 498 among them whose family line was not yet known, 223 carry that mark, and as a group they carry John's side and Altha's side in balance, just as the couple's descendants should. The DNA can also suggest which child a person descends from: tested on 139 people already placed in the family tree, without being shown where they belonged, it got all 28 of its most confident placements right. It can already place 23 of the 223 under a child with good confidence.

What does this mean for you? If you have tested at AncestryDNA and see several Hamilton descendants among your matches, you may well be one of these people. Placing you in the tree turns a DNA match into a confirmed branch of the family, and every confirmed branch makes the next one easier to find.

### **This family is not unusually inbred**

Some families married within a small circle for generations, which inflates their DNA matches and makes relationships look closer than they are. Comparing the family tree with the DNA shows no sign of that here: close cousins share about the expected amounts of DNA, and distant cousins share small amounts or none, as usual.

CONFIDENCE: STRONG.

## **What we still don't know**

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- **John's parents.** Y-DNA proves his male line goes back to Thomas Hamilton of Cape Cod, but the generations in between are not yet identified.
- **Joseph's exact relationship to John.** Brother, half-brother and cousin all fit.
- **Which son of Supplina and Jane was Roy Peterson's father.**
- **Where the Trowbridge family joins the tree.**
- **Why John and Altha's children's DNA shows some proportional variance.** Mary's and Elizabeth's lines have no DNA kits of their own, and Roxie's and Hiram's kits come from one family each.



## Families we are looking for

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The details below come from the study's family tree. Dates marked "about" are estimates and early records are incomplete, so use them as a guide when comparing with your own tree.

### Joseph Hamilton

**Joseph Hamilton** (born 1773 in Connecticut; died after 1860 in Michigan) married '**Mandana**' in 1802 in Greene County, New York. Their children:

- **Joseph Allen Hamilton** (born 12 July 1803, Greene County, New York; died after 1880, Watertown, Tuscola County, Michigan);
- **Adelia W. Hamilton** (born 30 July 1805, New York; died 5 February 1885, Michigan);
- **Axsah Hamilton** (born 12 January 1807, Windham, Greene County, New York; died 1855, Ohio), who married **Thomas Noah Dutcher**;
- **Candace A. Hamilton** (born 10 December 1812, Windham, Greene County, New York; died 18 April 1894, Villisca, Montgomery County, Iowa), who married **Joseph Gillett** on 1 February 1827 in Randolph, Cattaraugus County, New York.

### Thomas and Lydia (Wing) Hamilton

**Thomas Hamilton** (born about 1645; birthplace unknown) married **Lydia Wing** (born 23 May 1647, Sandwich, Barnstable County, Massachusetts; died between 1704 and 1714, Barnstable, Massachusetts) about 1665. Their sons were **Daniel Hamilton** (born about 1670, Rhode Island; died 8 December 1738, Chatham, Barnstable County, Massachusetts) and **Thomas Hamilton** (born 17 February 1671, Rhode Island). Lydia later married John Abbott. Their descendants are found on Cape Cod, in Nova Scotia and across New England. *Records from this period are sparse; Thomas's birth year and origins in particular are uncertain.*

### The Trowbridge family

Most Trowbridge descendants in the study trace to **Caleb Trowbridge** (born 8 April 1706, Stratford, Connecticut; died 2 January 1759, New Fairfield, Connecticut) and **Jemima Keeler** (born 18 January 1712, Wilton, Connecticut; died 2 February 1759, New Fairfield), who married about 1730. Their children who grew up were Rebecca (about 1733–1807), Mary "Molly" (about 1735–1820), Ralph (about 1737–1800), Jemima (born 1739), Caleb Keeler (1745–1799), Keeler (about 1749–1808) and Esther (born about 1756). Others trace to Caleb's parents, **James Trowbridge** (1664–1732) and **Mary Belden** of Wilton, Connecticut.

### Mary E. (Hamilton) Jones

Born about 1827 in New York; died between 1863 and 1869 in Menard County, Illinois. Married **James Matthew Jones** (born 1819, Kentucky; died after 1880, Menard County) on 6 September 1846 in Menard County, Illinois. *Her line has no DNA kits yet.*



## Elizabeth (Hamilton) Foland

Born about 1820 in New York; died 9 May 1900 in Decatur, Macon County, Illinois. Married first **William Sursey Foland** (born 1813, Kentucky; died November 1894, Platteville, Grant County, Wisconsin) on 9 June 1840 in Pope County, Illinois; second, a **Mr. McCann**, about 1858; and third, **Abel Webster Cross**, her sister Roxie's widower, on 13 May 1875 in Georgetown, Williamson County, Texas. Her children were born to her marriage with William Foland. *Her line has no DNA kits yet.*

## Roxie (Hamilton) Cross

Born about 1820 in New York; died about 1840 in Illinois. Married **Abel Webster Cross** (born about 1814, Indiana; died after 1880, Sebastian County, Arkansas) on 2 September 1836 in Morgan County, Illinois. *Additional AncestryDNA test results needed.*

## Hiram Hamilton

Born about 1822 in New York; died 17 June 1862 on the White River, Arkansas, in the explosion of the gunboat USS Mound City. Married **Delphia Leephe Vancil** (born about 1829, Tazewell County, Illinois; died about 1874, Illinois) on 2 December 1851 in Circleville, Tazewell County, Illinois. Delphia's daughter Nancy Jane Wilder, born in 1842 before the marriage, is believed to have been Hiram's stepdaughter and so does not descend from him. *Additional AncestryDNA test results needed.*



## Join the study

The next answers will come from more of John and Altha's descendants. If you descend from John and Altha (Judd) Hamilton through any of their children known to have had descendants, Elizabeth (Foland/McCann), Roxie (Cross), Hiram, Mary (Jones), Supplina or William, you can help, and your family's story will become part of this one.

We especially need more tests added from the descendants of (see *Families we are looking for*):

- **Joseph Hamilton, Thomas and Lydia (Wing) Hamilton, and the Trowbridge family;**
- **Mary (Hamilton) Jones and Elizabeth (Hamilton) Foland,** whose lines have no DNA kits yet;
- **Roxie (Hamilton) Cross and Hiram Hamilton:** additional AncestryDNA test results needed.

We would also welcome family Bibles, letters, census notes or photographs of the early Hamiltons and Judds.

Taking part is simple. If you have tested at AncestryDNA ([ancestry.com/dna](https://ancestry.com/dna)), you can share your results with the study; if you have not, an AncestryDNA test is the place to start. A family tree, even a small one, makes your DNA many times more useful. Living people are never named in anything the study publishes.

**To join, or to ask a question, contact Glen Hamilton at [glen.hamilton@gmail.com](mailto:glen.hamilton@gmail.com), or visit us at [myhamiltonfamily.com](https://myhamiltonfamily.com).**



## About this study

### The data

The findings here come from a single frozen copy of the study's database, taken on 6 October 2026, after every match on the research list had been read.

|                                                |                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DNA kits in the study                          | 39 (7 Thomas kits, 26 descendants of John & Altha, 3 controls, 2 from Jane Sumpter's family, 1 held back) |
| Matches hand-picked for study and fully read   | 1,698                                                                                                     |
| People checked against every kit               | 1,658                                                                                                     |
| People included in the analysis                | 1,647                                                                                                     |
| Shared-match records read                      | 1,325,298                                                                                                 |
| People already placed in the family tree       | 139                                                                                                       |
| Kit-to-person pairs seen in two or more places | 10,818, all agreeing within 1 centimorgan                                                                 |

### How the analysis works

Every person was checked against every kit, and a "no match" answer counts as a real zero. A person is never counted against the kit they were found through, or that kit's close relatives, because they match those kits by definition. Results are given with a 95% range and were rechecked by dropping each kit and each person in turn, so no single family or person can carry a finding. Lines are compared with the three control kits, which matched 7 of 4,934 checks (0.14%).

The analysis was run from scratch on the frozen copy, and an independent reviewer rebuilt the key numbers from the raw data without seeing the working. Every one held.

### What the confidence words mean

**Strong** means a result holds every way we checked. **Moderate** means it holds but rests on fewer people. A **lead** is worth checking, but is not yet a conclusion. An **observation** is a pattern recorded without an explanation.



## Limits

DNA kits come in families, so a result resting on one family's kits is less certain than its range suggests. People came onto the research list because they matched a kit, which lifts the match rates of distant lines; comparisons between lines are fair, but the rates are not relationship estimates. Only two of the kits are placed in the family tree so far, and Ancestry does not show chromosome detail, so segments cannot yet be compared.

## Glossary

- **DNA kit:** one person's DNA test at Ancestry.
- **Match:** two people whose DNA shares a stretch, which means a shared ancestor somewhere.
- **Centimorgan (cM):** the unit for how much DNA two people share. First cousins share around 870; distant cousins often 8 to 20, or none.
- **Y-DNA and haplogroup:** Y-DNA passes from father to son almost unchanged. A haplogroup is a branch of the Y family tree; two men on the same rare branch share a male-line ancestor.
- **Side:** whether a relative is connected through John (John's side) or through Altha (Altha's side).
- **Thomas kits:** the seven kits from descendants of Thomas Hamilton and Lydia Wing through branches other than John's.
- **Control kits:** kits from people unrelated to the family, checked in the same way, to show what no connection looks like.
- **Community:** Ancestry's grouping of people whose ancestors lived in the same place.
- **Endogamy:** marrying within a small community over generations, which inflates DNA sharing.