

The Paternity of Seymour Savage (1868–1937)

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Abstract: This article describes an unusual success story wherein DNA testing coupled with genealogical documents is used to discover the paternal ancestor of the author Charles Savage Jr. The paper trail on his grandfather Seymour Savage dead ends at the 1870 census of the Saluda Division in Edgefield County, South Carolina, where Seymour, age 3, lived with his mother Lotty Savage. To progress further, Charles took both Y-DNA and autosomal DNA tests at Family Tree DNA (FTDNA). His Y-DNA results showed that he matched a grouping of nine different Fergusons, participants in the Fergus(s)on DNA Project, known to descend from John Ferguson (1650–1715) who married Ann Stubbleson. Charles' closest match is to co-author John T. Ferguson, whose earliest known ancestor is Joseph Ferguson born 1824 in Edgefield County, South Carolina. John T., in the course of researching his own ancestry, examined documents that had been discovered in an attic in Edgefield, South Carolina. John T. was able to show that brothers Gideon and Lewis Ferguson are descendants of John Ferguson and Ann Stubbleson. Coincidentally, three households away from the aforementioned Savage household in the 1870 census is one Gideon Ferguson, leading to the hypothesis that Gideon Ferguson was the father of Seymour Savage. To test that hypothesis, we worked the genealogy of Lewis Ferguson forward and were able to locate a living descendant of his who was willing to do an autosomal test. The result was a match at a level predicted to be that of a third cousin, in agreement with the genealogy. We concluded that Gideon Ferguson was the father of Seymour Savage.

Introduction

Seymour Savage is the paternal ancestor of this article's author Charles Savage Jr., according to family notes inherited from Charles' father's sister Hattie and verified with census records. The earliest record of Seymour Savage is the 1870 census of the area served by the Chappells Depot post office in the Saluda Division of Edgefield County, South Carolina. A transcription of that census record and nearby households is given in Table 1. Seymour resided with his younger sister and his mother Lotty Savage. Hattie's notes name Lotty's parents as Larkin and Dorcas Savage. A Larkin Savage and family lived two households away, but he appeared to be too young to be Lotty's father. The relationship between the two households has not been established.

By the time of 1880 census, Seymour appeared to be an orphan living in the household of his uncle Willis Spearman in Floyds, Newberry, South Car-

olina. His sister Maria resided in the household of their uncle Gideon Savage in Greenwood, Abbeville, South Carolina. No record of Lotty Savage has been found subsequent to the 1870 census.

In 1900, Seymour Savage was a head of household in nearby Greenwood Township, Greenwood County, South Carolina. That census record indicated he was a carpenter and born April 1868 in South Carolina. His son Charles Savage Sr. was born about 1902 and lived in his father's household in both the 1910 and 1920 censuses of Greenwood County, South Carolina. In 1920 he, like his father, was a carpenter. Sometime between the 1920 and 1930 census, Seymour Savage and his wife Lucy moved to Philadelphia, where he died in 1937.

yDNA

Charles Savage Jr. took the 111 marker short tandem repeat (STR) test offered by Family Tree DNA (FTDNA; Houston, Texas, USA). To his surprise, the match lists in his FTDNA account were dominated by people named Ferguson. At 67 markers, he matched 17 Ferguson men at genetic distances of 5 or less and at 111 markers, he matched 7 Fergusons at genetic distances of 7 or less. His haplotype matched the key markers of the “Scots” cluster, so named because of the observations by Nordtvedt (2005) and McEwan (2007) that men in this cluster generally have Scottish ancestry.

Within the Fergus(s)on DNA Project are six different subgroups that share the key markers characteristic of the Scots cluster. They are subgrouped in the project using a 111 marker modal haplotype constructed from data in the R1b-L1335 Project (see Supplementary Information). Some of those subgroups are well defined as a result of single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) testing, and one is nothing more than a catch-all group that defies classification to date. Charles Savage Jr. is in the subgroup known within the project as R1b-Scots Branch II. The six Fergusons in this subgroup who SNP tested are all S756+. The Savage kit was found to be S756+ and negative for all SNP downstream of S756 in the R1b-L1335 Scots Panel offered by YSEQ.net as of 1 Jan 2017, i.e. A33- and BY154-.

The Fergus(s)on project’s R1b-Scots Branch II is relatively homogeneous, as is characteristic of a founder effect that might be attributed to a common immigrant ancestor (see Supplementary Information). There are 31 Ferguson haplotypes in this group. The coalescence age of the group, interpreted as the mean pairwise time to the most recent common ancestor of all individuals in the group, has been computed using the variance method of Nordtvedt (2012). The results vary from seven to nine generations depending on whether 37, 67, or 111 markers are used. The standard deviation of time to most recent ancestor (GA in Nordtvedt’s spreadsheet) varies from 2.5 to 3.2 for the same data sets.

Within the R1b-Scots Branch II is a familial subgroup comprised of nine different known descendants of a John Ferguson, often referred to as “John Fergusson of Cherry Walk”. The site of his home was added to U.S. National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

The final nomination form, Cherry Walk 028-0008 (1982), states:

The land on which Cherry Walk now stands was first mentioned in a colonial patent dated 1714 to a John Fergusson for one hundred acres in

South Farnham Parish, Essex County. This one hundred acres was possibly the same tract later deeded by James Fergusson to John Croxton in 1739 and described as being part of that tract where James Fergusson now dwells. Reference in the 1739 deed was made to “all buildings, houses and orchards ...” and particularly noted was the exception of the “burial place” from what was otherwise deeded. This evidence thus suggests that the tract was the home place of the Fergusson family whose name appeared often in Essex County records of the 18th century.

Gideon Ferguson

Coincidentally a Gideon Ferguson lived two households away from Lotty Savage in the 1870 census of Chappells Depot, Table 1. Thus research was done on Gideon Ferguson to see if he might be Seymour Savage’s father.

In the 1850 census, Gideon Ferguson, age 18, lived with his mother Mary, brother Lewis, and sister Elizabeth in the Edgefield Division of South Carolina. In 1860, he was on his own in the Newberry District of South Carolina, working as an overseer. Notably, members of the Savage family were slaves prior to emancipation by President Lincoln in 1863 and enforced by the Union after the Civil War in 1865. Seymour Savage was born soon after the Civil War, in the era known as Reconstruction.

On the 17th of March in 1862 at the Newberry Court House, Gideon Ferguson enlisted in the Confederate Army for a period of 3 years. He served as a Private in (2nd) Company G, 7th Regiment, South Carolina Infantry. Inspection of his service records, compiled by the National Archives (1959), reveals that he spent much of his time hospitalized for chronic rheumatism affecting his spine and leg. That led to his discharge on 18 Aug 1863. His discharge certificate lists his address as Chapells Depot, Newberry District, South Carolina. The address ties him to the 1870 census record. That he enlisted in the Newberry Court house is consistent with him living in the Newberry District at the time of the 1860 census.

J.T. Ferguson (2014) researched some descendants of William Ferguson and Annie Henderson of the Fairfield District, South Carolina. His sources included documents concerning their son William Jr. and his children and

grandchildren that were discovered a number of years ago in boxes in the attic of a building in Edgefield, South Carolina. These documents were made available to the public in recent years by the Edgefield County Archives (124 Court-house Square, Edgefield, South Carolina, USA 29824).

A Bill for Relief filed 25 Mar 1846 in Edgefield, Equity 839, by John Ferguson et al., against Rebecca Ferguson O'Neall and Cullen O'Neall, stated that the complainants, John Ferguson, Jincey M. Clark, Agnes Corley, Keziah Edwards, and Anna Reeves were children of the deceased William Ferguson. The bill further stated that Gideon, Lewis, and Elizabeth Ferguson were the children of James H. Ferguson, deceased, and grandchildren of William Ferguson, and that Isiah, Martha, and Abraham Ferguson were children of William H. Ferguson, deceased, and grandchildren of William Ferguson. Two other documents said the same thing: a Bill of Partition filed 2 Jun 1847 in Edgefield (Equity 712, Ferguson et al. v. Corley et al.) and answers to this Bill of Partition filed by Rebecca Ferguson O'Neall, Cullen O'Neall, and Agnes Corley both stated that the complainants were children and grandchildren of William Ferguson as described in the Bill of Partition.

Gideon, Lewis and Elizabeth Ferguson were clearly the same children living with Mary Ferguson in the 1850 census of Edgefield Division of South Carolina. That their father James H. Ferguson was said to be deceased in the 1846 bill explains why there is no male head of house in the 1850 census record. Given that there was no other Gideon Ferguson in the area, he was probably the same Gideon Ferguson found in the 1870 census of Chappells Depot, thereby establishing that his father was James H. Ferguson and his grandfather was William Ferguson. No record of Gideon Ferguson has been found subsequent to the 1870 census.

According to a report copied by W.H. Ferguson (1995), the aforementioned William Ferguson was a descendant of John Ferguson of Cherry Walk and his wife Ann Stubbleson. The paternal pedigree of Gideon Ferguson is then as follows:

1. John Ferguson b. 1649, Scotland; m. Ann Stubbleson
2. James Ferguson b. ~1687, Essex County or Rappahannock County, Virginia, USA; d. July 1741, Goochland County, Virginia; m. Anne
3. William Ferguson b. ~1736, Essex County, Virginia; d. 1801, South Carolina; m. 1st Unknown; m. 2nd Annie Henderson
4. William Ferguson, b. bet .1760 and 1770, d. 20 Mar 1836 or 1837, m. Unknown.
5. James Hiram Ferguson m. Mary

6. Gideon Ferguson, b. ~1832, South Carolina

Charles Savage Jr. shared the same off modal STR as do the nine paternal descendants of John Ferguson of Cherry Walk. Furthermore, both Charles Savage Jr. and a Ferguson project member SNP tested using the R1b-L1335 Scots Panel offered by YSEQ.net and were S756+. This information does not contradict the idea that Seymour Savage's father was Gideon Ferguson.

Autosomal DNA

There are no records of any descendants of Gideon Ferguson. Thus, we tried to find a descendant of Gideon's brother Lewis who would be agreeable to doing an autosomal DNA (atDNA) test.

Lewis Ferguson can be found in each of the 1870, 1880, and 1900 censuses. The 1900 census of Saluda County, South Carolina, was enumerated by Lewis E. Ferguson. It reveals that he and his wife Amelia had been married 33 years, they had four children, and three of those children were living. Their son Lewis I. Ferguson, age 15, lived at home and, according to the census record, was born in November 1885.

Lewis I. Ferguson was recorded in the 1910 census records for Saluda as Louis Ferguson, age 28, living with his wife Cora and daughter Warnesta. An internet search using key words "lewis cora ferguson south carolina obituary" found the obituary of Margaret Jacobson who died 29 September 2015 at age 99 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. It stated that she was born in 1916 to the late Lewis and Cora (Steadman) Ferguson and that she was preceded in death by her sister Cleo Hansen. She and her sister were listed in the 1930 census as adopted daughters of Earl and Bertha Steadman of Minneapolis, Minnesota. Cleo, age 17, was born in South Carolina about 1913.

In the 1940 census of Baltimore, Maryland, was one Cleo Hansen, age 27, born in South Carolina and previously residing in Minneapolis. She resided with her husband Fernald Hansen and son Billy Hansen, age 6, born in Minnesota. A 1960 article in the Daily Telegraph mentioned Earl Steadman and his daughter Mrs. Fernald Hansen.

Fernald Hansen died in May 1985 in Santa Clara County, California. The search engine intelius.com found a Billy Hansen the right age living in Santa Clara County, California. He proved to be the individual sought and agreed to do an atDNA test. Both he and Charles Savage took a Family Finder™ test at FTDNA and matched at a level predicted by FTDNA to be that of third cousins, i.e., they share great-great-grandparents as expected (Figure 1). The total amount of shared DNA, excluding segments less than 7 cM, was 170 cM.

Conclusions

The coupling of Y-DNA test results and genealogical records provided circumstantial evidence that Seymour Savage's father was Gideon Ferguson. Compelling evidence was provided by atDNA testing a known descendant of Gideon's brother Lewis Ferguson. Thus, the hypothesis was confirmed.

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Conflicts of Interest

Colin R Ferguson is a volunteer serving as administrator of the Fergus(s)on DNA Project on behalf of both FTDNA and the Clan Fergusson Society of North America. None of the authors derive any income from any DNA or genealogical company. They declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Charles Savage Jr. is an Elder in the United Methodist Church. He retired from IBM after 32 years. He is a member of Clan Fergusson Society of North America and the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society.

John T. Ferguson is the retired Senior Vice President, General Counsel, and Secretary of a multinational chemical company. He is a member of Clan Fergusson Society of North America.

Colin R. Ferguson, a retired fire captain, is a volunteer serving as administrator of the Fergus(s)on DNA Project on behalf of both FTDNA and the Clan Fergusson Society of North America.

Supplementary Information

The Fergus(s)on DNA Project is online at <http://dna.cfsna.net>

The Scots Modal 2.5 Haplotype and the Fergus(s)on Scotts II haplotype data are compared at http://dna.cfsna.net/HAP/R1b/Scots_II.htm

A diagram showing the John Fergusson of Cherry Walk descendant lines that have yDNA tested is at <http://dna.cfsna.net/GEN/USA/VA/Stubbleson.html>

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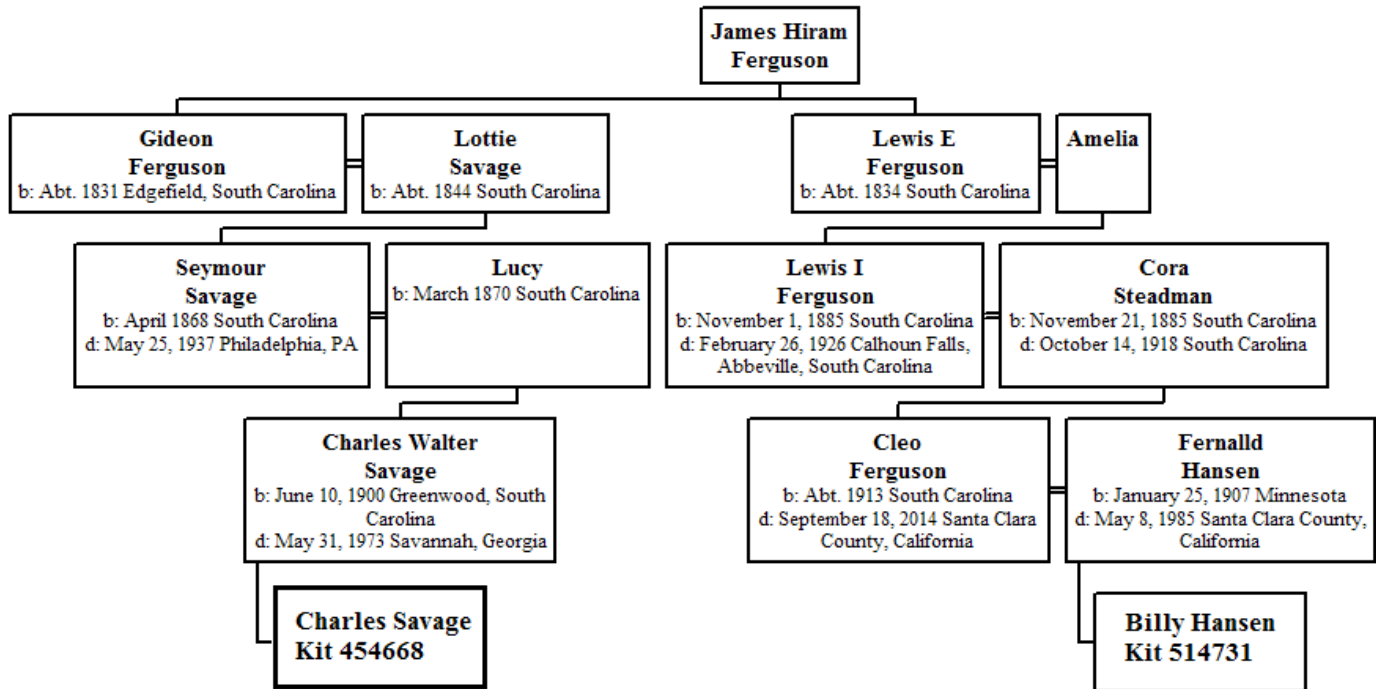


Table 1: 1870 Census, Saluda Division, Edgefield County, South Carolina; Post Office: Chappells Depot;

Enumerated: 20th July 1870

Dwelling	Family	Name	Age	Sex	Race	Born	Occupation
1096	1106	Gideon Ferguson	33	M	W	SC	Farm Laborer
1097	1107	William Webb (+ 6)	31	M	W	SC	Farm Laborer
1098	1108	Willis Moore (+ 4)	50	M	B	SC	Farm Laborer
1099	1109	Lotty Savage	26	F	B	SC	Farm Laborer
		Seymour Savage	3	M	B	SC	
		Maria Savage	1	F	B	SC	
1100	1110	Hester Brunson (+ 8)	70	F	B	VA	Farm Laborer
1101	1111	Butler Simpson (+ 3)	44	M	B	SC	Farm Laborer
1102	1112	Gideon Savage	29	M	B	SC	Farm Laborer
"		Larkin Savage	41	M	B	SC	Farm Laborer
		Ellen Savage	35	F	B	SC	
		Jane Savage	12	F	B	SC	
		Adam Savage	10	M	B	SC	

Households irrelevant to this article show only the head plus number of other occupants