

Tales from our DNA study - Sequoia

Those of you with long memories may recall that back in 2010, I reported a very interesting yDNA match in our Newsletter. This came from Alex, a man who is not an ADAMTHWAITE, but who is almost an exact match with our two GREY line volunteers, who you may recall are both descended from William Adamthwaite and Jane Devis, who married in Brough in 1769:

- At 25 markers Alex was the only exact match with both of them.
- At 37 markers he matched our Canadian GREY line representative in 34/37 markers and our Australian representative in 35/37 markers – with no other matches.

Now in 2016, Alex has another match, with a man named Mark whose father tested with a different company, and Alex and Mark's father both share a unique Haplogroup (R-FGC12384), which after testing one of our GREY line ADAMTHWAITES, we have now discovered is also shared with our Australian tester – and I am now in touch with Mark as well.

We have also recently found that Autosomal DNA results show a match between Alex and our Canadian GREY line Adamthwaite (our Australian GREY line tester has not taken a Family Finder test).

Alex gave me permission to share his VERY interesting ancestry; although he does not carry the surname Adamthwaite. Family Tree DNA data suggests that there is 90% likelihood that he is connected to the Grey line of Adamthwaites within the past 12 generations.

Alex told me ...

"We have confirmed our line back to Joseph Guess, born between 1785 - 1790 in Orange county, North Carolina. Family lore is that we are related to "Sequoia" aka George Giest or George Guess.

George (Sequoia)'s father was a fur trader who married Wurthe, a Cherokee Indian. George was half blood, married a Cherokee (multiple wives) and he was the first person create a written form of the Cherokee alphabet. One of the problems that my cousin had is that she was unable to link one of our relatives, a son, back to the birth records kept by the Cherokee nation. My cousin says that our ancestor's parents' names match those on a registry at the Cherokee nation, but that the son was never registered, so we can't be sure and the Cherokee nation won't recognize our ancestor.



Sequoia statue in Talequah, Oklahoma

Most of the test results on my y-DNA come back as English, with some Scottish, but all from your part of the world (i.e. NW Britain). So, I would think that I could be related through a common ancestor.

The spelling of the Guess name also could have changed over the years. My Aunt was the family member who would tell us what history she knew. She never told me about Sequoia, but told me of old family pictures that showed a women with very dark skin who appeared to be Indian, she said there was no name written on the photo, and she did not know who the photo was of. When my Aunt passed away, her kids threw out all her photo's, records, etc., in cleaning out her personal items. I was much too young then to even think about wanting them one day."

Wikipedia tells us that Sequoyah (born in Tuskegee circa 1770*–1843), named in English George Gist or Guess, was a Cherokee silversmith who in 1821 completed his independent creation of a Cherokee syllabary, making reading and writing in Cherokee possible. This was the only time in recorded history that a member of an illiterate people independently created an effective writing system. After seeing its worth, the Cherokee Nation rapidly began to use his syllabary and officially adopted it in 1825. Their literacy rate rapidly surpassed that of surrounding European-American settlers.

Wikipedia lists a number of different sources relating to the identity of Sequoyah's father:

- Davis quotes Emmet Starr's book that he was a peddler from Swabia (in SW Germany) named Guyst, Guist or Gist – other sources give similar origins and the name of George is mentioned
- Mooney and others suggested that he was possibly a fur trader, who would have been a man of some social status and financial backing.
- Grant Foreman identified him as Nathaniel Gist, a commissioned officer with the Continental Army associated with George Washington.
- Josiah Nott suggested he was the son of a Scotchman.
- In one Cherokee source, his father is said to be a half-blood and his grandfather a white man.

There seems to be general agreement relating to the name of his mother being Wut-teh and that she was Cherokee. Some suggest she was a niece of a Cherokee chief or chiefs – possibly that her uncles were 'Old Tassel' and 'Doublehead', and that she could be a sibling of John Watts (also known as 'Young Tassel') who was similarly a nephew of two Cherokee chiefs – the son of a mixed-blood British trader John Watts.



By Lithographer: Lehman and Duval (George Lehman (d.1870); Peter S. Duval) Painter: Henry Inman (1801- 1846); copy after a painting by Charles Bird King (1785 - 1862) which was lost in a fire in the Smithsonian in 1865. - Source of this reproduction unknown. See also File:Sequoyah painting.jpg, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=378855>

Depending on which of the above possibilities is correct, I would calculate that if Sequoyah aka George or Nathaniel GIST/GUESS was born in about 1770 and his father was a half blood but his grandfather a white man, then that white man must have arrived from Europe some time before about 1740-45. But if Sequoyah's father was a white man he could have arrived any time before about 1768 (though estimates of his birth year range from 1760-1776)

(Could this man be linked to our GREY line Adamthwaites? **DNA suggests he is!**)

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sequoyah> accessed 2016