

# Meek/Meeks Families of Virginia

## Meek Group F Introduction

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The Meek/Meeks Y-DNA Project<sup>1</sup> has established DNA signature<sup>2</sup> for a significant number of early American ancestors based on tests of living descendants. This allows for a determination of which Meek(s) ancestors were related and which ones were not related. Combined with genealogies DNA shows five major groups one of which is designated as Group F and includes the ancestors Athe Meeks, Nacy Meeks and Littleton Meeks. Y-DNA 37 STR<sup>3</sup> marker tests on their descendants indicate that they all shared a common Meek(s) ancestor. The haplogroup<sup>4</sup> of Group F men is defined by the SNP<sup>5</sup> marker R-L193. L193 is a sub-clade of L513 which in turn is a sub-clade of L21. L21 and its many sub-clades include a significant portion of European men. All men in Group F will be positive for L193. Various branches of L193 evolved into sub-groups which eventually became identified with surnames.

Historically the American progenitor of this family has been recorded in genealogies as William Meeks born about 1725. His children were reportedly born in Virginia. However, this is not documented and William Meeks is first mentioned in the 1777 tax list of Surry Co., NC. He married Mary Nolan and he died in Greenville Co., SC in 1797.

Various genealogies claim to know who his father was and where he came from. However sources are lacking or those that are mentioned are misrepresented. In some cases a brother John is mentioned. His most frequently mentioned sons are Priddy Meeks born about 1747-1751, Athe Meeks born about 1850-1856, Littleton Meeks born 8 Feb 1766 and Nacy Meeks born about 1768. Also mentioned are John, Jesse and Martin.

Unfortunately there does not appear to be a single genealogy or source that modern researchers use as a starting point for building a genealogy on this family. That accounts for the considerable variance in the genealogies available today. However, there is now considerable DNA evidence available. Three descendants of Athe, four descendants of Nacy and two descendants of Littleton have been tested. These tests provide information on what the three ancestor's DNA might have looked like as well as providing insight into what their father's DNA looked like.

In addition two men whose families currently or recently live in Scotland match the DNA of Group F with minor variations. They represent a branch or branches of the Meek family that did not migrate to America in the 1700's. Their DNA results also help establish the ancestral values for the Group F progenitor. In addition the R-L193 haplotype is consistent with a Scottish origin. William Meeks or his father likely came to America from Scotland.

Genealogical efforts on the American Meeks family have been helped by some very unique given names. Priddy, Athe, Littleton and Nacy (Ignatius) are extremely rare names for any Meek or Meeks families during the latter half of the 1700's. So rare that one can follow the very common name William Meeks by following his son Athe from Surry Co., NC to Greenville Co., SC<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately Athe is the only son of William Meeks that can be proven genealogically.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://meekdna.com>

<sup>2</sup> 37 Y-DNA STR marker results. AKA DNA haplotype, signature or profile

<sup>3</sup> STR=short tandem repeat

<sup>4</sup> Haplogroup=large population of men defined by a single SNP marker

<sup>5</sup> SNP=single nucleotide polymorphism

<sup>6</sup> Deed Book D p. 294, Greenville Co., SC

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This is significant because there is some genealogical information that suggests that Littleton Meeks was the son of John Meeks of Hanover Co., VA<sup>7</sup>.

### DNA Implications

An analysis of Y-DNA results for descendants of Littleton, Nancy and Athe boils down to two markers. They are DYS 576 and DYS 456. Overall results show that these three ancestors shared a common ancestor. Who that ancestor was or when he lived is not revealed by DNA. It does not prove that the three men were sons of any particular person or what their relationship might have been.

One of the few proven fact from genealogy concerning relationships is that on 7 Jan 1797 William Meeks transferred his property to "Athe Meeks my son" in Greenville Co., SC court records. Therefore it is accepted that Athe Meeks was a son of William Meeks.

Four descendants of Nancy received DNA tests. They represent three different sons<sup>8</sup>. All had DYS 576=19. Therefore it is highly likely that Nancy and probably Nancy's father also had DYS 576=19. One of three available tests for descendants of Athe also has DYS 576=19. (That marker is missing for the other two members and additional tests are desirable.) The members from Scotland also have DYS 576=19. Since any connection between them and the U. S. families predate the early 1700's this lends support to the conclusion that it is likely that the ancestral value for DYS 576 is 19.

There are two DNA tests for descendants of Littleton Meeks. One descends through his son William Sheridan Meeks and the other descends through his son Jesse. Each has the same results of DYS 576=20. Therefore it is likely that Littleton and probably Littleton's father also had DYS 576=20. This marker will, in most cases, distinguish descendants of Littleton Meeks from those of Athe Meeks and Nancy Meeks.

The three descendants of two sons of Athe Meeks have DYS 456=15 while descendants of Littleton and Nancy have DYS 456=16. This marker will, in most cases, distinguish descendants of Athe from those of Littleton and Nancy.

Descendants of Athe and Littleton have a genetic distance of two when looking at the ancestral values. Hanover Co., VA deed records dated 2 October 1788 show that Littleton inherited land from John Meek of Hanover Co., VA. Neither fact is conclusive by itself. However the two facts complement each other and give each more weight than they would otherwise have standing alone. **This data indicates that the father of Littleton Meeks was not William Meek's, the father of Athe.**

Since DNA proves that Athe and Littleton were NOT brothers the question is how did Nancy fit into this group. It is more likely for two brothers to have a different value in one marker than it would be for two brothers to have different values in two markers. Nancy could have been a brother of Athe or a brother of Littleton. He could not have been a brother of both although all

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<sup>7</sup> Hanover County, Virginia Deeds, 1783-1792, Abstracted and compiled by Rosalie Edith Davis

<sup>8</sup> Multiple tests from different sons is the key to determining what the ancestors DNA profile was.

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three were related. But the same token DNA does not rule out the possibility that there were three fathers involved. Given the level of data currently available it is not possible to be more definitive about the relationship of these ancestors.

The follow table is one view, based on this writer's opinion, of how Athe, Nancy and Littleton came to have different values in two markers. This writer is not a geneticist, mathematician or statistician. Other scenarios are possible but less likely.

Assumptions:

- Common ancestor of Athe, Littleton and Nancy had DYS456=16 & DYS576=19
- It is unlikely that the any one ancestor threw a mutation to two sons in two different markers
- William Meeks and John Meeks were approximately the same age and not father and son
- The number of generation between the common ancestor and the known ancestors is unknown
- There were no back mutations during the period in question

|   |                                      |   |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Common Ancestor</b><br>DYS456=16 & DYS576=19 |                                      |   |
| <b>DYS456=15</b>                                |                                      | <b>DYS576=20</b>                          |
|   |                                      |   |
| <b>William Meeks</b>                            | <b>Unknown Father</b>                | <b>John Meeks</b>                         |
| <b>Athe</b><br>DYS456=15 & DYS576=19            | <b>Nacy</b><br>DYS456=16 & DYS576=19 | <b>Littleton</b><br>DYS456=16 & DYS576=20 |

As noted earlier Athe and Littleton cannot be brother based on a combination of some genealogical information and their probable DNA profile which shows a genetic distance of 2. From a statistical standpoint it is less likely that their respective father's had a different DNA profile than their sons. However, one of their fathers could have been the source of a mutation passed to his son. It is less likely that both fathers passed on mutations to their respective sons. However, for a genetic genealogist to look at any one point in history and find this many mutations is unlikely. **Therefore the conclusion is that William Meeks and John Meeks were related but were probably not brothers.**

More information is needed from both DNA and genealogical. DNA upgrades are pending as of this writing. It would be useful to have a descendant of Priddy Meeks tested to determine how he fit in to this family. Athe and Priddy seem to have come from the same area of Virginia. At the same time Nancy and Littleton appear to have been associates who migrated together and witnessed documents for each other. If Nancy and Littleton can be shown to have been brothers it will date the mutation (DYS576=20) that descendants of Littleton carry. It is not known if there are any living descendants of the other supposed sons of William Meeks.

DNA proves that Athe, Nancy and Littleton were related. Genealogically it has been proven that Athe was the son of William Meeks. There is some documentation to indicate that Littleton was a son of John Meeks. DNA suggests that Athe and Littleton were not brothers. Beyond these things little is known at the current time about how the three men were related.

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### Addendum:

In contemplating a possible family tree for Group F one should consider several issues.

The Scotland branches also have a unique marker in CDY<sub>a</sub>=40

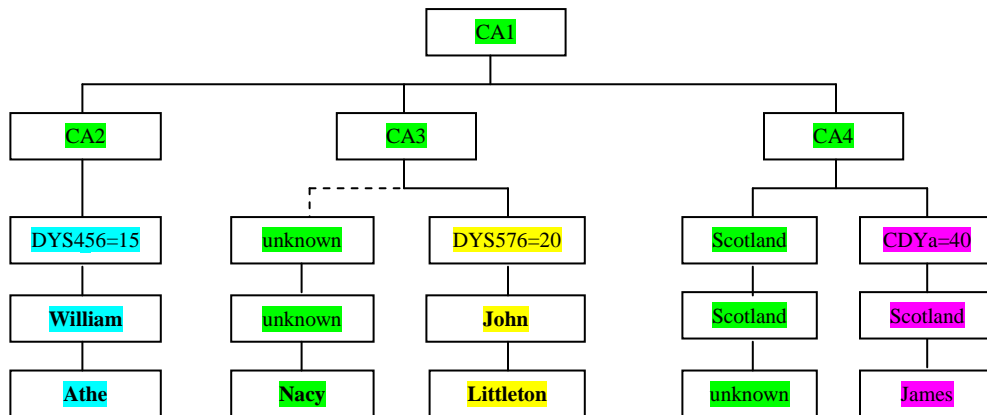
It is unlikely that any two mutations occurred in the same generation for the same branch.

There must be a clear path for each profile back to the common ancestor (progenitor)

Athe and Littleton were not brothers.

This can be illustrated on the following chart which is very hypothetical. There were very likely more generations involved especially for the Scotland branches. Considering that only a small number of people have been tested and some branches have died out the tree was likely much more extensive. In all probably there are men in Scotland today that match the Common ancestors DNA profile.

Nacy's position on the tree is unknown as is when the mutation carried by Athe and Littleton occurred.



Without quoting scientific sources it is this writer's understand that it would be highly unlikely if Athe's mutation at DYS465 and Littleton's mutation at DYS576 both occurred between their fathers and themselves although both markers change more often than others. The implication is that the common ancestor lived further back in time than the father of William and John. Another reason that this is true is that there needs to be a clear path between Nacy and the common ancestor which is illustrated in green on the above chart.

Even if the mutation occurred between John and Littleton (rather than occurring earlier) it is difficult to see Athe's mutation occurring in the same generation. It is not impossible that William and John were brothers but it is not likely. The common ancestor likely lived 2, 3 or more generation further back in time.

The Scotland branch of Group F also had its own unique mutation which also pre-dates William and John. It is important to note that there could be many other branches of Group F that are unknown and untested. It is entirely possible that there are living men today in Scotland who match the ancestral values for Group F. In other words they would match the Nacy's descendants were they to get a DNA test. For that reason one cannot exclude the possibility that Nacy descends from common ancestor #4 (CA4) on the chart above. However that fact that Nacy and Littleton associated with each other suggests a more recent common ancestor.