



genetics & genealogy

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Recent Findings from the Horton Surname Project

At least four men with the surname Horton immigrated to New England and New Netherlands by the mid-seventeenth century. According to tradition, two were brothers—Thomas, who settled in Springfield, Mass. (d. by August 1641¹), and Barnabas (ca. 1600–1680) who settled in Southold, New York. The latter was covered in George F. Horton, *Horton Genealogy; or Chronicles of the Descendants of Barnabas Horton of Southold, L.I., 1640* (1876).² Researchers looked for decades, without success, for a proven link between these two immigrants.

In 2003, the Horton Surname Project was created at FamilyTreeDNA.com. One of its objectives was to prove or disprove a genetic link between Thomas and Barnabas. The project has now grown to 135 Y-DNA samples (supported by my database of 160,000 names) and our goal expanded to cover other well-documented Horton immigrants. Initially, most samples were from self-described descendants of Barnabas. I submitted my Y-DNA in 2008 and was informed I did not match the Barnabas Horton group. I began to collect new

samples more actively and target unexplored lines. In 2013 I became an administrator of the Horton surname project. My efforts at recruiting Horton men were successful, and I was able to prove my line was of Barnabas. Findings to date are as follows.

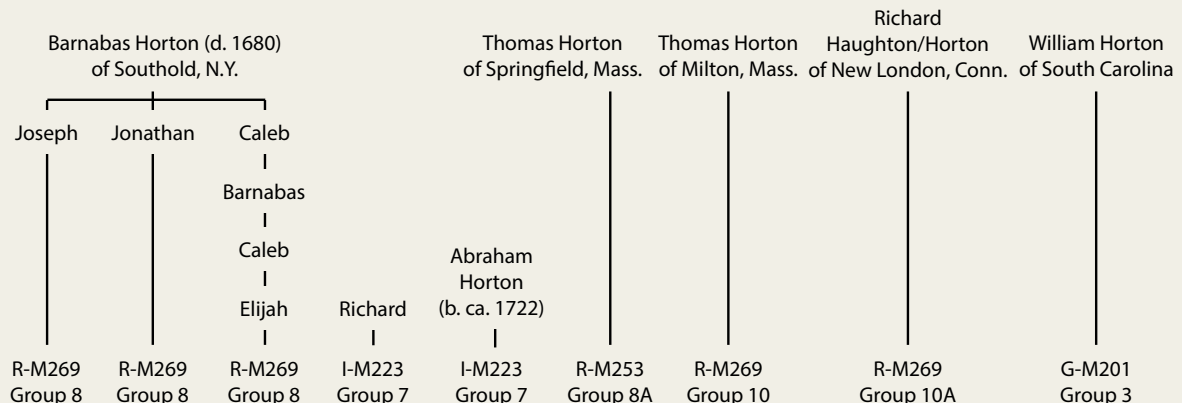
Were Barnabas and Thomas brothers?

Since most samples were from Barnabas descendants, I could not initially prove or disprove any kinship with Thomas. In 2013, after three years I found two willing descendants of Thomas Horton of Springfield in one week. The Y-DNA results of these two matched each other but not the Barnabas Horton groups. Thus, Barnabas and Thomas were not related. My attention then turned to various Barnabas descendants.

Why did Y-DNA samples from Barnabas descendants fall into different haplogroups?

Samples from the self-described Barnabas descendants did not belong to identical haplogroups, but instead to

Horton Y-DNA results



For full Y-DNA sequences, visit familytreedna.com/public/Horton/default.aspx?section=yresults.

two distinct lines. An incorrect parent assignment or non-paternal event had evidently occurred. Random samples of self-identified Barnabas descendants would not resolve the discrepancy. I had to rephrase my question—where and when did this event occur? Barnabas¹ of Southold fathered five sons (by two wives); four were known to have sons of their own (Joseph², Caleb², Joshua², and Jonathan²). At the time, we had samples only from descendants of Joseph (Group #8) and Caleb (Group #7), and all samples from Caleb's line were through *Richard*⁵, *Caleb*⁴, *Barnabas*³, *Caleb*², *Barnabas*¹.

Using traditional genealogical methods, I identified and contacted three additional Horton men who agreed to submit Y-DNA samples—one from Joseph² (Group #8); one from Jonathan² (Group #8); and one from another Caleb line (*Elijah*⁵, *Caleb*⁴, *Barnabas*³, *Caleb*², *Barnabas*¹; Group #8). Y-DNA samples from descendants of two alleged brothers (in the Caleb line)—Elijah⁵ and Richard⁵—belonged to different haplogroups—Elijah⁵ to Group #8, but Richard⁵ to Group #7. Had I found where the split occurred?

A review of primary sources exposed gaps in evidence, so Richard's position in the family became tenuous.³ Horton samples in Group #7 also include an Abraham Horton (b. ca. 1722 in Bucks County, Pa.), whose parentage is unknown.⁴ This match suggests that Abraham and Richard Horton belong to a distinct Horton line unrelated to the Barnabas line. I now have identified at least six distinct haplogroups descending from colonial Horton males; traditional sources had earlier suggested that three of groups below (nos. 1, 2, and 6) were descendants of Barnabas of Southold.

The majority of test samples fell into one of the following groups:

1. Barnabas Horton (via Joseph², Jonathan², and Caleb², [via Elijah⁵]) Group #8 (R-M269)
2. Abraham and Richard Horton, Group #7 (I-M223)

3. Thomas Horton of Springfield, Mass. Group #8A (—)⁵
4. Thomas Horton of Milton, Mass. Group #10 (—)⁶
5. Richard Haughton/Horton of New London, Conn., Group #10A⁷
6. William Horton of S.C., Group #3⁸ (G-M201, Kit 3 N2363)

As per the above, actual Barnabas descendants, from three different sons, belong to Group #8. Barnabas's parents have never been proved with traditional sources. A recent book, *In Search of Barnabas Horton*, presents indirect evidence suggesting Barnabas's *likely* origin in Mowsley, Leicestershire.⁹ Could Y-DNA provide conclusive proof?

Would Y-DNA from a Horton male with ancestry in Mowsley, Leicestershire, match that of American descendants of Barnabas?¹⁰

Luckily, I found and contacted a male Horton from Leicestershire whose known patrilineal ancestors have lived in the Mowsley/Saddington area since the 1700s. His Y-DNA matched that of Barnabas Group #8. Thus, a genetic link was established between an English family and Barnabas Horton of Southold, New York. Research to document fully this Englishman's Horton descent continues.

As always, DNA results are only as good as the diversity of available samples, and testing is most often successful when combined with traditional genealogical research. ♦

NOTES

- ¹ Thomas Horton was recorded in Springfield in 1636 and 1638. See Henry M. Burt, *The First Century of the History of Springfield: The Official Records from 1636 to 1736*, vol. 1 (Springfield, Mass.: the author, 1898): 41, 162; Lucius M. Boltwood, "Robert Ashley," *Register* 33 (1879): 310–11.
- ² Reissued as Adeline Horton White, *The Hortons in America* (Seattle, 1929).
- ³ No record links Richard to the Horton family of Southold. Richard's alleged father, Caleb⁴, named four sons—Caleb, Nathaniel, Elijah, and Nathan—and five daughters in his will (1759) and codicil (1768), but no Richard. See A. Van Doren Honeyman,

ed., *Documents Relating to the Colonial and Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey*, First Series, Vol. XXXIV, Calendar of New Jersey Wills, Administrations, etc., Vol. V: 1771–1780 (Trenton, N.J.: MacCrellish & Quigley Co., 1931), 256. Although a preliminary search uncovered a few documents in New Jersey and Pennsylvania naming a "Richard Horton," these do not include origins or kinship ties. Research is ongoing.

- ⁴ According to Horton descendants of Surrey County, North Carolina, Abraham Horton of Bucks Co., Pa., was the great-grandson of Thomas Horton of Springfield, Mass. (*John*², *Jeremiah*², *Thomas*¹). Y-DNA has proved this identification incorrect. Margaret R. Jenks (see note 6), reached the same conclusion through traditional research, and shared her findings. John³ Horton, alleged father of Abraham, died aged 17, unmarried. I could find no mention of an Abraham Horton in the Springfield family.
- ⁵ According to Margaret R. Jenks, Thomas Horton of Springfield, Mass., is routinely confused with Thomas Horton/Orton of Charlestown, Mass., a shipwright.
- ⁶ This Horton branch has been expertly documented in Margaret R. Jenks and Frank C. Seymour, *Thomas Horton of Milton and Rehoboth, Massachusetts (1984–90)*, which also proved that Thomas Horton of Springfield, Mass., and Thomas of Milton, Mass., were unrelated.
- ⁷ Careful analysis is required with regard to Richard Haughton/Horton of New London, as two men there with identical names are regularly confused. See Mrs. James T. Watts, "Some Corrections of the Haughton Family of New London, Conn." in *The American Genealogist* 11 (1934–35): 133–37. The Haughton Surname Project at FamilyTreeDNA (distinct from the Horton Surname Project) does not yet include samples from descendants of Richard Haughton. (Email exchange between Jackie Dinan and Charles Vella, administrator of the Haughton Surname Project, July 1, 2012).
- ⁸ According to White's *Hortons in America*, this William was a son of Joshua Horton and Sarah Hull, which is incorrect. Williams's line shares Y-DNA with Horton descendants from Virginia in Group #3. Virginia and New York Hortons are unrelated.
- ⁹ Jacqueline Dinan, *In Search of Barnabas Horton: from English Baker to Long Island Proprietor, 1600–1680* (New York: Pynsleade Books, 2015).
- ¹⁰ Barnabas's birthplace—"Mousley Leser-shire England" [i.e. Mowsley, Leicestershire]—is identified only by his tombstone, probably contemporary with his 1680 death.