

Who Am I?

2nd Year Project- Anna Bonavita
Music Education and Psychology Major

Project Description

I decided to interview people that have participated in DNA and genealogy research within the last few years. Part of what I love about the humanities is the way the subject incorporates history, culture, and community. For me, the experience of taking part in those things is enhanced by knowing what your own history is. Most people that I spoke with during this process were interested in their family tree and ancestry for a variety of reasons. I hoped to learn about what makes people interested in their own heritage, as well as how it may have affected their view on their own self and or the people around them.



| | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| ▼ Europe | 84.6% |
| ● North and West Europe | 54.6% |
| Irish, Scottish, and Welsh | 36.8% |
| Finnish | 9.0% |
| English | 8.8% |
| ● East Europe | 21.5% |
| Balkan | 21.5% |
| ● South Europe | 8.5% |
| Iberian | 8.5% |
| ▼ Asia | 8.0% |
| ● West Asia | 8.0% |
| West Asian | 8.0% |
| ▼ Africa | 7.4% |
| ● North Africa | 6.0% |
| North African | 6.0% |
| ● West Africa | 1.4% |
| Nigerian | 1.4% |
| Anna Bonavita | 100.0% |

Process

I became interested in my own genealogy over the last year as a way to honor my late grandmother. I often think about all of the family memories that went with her when she died and was hoping to learn more about where I come from and the lives my ancestors lived. I was surprised when I got my results. For my entire life it has been a known fact that my mother's side is Swedish and my father's side is Italian. But, my results proved that to be a false thought, seeing as my highest percentage actually falls into Irish, Scottish, and Welsh (which explains the mystery red hair I have). Based on my own experience, I wondered what reactions and feelings others who have done this may have experienced during the process. I plan to interview people who have been using sites and kits such as MyHeritage in order to gauge what gets individuals interested in genealogy, history, and culture. I know many people from high school and from Columbus that have done this, and also have the ability to connect with users online. My main hope is to connect with them and listen to their stories. With that, I am hoping I can learn about many different cultures and people.

Results



In my experience, most people were surprised by the mixture that their results showed, originally believing they were a mix of maybe two to three nationalities. In reality, most people's DNA results have at least 4-5 different nationalities and cultures built in to it. For one girl, this allowed her to learn about a completely new culture to her as she learned she was majority Dutch and knew nothing about it. I have found that most people are inspired by different cultures when they realize they are somehow connected to them. Along with that, many participants said their results changed the way they think about the people around them and made them reevaluate some bias or prejudice they previously held. One man told me that his results made him angry at first, as he has a majority of DNA from a place that he held resentment for. But, as he researched the history and people for himself, he loved the fact that he had that DNA in him. Political Science student, Emily, relayed to me that receiving her DNA breakdown strengthened her self-image as her results allowed her to understand where she comes from and gave her a new sense of purpose. She also hopes to explore more of her heritage as she journeys through Europe on a study abroad this summer under the pre-law program. In another story, Lexi, a Biomedical Engineering student here at Ohio State, discovered that she is not even remotely Native American. Growing up, Lexi was told that her dad was twenty percent Native American and seeing that she is not in contact with her father, this shifted her entire view on what she thought she knew about him. Lexi echoed the idea that Emily shared, stating that her results instilled in her a sense of self-worth and understanding though they initially brought up confusion. Each individual relayed this led them to learn more about the different cultures and places in their breakdowns.

| Europe | 100.0% |
|----------------------------|--------|
| ● North and West Europe | 72.3% |
| Irish, Scottish, and Welsh | 40.4% |
| English | 31.9% |
| ● East Europe | 22.7% |
| Balkan | 21.9% |
| East European | 0.8% |
| ● South Europe | 5.0% |
| Iberian | 5.0% |
| Emily Szalay | 100.0% |

Reflection

I gained a lot of hope from my conversations with people during this project and year. I am easily discouraged by the exclusion and hate that is found in modern society. That idea is what actually drew me to Humanities Scholars in the first place, as it provides an opportunity to experience countless subjects and fields, as well as cultures and people. Many of my conversations consisted of people telling me they had a complete change of perspective. I am a strong believer that every culture and person deserve to be respected for their own beliefs. Almost every one of the testimonies stated that when they actually looked in to who they were and the ideas of the people around them, they were inspired. We can all take more time to learn about ourselves, let alone each other. I think that Humanities Scholars is a place that allows people to do just that and am thankful for its integration of the liberal arts and community. I wouldn't trade this program and the chance to connect with people for the world. I hope to continue learning within the realm of humanities, and integrating what I experience in to my own classes and students. We are all people of the world, and everyone has a story to tell.



| European | 100.0% |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| ● Northwestern European | 96.3% ▾ |
| ● British & Irish | 42.5% ▾ |
| United Kingdom, Ireland | |
| ● French & German | 34.4% ▾ |
| Germany, France | |
| ● Scandinavian | 1.1% ▾ |
| ● Finnish | 0.3% ▾ |
| ● Broadly Northwestern European | 18.1% ▾ |
| ● Ashkenazi Jewish | 1.6% ▾ |
| ● Eastern European | 0.9% ▾ |
| ● Southern European | 0.2% ▾ |
| Spanish & Portuguese | 0.2% ▾ |
| ● Broadly European | 1.0% ▾ |