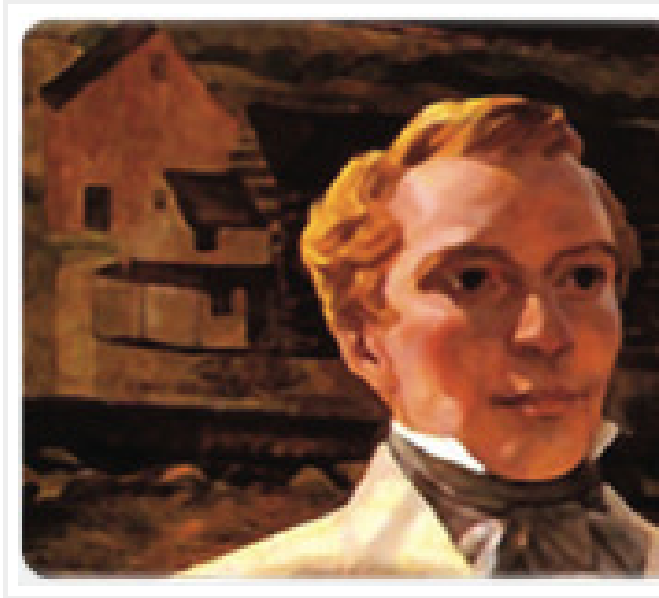


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Joseph Smith now even more Irish

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Mormon prophet Joseph Smith Jr., was [shown in 2008](#) to have descended from Irish royalty. Ugo Perego, a senior researcher at Sorenson Molecular Genealogy Foundation, said recent DNA tests show the connection is even more certain.

In 2008 Perego found a DNA connection between Joseph Smith, the first prophet of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and King Niall of the Nine Hostages, an Irish warlord of the fifth century. This connection was found using STR profile values.

The STR profile assigns a number value to certain small sections on a person's Y chromosome. An STR profile looks like a long list of numbers. One person's number values can be compared section by section with another person's values. The closer two people's STR values align the more likely they are connected.

"We know exactly what the Joseph Smith and Smith family Y chromosome STR profile looks like," Perego said. "As accurate as if I had Joseph Smith next to me and I would get a swab from him. It's not guesswork."

The 24 values of the Smith family STR profile matched best with the STR profile of Niall of the Nine Hostages.

Two years later, Perego compared 43 STR values between Joseph Smith and Niall of the Nine Hostages. Instead of showing Joseph Smith was on another

genealogical branch, the Irish connection continues to match.

"So why is Joseph Smith more Irish?" Perego said. "We have more STR data available for Joseph Smith. We have more STR data available for Niall of the Nine Hostages. And the number of STR values matching has also increased. . . . A stronger connection. A more sure family relation."

Y chromosome research only follows the line back from son to father to grandfather and so on. It doesn't tell the whole DNA story. It is just one branch of the family tree — but Y chromosome analysis does follow the surname, usually making it easy to match up with genealogical records.

[Michael Kennedy, a direct descendant of Joseph Smith](#) and president of the Joseph Smith Jr. Family Organization, said the Irish family connection is just beginning to be known among family members. He said, however, that descendants don't appear to be giving Irish names to their children just yet.

Even though traditional genealogical research failed to push the direct Smith lineage back beyond England, the DNA evidence points to Ireland. Y chromosome STR profiles may not tell the whole genealogical story of the Smith family, but for Michael Kennedy it is enough to enjoy St. Patrick's Day a little more.

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