



The English Ancestry Committee of
THE WILLIAM STROTHER SOCIETY, INC.

**REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
JULY 2014**

This is the eighth report to the Board of Directors by the English Ancestry Committee which was formed in 1999 to make an organized, sustained search for the ancestry of William Strother, the immigrant to Virginia in the mid-1600s.

Research of Butler and Strother Families in Rapides Parish, Louisiana

In the fall of 2013, The English Ancestry Committee did some genealogical research to reach a better understanding of some of the Strother lineages. DNA testing had shown matches between the Butler family and the Strother family, which was not fully understood. Both of those families had been traced into Georgia, Mississippi (Amite and Pike Counties) and Louisiana (Rapides Parish). The research had several specific objectives:

- Identify connection between the Strother and Butler families.
- Develop reasonable documentation for lineages of the Strother families in early Mississippi and Louisiana.
- Correct inconsistencies in the present Strother database related to the Strother family that settled in Rapides Parish in the early 1800s.

Our research was conducted during the period August through May 2014, and included the following procedures:

- Insertion of an article in the Strother Society newsletter requesting assistance from Society members. We wanted to communicate with anyone familiar with the Strother or Butler families that might have family information not available in official records.
- E-mail correspondence with several Butler family members, who provided information on the Butlers in Louisiana and Mississippi.
- Considerable research on the Internet through Ancestry.com and various other sites.

- One day searching the resources of the Family History Library in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Analysis of the results of prior DNA tests of Strother family descendants from Rapides Parish, Louisiana.
- E-mail correspondence with several Strother family members descended from the Rapides Parish Strother family.

The results of our research were disappointing. We received no response from Society members to our newsletter article. Our internet and Family History Library research accumulated substantial information about the Butler and Strother families, but did not identify a biological link between the two families. Furthermore, we were unable to locate new information on the Strother family in Rapides Parish that would identify with certainly their connection to other branches of the family. We needed information on the early 1800s and found Rapides Parish records before the mid-1800s to be practically nonexistent.

The analysis of DNA tests provided new information. First, the analysis confirmed that the Butler and Strother families are very closely related. Further research, which will probably be very difficult, is necessary to identify the link. Previous research had concluded that the Strother family from Rapides Parish was not descended from our William Strother. Those previous tests all focused on descendants of Alexander Strother (1829-1864). Now it appears that Alexander was the illegitimate son of a Blount, who happened to be living with a Strother family. In addition, a DNA match was found with Joseph Vernon Strother, who tested in 2013 and whose family is from Rapides Parish. Additional DNA testing is needed, but it appears that the Strother family in Rapides Parish may indeed descend from William Strother.

DNA Project, the History

For many years Strother researchers have searched for a document trail to the ancestry of our William, all to no avail. About 1998, sufficient progress had been made on the Human Genome Project to make it feasible to use the information and lab processes to make analysis of the human DNA for genealogical purposes. It was to take advantage of this scientific development that the English Ancestry Committee was established by the Board. Almost all of the funding for the project was contributions from members of the Society.

The basic theory of genetic genealogy is that the Y-chromosome of the DNA is carried only by the male. It is passed from father to son relatively unchanged, thus enabling one to test the DNA of two men to determine if the men are biologically

related. There are mutations of the various “markers” on the Y-chromosome. The average rate of mutation is once every 500 years with some markers mutating faster and some slower. As scientists have determined the usual rate of mutation of each of the markers on a Y-chromosome, they can make an estimate of the generations back to the most recent common ancestor of two men tested. If several men tested all know where their ancestors came from and the generations back to the most recent common ancestor with your man is estimated, then you have a place and a time frame within which to look for documentation of ancestors of your man.

The Committee began by sending to the testing lab DNA samples from male line descendants of each of the sons of William plus samples from some of our purported cousins in England. The results were surprising. We were not biologically related to our purported cousins in England whose ancestry was in Northumberland. So we expanded our search for volunteers to be tested and contacted all the Strother men we could find worldwide. We obtained fifteen volunteers from five countries. The results were the same. William was not biologically related to any of the Strother men tested except his own descendants.

During our major solicitation, we contacted some men with variations of the Strother name. About a year after the major solicitation, we received a letter from a Derek Struthers from a town near Manchester, England telling us he had misplaced but had now found our letter and, if the project was still open, would like to be tested. We tested Derek. He matched our William on 63 of 67 DNA markers tested. We tested three more men with the surname Struthers. Their test results were similar to those for Derek.

The four Struthers men were unknown to each other. From this we concluded that the evidence was strong that the surname of the ancestors of our William was Struthers, not Strother. We then worked with the Struthers men to trace their ancestry. We got back to the early 1700s when the records played out. Since our William was in Virginia by mid-1600s with a Strother surname, we couldn't establish a link with the Struthers

DNA Project, Recent Activities

Since the last Conference, our activities have been mainly monitoring the activity on our DNA site on the Internet to see if we can find any clues that will give us a lead for further research. We also analyzed the DNA test results of Strother family descendants in Rapides Parish, as described above, and reached the conclusion at least one of those Strother families is related to our William Strother.

In May 2014, we communicated with a newly identified Struthers descendant, who contacted us via the Family Tree DNA site on the Internet. This contact is interesting from two aspects. First, his ancestor, William Struthers was born 5 Jun

1757 at Avondale, Lanaark, Scotland. That ancestor came to the United States and settled in Greene County, Ohio, where he died in 1834. This William Struthers was from the same area in Scotland as the other Struthers men that matched in the previous DNA testing. We have suggested that a male descendant of this William be take a DNA test.

Secondly, the Struthers descendant that contacted us is very experienced in DNA testing and genealogy and is willing to assist us. He has offered some excellent suggestions on how the results of the DNA tests are presented on the web site, which should help arrive at a better display of testing results. He has agreed to serve as a co-administrator for the DNA project.

Finances

The English Ancestry Committee had no receipts and expenses (research) of \$88 during the two years ended June 15, 2014. At June 15, 2014, the Committee had a bank balance of \$4,626.

Committee Membership

After 15 years of outstanding service, Nolan Hensarling retired from the English Ancestry Committee. This leaves only Edward L. Strother on the Committee, who became acting Committee chairman. Newsletters articles have asked for volunteers to help on the Committee, and one response has been received to date.

National Society of Colonial Dames XVII Century

In December 2013, an inquiry was received from the National Society of Colonial Dames XVII Century. This is the only women's lineage society with a Heraldry-Coat of Arms program. Its members (all of whom have proven Colonial Ancestors who were in the colonies in the 1600s) provide referenced information on the lineage to show connections to Armigers (persons entitled to bear a particular Coat of Arms). They wanted to confirm the heritage of our William Strother, the immigrant. I responded with a message advising them that we had been unable to identify the heritage of our William Strother. They indicated that the Society web site, specifically the reports of the English Ancestry Committee, were the basis for their inquiry.

A copy of this report and of each of the other reports to the Board is on the Web site of the Society. If there are any questions about the report or the project, please let us know.

Respectfully submitted,
Edward L. Strother, Acting Chairman

June 1, 2014

