



23andMe Launches New Feature Connecting Customers to Historical Individuals from Hundreds and Even Thousands of Years Ago

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Built upon peer-reviewed published science, the Historical Matches feature weaves customers' ancestral connections into the story of human history and migration

SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO, Calif., March 19, 2024 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- 23andMe Holding Co. (Nasdaq: ME), a leading human genetics and biopharmaceutical company, released an exciting new feature for 23andMe+ Premium and Total Health members, that uncovers DNA connections to 335 unique historical individuals, from medieval Vikings to late Stone Age African hunter-gatherers to pre-colonial indigenous Caribbean people to the great musical genius Ludwig Van Beethoven.

The advanced science used to create this feature was over a decade in the making as scientists, including those at 23andMe, leveraged new technology for extracting and sequencing ancient and historical DNA from bones found at archeological sites, and then comparing living individuals' genomes to the historical and ancient DNA.

Among the historical genomes included in this feature are a number of enslaved and free Black and African Americans who toiled at an historic Maryland iron furnace in the late 18th and early 19th century. 23andMe scientists, along with researchers at Harvard and the Smithsonian, [published seminal work](#) in August of 2023 connecting 22 anonymous enslaved and freed African Americans buried at the site to thousands of their living relatives. The paper broke new ground, and provided a technical and [ethical benchmark](#) for future studies of similar, largely forgotten burial sites.

23andMe is the first leading DNA ancestry service to offer this level of genetic matching to relatives of historical people based on peer-reviewed, published methods and deep data analysis.

"23andMe's Historical Matches is a technical breakthrough in our ability to accurately detect genetic connections between customers and historical individuals," said Dan Chu, 23andMe's Chief Product Officer. "It uses cutting-edge science to provide customers with connections to history that can be fun, and in some cases, deeply personal and profound."

The new Historical Matches feature leverages the same science applied in a more consumer-friendly and approachable way to making these connections. The connections to historical individuals like those in Maryland or to the many others across the globe that are highlighted in the feature will help customers as they explore fundamental questions about who their ancestors and other historical relatives were, where they came from, and their place in the human story.

23andMe plans to add additional historical genomes to the Historical Matches feature over time, offering 23andMe+ Premium and Total Health members more opportunities to connect their stories to past epochs.

To create this new feature and connect members to Historical Matches, 23andMe identifies segments of DNA that individuals share with the genetic sequences of historical individuals. The feature relies on publicly available data, scientific publications, and the 23andMe relative matching technology to link to these historical individuals. Most members will have a match to one or more of these individuals, offering them a connection to specific individuals from a particular time in history.

While most matches reveal very distant connections, some matches may be closer. Some of these genomes are from individuals who lived thousands of years ago, while others are just a few centuries old. Almost all are relatively anonymous, except one of the more recent figures, Beethoven, who died in 1827. The other historical genomes are from unnamed individuals who were part of important historical moments. 23andMe has collected them into nine groups.

The Viking Age —*Seafaring people of Scandinavia, the Vikings made their indelible mark between the 8th and 11th centuries, called [the Viking Age](#).*

Catoctin Furnace Ironworkers —*The Catoctin Furnace Iron Workers were enslaved and freed African American laborers who toiled at an iron furnace in Maryland between the 18th and 19th centuries. The site, one of the earliest industrial sites in the United States, produced iron goods, including making the shells fired during the siege of Yorktown and ammunition for the Continental Army.*

Iron Age Taiwan —*The [Iron Age in Taiwan](#) refers to a period when the indigenous Atayal people began to use metals like bronze, iron, and silver.*

The Ancient Eurasian Steppe —*The Eurasian Steppe encompasses the massive grasslands and plains stretching from modern-day Hungary and Romania to Mongolia and China. It also was a crossroad for human migration and a hub for the spread of the Indo-European language.*

The First Peoples of the Caribbean —*This group includes indigenous people of the Caribbean who lived in the region [before colonization](#), between about 1,000 BCE and about 1,500 CE, or just as Spanish explorers first encountered these communities.*

The Genomic Formation of South and Central Asia —*Most South Asian populations today descend from a mixture of two ancient populations that lived around 4,000 years ago, whom scientists call "Ancestral South Indians" and "Ancestral North Indians". Ancestral South Indians were also the product of a mixture between [two genetically distinct groups](#) related to ancient Iranian farmers and southern Asian hunter-gatherers, which likely occurred around 2,000 BCE. Ancestral North Indians were descendants of pastoralists (herders) who lived in the eastern part of the Eurasian Steppe during the Bronze Age.*

Late Stone Age and Iron Age South Africa —*Many archeological studies in Southern Africa focus on sites where our earliest human ancestors*

once lived [hundreds of thousands of years ago](#), but there are other sites from the more recent past. There isn't a fixed date when the Late Stone Age ended in South Africa, but the Iron Age began around 200 CE, when Bantu speaking people experienced with iron working migrated to the region.

Ancient Northern Chinese Millet Farmers —*The fertile basin between the Yellow and the West Liao rivers was once the home to the world's earliest complex agricultural societies. The communities there grew millet and human migration from and through the region helped spread the cultivation of millet, which eventually became the staple crop of Northeast Asia, dating back almost 8,000 years.*

The Ancient City of Beirut —*Beirut, Lebanon has been inhabited for 5,000 years and has been governed by many empires — Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, and Ottoman — each leaving their cultural mark but not always a genetic one.*

About 23andMe

23andMe is a genetics-led consumer healthcare and therapeutics company empowering a healthier future. For more information, please visit www.23andMe.com.

Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. All statements, other than statements of historical fact, included or incorporated in this press release, including statements regarding 23andMe's products, strategy, product development and launches, the successful commercialization and market acceptance of new products and objectives of management, are forward-looking statements. The words "believes," "anticipates," "estimates," "plans," "expects," "intends," "may," "could," "should," "potential," "likely," "projects," "predicts," "continue," "will," "schedule," and "would" or, in each case, their negative or other variations or comparable terminology, are intended to identify forward-looking statements, although not all forward-looking statements contain these identifying words. These forward-looking statements are predictions based on 23andMe's current expectations and projections about future events and various assumptions. 23andMe cannot guarantee that it will actually achieve the plans, intentions, or expectations disclosed in its forward-looking statements and you should not place undue reliance on 23andMe's forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve a number of risks, uncertainties (many of which are beyond the control of 23andMe), or other assumptions that may cause actual results or performance to differ materially from those expressed or implied by these forward-looking statements. The forward-looking statements contained herein are also subject generally to other risks and uncertainties that are described from time to time in the Company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission, including under Item 1A, "Risk Factors" in the Company's most recent Annual Report on Form 10-K, as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and as revised and updated by our Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q and Current Reports on Form 8-K. The statements made herein are made as of the date of this press release and, except as may be required by law, 23andMe undertakes no obligation to update them, whether as a result of new information, developments, or otherwise.

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