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Case Study

Pinpointing the Collins Irish Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland

www.irishorigenes.com



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INTRODUCTION

A simple painless commercial ancestral Y chromosome DNA test will potentially provide one with the names of many hundreds of individuals with whom one shares a common male ancestor, but what often perplexes people is how one can match lots of individuals with many different surnames? The answer is quite simple. One's direct medieval male ancestor, the first for example to call himself 'Collins' was living near others with whom he was paternally related but who crucially inherited other surnames like Lynch, Donohoe, O'Mahony, and Crowley. Given that hundreds of years have passed since paternally inherited surnames were first adopted, there will be many descendants of those individuals, some of whom will today undergo commercial ancestral Y-DNA testing. Hence the surnames of one's ancestor's neighbours will be revealed in today's Y-DNA test results.

Surnames in Ireland can still be found concentrated in the areas where they first appeared, or in the area where ones ancestors first settled. One can therefore use census data to determine the origin of the surnames that appear in one's Y-DNA results, identifying an area common to all, and reveal one's '**Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland.**' The paternal ancestral genetic homeland is the small area (usually within a 5-mile radius) where one's ancestors lived for hundreds if not thousands of years. It is the area where one's ancestor first inherited his surname, surrounded by relatives who inherited others. It is the area where ones ancestors left their mark in its monuments, placenames, history, and in the DNA of its current inhabitants. Since modern science can pinpoint a paternal ancestral genetic homeland, it can also be used to confirm it by DNA testing individuals from the pinpointed area.

Notes of caution!

1. Science has demonstrated that each of the estimated 1,500 unique Irish surnames had a single founding ancestor, which is an estimated 1,500 'Adams' from whom anyone with Irish paternal ancestry (and with one of those unique surnames) can trace direct descent. But science has also demonstrated that only 50% of individuals with a unique Irish surname will be related to their surnames founding ancestor (*the surname-Adam*), the other 50% of males will have an association that has arisen due to 'non-paternal events,' usually a result of adoptions or maternal transfer of the surname.
2. Often people are looking for their DNA results to trace back to a specific area. One must remember that the results typically reflect one's ancestor's neighbours from around 1,000 years ago. As a result, if one's Irish paternal ancestor was descended from a Viking raider, Norman, or Plantation settler, then one's Y-DNA results may reflect earlier English, Welsh, French, and possibly Scandinavian origin. One must approach this process with an open mind!

dominated by Irish surnames and individuals with earliest recorded links with Ireland, see **Figures 1 and 2**.

The Collins Surname in Ireland

Collins is a common surname in Ireland. The 1911 census of Ireland revealed over 13,000 individuals named Collins. Distribution mapping reveals that those individuals were not distributed evenly throughout Ireland, but concentrate within specific counties, see **Figure 3**. Since surnames arose in an agricultural based society, farmers with each surname can still be found concentrated in the area where their surname first appeared, or in the area where one's ancestors first settled. An examination of the distribution of farmers named Collins (male, heads of household in 1901) reveals that they were not distributed evenly throughout Ireland, but concentrated in at least seventeen specific locations, see **Figure 4**. This indicated that there were potentially seventeen unrelated (genetically distinct) Collins clans, one of whom, as revealed by the Y-DNA test results, Mr. Collins shares common paternal ancestry with.

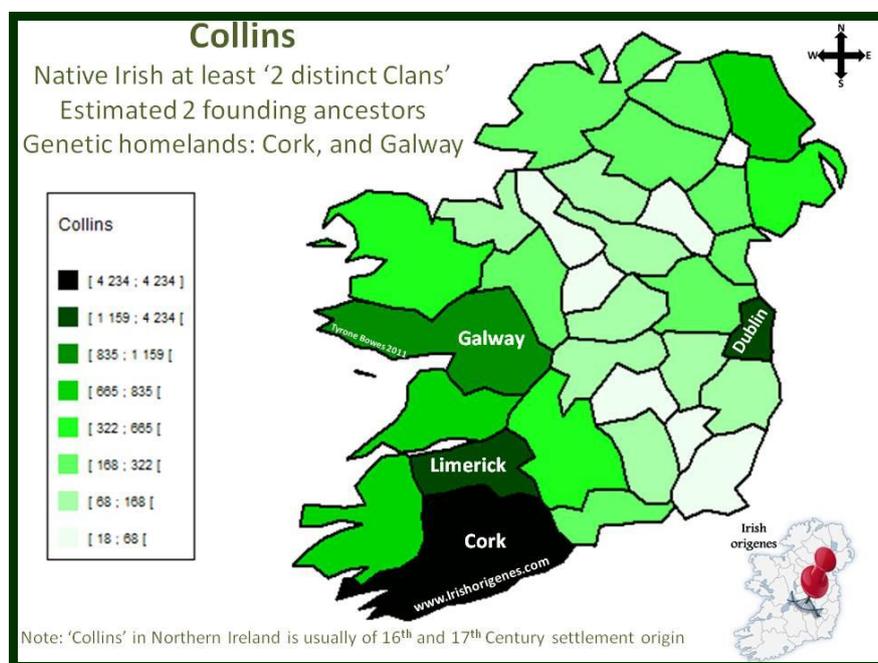


Figure 3: Distribution mapping of the Collins surname in Ireland. Distribution mapping of all individuals named Collins in 1911 reveals that the surname was not distributed evenly throughout Ireland but concentrates in specific counties. Image taken from the Irish Surnames database, free to view <https://www.irishorigenes.com/surnames-database>.

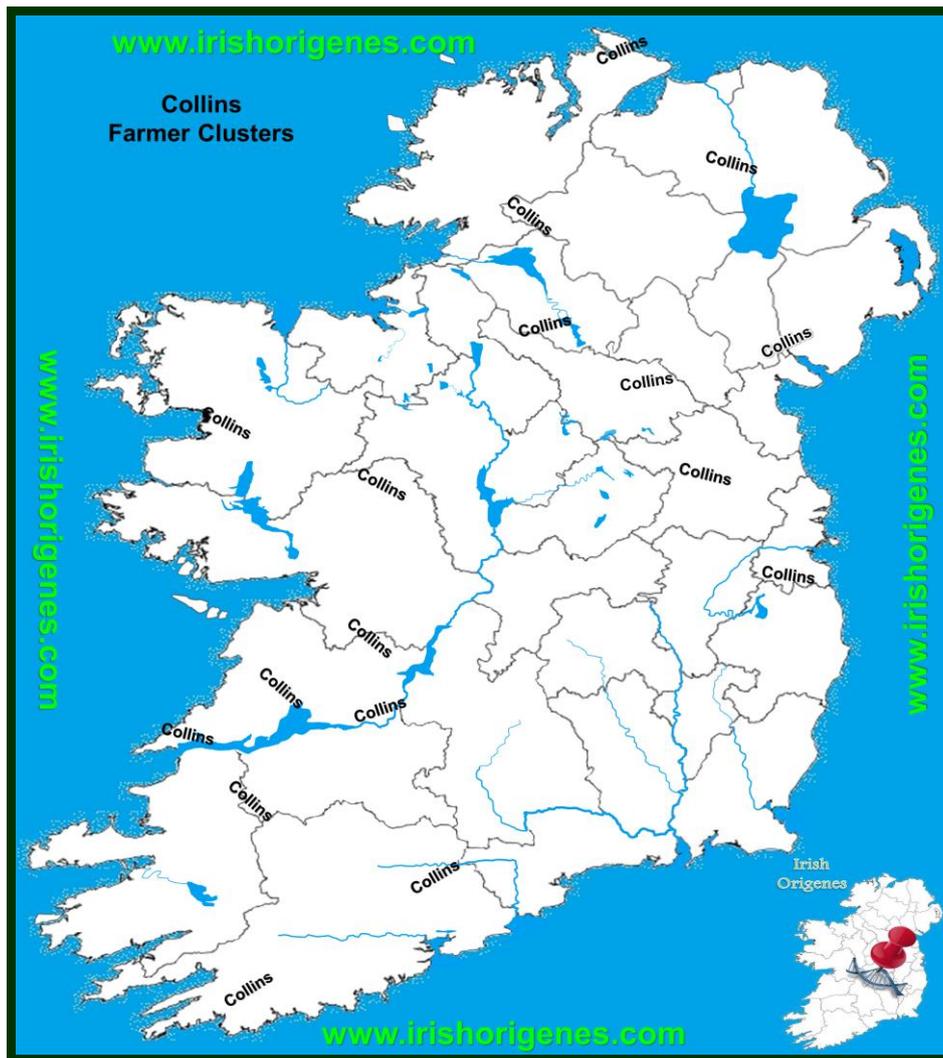


Figure 4: The Collins farming communities. An examination of the distribution of farmers named 'Collins' in early census data revealed at least seventeen distinct groups within Ireland. Each surname is positioned in the location where farmers (male/heads of household) with that surname concentrate in early census data. The most common spelling is detailed in each location. Surnames are positioned as they appear on the Irish Origenes Medieval Surnames map <https://www.origenesmaps.com/maps/medieval-surnames-ireland>. A surname search function is available at <https://analysis.irishorigenes.com/surnames>.

A Paternal Ancestral link with Southwest Ireland

The method of using genetic surname matches as revealed by commercial ancestral Y-DNA testing to pinpoint one's paternal ancestral genetic homeland works by exploiting the link between the Y chromosome, surname, and land, which are typically passed from father to son through the generations. In the absence of a link to the land the process becomes more challenging. The link with the land is greatest among the farming community, and since farmers can still be found farming the lands where their ancestor lived when he first inherited his surname, or where one's ancestor first settled within Ireland, one can plot where farmers with the surnames that appear in one's Y-DNA results originate and identify an area common to all. This means, for example, that upon Y-DNA testing a Collins male from County Donegal will be a genetic match to males named Doherty, Gallagher, and McGee; surnames associated with Northwest Ireland. In contrast, a Collins male from County Clare will

be a Y-DNA genetic match to individuals named O'Brien, McNamara, Fogarty, and Hogan, surnames associated with Southwest Ireland.

An examination of the test subject's Y-DNA results reveal that the Collins, Lynch, Donohoe, Crowley, and O'Mahony surnames appear as his *closest and most frequent* Y-DNA matches, see **Figure 2**. Overlay mapping reveals that the Collins, Lynch, Donohoe, Crowley, and O'Mahony surnames crucially only occur together within Southwest Ireland, see **Figure 5**. An examination of the surnames associated with Southwest Ireland reveals the Collins surname surrounded by many of the surnames that appear among the test subject's closest recurring Y-DNA matches, see **Figures 2 and 6**.

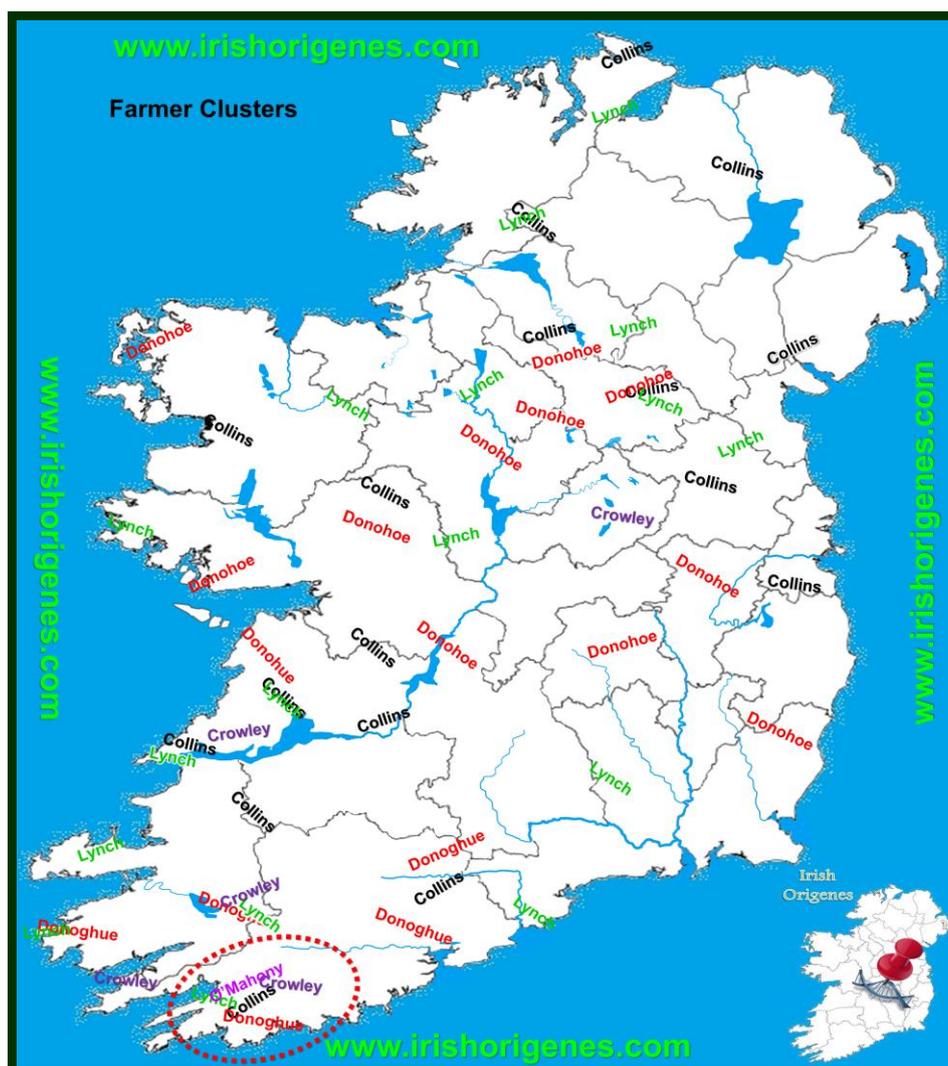


Figure 5: Distribution mapping reveals a paternal origin within Southwest Ireland. Commercial Y-DNA testing reveals that the Collins, Lynch, Donohoe, Crowley, and O'Mahony surnames appear as his closest and most frequent matches, and that those surnames arose among a tribal group of Gaelic Irish males living in a specific part of Ireland. Distribution mapping of farmers named Collins, Lynch, Donohoe, Crowley, and O'Mahony reveal that they crucially only occur together within Southwest Ireland (**red broken circle**). Each surname is positioned in the location where farmers with that surname concentrate in early census data. The most common spelling is detailed in each location. Detail taken from the Irish Origenes Medieval Surnames map free to view at <https://www.origenesmaps.com/maps/medieval-surnames-ireland>. Surname search function available at <https://analysis.irishorigenes.com/surnames>.

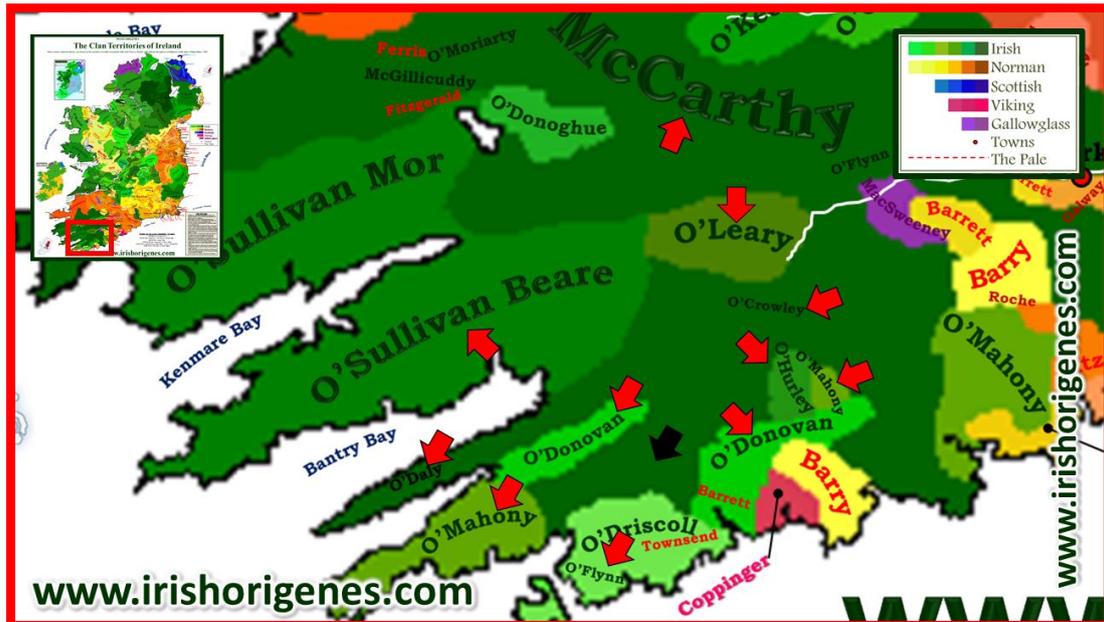


Figure 7: The Clan Territories of Southwest Ireland. The Irish Origenes Clan Territories map reveals that the test subject's paternal Collins ancestors (**black arrow**) lived in an area dominated by Gaelic Irish clans, almost all of whom (**red arrows**) appear as Y-DNA genetic relatives. The clan territories map was reconstructed based on castle locations and their historically associated clans and families, free to view at <https://www.origenesmaps.com/maps/clan-territories-ireland>.

Mr. Collins Irish Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland

Early census data reveals that farmers named Collins concentrated in the land that lies just north of Skibbereen town in Southwest Cork in the far southwest of Ireland, and it is there that his Irish Paternal Genetic Homeland is to be found, see **Figure 8**. It was there that the test subject's paternal ancestor lived when he first took the 'Uí Choileáin' (Collins) surname an estimated 1,000 years ago, see **Figure 8**. His Collins ancestor lived surrounded by relatives who would take other surnames like Lynch, Donohoe, Crowley, O'Mahony, McCarthy, and O'Sullivan among many others, see **Figure 8**. When one's ancestors have lived in an area for a long time then one will often find evidence of their ancestral links with that area in its castles and placenames. An examination of the surrounding area reveals Coorycullane (*Cuar Uí Choileáin*) Townland to the northeast on the outskirts of Dunmanway town, see **Figures 8** and **9**. Townlands are Ireland's smallest geographical unit of land division, with the entire island divided into approximately 64,000 townlands, many of which pre-date the Norman invasion (1169AD) and are named after the clans and families that lived there. The townland of Coorycullane (*Cuar Uí Choileáin*) may mark the precise original origin of the test subject's Collins ancestors prior to the upheaval of the Norman and later 17th Century plantation settlements. The test subject's paternal ancestors will also have left evidence of their ancestral connection with this area in its history, and in the DNA of Collins who still live and farm there.



Figure 8: Mr. Collins Irish Paternal Ancestral Genetic Homeland. The test subject's Irish paternal ancestral genetic homeland (**orange broken circle**) lies in the farmland just north of Skibbereen town in Southwest County Cork. It is there that farmers named Collins concentrated in early census data. His paternal ancestor lived among a tribal group of Gaelic Irish males among whom arose other surnames like Lynch, Donohoe, Crowley, O'Mahony, McCarthy, and O'Sullivan among many others. An examination of the surrounding area reveals the townland of 'Coorycullane (Cuar Uí Choileáin)' which may mark the precise origin of the test subject's paternal ancestors prior to the upheavals caused by the Norman and later 16th Century Plantation conquests/settlements. The test subject's paternal ancestors will also have left evidence of their ancestral links with this area in the history of this location and in the DNA of the current inhabitants.



Figure 9: Coorycullane (Cuar Uí Choileáin) Townland just north of Dunmanway town.

Ancient Britons

Commercial ancestral Y-DNA testing and research at Irish Origenes has revealed that the modern Irish males are a mixed bunch descended from Neolithic farmers, Celts (Ancient Britons and refuge Gauls), Vikings, Normans, and 16th Century Plantation settlers, see **Figure 10**. The test subject's M-269 Haplogroup, together with his more distant Y-DNA matches (at the 25 and 12-marker levels) which are a diverse mix of Irish, Scottish, Welsh, English, and Mainland European surnames, indicate that his

paternal ancestors were Brythonic Celts whose Y-DNA genetic signature dominates both Britain and Ireland. The test subject is descended from Central European Celts who began arriving in Ireland in waves from around 800BC.

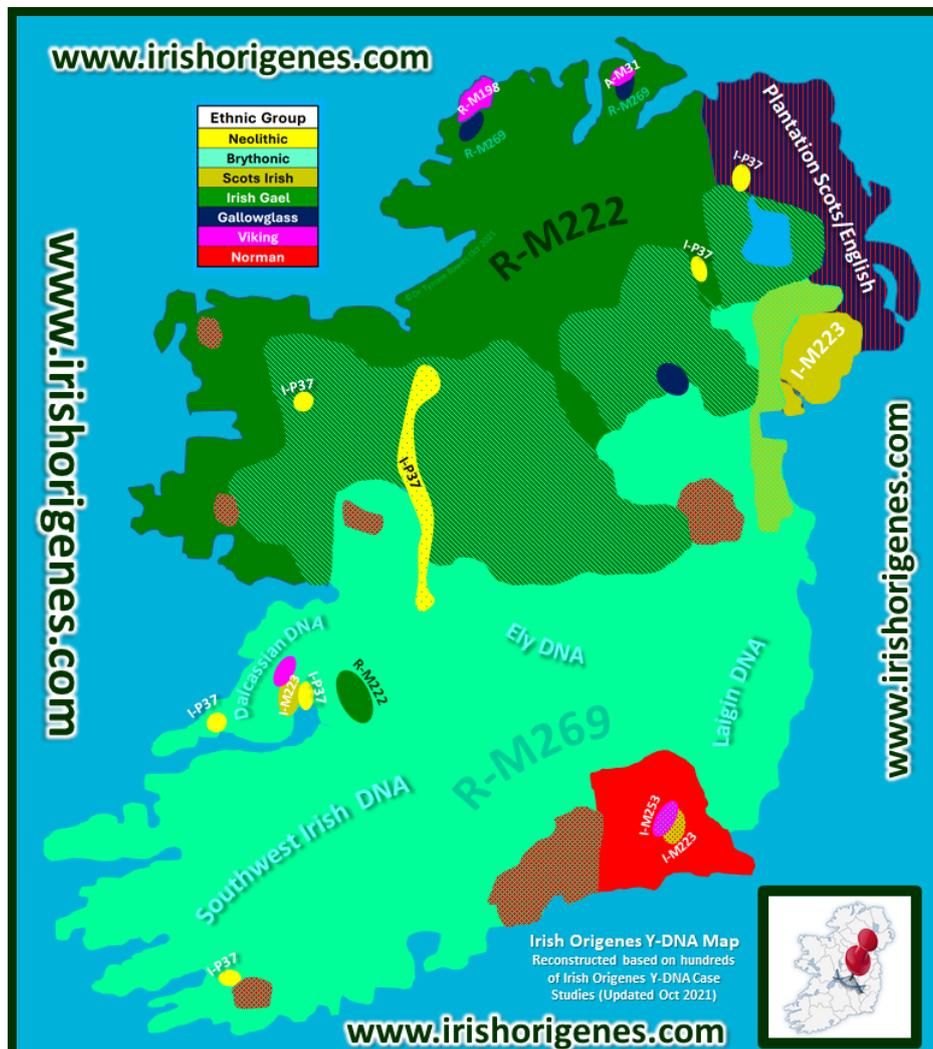


Figure 10: The Irish Origenes Y-DNA Map of Ireland. Y-DNA Case Studies at Irish Origenes reveals an ethnicity map of Ireland. The test subject's paternal ancestors were descended from Brythonic Celts whose Y-DNA signature dominates Southern Ireland.

How to confirm the Collins Genetic Homeland

One must keep in mind that this is a scientific 'DNA' approach. The DNA does not lie, and a simple painless commercial ancestral Y-DNA test of males named Collins who farm the land between Skibbereen and Dunmanway in Southwest Cork would confirm the ancestral link to that location.

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