

# The Ancestor Chain

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Dedicated to

Narby Krimsnatch

"Best of 56"

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## INTRODUCTION

You and I have had, without question, direct line relatives living many thousands of years ago...else we could not be here today. Genealogical studies can sometimes trace your family roots, but only for a few generations.

This narrative is about our common ancestors of long ago. Each of these tales is accurate to the living conditions in its calendar time. Locations, historical events and maps are genuine. Names of notable people are true to historical records. Myths of each period correspond to the thinking of that point in time. Archeology represented is based on current studies.

Follow these ten accounts then as they describe possible activities of your ancestors, striving to survive in their personal segment of history. Your forbearers actually lived such tumultuous times.

Their survival brought you to life.

Willie Gaard

Baldwinsville, NY

2013

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**One**

**[Ru](#)**

**[The First Marker](#)**

## 50,000 B.C.

Muk slept fitfully. He was lying on his left side in the tiny shallow depression of the limestone plateau. It was his bed. His torso was pasted by his own drying blood to the grass bedding beneath his body.

A light flashed onto his face. Suddenly he was wide awake. He blinked repeatedly. The round hot orb of the day was casting brilliant sunlight directly into his eyes. This blazing orange globe was sitting between the rim of the earth and the dark endless cloud blanket overhead.

Muk tried to turn away from this blinding source of light. His sudden movement forced a hoarse scream from his badly chapped lips. His bellowing shriek channeled a throbbing pain throughout his being. Violent distress immediately flashed through every nerve ending in his body. He fainted.

As the physical agony subsided, Muk slowly drifted back to consciousness. Now he was cautious not to move. His breath came in tiny snorts. Still, as the pain receded, he could only marvel at the light in his eyes! It was so strong it penetrated his closed eyelids. There had been only one other time in his life that he remembered seeing, for just a moment, the hot burning fire that warmed the day. He knew that the round fire slowly passed overhead every day. It somehow created the day.

He remembered that once, many uncountable moons ago, an old muk using sign language, had told the tribe about this hot bright orb from an earlier time. The old tribesman motioned that one day thick gray clouds had come to hide the hot orb. The clouds would not go away. It had been the work of some strange evil god.

For every day of this muk's life that gray blanket had filled the air above his head. Even a rare ash filled rain did not diminish the dreary high barrier between sun and earth. Just now the orb no longer pressed his eyes shut. It had climbed over the gray clouds and into the upper sky.

Dimly Muk recalled the source of the agony caused by his movement. His leg and foot were crushed. A bone with sharp edges was sticking through his skin just above his knee. A great animal that they were hunting had suddenly turned and trampled him. Old Muk and Young Muk must have carried him to his dream spot on the limestone rock. Muk could not remember. He woke there one sun time ago...or was it longer?

Once, Young Muk had come by with some pulled fresh grass to soften the place where he lay. An oola had laid part of a roasted snake near his hand. It was his only food but he dared not make the stretch movement to reach for it. The pain of stirring any part of his body was too great.

The tribe knew Muk would soon die. Early on, he had tried to pull the jagged bone out of his body. The violent stabbing pain from his pull immediately drove Muk into a death sleep. Since that one attempt to cure himself, he was only sometimes awake. Now he breathed quietly, afraid to move at all... even while insects feasted on his festering open wound. Muk dared not lift his head to see them. It didn't matter, except that, if he could catch any of them, then he would have something more to eat, maybe even a little liquid for his swollen tongue.

Daily survival was more than difficult for the Muk tribe. It was a constant challenge to stay alive. Game was always scarce. Many seasons of overcast had reduced vegetation to almost nothing. Animals had little to eat. The oolas could not find edible roots or fruits. Clan Muk was on the edge of extinction almost every day. The oasis, which was their home, was rapidly failing from years of drought. The last date palm tree no longer bore fruit. Their bubbling water source, a spring, was

almost dry.

“Move,” Old Muk shouted in a guttural grunt with arms waving and a shoulder shrug.

“What?” Hork, the tracker of animals responded. He was surprised. Old Muk seldom spoke any words. The tribe mostly communicated with head and hand movements and occasional grunts. This little group of humans, living in the dawn of mankind, had no more than an eighty word vocabulary.

“Move,” Old Muk repeated the command. He pointed downstream of the trickle of water running from the spring. His order meant traveling in the direction where the dim light of the day started. Some long dead male muks had indicated that this journey would take them to a bigger water flow. That water course moved north. There were legends of a very big water flow in that direction.

Yet all knew that some of the tribe would die on such a journey. It was recognized that there was no food to be had along this rocky defile. These primitive people had no way to preserve food. Each day was a test to find enough nourishment to survive until the next day. Even the bravest living muk had never gone more than a half day’s journey down the stream flow. And the ooolas almost never strayed out of sight of the encampment. Their little oasis, with a spring to create the stream, was the entire world of Clan Muk. It had been so for generations. Moving away was unthinkable. Change was always to be feared.

Old Muk stood. He picked up a small rock and smashed it into one that was bigger. This time the sound got the attention of all the ooolas and their offspring. “Move!” There was anger in his shout. He started out. No one dared oppose him. The ooolas gathered their skinning tools, the fire-starter and the few offspring too young to walk. There were no blankets or other possessions to bring. They had no clothes.

The Muk Clan followed Old Muk. In the countless ages of this clan’s existence they had migrated many times. Still, this was the first move for every currently living clan member. The oasis had been a good home. To move away from it seemed almost impossible.

The Muk Clan of early man was typical of the time. Short, stocky, very hairy and dark skinned. Life at the most, rarely exceeded forty years. Few males, muks, and none of the females, ooolas, had names. Only Hork, the best hunter in the clan, was the exception in this tribe. He had a name. The ooolas, among themselves, identified each other and their children by sounds unrecognized by the males. In only a hundred or so generations this would all change. Everyone would have a name.

The trip became three days of exhaustive climbing over large rocks and down steep defiles. Along the way there was nothing that they could find to eat. One of the youngest offspring died ... his ooola had no milk. Another ooola gave birth on the second day of the trip. No one stopped to help her with the birth. It was not the way of the Muk Clan to do so. Alone, she caught up to the group the next afternoon.

Finally, the group arrived at a large river. On its muddy banks they immediately found an abundance of food in the form of clams. Greedily, all but the youngest ate with vigor. Eventually the clams filled their bellies. Most could not remember a time when they could simply eat no more. Two of the clan, though full, just kept on eating, but then returned the chewed clams from their stomachs back to the mud. With full stomachs, the other clan members sat and laughed at the gluttons. Laughter was a rare sensation. At the dawn of mankind humans seldom had any occasion to enjoy life.

Those ooola mothers with weaned, yet tiny offspring began chewing clams into mush for their small children. Old Muk, who had almost no teeth left in his mouth, could not bite the clams. He found small clams and swallowed them whole. His first ooola, from his youth, chewed the larger, meatier shellfish for him and transferred the gruel to his mouth. For many days Clan Muk feasted on clams.

On a new day, Hork entered the muddy river water with a spear. He snagged a large fish. The ooolas roasted it over hot coals. Again, the clan feasted. Only Hork was able to catch fish. His quickness with his spear could not be matched. All the young muks tried to imitate Hork, but without success.

Another day, as Hork fished in almost waste deep water, the children watched squatting and playing in ankle deep mud. Suddenly one of the older boys pointed to Hork and screamed, "Snake!" The large crocodile caught Hork before he could even turn to look. Most of Clan Muk saw the fight in the water and heard Hork's screams. Now there was only a bloody pool in the river. None had ever seen an animal like that. They turned to Old Muk for guidance.

He said, "Stay away water."

Two nights later there was a horrible tumult in the camp. Everyone woke. From the dim light of the night fire they watched as a croc carried a screaming half grown muk into the water. The rocks they threw at the beast did nothing at all. A flint pointed spear just bounced off the animal's tough hide.

All huddled close to the firelight to await the dawn. Every night sound terrified them. In the morning Old Muk again banged two rocks together for attention. He said, "Bad place! Move," and he pointed downstream. Clams would no longer be collected from this mud bank.

The little group of kinfolk began walking together in fear, almost clinging to one another in a compact circle. They watched everywhere for the monster that had taken Hork and the young muk to their doom. Only the ooola who had birthed the lost muk looked back. Then she too moved on. He was forgotten. She had other little muks and ooolas.

Their journey became terrifying. Now, they recognized there were many of the monsters watching them, with only eyes above the water. Death was floating silently in the river.

Around a small bend the mud turned to sand, here rested more crocodiles than any muk or ooola had fingers. The band of humans shrunk back at the sight. Their leader, Old Muk, held his ground. He had fought many beasts, some even bigger than these strange animals. A few of the crocs sensed that Old Muk was there, but they did not move.

Suddenly Old Muk yelled at the top of his lungs and took small steps towards the crocs. He alarmed everyone, both human and crocodile. The nearest of the beasts turned and fled towards the water. Seeing that the crocs could be frightened, the tribe began screaming with Old Muk and moved slowly forward as a group. Every crocodile turned, waddled away and finally splashed into the water. A hunter's cheer of triumph rose from the clan. Fear was now replaced with caution.

As the Muk Clan moved forward, they found a plethora of clams. Then a real treasure...eggs! Old Muk watched as the ooolas gathered the rich bounty. This was good. Most important, he had learned that the crocs could move very fast on land. Their short legs also told him that they could not climb. The tribe would be safe on higher ground. When the egg gathering was completed, Old Muk again crashed two stones together. With his back to the river he pointed up the hilly bank and said, "Move."

Reaching the crest of the high embankment was as difficult as the descent to the river a few days earlier. These early humans were of very limited stature. The biggest of the clan, strangely an ooola, was barely over five feet tall. The way was steep and the vegetation thick with thorn bushes. At the top the land was a barren plain. It was all rock and light brown sand away from the river as far as anyone could see. The water gave life, but only close to its banks.

The group followed the ridge and the flow of the river northward, walking further away from their old oasis. The river, and often the adjoining sandbanks filled with crocs, was almost always in sight. Finally they came to a bluff covered with trees. The ooolas immediately recognized some living date palms. A wide stream was flowing sharply down to the river. Here there were no clams to be found ... but also no crocs. There would probably be birds and game for the muks to hunt in this small forest. The stream to the river flowed swiftly and was a barrier too deep to cross. But the tribe, led by Old Muk, had found a new home.

Life suddenly became as gentle as the tribe had ever experienced. Existence had always been a daily fight for food. Now food was plentiful. The crocodiles could not reach them. No spoor of dangerous large animals was found, not even the deadly lion.

One morning two young muks were at the stream bank. A loud squawk from across the water made the young boys look up. There they saw a terrifying site. It was someone like them, a human, but not of the Clan Muk. In this primitive world of early man, the true Homo sapiens groups rarely, if ever, encountered another human tribe. The land was very big and the humanoid branch numbered less than ten thousand beings. They roamed widely, always in small groups. Each little clan exhausted the plant and animal food supply that lay before them. Then they moved forward. Meetings with other humans were rare. Still, this extraordinary event did occasionally happen.

The small muks ran back to their ooolas screaming, "New muk, new muk!" They waved their arms toward the stream. The boys had seen babies born and heard the ooolas call them 'new muks.' Now they used these same words. It was as close as their limited language allowed them to describe the sight they had just seen.

All the ooolas, followed by their children ran to the stream. All expected to see a newborn. There was nothing to see! The bank, opposite of where the boys had been playing, showed only the normal trees, some green knotty reeds and the rocky outcrops of the oasis. Several of the ooolas mouthed angry sounds at the two small muks. One of the adult ooolas cuffed them both. Three little ooolas, of the same age as the muks, giggled at the boys' misery.

Days later, an almost full grown ooola, also saw what the boys had observed. She too ran back to the group screaming, "New Muk!" She also made motions to indicate that this was a full grown human.

This time the entire clan came to the impassable stream. They saw indeed, another muk, but not a member of Clan Muk. The grown ooolas noticed a difference, slight certainly, but yet a difference. The stranger had a somewhat lighter skin color and much less hair on his body. The three adult muks were busy waving their flint tipped spears and shouting at the intruder. The ooolas had none of this. They were more interested in the appearance of the male. Now, almost daily, this incident was repeated. Then, one day the newcomer did not appear. Each new sun time Clan Muk returned to the stream bank. But now, the opposite bank was always empty.

Drought, a concept not understood by the clan, continued to suffer the land. It was severe. The gray cloud covering the sky produced almost no moisture. Plant life continued to wither. Day after day the remaining three adult muks of the clan, returned from the hunt empty handed, Clan Muk would need to move again soon, Old Muk knew that. His plan was cancelled the very next

morning.

The stranger had appeared again. Fear rippled through the group. This time he was on their side of the stream! The muk men howled and waved their spears as they had done before but did not advance towards the outsider. He too kept to a safe distance beyond spear and rock throwing range. He yelled sounds that none understood. No one moved. Finally, he reached down into the tall grass at his feet and held up game he had killed, many rabbits and two large rats. Next, he walked away leaving his gift. There was sufficient sustenance now for the entire tribe. They would live another day.

More game was left in that same spot almost every day. At times the stranger was there, other days they did not see him. Clan Muk no longer had great fear of him or screamed at him. Yet, all stayed safely beyond the range of a thrown spear.

Old Muk and his two grown muk men could not locate the source of the animals that the stranger brought to them each morning. Where was the game coming from? Old Muk realized he had to bring this person closer to his tribe to hunt with him. How? Originality was not part of the early human thought process. The only exception was trapping and hunting. Old Muk needed to trap the stranger.

Early the next morning, with barely enough light to see the pathways, Old Muk grabbed a young ooola who had only recently freshened. She thought that Old Muk wished to take her so she stretched out on her bed of reeds. The clan leader shook his head to say 'No' and pulled her to her feet. She was confused. He made her walk, in the breaking dawn to the spot where the stranger left his daily presents. She knew the place. All the ooolas knew it. They went there every day to collect his donations of food. Among themselves they admired the skills of this strangely different provider.

At the location of the food drop Old Muk pushed the ooola down. He signed strongly for her to stay in this place. She began to tremble and wail. She understood! She was to be given to the stranger. Her primitive fear was that the hunter might eat her.

Old Muk could not describe what he had done or why he had done it. The clan did not have enough language for that. When, at last, there was sufficient light, the tribe could see the food gifts were in their usual spot. The stranger was not to be seen. Also one of the younger ooolas was missing.

The stranger failed to appear for the next two days. On the third day the tribe heard his cry from afar. As he came into sight, they could see the missing ooola following behind. She carried a heavy burden across her back. The three hunters in the clan immediately recognized what she carried. It was a fat gazelle. This was a rare catch.

At the trading point she was allowed to drop the animal. It was fresh. All could see blood from the animal smeared across on her back. With the heavy weight gone, she could raise her head. She saw her tribe the short distance away and immediately started to run towards them. In two steps the stranger caught her by her trailing long black hair, pulled her back, and then slammed her forward into the ground. With one foot on her back he raised his spear and howled, warning the tribe to stay back. No one moved.

The stranger brought the ooola roughly to her feet. Her face was bruised from the fall. Blood trickled from her nose. He violently turned her around onto the path they had come, prodding her to move with his spear. She was not to return to the clan. Old Muk knew inwardly that he had made a good trade. The ooola did not matter. The tribe would eat well for many days. The stranger

might return again.

Days passed. The stranger, the ooola and more gifts did not appear. It had never occurred, in the dim minds of the muk hunters, to try to follow the stranger's trail. Then, the same two boys, who had first seen the stranger, saw him again. They alerted the tribe as before. This time both the stranger and the ooola were on the opposite side of the stream. Old Muk, for the first time, realized that there had to be a way to cross over to the other side. His clan had yet to find it. Perhaps that side contained abundant game. The ooola and the stranger finally turned and walked into the trees.

Once again, many gray days followed by dark moonless starless nights passed. The stranger and the ooola were all but forgotten. One morning a yell came from the field near the food drop. It was the sound of the stranger. Clan Muk was starving again and ran out to greet him...yet keeping a spear throw distance from the man.

Both the stranger and the ooola bore large game on their backs, unloading them in the usual spot. This time the ooola did not run. She held up a clutch of rabbits and waved them at the clan. With her other hand she took the stranger's arm. Then both of them took a step forward. Immediately Clan Muk, moving in unison, took a step back. Again she waved the rabbits before moving another step forward. Old Muk held his ground this time. The two came closer. Finally the ooola reached Old Muk and handed him the rabbits. She pointed to the clan leader and said to the stranger, "Muk." In turn she pointed to the stranger and said, "Ru." Lastly she waved at the females crouched behind the three muk men, and said, "Ooola." The tribe had no way to yet describe more than one of anything. All the females were simply 'Ooola.'

Old Muk raised his fist to strike this impertinent ooola. She had spoken directly to him...without permission. She had looked openly at him. Her eyes had not been downcast in the customary subservient position. Old Muk did not strike. He saw the newcomer tense and slightly raise his spear. *Best not to fight*, he thought. The clan needed this man Ru to ward off starvation. Old Muk, the still growing Young Muk and the third muk all needed help to hunt. Ru would help. Tribal custom was not that important.

Ru had no language skills at all. He could make sounds, but did not understand any words of the muks or the ooolas. Ru and the three muks communicated with body movements and hand signals. Since he had made growling noises towards the very frightened ooola given him by the Muk Clan, she in turn had taken the sound and made it his name, Ru. He was intelligent and quickly understood that she was 'Ooola.' Still, he could not manipulate his tongue to make the sound of her name. His temper was always short. He guided her to his needs with sign language or beatings.

Clan Muk and Ru learned much from each other. Ru taught them to make snares. He showed them how to bait a trap with some part of a decomposing animal they had previously caught. There was now excess food to do this. Clan Muk began to put on weight. The ooolas, secretly to themselves, said Old Muk's swelling belly meant he would soon bear a new muk.

Ru, without language, could not explain how he grew up or where his tribe wandered. Never-the-less, the muks and ooolas marveled at his hunting skills. Ru, in turn, also learned new things. The muks could make better spears than those which he had. They painted their bodies with juice from certain plants to ward off insects. He found he could mate with any ooola. Whenever he felt the urge, one of the ooolas would eagerly comply.

The ooolas noticed that Ru often made a sign that seemed meaningless. He would take the thumb and first finger of his left hand and squeeze his nose shut for just an instant. It was a sweeping

motion that happened at random. It did not appear to convey any meaning they understood. The ooolas mirrored the squeeze of nostrils to Ru. He ignored it. The muks did not notice it. It was senseless to all but the newcomer.

Ru settled into clan life with surprising ease. He had missed the companionship of other humans. Sign language served all of them well. The long missing clan of his origin never had developed words for objects or actions. That did not matter to the muks. His hunting skill made him wanted by the tribe. Perhaps the ooolas appreciated something more.

One morning Ru was roasting a small pigeon. It was the last food item in camp. He and the muks would need to hunt for game this day. As he held the bird over the fire two very young ooolas raced passed him. The second girl stumbled and fell into the squatting man. He was thrown off balance and fell into the hot coals, searing his mating tool. His temper flared. He quickly caught the little ooola. Kneeling over her, he began pummeling her with his fists.

The little ooola's mother was only a short distance away scraping a gazelle pelt with her flint knife. She saw that her child was being savagely attacked. Without thought she stood, stepped to the hunched over man and stabbed him in the neck. The sharp flint severed his carotid artery. Ru's life bled away in just a few minutes. The child also died.

The tribe was not shocked, nor did it mourn. Occasionally someone in the tribe died or was killed. Usually it was an ooola or a child. It just happened. It was just part of their existence. There was no punishment or remorse for a killing.

Clan Muk was no longer short of meat. They feasted for several days.

The three muk hunters left the clan in search of new game. The wildlife in the area was again near exhaustion. They could roam only a half day's journey before turning around. If night separated them from the rest of the clan there was great fear they might never find their way back. Such was the primitive tribe's thinking.

The search for food was almost useless without Ru. Somehow he had been able to see game where they found only dried grass and sand. Still, on the second day of a new hunt, Young Muk did find the droppings of a large animal. Tracks pointed to a box canyon that they knew. They ran to it. Muk and Old Muk guarded the narrow entrance. Young Muk was sent through a narrow defile at the back to force the animal out to the two stronger hunters. Ru had taught them this trick.

Muk and Old Muk heard the other hunter yell to startle the animal. Suddenly, the flushed beast came roaring out of the narrow canyon opening. It had horns. It was the largest beast they had ever seen. The brown juggernaut swerved towards Old Muk. He threw his spear into the animal's flank just as Muk closed from the opposite side. The pain from the spear caused the animal to turn. Muk was too close. He tripped backwards and was trampled.

Old Muk and Young Muk carried the unconscious man back to camp and placed him in his shallow sleeping place in the sandstone rock. He would be left there to die. Burial was not yet a clan custom. So too, using the flesh of a tribe member for food was taboo. They would simply leave Muk where he lay.

The next daylight, Old Muk banged two rocks together for attention. "Move," he shouted. With sign language he indicated that they would cross the stream where Ru first appeared. He pointed to the ooola, that he had traded to Ru. She was now obviously with child. She was to lead them to the crossing point. Old Muk was sure that much game and plant food existed on the other side. If he was wrong, if it was barren, his group was doomed.

As the tribe was leaving, Muk awoke or perhaps regained consciousness. He understood what they were doing. It was the way of Clan Muk.

As they departed, one of the little ooolas wistfully looked back at Muk. She turned and ran to him as he lay, almost immobile, on his death bed. This confused Muk. She was the small ooola that he most disliked. He had often cuffed her, just to move her out of his path. Sometimes he had enjoyed hitting her for no reason at all. Now she approached him, but stayed out of arms reach.

For just a moment she looked at him, her eyes sparkling. Then she reached down, picked up the snake portion that her mother had left as food for Muk. She hurled it away, far beyond his grasp.

Done, she ran to catch up with the departing tribe.

### ***A BIT OF HISTORY***

***The first marker, Haplogroup R-1B (M168), was present in some of the signature groups working their way north out of Africa fifty to seventy thousand years ago.***

## **Two**

### **[The Genographic Project](#)**

Christopher puzzled as he watched his father. Michael was sitting at his desk in the family room swabbing his mouth with something like a tiny toothbrush.

“Dad, what are you doing?”

Michael held up his index finger to Chris, as a signal to wait. He looked at his watch, swabbed his cheek a few more turns, then he took the little brush out of his mouth and put it into a tiny canister.

“What is that?” Chris again inquired.

Michael smiled. Teenagers didn’t often talk to their parents. “I’m sending a sample of my DNA off to a lab to be analyzed.”

Chris was suddenly worried. “You mean they are checking you for some sort of disease?”

“No, Chris. This is part of something called the Genographic Project. It is a research scheme. It will give us an idea about where our ancestors came from.”

“We already know that dad. They came from Denmark and Germany and Ireland and maybe a few more places. Every kid does a family tree in school. I think I made one years ago in the third grade.”

“Chris, this is not about our relatives that came from Europe a few generations ago. This is a deep, deep ancestry study. I expect we will find out the origins of our relatives hundreds or maybe thousands of years ago.”

“But Dad, we didn’t have any relatives back then!”

Teenagers, Michael thought. "Okay Chris, then how did we all get here?"

"Oh, I see ... I guess"

It was always a joy to see understanding develop; especially in one of his own children. It reminded him of his years as a teacher. As Chris pondered this information, Michael, squeezing his left index finger and thumb, pulled the two digits down over his nose and lightly pinched his nostrils. He sometimes remembered that his father had done the same thing. *Must be something in the family genes*, he briefly mused.

Chris finally said "I guess I get it. Our grandparents had grandparents who had grandparents and so on. So this DNA test will tell us if we are related to someone famous way back, maybe George Washington."

"No."

"Well then..."

"Chris, this will only give us an idea of the physical paths our ancestors followed. All humanity's roots are in Africa. At some point we, I mean our first true human ancestors, came away from the African savanna and colonized the world. As far as we know today, human development began on the African continent."

"So that little swab will tell us if we came from cavemen?"

"I don't think so Chris, but maybe. We'll get results in about a month."

"But Dad how does that work?"

"It's a bit complex. Here, read this little paper. It came with my test kit. It might help explain how this works."

*As human DNA is passed from parents to offspring, most of it is re-combined, and mutated giving rise to all of those characteristics that make each person unique. Some components of our genetic inheritance, however, remain relatively stable over the course of generations. Occasional mutations in these components are easily identified and accumulate in a particular order and at a particular rate so that, compared across a broad spectrum band of DNA samples, they act as kind of a time line. These 'genetic markers' never disappear but are passed on to each generation. Over eons, different populations accumulate their own set of markers.*

Christopher shook his head. "Wow! So we'll find out if we are related to a hairy caveman whacking dinosaurs?"

"Not really." Michael was now just a little annoyed that his son was losing the concept. "I'm pretty sure Chris that way, way back we are all related to what you think of as a caveman. Somehow we had to have a beginning. But then I really don't know how much we will learn about cavemen. I think the results will give us some sort of generalizations about where we, as humans, got started. The test is especially designed to tell us the paths that our particular line of ancestors followed across Africa and Europe, That's long before any of our relatives ever came to this country."

The young man thought this all over. "Will this swab of DNA tell us if we are related to somebody famous?"

"I don't think so Chris... I really don't think so. I'll share the results with you and the rest of the family when I get them."

### Three months later

The week that the Genographic Project results arrived in the mail, was just a few days before Chris arrived home from college for the summer. The first thing the young man did when he came in the door was to raid the refrigerator and eat everything in sight.

"Didn't they feed you in college?" His mother asked. "You look so thin."

"I didn't have much time to eat, mom. I was studying for all those exams." He lied. He had really run out of money, but why worry his mother.

Later, after eating and talking with the family, Chris and his younger brother Matt had time to share together. They were only a year apart in age. Matt was especially interested in the Ancient History course that his older brother had just completed. Their father's DNA test for their ancestry had particularly sparked Matt's curiosity.

"You got an A in Ancient History?" Matt challenged. "You don't get 'A's' in anything as I remember."

"Yup, I got an A. It was the easiest course I've taken so far. In fact, it was so much fun, I may change my major."

Matt grinned. "Did you know that dad is tracing our ancestry with something called the Genographic Project?"

"Yes. Mom told me about that on Facebook. Besides I was home the day dad did the cheek swabbing."

"Well, his results came in the mail a while back. Dad was excited about it. It really doesn't look like that much to me. I made a copy for you with the computer. Here, take a look."

Matt prattled on while Chris scanned the documents.

"Well?" said Matt.

"Well what, little brother."

"I don't know. I guess I just expected more. It's a map, but it is mostly just a flow line. Were our ancestors only nomads? Didn't they ever stop and plant roots some place?"

"Probably did Matt. According to that ancient history course I took, one of the earliest towns that has been ever identified is what we now call Jericho. We got that name from the Bible. I doubt the first settlers ever called it by that name.

"Where the walls came tumbling down..." Matt grinned as he half-sang the words.

"No and yes and maybe."

"Huh?" Matt screwed up his face. "I don't know what you mean."

"This Genographic Project starts us back fifty, maybe seventy thousand years ago in Africa. Back then our ancestors might have lived in caves or were nomads. Archeologists so far found that the oldest known settlement, a place where humans first stayed permanently, was Jericho. That was a long time ago Matt, about 8,000 B.C. One of the genetic markers I see on this report for dad is M89. That means you and I also have that marker because we would have inherited it from dad. Look at it on the map. Jericho is located in what was called The Fertile Crescent. This map just gives us a rough idea about how people wandered. I guess eventually they got tired of moving and found a place to settle where their needs could be met. There was water; food and maybe an economic basis to stop wandering and start a permanent home...create a town. A permanent location made life easier. Jericho, it seems could have been, perhaps, that first town."

"What was the reason to settle there and then start a town?" Matt was now interested.

"Salt probably. Jericho is in a valley where the River Jordan flows from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. People and animals need salt. It also preserves food. Jericho provided that salt. The nomads who became settlers in this new town could trade salt for other necessities. A town meant something brand new... commerce."

"Wow, maybe we had relatives in Jericho."

"Maybe. But also, think Matt...you are the one who is good at numbers. At that time, in 8,000 B.C. there were an estimated 5 million humans alive. They had spread all over the world....even into China and Australia and some had managed to get into North America. But our ancestors, labeled with a new gene called M89 were in the Fertile Crescent."

"How did we get that M89 thing?"

"I have no idea Matt. That was a long time ago."

"How many generations would that be back to then, Chris?"

"Well, at a rate of four generations every 100 years, and ten thousand years, that would be about 400 great grandfathers. So, that means, we could draw a direct connection back through 400 men and you and I might find a male relative in Jericho."

"And women too."

"No Matt. The Y-chromosome markers in the Genographic Project trace only males. We can only trace through males...fathers and grandfathers."

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**Three**

**Pov**

**Jericho 7400 B.C.**

The small settlement of Jericho had been in place for hundreds of years. Its name meant something like 'smell' or 'odor'. Indeed the area did have a very strange aroma. It came, not from the salt collected from the Dead Sea, but from the bitumen dug from the dark merky shallows of

that nearby body of the water. Those two valuable products, salt and bitumen, changed the way of existence for some nomads who had wandered the Fertile Crescent for millennia. For the very first time in the history of mankind there was a permanent settlement. Jericho was not just a temporary encampment, it had developed into a community. It was a town. The number of inhabitants had grown to more than 600.

In Jericho, the townspeople built a wall for protection. Yet the wall often failed to shield the small population from wandering bands of raiders. Violent hunter bands sought the riches of Jericho. A second inner wall had been built for additional protection. This first town of mankind, consisting of small round houses, each made of dried clay, had a double ring of defense.

Those clansmen without strong family ties, a few bonded servants and even fewer slaves, lived between the outer and inner wall. The privileged and their families shared space inside the second fortification. Jericho was often attacked. Sometimes the warring party became exhausted and was driven away before breaching the first wall. At other times raiders broke through the outer wall and were satisfied to pillage the poorer part of Jericho. Occasionally the double walled defense was completely overwhelmed and the entire town was temporarily brought to ruin.

Tog a merchant, was the semi-official leader of Jericho. He was as physically strong as his size indicated. His coal black hair hung half way down to his waist. His skin was an olive brown. A dirty loin cloth somewhat covered him. There was a deep scar on his left cheek which reminded everyone of the terrible fight that, many years ago, had won him his position of authority. His enemies and their kin had also paid a price that day...their lives! He was widely known as a man to be feared.

Tog had many sons. All of them lived inside the second wall. His extended family was the largest in Jericho. That alone made Tog the arbiter of a town of just a few hundred humans. Tog liked his position. He was not a fool...power was good. He conducted his daily life using power.

Tog's women had produced many sons. Daughters were discarded at birth. But, as Tog's sons grew towards manhood, his women produced fewer children. Then, after a time, there came no children at all. A crone, who made spells and hexes, was consulted by the man. She told Tog he needed a younger female to produce more sons. The very next day a trader appeared. He came from the land of the great river far to the south. He wanted to barter for salt. He offered Tog leopard skins and one of his two slaves. In turn he would take all the salt his burros could carry away. Tog had no need for the black male slave, but the young female, perhaps fourteen, caught his eye. It was an omen.

"I will take the animal skins and the female slave for the salt," Tog told the man from the south.

The trader smiled. "You have made yourself a poor bargain Tog. The male is strong. The girl is nothing but a problem. She is insolent and lazy. I am glad to be rid of her."

Tog inquired, "Have you had her a long time?"

"All her life," the trader replied wearily. "She is one of my many daughters. Her name is Lahg."

Tog quickly found that Lahg had been trained by the women of her clan in the special arts of pleasing men. She knew things that Tog's women did not know, and Tog for the very first time, was overjoyed to learn them himself. Just thinking about her brought a smile to his face. In a matter of only two moons young Lahg was installed as First Woman. The other females jealously hated her. Tog commanded that none of his sons could use her. This was a violation of the family custom. But since everyone feared Tog, none of them dared to disobey.

In just a short time, Lahg was obviously with child. Tog was delighted but his women understood something different. In only five moons a full term girl was born. Tog ordered the issue destroyed. His women mocked him behind his back. He had been taken for a fool. After beating Lahg, he questioned her about being with child.

"It was not my fault," she cried. "It was the man who sold me to you. He told me he would kill me if I said anything. Now that I am free of his burden I can give you a son. Let me show you."

Lahg's offering was perhaps no longer possible. Tog's youngest son was now ten seasons old. He wondered drearily if he could sire any more sons. Yet, true to her word, Lahg produced a boy barely a year later. She named him Pov. Tog was overjoyed and rewarded Lahg with soft robes and sparkling gold rings. The other women of his clan raged in jealousy. Not once had Tog gifted any of them for bearing children. They could only think of revenge.

The oldest of Tog's women visited the crone of the hexes and bought poison from her. It worked quickly. The women explained to Tog that the strain of childbirth, on such a young girl, had killed Lahg. Pov, her baby, had been the cause of her death. Tog mourned. He could not forgive his new son for the loss of his beloved Lahg. He directed the woman of the hexes to take his new son and raise him away from his family in the lower part of Jericho. He could not bear to look at the tiny boy.

With the death of Lahg, everyone noticed a gradual change in the man. He drove his many sons relentlessly at the work of panning salt. He organized the Jericho population into forced work parties to raise the town walls another four feet. He became a bitumen tradesman, buying slaves to collect the black sticky gobs of tar. He no longer visited his women. Tog's temper was to be feared. He was a man alone.

Pov grew in the loving care of Kella, the hag, the maker of potions and the giver of hexes. She had been childless and Pov now filled a deep void in her heart. In such a small village it was not easy, but Tog did not see his son again.

Pov was an inquisitive and intelligent child. As he grew, she allowed him to assist her mixing some of the simpler healing potions. She explained what problems they were meant to cure and how they worked. She had him taste and smell the substances in the unmarked containers on the shelf above her pallet. The concept of writing was still many generations into the future. There were no markings to identify the material. She relied on the different shapes of the many jars and unique texture or smell of its contents for identification.

One morning, while Kella was baking a bit of dough for breakfast, the young boy pulled a container from the back of the shelf. He did not recognize the contents. It had a delicate odor that he could not distinguish. As he was about to taste it he called to Kella, "What is this?"

Kella turned, saw what he was holding and screamed at the top of her lungs, "Stop!"

Pov was terrified by the angry screech. He dropped the container and started to wail. Kella had never before yelled at him like that. In turn, Kella was both horrified and relieved. She scooped the crying five year old onto her lap and comforted him.

"Pov," she said, "what you had in your hand was poison. I sell that to the people of Jericho. They use it to kill rats in the food bins. Did you smell it?"

"Yes," came a weak whimpering reply.

"Pov, never forget the smell from that jar. Just a small taste of that powder will kill anything, human or animal. If you had put just a few grains in your mouth you would be dead now."

Pov scuttled more deeply into her arms and cried even more.

Kella had lied to him. It was poison, but not for rats. She sold some of it only once since coming to Jericho...to the woman who had poisoned Lahg.

As Pov grew a little older, he wanted more freedom from Kella. He wished to explore beyond her tiny house situated between the two walls. One cloudless morning he woke early. Kella was snoring. He went outside into the bright dawn sunlight. Urinating at the ditch where townspeople emptied their nightly honey pots, he noticed that the gate through the inner wall was open. He had never been in that part of Jericho. Kella told him he was too young to enter there. She indicated that the upper town was sacred and he was not cleansed. At age seven he already knew not to believe all that adults told him. Pov would find out for himself.

Kella woke suddenly, as if from a nightmare. But she had not been dreaming. Something was wrong...terribly wrong. She saw immediately that Pov was missing. Someone had taken him? No!

At the doorway she saw the town's upper gate was open. Had he disobeyed and gone to the upper part of Jericho? She had warned him that he could not go there, but he was a headstrong boy. Moving as fast as her short legs could carry her, she ran up the hill to the open gate. It was much too late...Tog was there holding Pov's arm tightly clamped in his enormous hairy fist. He saw Kella.

"Is this little runt my son," he asked.

"Yes Tog. I am so sorry. He got away from me. I know I promised that you would never see..."

"Quiet woman! I see Lahg in his face and in his movements. How old is he now and why is he so small?"

"He is in his seventh year Tog. Remember that Lahg was also tiny."

Tog thought for a moment about Lahg and a rare smile came to his face. "The boy pleases me. I will take him back. I am reminded of his mother. Your duty is done women. I will send a gift to you. You have served me well. What do you call him?"

Kella, with breaking heart replied, "I use the name Lahg gave him. I call him Pov."

"He is little, I will call him Runt."

"My name is Pov," the boy cried in a childish scream as he tried to escape Tog's grasp.

Kella was horrified by the boy's reaction. Tog had severely punished others for much less.

Instead, Tog laughed. "Just like your mother, are you boy? She would fight me all the time. It will be a joy to battle with you."

Initially, Pov sorely missed Kella. Yet, life was much sweeter in Tog's house. He was given a fine new pair of sandals. Now that he was no longer barefoot he could run faster. Pov could also eat until he was full. That happened rarely when he had lived with Kella.

Tog enjoyed calling Pov by his new name, Runt. When his women or older sons were present Tog would freely call the boy, 'Runt'.

"My name is Pov," the seven year old would shout with some anger in his voice.

"See, he is spirited, as was his mother." Then Tog would hold his big belly and laugh.

Pov found that his older brothers did not share their father's joy. Out of Tog's hearing they all called him Runt. If he tried to correct them, they would hurt him in ways that would not leave marks on his body. The women equally disliked this issue of the hated Lahg woman.

Pov had a mental quickness that none of his brothers possessed. He was allowed the honor to sit at Tog's foot. Sometimes he would even question some of the reports given Tog by his brothers. As he grew Pov dared to make suggestions and occasionally, but privately, challenge some of his father's directives. His brothers and the women could see the danger. If young Pov became too powerful, he might be made the heir to Tog's property. Siv, the eldest son, would be disinherited. The structure of the clan would change for all the other sons and all of the women.

"We must do something about Pov," Siv told his brothers.

"Kill him!" one suggested.

"How?" Siv asked. "Father will blame us if we do that. Then he will have us killed." At those words the sons all turned and looked at their largest brother. He was called Ox. Only Ox had the physical proportions of his father. Yet he was the slowest of the somewhat dull-witted group of siblings. Ox was Tog's tool of control. If his father ordered it done, Ox would break a man's arm. If a captured raider, now a slave, disobeyed a directive, Ox might be sent to strangle the man. He did everything as Tog commanded, and without passion. His brothers had reason to fear him.

One of the women, Cam by name, serving food to the group of brothers answered Siv's question of 'how to kill Pov?' She whispered quietly in Siv's ear. At first he was going to bat her away. Then Siv's eyes lit up and he listened carefully. He replied noiselessly with a nod and sent her away.

"Brothers," Siv said, "we have a way to rid ourselves of that Runt. Tomorrow we will join our father in the feast of the North Goddess. I will send a special dish to Runt. It will be poisoned. He will die and we will be rid of that open sore the bitch Lahg made for us." The brothers all cheered except Ox. He did not understand.

The next afternoon the feast was held in the small open plaza near the upper gate. None of the small round houses in this early village of mankind was large enough to hold more than a few people.

Siv was careful not to be directly connected to the poisoning process. He had the woman, Cam, instruct a new serving girl to present a special lamb dish directly to Pov. She was told to say to Pov that it was seasoned with a new spice. He would be the first to try it.

The servant girl was very young. She trembled as she approached Tog and Pov. The young boy was sitting in his customary position at the feet of his father. As she offered the lamb, it was Tog who reached out for the meat. Siv was horrified. As Tog brought the meat to his mouth, Pov jumped up and knocked it out of his hand. The feasting group was stunned. Pov had actually hit his father! This was an offense punishable by death!

A sound started to come out of Tog's throat, but Pov's scream overpowered it. "Father that was

poison!" The lamb piece had fallen to the ground. It was instantly consumed by one of the many dogs in the courtyard. In moments the dog's eyes bulged, her tongue flopped out of her mouth and she fell dead on the ground. All were stunned into silence.

"Pov, how did you know?" A shaking Tog asked.

Pov smiled. His father did not call him Runt. "I...I learned that smell when I was with Kella. She taught me."

Siv was shaking too. Without thinking he blurted, "Father, it was not meant for you. It was for the Runt." Too late, Siv realized he had confessed to the crime.

Overwrought, perspiring from his close brush with death, Tog said in a weak voice, "Ox, take Siv to the gate in the wall and hold him there. I must think on this. Everyone else leave, but Pov, you stay with me."

Tog took Pov by the arm and forced the boy to sit beside him. "Pov, your brother tried to kill you. It is your choice to decide how to punish him. It is not right to have Ox strangle him on the feast of the North Goddess. Yet, if that is what you want, I will command Ox to do it. Better still we can wait until tomorrow to punish him."

"Father, I would never want to kill my brother," Pov knew about the abhorrence his brothers and the women had for him. He knew he had replaced some of them as his father's favorite. That came at a price. The young boy was conflicted. He was too young to order a man to his death...especially a brother. "I don't want him killed father" he begged.

Tog rejected Pov's plea. "He must be punished Pov. I just don't understand why he would ever want to harm you. Our law is an eye for an eye. It is our way. It is simple. It is just."

"Father, you are the most powerful man in Jericho. You make the rules and you can change them. Siv is your blood and also mine. Trade him to that caravan leaving tomorrow. He will become their slave. That is a fair punishment for what he has done. Slavery is far worse than death."

Tog thought about that for a moment and then nodded in agreement. He was inwardly pleased at Pov's good judgment. He ordered Siv to go to his house and wait there. After that, he had the wailing servant girl brought to him. Between hysterical sobs she told Tog that his first woman, Cam, had sprinkled some powder on the lamb. Then she was ordered to take the dish only to Pov.

Tog ordered the girl sent to a brothel in the outer town where she would now pleasure the caravan drivers. It was a mild and fitting punishment.

Ox was sent to fetch Cam. She was dead. She had taken the remainder of the poison knowing the servant girl would seal her fate. Before the next dawn Siv slipped out of the gates of Jericho. He had assumed his punishment would be death. He had decided not to wait for it.

During the next few years Tog found that the bitumen that his sons and slaves pulled from the muck at the Dead Sea for their own use was equally a much sought after trading commodity. Bitumen was a good adhesive with many possibilities. Wooden boats were caulked with it, reed containers were water-proofed by it and ceramics repaired using the mastic properties of the material.

As Jericho became a more important trading center for salt and now bitumen, Tog became aware

of the profit from a new product called obsidian. This sharp glass-like stone was not new to him, but tradable quantities of the material had never before arrived at Jericho. Today a trader had come over a great sea and followed the narrow track to Jericho to get Tog's bitumen. In trade he offered obsidian. Tog discovered from the trader, his name was Dagg, that obsidian was mined far to the north, almost in another part of the world. The place was called Catal Hoyuk.

Tog was amazed as the trader showed him how a slight blow to the obsidian created a seashell like piece of mineral with the sharpest edges he had ever experienced. He could cut hair with it. He could even shave his beard with the glass-like material. While this stone-glass was far too fragile to be used as a weapon, it would cut flesh and bone if handled with diligence. It could become a wonderful tool in the preparation of animal products.

The trader explained that his obsidian was mined at the base of sacred mountain named Hasan Dag. This mountain occasionally spit fire from its top and had two cones shaped like a woman's breasts. Hasan Dag was a difficult four day journey north of his home village of Catal Hoyuk. Collecting the obsidian was dangerous work. Dagg said that the fire goddess of Hasan Dag did not like her treasure stolen. She often sent puffy hot clouds of smoke down the sides of the mountain. Everyone who breathed the strange smoke died. At other times this angry goddess sent rivers of boiling hot melted stone flowing over the cliffs. Obsidian collectors were often trapped by the flowing liquid fire and died. The mountain goddess was powerful and all Catal Hoyuk worshiped her fury. Currently no one dared to tempt her by collecting more of her precious glass-stone. Too many collectors were dead. \*

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The Ancestor Chain explores the often desperate circumstances of our direct line relatives living hundreds and even thousands of years ago. They carried forward, through subsequent generations, common DNA Haplogroups that you probably possess in your genes today. Your ancestors traveled across the Fertile Crescent, founded one of the first towns, Jericho, escaped The Great Flood, and participated in the rise and later the fall of the Roman Empire. They confronted the daily challenge of life in their times. Some were adventurers, or soldiers, or Vikings or Crusaders. Many won only the test of survival. But if each had not succeeded, you might not be here today.

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