

## Jesse James and DNA

Wild West readers following the Jesse James/DNA testing story (see articles in the June 1994 and October 2000 issues) please note: The 1995 exhumation of the purported grave of Jesse James in Clay County, Missouri, and subsequent DNA testing have proved nothing. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA, passed directly from mother to child) was chosen for that exhumation, but the project leader, Professor James Starrs, chose not to exhume Jesse's mother, Zerelda James Samuel, who is buried close by. Instead, Starrs used Oklahoma attorney Robert A. Jackson and Jackson's nephew Mark Nikkell as the mtDNA reference sources. However, Jackson's claim that he is a direct matrilineal descendant of Susan James Parmer, Jesse James' sister, has been called into question.

Jackson's mother, Dorothy Ann Rose, might not be the daughter of Feta Rose, Susan James Parmer's daughter. Feta's husband, Bert Rose, was married first to a woman named Katie who might in fact be Dorothy's mother. Please email me if you want more details at [banditoutlaw13@aol.com](mailto:banditoutlaw13@aol.com). (For the information substantiating my concerns about Jackson's lineage, see the page labeled [DNA Controversy](#) on this site.)

The good news is that Jackson's lineage can now be verified beyond the shadow of a doubt. A valid mtDNA reference source has been located - 90-something Sue Laura Hale, granddaughter of Susan James Parmer. Hale has submitted a DNA sample taken under strict chain of custody guidelines. If Jackson is a true matrilineal descendant of Susan James Parmer, his mtDNA sequence should match Ms. Hale's exactly. I have requested that Jackson submit a new blood sample for DNA testing (at my expense) in order to validate his lineage, but he refused. Should the results from new DNA testing match the 1995 DNA results, I will shut up. I am calling for Robert Jackson to donate a new DNA sample for the sake of history - Jesse's burial place needs to be found.

- Betty Dorset Duke, Liberty Hill, Texas

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### Robert A. Jackson responds:

"Ms. Duke's letter states, among other things, that 'Jackson's claim that he is a direct matrilineal descendent of Susan James Parmer, Jesse James' sister, has been called into question. Jackson's mother, Dorothy Anne Rose, might not be the daughter of Feta Rose, Susan James Parmer's daughter.' That statement is insulting, ludicrous and libelous. My grandmother, Feta, married my grandfather, Bert Rose, on June 16, 1912. My uncle, Allen Parmer Rose, was born June 29, 1913. He never married. My mother, Dorothy Anne Rose, was born May 26, 1914. A third child, Martha Louis Rose, was born December 22, 1923, and died November 16, 1927. I am absolutely 100 percent satisfied beyond the shadow of any doubt that my mother was the daughter of Bert and Feta Rose, and that my grandmother, Feta, was one of seven children born to Allen and Susan James Parmer. As far as I am concerned, it is way past the time for Betty Duke to 'shut up.'"