



NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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**PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES MAY BE SURPRISED
BY THEIR FAMOUS COUSINS**

All three candidates claim famous relatives, including Madonna, Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie, and Laura Bush.

Boston, MA – March 26, 2008 – It's not unusual for celebrities and other famous people to lend their star power to presidential candidates in their White House bids. But for some of them it could be a matter of sticking with family.

The New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS) in Boston recently traced the family trees of all three major presidential candidates, and the results -- including major new discoveries --- are a 'Who's Who' of American culture and history.

Illinois Senator Barack Obama, whose white mother hails from Kansas, can claim at least six U.S. presidents as distant cousins, including President George W. Bush and his father, Gerald R. Ford, Lyndon B. Johnson, Harry S Truman, and James Madison. Other cousins include Vice President Dick Cheney, British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill, and Civil War General Robert E. Lee.

"Obama's maternal ancestry includes the mid-Atlantic States and the South," said NEHGS genealogist Christopher Child. "He also has a Hinckley line that goes back to 17th-century Cape Cod which includes a colonial Plymouth governor."

Child, 27, has done considerable genealogical research on presidents and presidential candidates.

And while Obama can also call actor Brad Pitt a distant cousin, his Democratic rival, New York Senator Hillary Clinton, shares a common ancestor with actress Angelina Jolie.

Child noted that Clinton is also a cousin of a number of famous people with French Canadian ancestry, including singers Madonna, Celine Dion, and Alanis Morissette, as well as Beatnik author Jack Kerouac. Another cousin is Camilla Parker-Bowles, wife of Prince Charles and possible future Queen of England.

Child added, "It is common to find people of French Canadian descent to be related to large numbers of other French Canadians, including these notables."

On the other side, presumptive Republican nominee, Arizona Senator John McCain, is a sixth cousin of current First Lady Laura Bush. "McCain's ancestry is almost entirely southern," Child said, "making notable connections somewhat harder to trace because of challenges to genealogists in that region. Additional research will undoubtedly identify more interesting cousins for McCain."

While having famous cousins makes for interesting conversation, Child noted "it should not influence voters." But at a time when the race focuses on pointing out differences, the candidates may enjoy learning about famous cousins and their varied family histories.

More information on the notable kinships of the presidential candidates can be found at: www.NewEnglandAncestors.org.

NEHGS plans a January 2009 release of an updated edition of "Ancestors of American Presidents" by senior research scholar Gary Boyd Roberts.

About NEHGS

Founded in 1845, New England Historic Genealogical Society is the country's oldest and largest non-profit genealogical organization. Located in Boston, NEHGS collects, preserves, and interprets materials that help make accessible the histories of families in America. The NEHGS research library, one of the most respected genealogical libraries in the field, is home to millions books, journals, manuscripts, photographs, microfilms, documents, records, and artifacts that date back more than four centuries. The award-winning web site www.NewEnglandAncestors.org offers access to more than 110 million names in 2,400 searchable databases. NEHGS has more than 23,000 members nationally.

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