

# The American Ruling Class

## The genealogy linking U.S. Presidents together

As the saying goes: “*We are all brothers and sisters.*” This catchphrase is commonly associated figuratively, either in a theological or humanistic context. If taken literally at face value, the context shifts from one of brotherhood to one of ancestral pedigree. The consensus among scholars, geneticists and anthropologists is that nation building in our era is mutually inclusive of ethnicity, culture and religion from various sources. Professor Mark Jobling, a geneticist at the University of Leicester, led a research into the gene pool of western European populations, concluding that two-thirds of modern Europeans are descended from just three Bronze Age leaders. American citizenry, as seen in the context of a melting pot of societies, differs from its European counterpart. By that definition, American demography is more heterogeneous than homogeneous; and its nationhood is still a work in progress. The odds, therefore, for U.S. Presidents to be related to one another by blood, all the way down the chain, are less favourable than for politicians in countries with ancient history, where homogeneity is cohesive. In spite of this, we find that there are more elected statesmen in the United States who stem from the same family tree than anywhere else in the democratic world. We count amongst the illustrious list of U.S. Presidents sons, grandsons, cousins, and spouses.

John Quincy Adams, the 6<sup>th</sup> President, was the son of John Adams, the 2<sup>nd</sup> President; Benjamin Harrison, the 23<sup>rd</sup> President, was the grandson of William Harrison, the 9<sup>th</sup> President; Zachary Taylor, the 12<sup>th</sup> President, was a second cousin to James Madison, the 4<sup>th</sup> President; Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the 32<sup>nd</sup> President, was a fifth cousin to Theodore Roosevelt, the 26<sup>th</sup> President; George W. Bush, the 43<sup>rd</sup> President, is the son of George H. W. Bush, the 41<sup>st</sup> President; Donald Trump, the 45<sup>th</sup> President, is related to Hillary Rodham Clinton, the wife of William Jefferson Clinton, the 42<sup>nd</sup> President.

The associated links in the above examples are easily discernible by the family names. Not all are so conspicuous. One such opaque high profile relation links Richard Bruce Cheney, the Vice President in George W. Bush’s administration, with Barack Hussein Obama, the 44<sup>th</sup> President. Speaking to MSNBC on 16 October, 2007, Lynne Cheney, Cheney’s wife, revealed that Cheney and Obama are 8<sup>th</sup> cousins, both descended from a common ancestor named Mareen Duvall, the son of a French Huguenot who settled in the state of Maryland in the 1650s. Harry Truman, the 33<sup>rd</sup> President, also descends from Duvall, as do other notable people like e.g. the business tycoon Warren Buffett.

A research at the New England Historic Genealogical Society, founded in 1845, found that Obama is related as a cousin, several generations removed, to six U.S. Presidents: George H. W. Bush, George W. Bush, Gerald Ford, Lyndon Johnson, Harry Truman and James Madison. In 2009, an 11-year old 7<sup>th</sup> grader called BridgeAnne d’Avignon compiled a family tree on all U.S. Presidents, up to and including Obama, as part of a school project. She discovered that all Presidents, barring Martin van Buren who was of Dutch ancestry, can trace their lineage back to King John of England. As startling a discovery as it appears to be, it can rationally be explained when using applied logic. There were scarcely one billion humans roaming the earth during King John’s reign in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Societies were provincial and human migration was relatively static. These factors forged a concentration of ethnic homogeneity to set geographic regions.

The more homogenous a society is, the higher the odds are for two individuals sharing ancestors to procreate, thus causing the number of distinct ancestors in the family tree of their offspring to decline. This process ultimately becomes inexorable the further in time we move—a phenomenon described in genealogical terms as 'pedigree collapse'. On a balance of probabilities, millions of white Caucasian Americans, albeit remotely, are related to at least one U.S. President; just as BridgeAnne d'Avignon found in her research when she uncovered that she and Obama share common ancestors.

Leaving rationale aside, the process that began back in 1789 with George Washington alludes to a ruling class of hierarchical dimensions. Out of 45 Presidents, twelve have had kindred ties, notwithstanding the epic Bush/Clinton derby spanning three decades.