

Connections between Sámi and Basque Peoples



Kent Randell

2012 Siidastallan

Outside of Minneapolis, Minneapolis



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Linwood Township, Minnesota

“D----- it Jim, I’m a librarian and an armchair anthropologist??”



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Connections between Sámi and Basque Peoples



Hard evidence:

- mtDNA
- Uniqueness of language

Other things may be surprising.... or not.

It is fun to imagine other connections, understanding it is not scientific

Documentary:

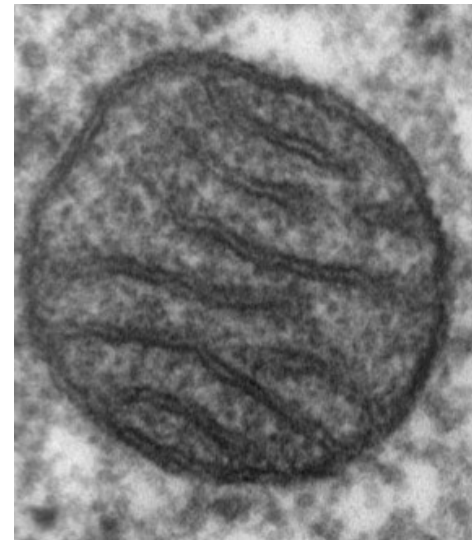
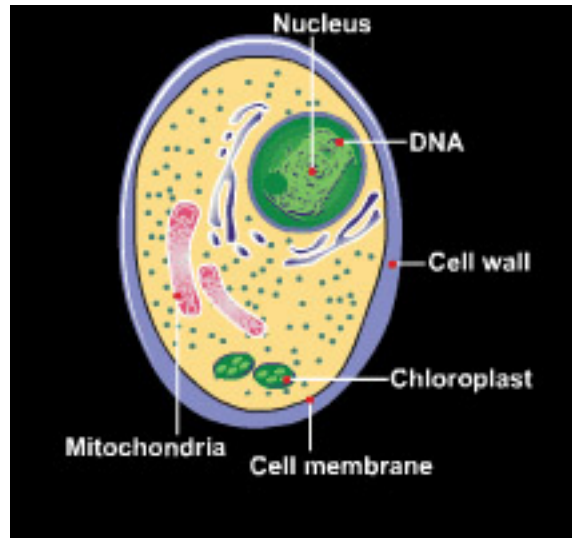
Suddenly Sámi by Norway's Ellen-Astri Lundby

She receives her mtDNA test, and express surprise when her results state that she is connected to Spain. This also surprised me, and spurred my interest.....

Then I ended up living in Boise, Idaho, the city with the largest concentration of Basque outside of Basque Country

What is mtDNA genealogy?

The DNA of the *Mitochondria* in your cells.

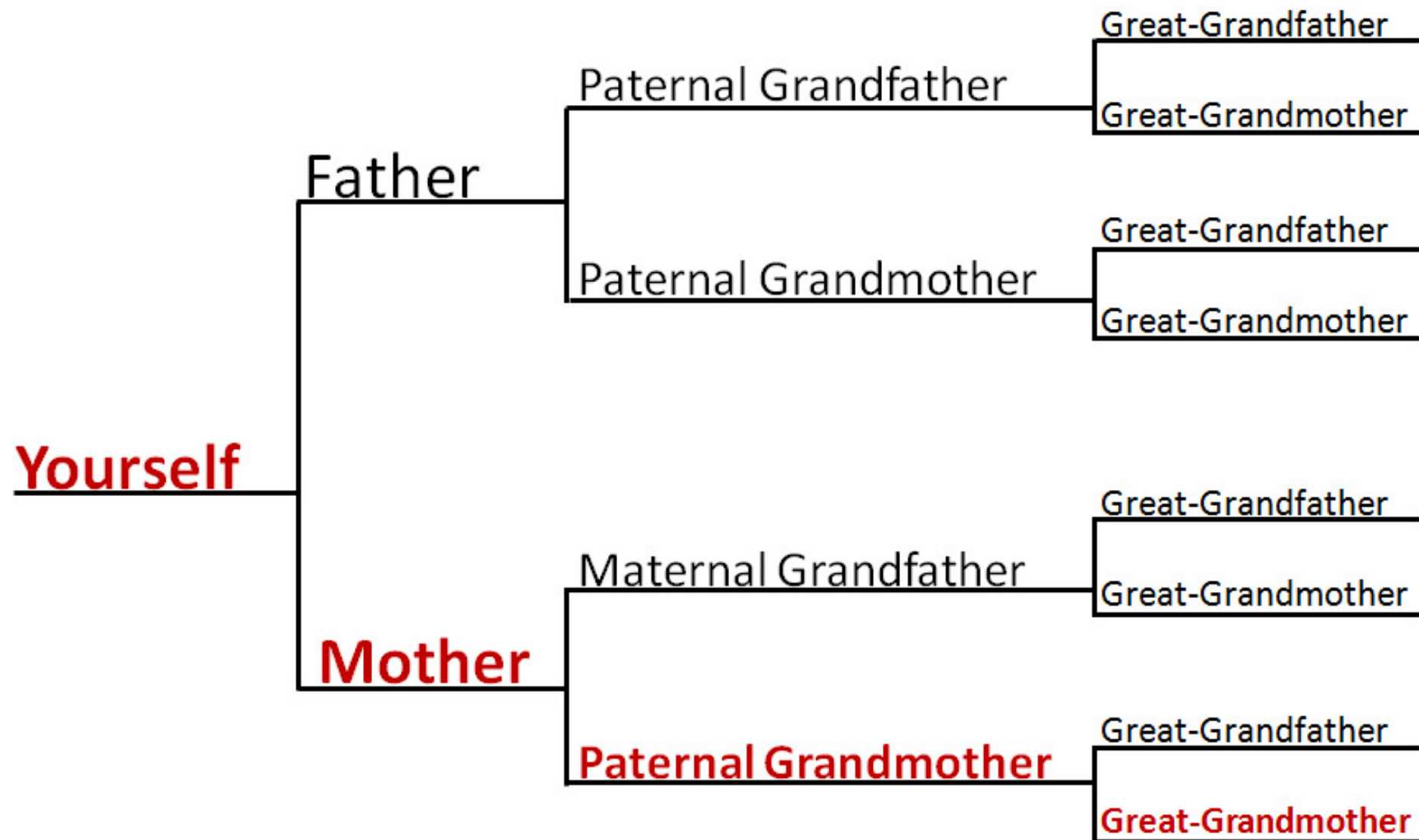


Cell energy, cell growth, cell signaling, etc.

mtDNA – At Conception

- The Egg cell Mitochondria's DNA remains the same after conception.
- Male does not contribute to the mtDNA
- Therefore Mitochondrial mtDNA is the same as one's mother.







Certificate – mtDNA

Family Tree DNA certifies that a mitochondria DNA sample taken from

differs from the Cambridge Reference Sequence (CRS)* at the numbered positions indicated,
by the presence of the bases designated A, C, G or T:

Haplogroup V

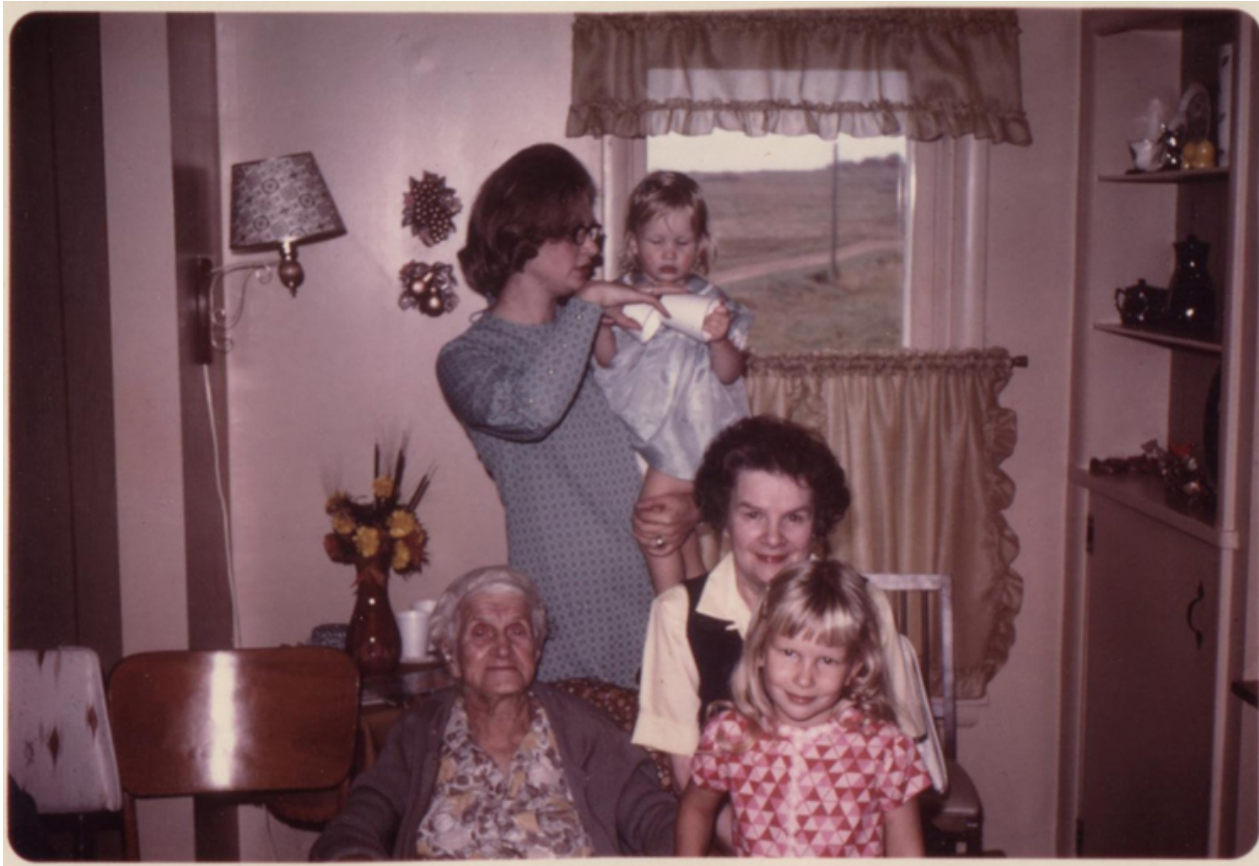
Sample # 127612

The letters designate the base – adenine, cytosine, guanine or thymine – that occurs at each of those positions in place of the CRS 569-base portion for Hyper Variable Region 1 starting at position 16,001 and ending with 16,569, as well as the 574 base portion for Hyper Variable Region 2 starting at position 1 and ending with 574. These are distinctive of this sample and may be compared to other people to confirm or rule out common descent, providing genetic evidence of genealogical relationships.

1st Segment	16183G, 16298C, 16519C
2nd Segment	72C, 263G, 309.1C, 315.1C, 485C

*The Cambridge Reference Sequence is the accepted mtDNA standard.

Four generation mtDNA line



Sisters – Mother – Maternal Grandmother – Great-grandmother Jennie
Mary Karjalainen b. 21 March 1886, parents from Kuusamo, Finland

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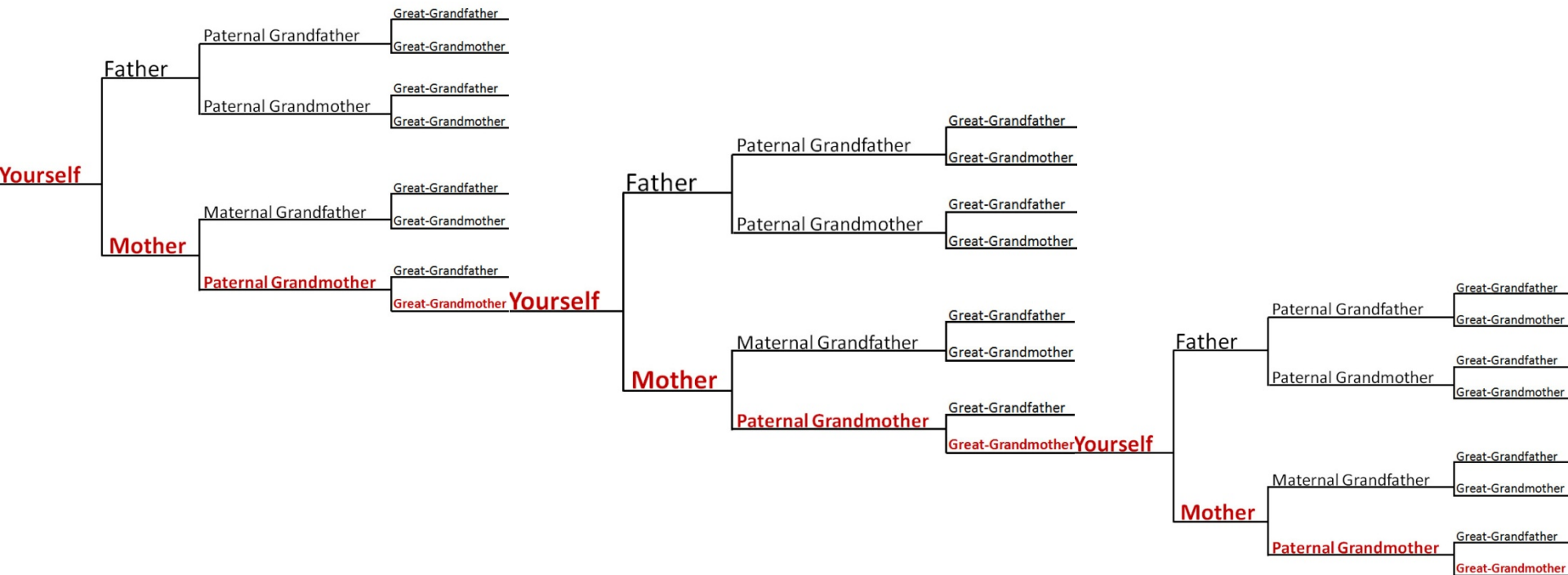
Isaac Abramson and Jennie Karjalainen wedding picture



Isaac is from Northern Norway, Kvaen father and Saami mother from Haetta village. Not matrilineal line.... so why do I have the V-type mtDNA?

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mtDNA genealogy only records the ancestor at the bottom of your family tree



Population Bottleneck

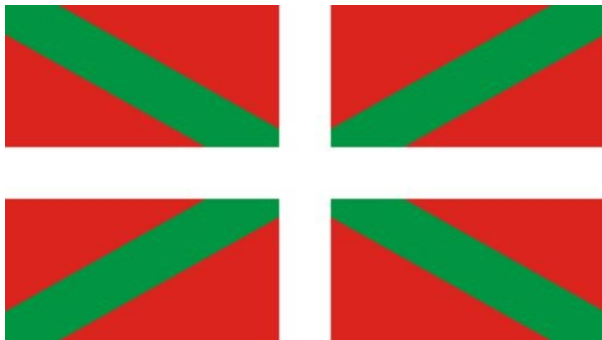
- Kuusamo – Original Finnish settlers were men. Probably did not bring wives, or at least several of them married Sámi women
- Sámi starvation in late 1690's, rewarded for living as agrarian Finns, etc. Lived as Finns for almost 200 years before coming to America
- But the pioneer women were Sámi
- Many people from Kuusamo settled the Copper Country of Northern Michigan (looks like a Kuusamo phonebook)
- A lot of Copper Country Finns (like me) with a Kusamolainen great-grandmother have Sámi mtDNA



The “V” type mtDNA (the woman that Brian Sykes calls Velda) is the rarest European “mitochondrial Eves.” Less than 5%



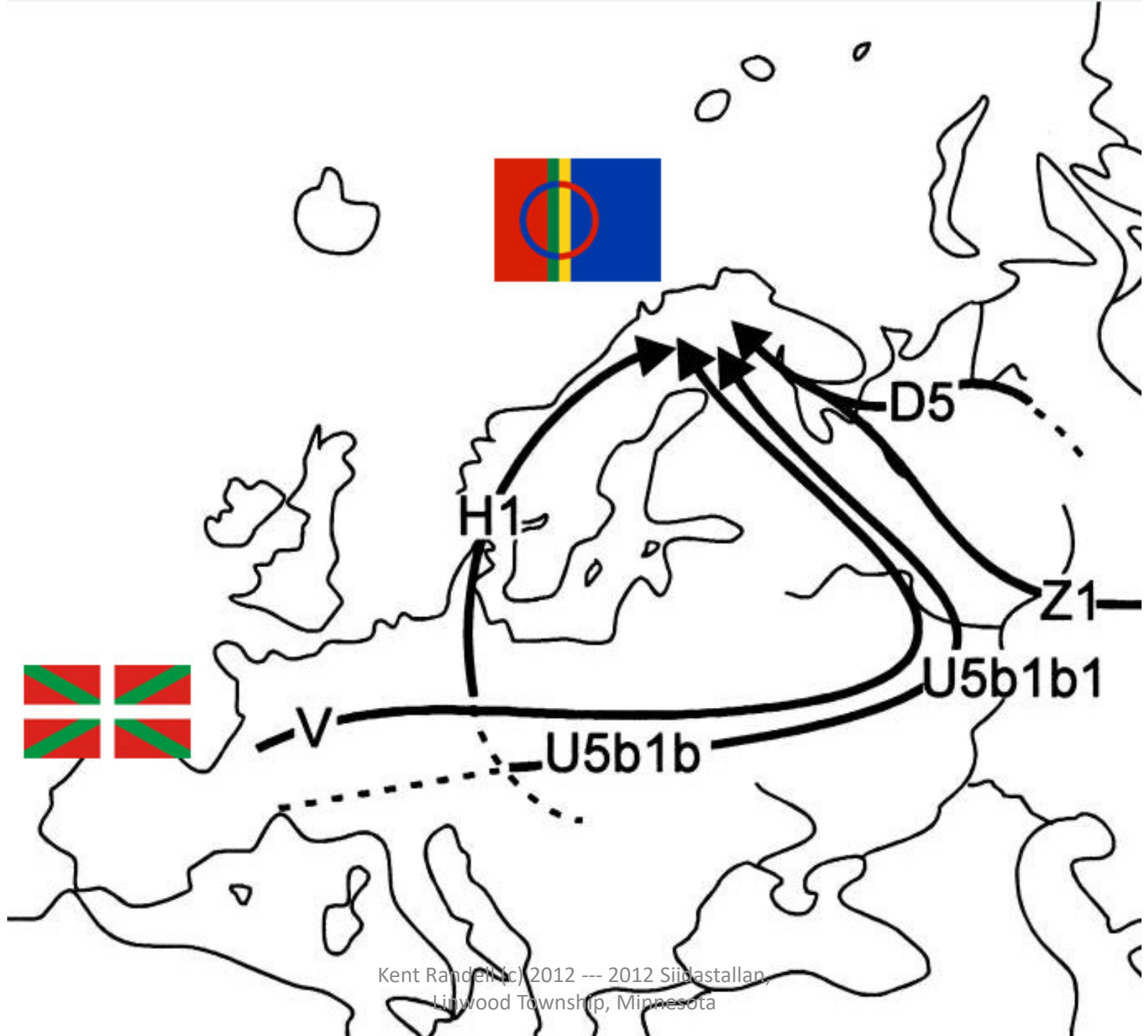
- 40% of Sámi are descended from “Velda”

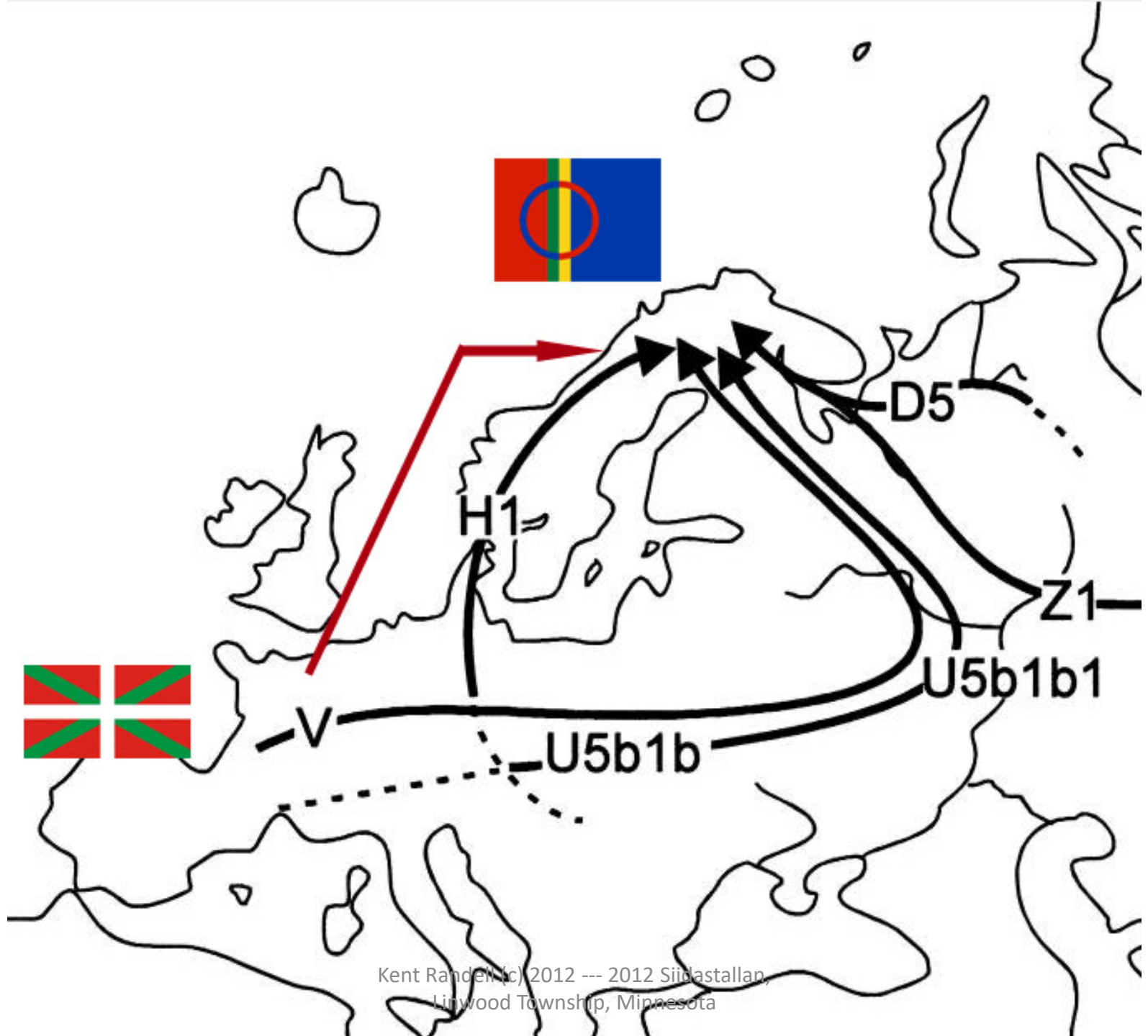


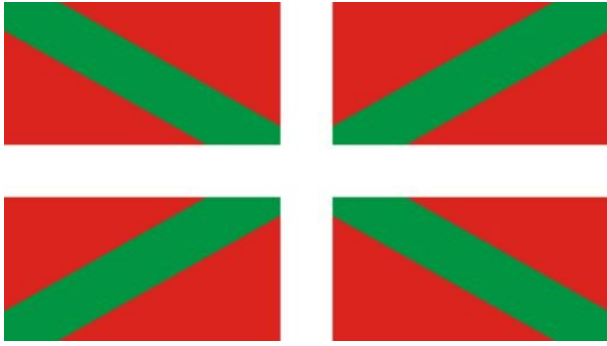
- 10-12% of Basque are descended from “Velda”

Velda – the “Eve” of mtDNA V Haplogroup

- Believed to have lived in Spain about 12,000 years ago.
- Sámi and Finns have different genetic histories.
- Sámi genetic histories are a mix of East and West and are very unique
- Basque – oldest people in Europe
- How are they connected through the V mtDNA?

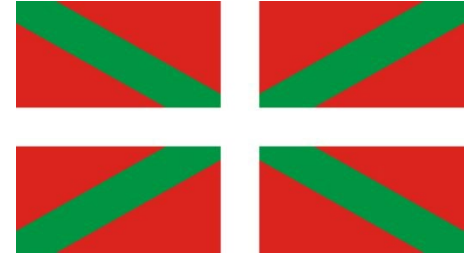






Basque Sailing Prowess

- Lakotza – Christopher Columbus' navigator
- Elkana – Succeeded Magellan



Similar Histories and Cultures of Sámi and Basque Peoples

- Resist cultural assimilation – not absorbed by neighbors
- Maintain language
- Identity is not based upon a social elite
 - a ruling class did not dictate culture
- Did not develop nationhood
- Rural culture and is not city-based.
 - based on small groups
- Now a minority in some of the places they have lived for thousands of years

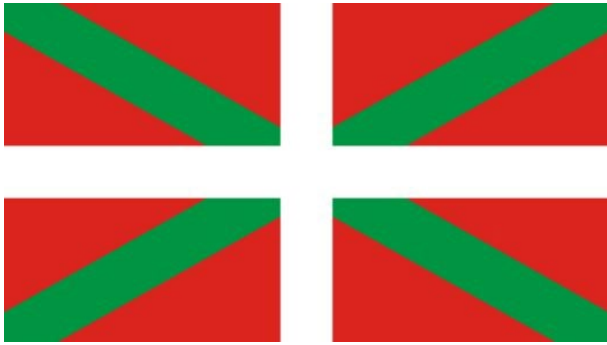


Sámi History

- Originally settled in a much larger area
- Not genetically related to Finns, but speak a Uralic language related to Finnish???
- Somewhat mysterious, though some say they split from Finns about 4,000 B.C. (then why are they genetically different?)

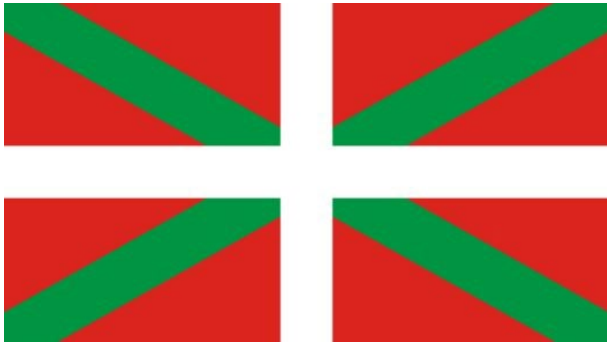


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Basque History

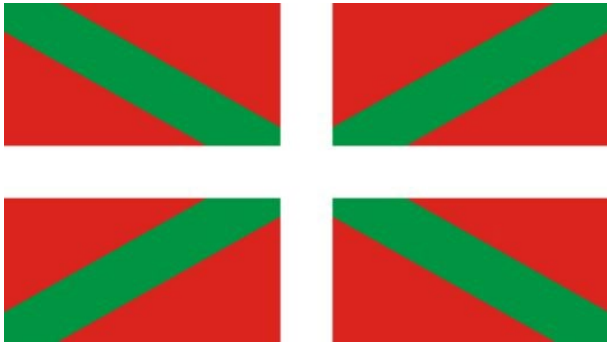
- Oldest Race in Europe. Predates arrival of those speaking Indo-European languages
- Since 4,000 to 9,000 B.C., or 20,000 B.C.???



Basque History

Pete Cenarrusa (served 52 years in the State of Idaho) called:

“robust, courageous, fiercely independent, passionately devoted to their liberties, intensely individualistic and deeply convicted in their beliefs”



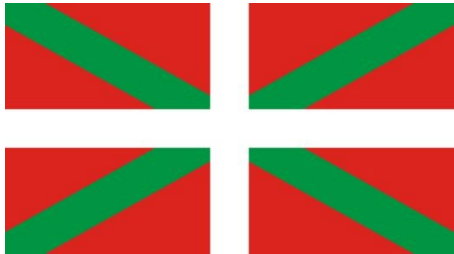
Basque

- Kept out Muslims, who occupied some parts of Iberian Peninsula (Spain) from 711-1492
- Roncevaux Pass, Summer 778, the *only* defeat of the mighty Charlemagne. (Also inspiration for *The Song of Roland*)

Spread across several countries



Sápmi spread across Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia



Spread across Spain and France

$$4 + 3 = 1$$



Sámi Border and Settler Issues

(Johan Turi's 1910 Account of the Sámi)

- Transporting reindeer from Norway to Finland to Sweden – in what country are they to be taxed?
- Governments encourage agriculture (Finns at least included Sámi), which ruined reindeer seasonal feeding grounds or transportation routes
- Generations of tame reindeer made attractive fertile settlement lands
- Finland – Norway border closed in 1857
- Finland – Sweden border closed in 1889



Sámi Border and Settler Issues

(Johan Turi's 1910 Account of the Sámi)

- New routes through mountains are **DANGEROUS:**
 - crevasses
 - cliffs
 - children ride on the reindeer
 - exposure to the elements
 - river crossings
- Settlers would hunt reindeer
- Lichen gets burned off from over-population
- Wolves don't go into the forest for food



Norwegianization

- Compulsory military service in 1897 (broke historic treaties)
- No Sámi language in school in 1898
- Could not own land if could not speak Norwegian
- 1902 – started ascribing Norwegian names to properties
- Still wanted some Sámi to remain in the mountains to conform with “primitive” Social Darwin ideas



Norwegianization post WWII

- The Nazis burned Lapland – rebuilt in European style
- More adoption of modern farming
- Wage earning lifestyle and modern consumption built around farming
- Because of distances – children were sent to boarding schools and removed from their own family and culture, immersed in Norwegian culture. Had to learn a new language.



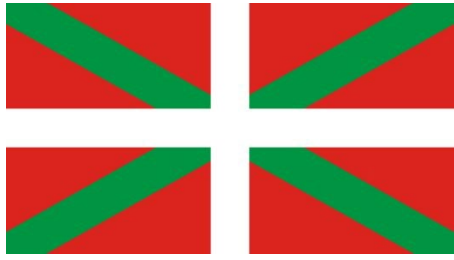
Discrimination and Alta

- In the late 1970's the government of Norway wanted to build a dam and power plant in a Sámi area which would destroy the Sámi town of Máze, disrupt fishing, etc.
- 1979 – civil disobedience
 - sitting down in front of machines, more than 1,000 chained to machines
 - hunger strikes
- 1981 – Government forcibly removed protestors.
- Power plant was built: lost the battle, won the war



Post-Alta – modern times

- 1988 – Sámi recognized as aboriginal people (only aboriginal people of Europe.... are the Basques close behind?)
- 1989 – Sámediggi, a Sámi representative body is formed
- 1990 – Sámi language act
- Sámi newspapers, Sámi radio station, and *Hamlet* was performed in the Sámi language
- 2005 – Finnmark Act, transferred 95% of land in Finnmark County to Finnmark Estate Agency, three of six members from Sámi parliament



Basque language oppression (as well as Catalan, Galician)

Language Can Not Develop or Modernize In Isolation

1766 – Books only printed in Spanish

1768 – Charles III – Teachers can only teach in Spanish

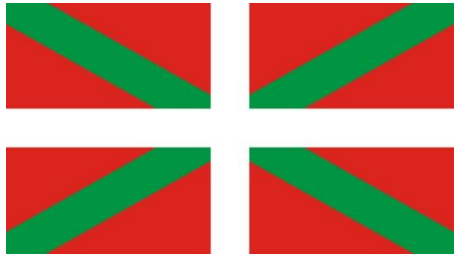
1801 – All theatre works are to be performed in Spanish

1857 – Again reinforced that the Spanish educational system will be in Spanish

1862 – Notary Law – all legal documents in Spanish

1867 – Isabel II again states that all theatre will be in Spanish

1931-1939 Second Spanish Republic



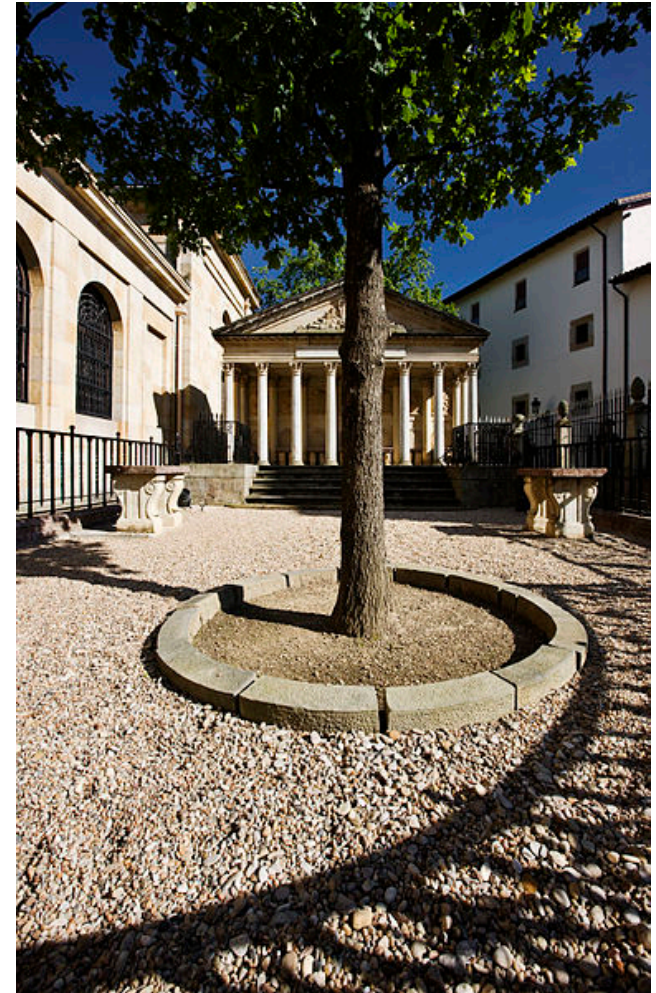
Spanish Civil War GUERNICA

Basque were Catholic Humanists

Franco - Catholic Nationalism

Franco and Hitler did not trust Basques

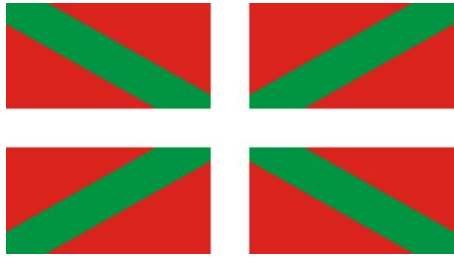
- April 26, 1937
German Luftwaffe's first major strike
- Anywhere 126 to 1,654 deaths
- City was destroyed
- The Oak of Guernica survived





- Pablo Picasso's *Guernica* raised awareness of the Spanish Civil War
- Countless Basque that opposed Franco were imprisoned or disappeared during his regime (1939-1975)
- Basque language and culture went underground
- Basque Nationalist Party went into Exile

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Basque current situation

Basque Country is an autonomous community in Spain, covering three historic provinces of: Álava, Biscay, and Gipuzkoa.

- Only Spanish is compulsory, but Basque is an official language
- This has led to a decreasing number of Basque speakers

Navarre in Spain is the 4th Spanish province, now a chartered community

No recognition for Basque provinces in France

Still Catholic Nationalists in contemporary Spain

Language

- Basque language is unique
- Sámi language (with Finnish, Hungarian, and Estonian) is the other unique language in Europe





Nils-Aslak Valkeapää said:

“People who only know one language think that in another language the words are only replaced by with equivalent ones. It probably never even occurs to them that the whole way of thinking may be different and that things may be seen in a different way.”

Note that Finno-Ugric/Sámi languages are much more removed from English than Spanish, French, German, Latin, etc.



Sámi is in the Uralic Language Group (originating in the Ural mountains)

One identifying trait (which is what pairs it with Hungarian) –

It is **agglutinative**

Case-endings, or suffixes (very difficult):

Kitsi – not a word in Finnish or Sámi

Kitsissä

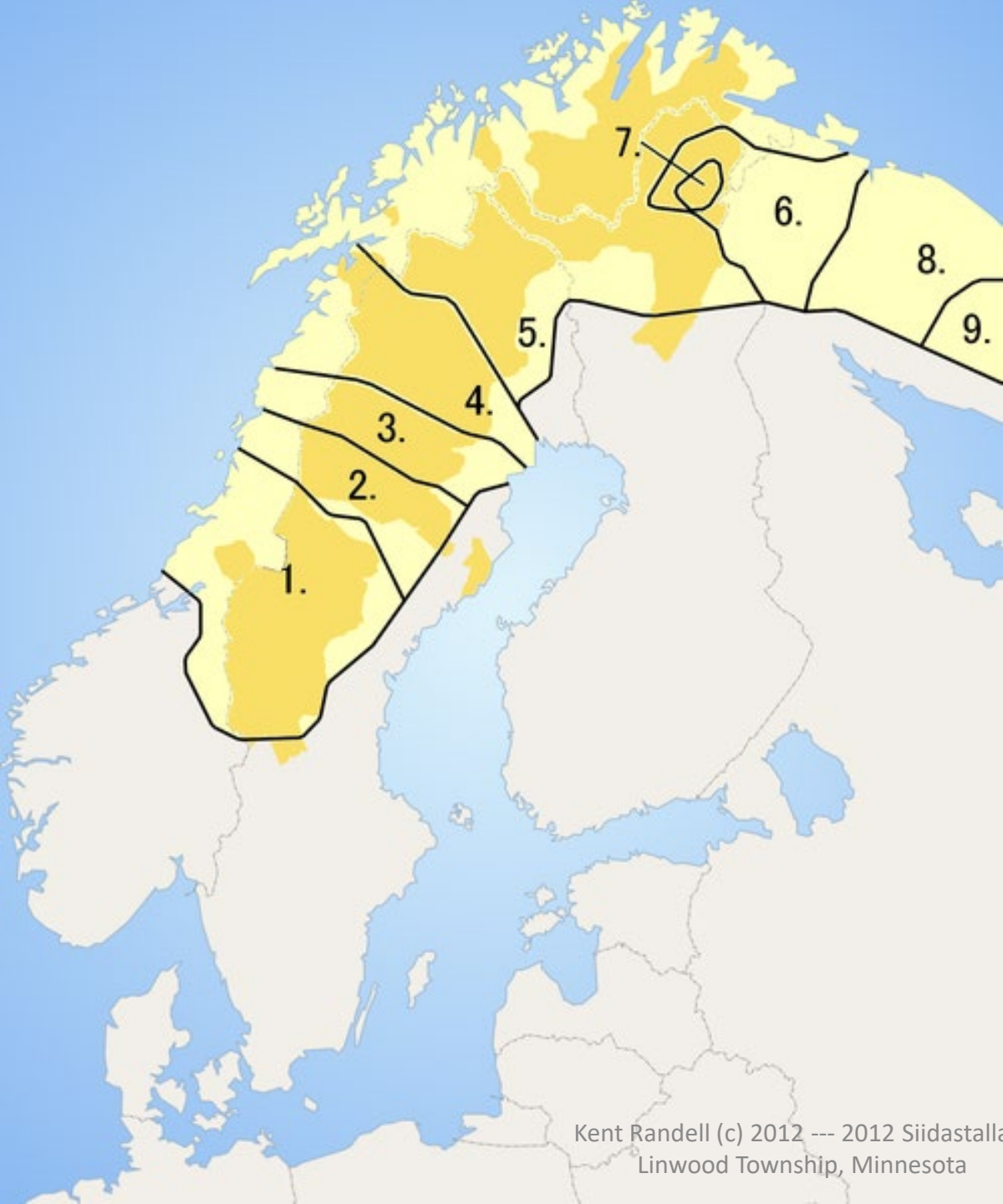
Kitsistä

Kitsille

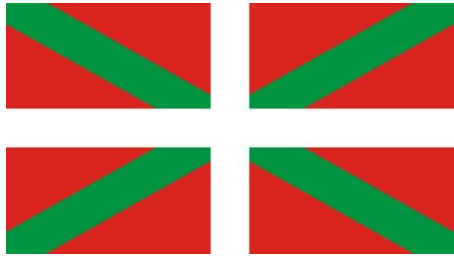


Sámi is also:

- As a Finnic language, sometimes referred to as a stone age language
- Very difficult to learn
- Very uniquely expressive
- Spoken by about 30,000 people

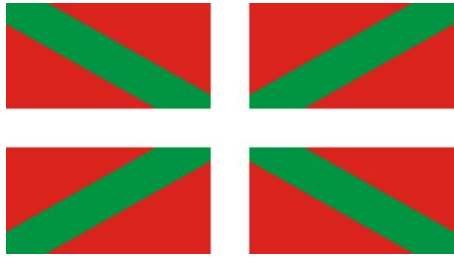


1. Southern Sami (6,000)
2. Ume Sami (20)
3. Pite Sami (20)
4. Lule Sami (2,000)
5. Northern Sami (20,700)
6. Skolt Sami (420)
7. Inari Sami (300)
8. Kildin Sami (500)
9. Ter Sami (about 10)



Basque language

- The Basque language is also **agglutinative**.
- Also has poly-personal verb agreement, which is also found in Hungarian (another Uralic language)
- Also sometimes referred to as a “stone age” language (like Finnic languages)
- Spoken by only 25% of residents of Basque provinces, totaling about 650,000 people



Basque language legend

Also known as an *Extremely Difficult* language

It is said that no Basque can go to Hell....

The Devil spent 7 years in Basque Country, and only managed to learn “bai” (yes) and “ez.” (no) And even these he forgot.

So, because the Devil can not speak the language, no Basque can go to Hell

Herding Traditions





Sámi Reindeer Herding

- Historically, Sámi were not reindeer herders but hunters, fishermen, fur trapping, gatherers, etc.
- Forest Sámi, Sea Sámi, as well as Mountain Sámi (not necessarily herders). Some also farmed.
- Adapted to their situation, especially when forced into different lands.



Sámi Reindeer Herding

- Started about 1500. Became archetypal image of Sámi
- *Alaska Reindeer Project* – Sámi sought out as Reindeer herders



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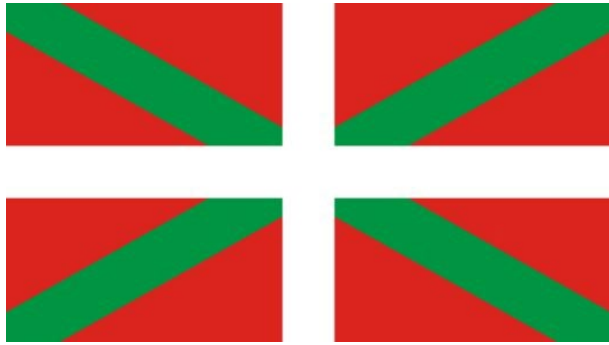


Basque Sheep Herding in the United States



Like Sámi and reindeer, Basque are ubiquitously connected to sheep-herding in the United States even though it is new for Basques to be sheep herders – since turn of the 20th Century

First Basque sheep herders were Basque from Argentina, moved to Nevada and Mexico



Basque Sheep Herding in the United States

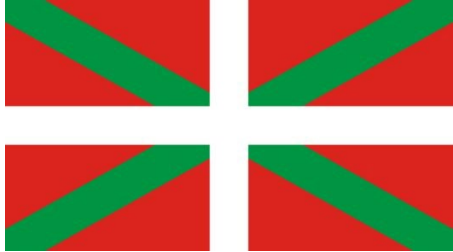
- Now largest population of Basque outside of Basque country in the world is in Idaho and Nevada
- Post WWII – Basque sought out via Congressional bill due to lack of sheep herders
- *Brand* reindeer, *brand* trees with Arborglyphs...

EUSKAL
TELE
BISTIA





Sámi “sieta”
From Kola Peninsula

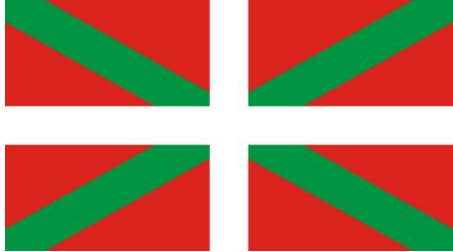


Basque “dolmen”





Sámi and Komsa culture
Alta Rock paintings
4,000 B.C. to 500 B.C.



Basque Pre-historic cave painting
at Lascaux
ca. 15,000 years old
Discovered by 4 teenagers and a dog named Robot





Names of Houses

Some Sámi names, like the Finnish tradition, are names houses

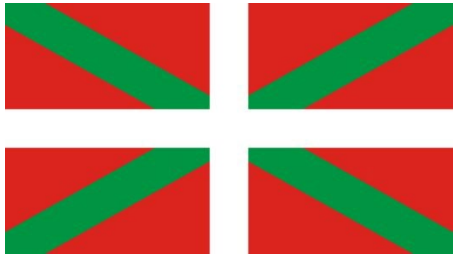


Basque surnames are names of houses



True Religion a Mystery

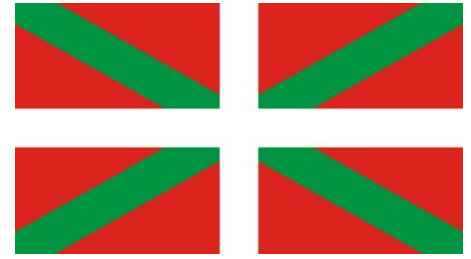
Though we have pictures of drums, details of symbolism and rituals destroyed by Christianity. Only Fragments... (literally)



Basque native religion destroyed by Christian Romans in the 4th Century



Religious Practices



“Earth mother” instead of “Sky Father”

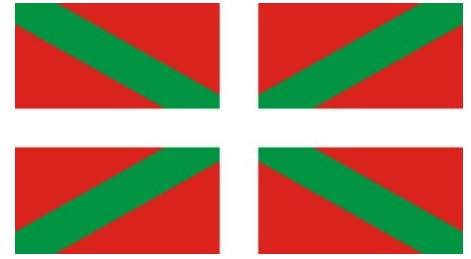
Matrilineal emphasis

- perhaps not coincidental that both Sámi and Basque cultures have high gender equality.

Women could own land, widow owns estate, in both Finland and Basque country



Music



Western music is based on duples and triples with relatively simple rhythms

Both Sámi and Basque music are frequently based on odd-time signatures, with *joiks* often not having a steady meter

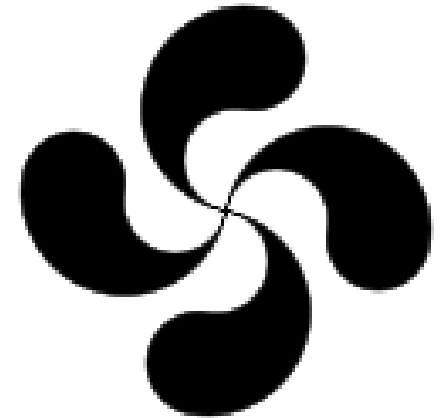


Four Winds, Four Points

Sámi hat of the Four Winds



Basque lauburu, also
four winds??
(history is unclear)



Basque block in Boise, Idaho with Lauburu and Flag



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Concluding Thoughts

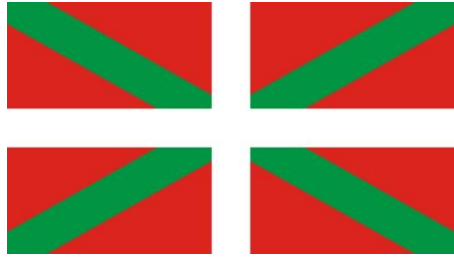
- What can we learn about the similarities between the Sámi and the Basque, two people who have preserved cultural and language assimilation for millennia – against all odds
- **MORE than just language and DNA**

Concluding Thoughts

- What can we learn about the similarities between the Sámi and the Basque, two people who have preserved cultural and language assimilation for millennia – against all odds
- **Peaceful peoples – does conquering territory actually hurt a culture's viability?**

Concluding Thoughts

- What can we learn about the similarities between the Sámi and the Basque, two people who have preserved cultural and language assimilation for millennia – against all odds
- Peaceful peoples – does conquering territory actually hurt a culture's viability?
- **Lived without an organized ruling class – does this also hurt a culture's viability?**



Manuel de la Sota:

“When [the Basques] first appeared in history they were already a free people organized as a democracy. And in marked contrast with the other European countries they did not have to acquire their rights as free men through any revolutionary process. They did not have to struggle for them with any king.”



Sámi Siida of North America

Siiddastallan 2012

July 6-8, 2012

Camp Salie, Linwood Township, Anoka County, Minnesota

Conference Theme: **Gal vuoigŋa voigŋa dovdá.**
(*Kindred spirits recognize each other*)

****All sessions are in Jacobs Hall unless otherwise noted**

Friday, July 6

- 4:00 p.m. Arrive at Camp Salie. Familiarize yourself with the beautiful wooded setting. Sign up for a shift working in the kitchen for meal prep, washing-up, and for site clean-up.
- 5:00– 7:00 p.m. Potluck dinner, bring a dish to share, or bring your own dinner.
- 7:00 – 10:00 p.m. **Movie night!** with *Arden Johnson*, discussion moderator. We'll share some short films, with the *Árran* editor serving as the moderator. Films to include *Sámi Over There*, *The Sámi*, and parts of *Samerna*.
-

Saturday, July 7

- 7:30 – 9:00 a.m. Breakfast and social time
- 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. Registration (continued). Register for door prizes.
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Welcome and Opening Remarks** by Interim Chair, *John Edward Xavier*
- 10:30 – 11:30 ***We Stopped Forgetting: Stories from Sámi Americans.*** *Ellen Marie Jensen* will present her book, the first about Sámi-American identity. Three of the

7:00 – evening.

Business meeting and Siida elections

Sunday, July 8

8:00 – 9:30

Breakfast (interlaps with walk)

9:00 – 9:45

Guided nature walk with *Evelyn Ashford*. Observe and interact with flora and fauna, or just have a lovely stroll. Gain familiarity with common plants and trees in this deciduous zone in Southern Minnesota, or just relax. Bring field books if you have them. Evelyn is a healer who incorporates local plants in her practice. *Meet up in Jacobs Hall before walk.*


9:45 - 10:45

Sámi-American Approaches to Spirituality.

Panel session with *Donald Engstrom-Reese, Eric Seaberg, Arden Johnson, and Jennifer Harkonen*. There are a variety of religious and spiritual practices of Sámi descendants in North America—from Evangelical Christianity, Apostolic Lutheranism (Laestadianism), Paganism, Atheism—and everything in between. This panel discussion, moderated by *Julie Halme Whitehorn* will explore the various approaches and personal meanings their Sámi ancestry plays in their individual spiritual expressions. *Jacobs Hall*

10:45 - 11:45

Breakout Sessions III

 Session A. **The Sámi and the Basque**--a number of similarities exist between the Sami populations of Northern Europe and the Basque region of Southern Europe--including genetics, traditional occupations, clothing, and music. Presenter: *Kent Randell* is a descendant of the Eira clan of Hetta Village, Enontekio. *Jacobs Hall*

Session B. **Sámi-American Art.** Join *Rosalie Sundin, John Edward Xavier* and *Mervi Maarit Salo* as they exhibit some of their artistic creations, and learn how their Sámi-American identity shines through in their artistry. *John "Xavi" Xavier* is a Sámi American from North Dakota who works with acrylics on board and canvas, and was educated in French theatre studies and history in Madison, WI and Paris. *In the covered picnic area.* With her roots extending back to the Sámi/Kvaen founding colony of Lake Lillian, MN, *Rosalie Sundin's* focus became renewing the traditional folk arts of her Troms-Sámi, Tornedalen and Dalarna ancestors, while continuing her work in digital graphic design and fine art painting. *Mervi Maarit* lives in Canada, was born in Finland, and is of mixed Nordic and Saami ancestry. Her formal education includes art, music, literature, education, policy and a/r/tography. Her traditional education began with her