It's All Relative

FAMOUS FAMILY

If you go back far enough, we're all related to someone famous," says Ancestry.com's Megan Smolenyak. After all, if you rewind 10 generations, your family may be composed of more than 100,000 descendants. And many of these celeb relatives — researched by Ancestry.com and the New England Historical Genealogical Society — are cousins once or twice removed. (A cousin once removed means the child of one's cousin. Twice removed means the grandchild.)

Finding famous kin is mainly a matter of following a paper trail (e.g., land records, wills). Curious to know yours? Gather family records, then plug in the info at a site like Ancestry.com or HeritageQuestOnline.com.
LY TREES

Surprise! Brad Pitt and Barack Obama aren’t the only celebrities who are unexpectedly related.

BARACK OBAMA

Marilyn Monroe
Ninth cousin, thrice removed

JOHN MCCAIN

BRAD PITT
Ninth cousin

GERALD FORD
Tenth cousin, once removed

LYNDON B. JOHNSON
Fourth cousin, thrice removed

GEORGE W. BUSH
Tenth cousin, once removed

LAURA BUSH
Sixth cousin

PRINCESS DIANA

BRITNEY SPEARS

JAKE & MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL
Tenth cousins, thrice removed

ANDREW FIRESTONE
Tenth cousin

NANCY REAGAN
Tenth cousin, twice removed

KATHARINE HEPBURN
Seventh cousin, thrice removed

JOHN EDWARDS
Seventh cousin, thrice removed