

Chapter 25

DNA Matches with my Burks Family Descendants

Introduction to the Use of DNA Matching in Genealogy

[This introduction is from “The Foundations of Family History Research” and originally appeared in ***The Source: A Guidebook to American Genealogy***, Third Edition, 2006.¹]

One of the newest developments in genealogy is the use of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) as a source of genealogical information. DNA is the substance within every living cell that carries the code for passing on its exact makeup to new cells, and although DNA is uniquely different for each individual, it is similar in cells of related individuals. As applied to genealogical research, distinctive DNA patterns can be used to determine whether and how closely individuals are related to other individuals whose DNA patterns are known.

Genealogical DNA testing looks at the non-coding portions of the DNA strand (sometimes misleadingly called junk DNA) that have no known function. For the most part, these stretches of DNA remain unchanged from generation to generation. However, chance changes, called mutations or polymorphisms, do occur at infrequent intervals, and it is these changes that let us distinguish different lines of descent and determine how closely people may be related to each other from the closeness of their DNA matches.

Autosomal DNA² is found in our 22 chromosomes. Autosomal DNA testing is a fairly recent and better way of determining ancestry because it provides concrete evidence of a cousin relationship. Sharing DNA segments that are identical by descent (IBD) indicates common ancestry. A higher percentage of DNA shared indicates a closer ancestor. For example, a person might share 50.23% with a child; 25.88% with a grandparent, and 1.5% with a 3rd cousin. Cousins identified through autosomal testing can share ancestry notes and gain insightful genealogical clues. It is not uncommon to find cousins who share DNA living on distant continents.

¹ http://www.ancestry.com/wiki/index.php?title=The_Source:_A_Guidebook_to_American_Genealogy

² Autosomal DNA is a term used in genetic genealogy to describe DNA which is inherited from the autosomal chromosomes. An autosome is any of the numbered chromosomes, as opposed to the sex chromosomes. Humans have 22 pairs of autosomes and one pair of sex chromosomes (the X chromosome and the Y chromosome).

For those ancestors at the head of an ancestral line, for whom we may know little more than a name and event date or place, a DNA sample from an appropriate descendant will provide the same pattern present in the ancestor, in the absence of any chance mutation along the way. For many family historians, a test of their own DNA is often their first step, providing a genetic signature for a distant paternal-line or maternal-line ancestor. Matching samples from two descendants through different lines provides assurance that the common ancestor's DNA sequence descended unchanged, with no mutation in either line.

When someone takes an AncestryDNA test, we [the folks at Ancestry.com] compare their DNA to the DNA of the hundreds of thousands of other test-takers in the AncestryDNA database. We're looking for "DNA matches" – people who share DNA with one another, and so might be relatives.

The main idea behind identifying a DNA match is to look for pieces of DNA that two people both have because they each inherited it from a recent common ancestor.

After you take an autosomal DNA test, AncestryDNA compares your DNA to everyone in the AncestryDNA database. Depending on how much DNA you share with another individual, AncestryDNA estimates a relationship and gives you a list of your DNA matches. If you've linked your tree to your DNA results, AncestryDNA can also look through both you and your DNA matches' trees and search for common names.

Specifics about AncestryDNA

AncestryDNA looks at autosomal DNA. Autosomal DNA tests survey a person's entire genome at over 700,000 locations where genetic markers that identify an individual typically appear. Plus, autosomal DNA tests look at both maternal and paternal lines, meaning discoveries come from both sides of your family tree.

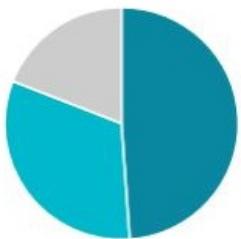
The AncestryDNA site now has over one million people in its database:



Examples of My DNA Matches with Burks Family Descendants

This past summer, I submitted my DNA to the AncestryDNA folks for analysis.

ETHNICITY ESTIMATE



- 48% Great Britain
- 32% Scandinavia
- 6% Europe East
- + 5 Other regions

[SEE FULL ETHNICITY ESTIMATE](#)

DNA MATCHES



 Shared ancestor hints

 Starred matches

 193 4th cousins or closer

[VIEW ALL DNA MATCHES](#)

They concluded that my ethnicity is 48% from Great Britain and 32% from Scandinavia. This result seems pretty straightforward, given that my ancestors on my father's side of the family came from Scotland, England, and Ireland (names like Oakley, Burks, Crawford, Miller, Wells, Darling, etc.), while my ancestors on my mother's side of the family came from Sweden (names like Larsson, Brorström, and Wennström).

The Ancestry.com folks also found a large number of individuals with whom I share DNA, and predicted that 193 of my DNA matches are with fourth cousins or closer.

One very useful feature of the AncestryDNA site is that most of the people that I share DNA with (my "DNA matches") have their family trees available on the Ancestry.com website, and this allows me to search their family trees for surnames that also appear in my family tree. And if I can indeed find an ancestor that we both have in common, that will explain the DNA match (and help to confirm our genealogical records).

In this narrative, I am going to discuss the large number of DNA matches that I have with other individuals who are descendants of John Burks, my 7th-great grandfather. John Burks was born in 1655 in Ireland; he emigrated from Ireland and moved to Virginia, where he died in 1721.

My paternal grandmother, from whom I get my first name of Burks, was Kate Cameron Burks (1873-1954). She married Ray Miller Oakley (1876-1948) in Quincy, Illinois, on 7 April 1897. Kate is buried in Woodland Cemetery in Quincy, Illinois; here is a photo of her gravestone:



Kate and Ray named their first son Burks Oakley; Burks was my father. I was given the name Burks Oakley II, and for some part of my youth (and even more recently), I had the nickname "B2" (short for Burks II). More about "B2" below.

I searched my DNA matches on the AncestryDNA website for everyone having family trees that include the surname of Burks. I have to say that I was completely amazed by all of the distant cousins that I found!

jeanie1225 - Jeannine Burks Long

One of the first hits I got was for a woman with a username of ***jeanie1225***, and Ancestry.com predicted that we were likely fourth cousins:

4TH COUSIN

★  [jeanie1225](#)

Possible range: 4th - 6th cousins ?

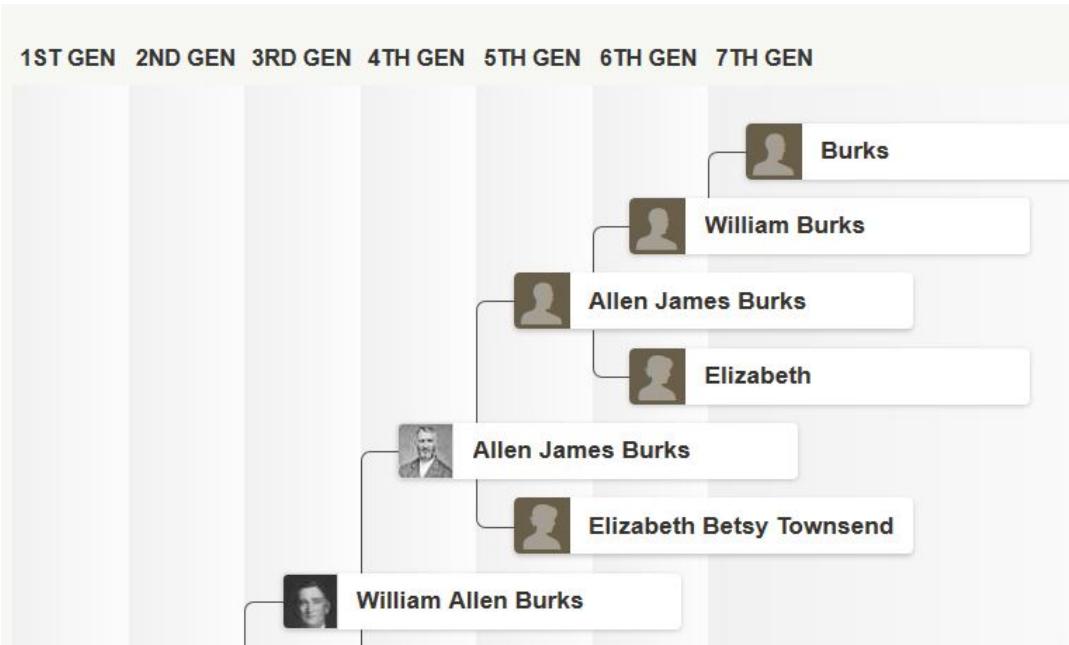
Confidence: Very High

Last logged in Aug 24, 2015

8087 people

[VIEW MATCH](#)

When I looked at the family tree showing her "pedigree", I was absolutely amazed to see the names of William Burks and Allen James Burks!



As mentioned above, my paternal grandmother was Kate Cameron Burks. Kate's father was James Alfred Burks. James A. Burks' father was Levi Burks. And Levi was a brother of Allen James Burks, who appears in *jeanie1225*'s family tree. And their father was indeed William Burks.

I then looked into the detailed family tree that I have, and I figured out that *jeanie1225* was really Jeannine Burks Long (Jeannine Burks was her maiden name), who was born in 1935. William Burks was her g-g-g grandfather, and he was my g-g-g grandfather. And that means that Jeannine and I are fourth cousins, as predicted by the AncestryDNA folks. How cool to see the science supporting our genealogy!

I contacted Jeannine via the Ancestry.com message system, and she wrote back:

jeanie1225
Aug 24, 2015

Greetings! ... You and I have communicated before, emailed each other, and I have sent you a lot of information from my tree. ... I can send to you again the info I sent previously, but I presume it's already in your records. Let me know if it is not. ...

Jeannine

As an aside, here are several photos of her gravestone (even though she is still living) in the Seward Cemetery, in Seward, Logan County, Oklahoma (just north of Oklahoma City).



Burks - MissRobby29 - Robby Sampson

The next one of my DNA matches on the AncestryDNA site that has the Burks surname in her family tree has the username of **MissRobby29**. She has an extensive family tree containing 2836 people published on the Ancestry.com website:

A portrait photo of a woman with short brown hair, wearing a white top, standing outdoors with trees in the background.

MissRobby29

Possible range: 4th - 6th cousins ?

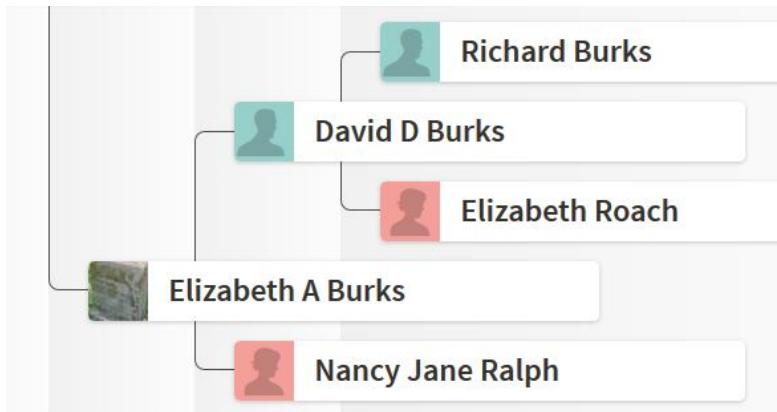
Confidence: Very High [green bar]

Last logged in Aug 26, 2015

+ 2836 people

VIEW MATCH

When I looked at her family tree, I learned that Elizabeth A. Burks was her great-great grandmother:



I sent **MissRobby29** a note using the Ancestry.com message system, and she replied:

MissRobby29

Aug 26, 2015

Hello Burks,

Thanks for taking the time to write. It's always nice to hear from another branch of the tree! I don't think I have come across your Kate Cameron Burks in my tree as of yet. My Burks connection started with Elizabeth A. Burks (1840-1909) who married John Peyton Midkiff (1829-1919) in Ohio County, Kentucky. I am finding roots all across this great country, which I find amazing!

By the way Elizabeth is my 2nd Great Grandmother and her line of Burks leads into the line that leads to John Burks of Mayo, Ireland, who would be my 9th Gr Grandfather. Do these line up with anyone in your line?

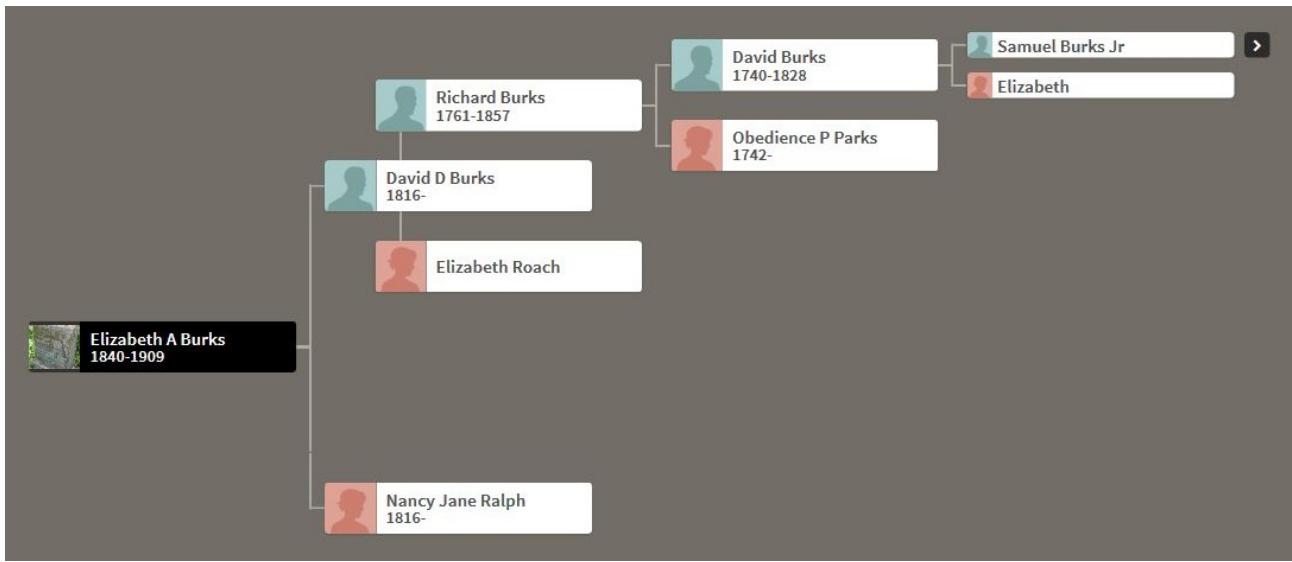
Well, as we all know, John Burks (1655-1721) is indeed our ancestor. To refresh your memory, here is what I wrote earlier this summer in my narrative about our Burks family heritage:

John Burks was born in 1655 in Ireland. He died in 1721 in Virginia. He married Mary Partree Peartree in 1679. She was born in 1657 (some say 1660) in Virginia. She died in 1721 in Albemarle County, Virginia. So unlike our Oakley, Burr, and Miller ancestors who lived in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, the Burks family that immigrated to America lived much farther south, in Virginia.

Several online genealogies state that John Burks was the son of another John Burks, who was born in 1635 in County Mayo, Ireland, and who died in 1735 in Ireland at the age of 100.

So it is clear that **MissRobby29** (who I later learned is Robby Sampson) and I are related through the Burks family line. But who was our last common ancestor?

When I looked at the ancestors of Elizabeth A. Burks (**MissRobby29**'s g-g grandmother), I found:



So **MissRobby29**'s Burks line includes Samuel King Burks Jr. – who was my 5th-great grandfather. Here is my pedigree:

- Burks Oakley II (me)
- Burks Oakley (my father)
- Kate Cameron Burks (my grandmother) who married Ray Miller Oakley (my grandfather)
- James Alfred Burks (my g-grandfather)
- Levi Burks (my g-g-grandfather)
- William Burks (my g-g-g-grandfather)
- (most likely) Samuel King Burks III (my g-g-g-g-grandfather)
- Samuel King Burks Jr. (my g-g-g-g-g-grandfather)

And Samuel King Burks Jr. was Robby Sampson's 6th-great grandfather. Her pedigree is:

- Robby Sampson (self)
- James Robert Gillim (father)
- Ortrie Denby "O D" Gillim (grandfather)
- Sarah Ann "Sallie" Midkiff (g-grandmother)
- Elizabeth Burks (g-g-grandmother)
- David Burks (g-g-g-grandfather)
- Richard Burks (g-g-g-g-grandfather)
- David Burks (g-g-g-g-g-grandfather)
- Samuel King Burks Jr. (g-g-g-g-g-g-grandfather)

And this is why Robby and I have a DNA match on the AncestryDNA website.

Samuel King Burks Jr. (aka Samuel King Burks II, aka "B2") had seven children. His first child was Samuel King Burks III (1725-1784) and his fifth child was David Burks (1740-1828). Samuel King Burks III was our ancestor, and David Burks was Robby's ancestor.

I find it amazing that the Ancestry.com DNA test is sensitive enough to identify distant relatives whose lines diverged before the mid-1700's.

I sent Robby an e-mail with a summary of our Burks family history. Recall that I included a section at the end of my narrative about our line being descended from Princess Nicketti, who was a first cousin of Pocahontas. In a subsequent exchange of messages on the Ancestry.com website, Robby wrote:

MissRobby29

Aug 29, 2015

I was thrilled with all the information you sent. I had been told all my life that we had Indian blood but through my Daddy's side. I find this DNA stuff a wonderful tool to have in your back pocket. ... Our daughter was over the moon thrilled with this news. She has always been told she looked like an Indian girl and she just loves this fact. Thank you for sharing this information. I wish I had known it growing up I might have used it to further my education. LOL!

Thanks Again,
Cousin Robby

Robby's g-g grandmother Elizabeth A. Burks died in 1909, and is buried next to her husband, John P. Midkiff, in the Midkiff family cemetery in Ohio County, Kentucky. Here is a photo of their gravestone:

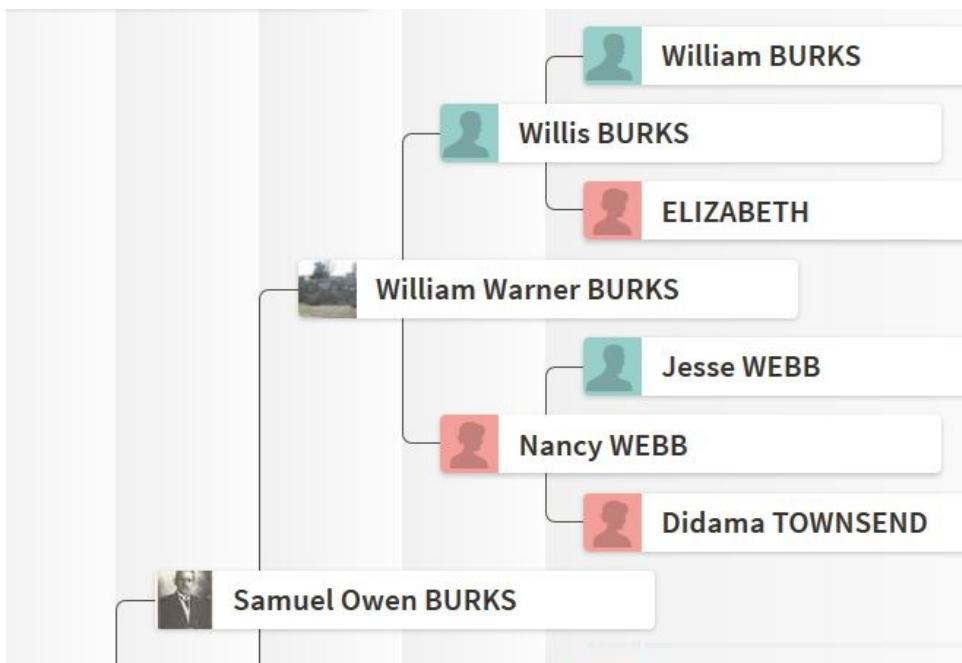


Burks - budsmith1936 - Bud Smith

As I continued to search my DNA matches on the AncestryDNA website for matches that have the surname of Burks in their family trees, I found a match with a person with the username of **budsmith1936**. Gosh, I wonder what his real name is and what year he was born in....



The DNA evidence suggested that he would be a very distant cousin. So I looked at his pedigree and immediately saw our Burks family connection:



His Burks line went back through Willis Burks (1784-1870) to William Burks (1750-1830). Well, William Burks was Levi Burks' father, and Willis Burks was Levi Burks' brother. And, of course, Levi Burks was my great-great grandfather. As I wrote when I discussed my DNA match with **jeanie1225** (Jeannine Long), another of William Burks' sons was Allen James Burks (1771-1864). So now we have DNA matches from Burks lines that go to William Burks through three of his sons – Allen James Burks, Willis Burks, and Levi Burks.

Gosh, this one was easy! Here is **budsmith1936**'s Burks pedigree:

- Bud Smith (**budsmith1936**)
- Samuel Earl Smith (1915-1982) – father
- Mary Etta Burks (1877-1919) – grandmother
- Samuel Owen Burks (1849-1919) – g-grandfather
- William Warner Burks (1820-1897) – g-g-grandfather
- Willis Burks (1784-1870) – g-g-g-grandfather
- William Burks (1750-1830) – g-g-g-g-grandfather

William Burks (1750-1830) was my g-g-g-grandfather. It seems to me that our relationship is closer than what the AncestryDNA folks projected. Bud and I are fourth cousins, once removed. Well, I guess that this counts for 5th cousins, which is the upper limit predicted by the Ancestry.com folks.

Again, the DNA supports the genealogy!

Here is a photo of Bud's grandmother, Mary Etta Burks, and her husband Clarence Smith:



Now let me digress with a great bit of Burks family trivia related to Bud's line in the Burks family tree. This story involves William Warner Burks Jr., who was the son of William Warner Burks, Bud's g-g-grandfather.

This story was posted to the Ancestry.com website by another Burks relative, having the username of ***mburks46***³:

The Death of William Warner Burks Jr.

As told to Myrna Clyde Burks Jr. by his grandfather, Evan Leland Burks

Myrna Clyde Burks Jr. transcribed this story in 1980, 56 years after it was told to him by his grandfather.

When I was a boy of about 12 years of age, I visited my grandparents in Lamar, Missouri, and stayed most of the summer. One day I happened to find a deck of playing cards that had been thrown away in the trash from next door. I was allowed to play with cards at home and never thought anything of taking them into Grandma's house to play with them.

When Grandpa saw the playing cards his face turned red and he told me to "Get those cards out of the house this very minute." He then sat down beside me and told me why he didn't allow any playing cards in his house.

When he was thirty years old, his brother, whom he was very fond of, was playing cards at one of the local saloons. A fight started over the card game, several shots were fired and when the fighting was over, his brother, who was only 22 years old, lay dead on the floor. No one knew whose gun the shot was fired from, but to the day grandfather died he never allowed a deck of cards in his house.

This is the way it was told to me, and I never forgot it to this day, July 12, 1980, some fifty-six years later.

Myrna Clyde Burks Jr.

William Warner Burks Jr. (in some family trees, he is listed as William Warner Burks II, so perhaps he also was called "B2") was born in 1860 and he died in 1882.

³ <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/49074632/person/12957008453/story/25bbe101-8145-46d3-966e-261d9a58f9ef?usePUBJs=true>

Burks – fantasystitching

As I continue to document all of my DNA matches that are in the Burks family line, I found a distant cousin whose username on the AncestryDNA site was ***fantasystitching***. The prediction was that we were 5th-8th cousins:

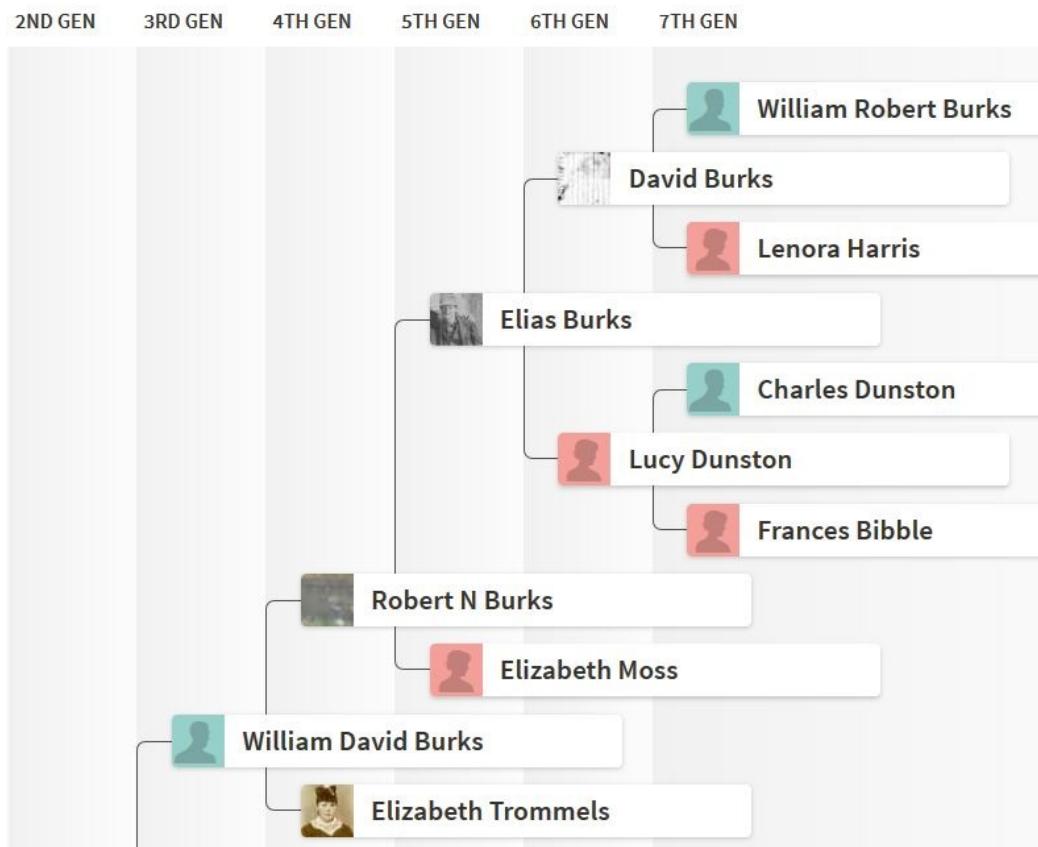


fantasystitching ⓘ
Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins ?
Confidence: Good
Last logged in Aug 28, 2015

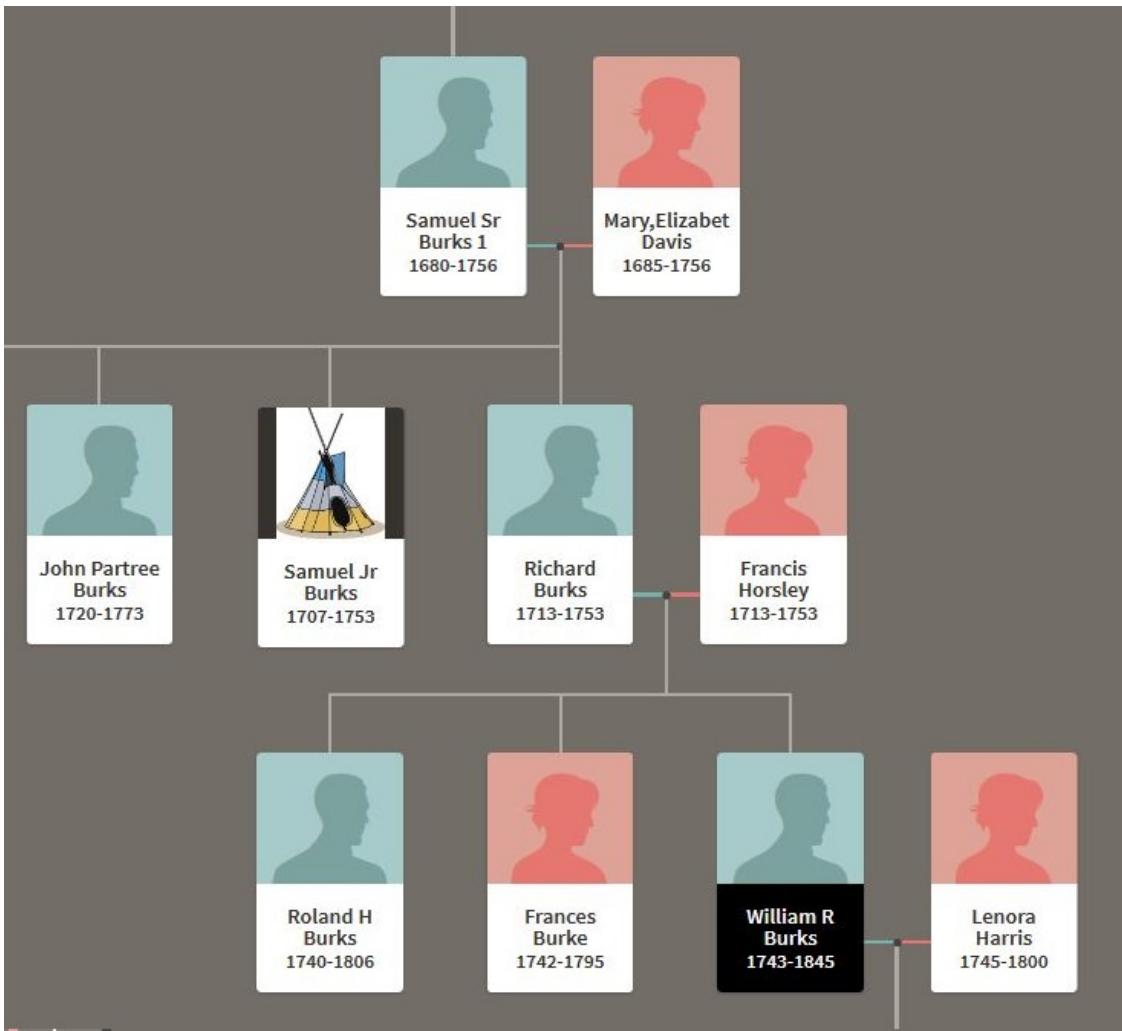
409 people

VIEW MATCH

She certainly has a number of Burks ancestors on her father's side of the family; this part of her family tree shows her Burks ancestors going back to her g-g-g-g grandfather, William Robert Burks:



Of course, her line of the family is very different than ours – I hadn't encountered these Burks relatives previously. Fortunately, she had the rest of her Burks ancestors listed in her family tree:



Yes, that's the connection. William Robert Burks' father was Richard Burks (1713-1753), and Richard's brother was our ancestor, Samuel Burks Jr. (or Samuel Burks II, aka "B2"). So both *fantasystitching* and I go back to Samuel Burks Sr. (1680-1756).

How can this DNA analysis be so sensitive as to predict that two different people are both descended from someone born in 1680?!!!

As I look at our two family lines, Samuel Burks Sr. was my 6th-great grandfather, and he was *fantasystitching*'s 7th-great grandfather. This makes us 7th cousins, once removed, which is at the far end of what the AncestryDNA analysis predicted.

Burks - mburks46 - Mel Burks

I now want to discuss the limitations of the DNA tests on the Ancestry.com website. For my DNA matches who are predicted to be "Distant Cousins", such as **fantasystitching**, the AncestryDNA site includes a link "What does this mean?":

fantasystitching
Granite Falls, Washington - Member since 2008, last logged in yesterday

Predicted relationship: Distant Cousins
Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins ([What does this mean?](#))
Confidence: Good

Clicking on that link brings up the following text:

A DNA test does not find EVERY relative of yours. For relationships this distant we are accurately able to predict only about 32% of the possible relatives that are out there—in other words there is a very large (68%) chance that our DNA analysis can NOT recognize an actual relative of yours. One way to be more certain that the DNA testing captures as many relatives as possible is to have multiple members of your immediate family tested.

An example of the DNA test **NOT** finding every relative follows. I mentioned above that **mburks46** had an anecdote about the death of William Warner Burks Jr. in a card game in 1882. After reading that anecdote and looking at **mburks46**'s family tree, I concluded that he was descended from William Burks through William's son Willis Burks (who, as you should know by now, was the brother of Levi Burks). I sent **mburks46** a message via the Ancestry.com message system, asking if he was in the AncestryDNA database. He replied:

mburks46
Aug 28, 2015

Hello Cousin,

My name is Mel Burks. And yes, we think William Burks is my 4th Great Grandfather. Willis Burks and Levi were brothers. My wife and I spend a significant amount of time on Ancestry and find it enjoyable. Your message

has now redirected us back to the Burks line for a renewed look. We are indeed in the DNA database. ...

Regards,
Mel Burks

So here we have Mel Burks, who is descended from William Burks (as I am) – yet the AncestryDNA test didn't flag him as a possible cousin. Obviously this test isn't perfect.

I'll now cover just a few more Burks relatives with whom I have a DNA match.

Burks - sporterfamily - S. Porter (?)

Another one of my DNA matches having the surname of Burks in his (her?) family tree is ***sporterfamily***:

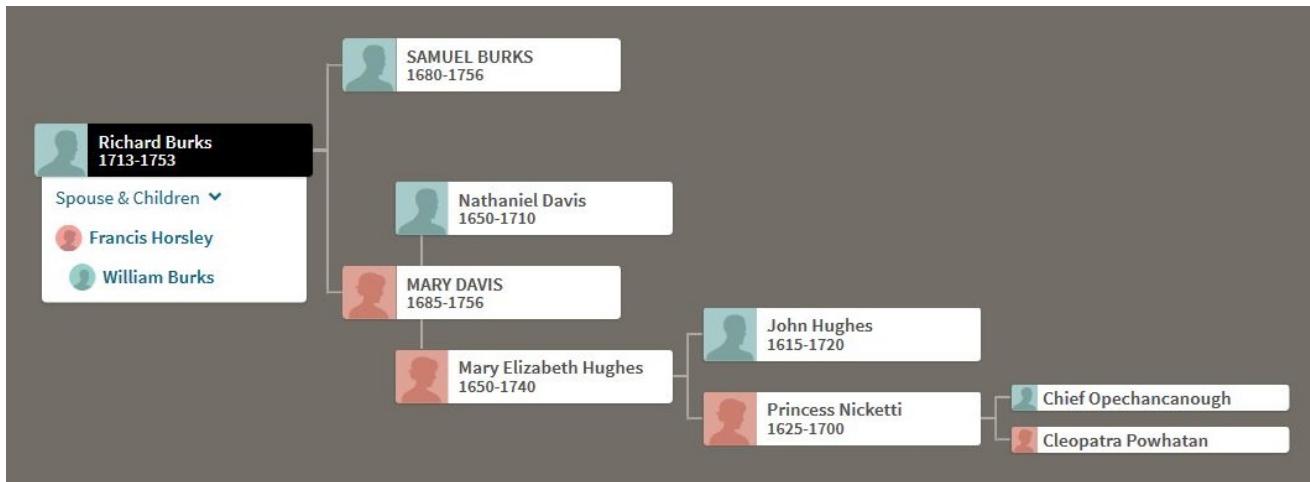


Since this person is associated with the Porter_Wyatt_Families family tree, I assume that this person is named S. Porter. When I examined his family tree, I found that he/she goes back to Samuel King Burks Sr. (b. 1680)⁴ through Samuel's son Richard Burks (b. 1713).⁵ By now, you should know that I go back to Samuel Sr. through his son Samuel Jr. (aka "B2").

And while the Porter_Wyatt_Families family tree doesn't have any of the Burks ancestors beyond Samuel King Burks Sr., it does show Richard Burks' maternal line back through Princess Nicketti, who you should recall was a first cousin of Pocahontas.

⁴ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/6681171/person/-1129047223/facts>

⁵ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/6681171/person/-1129057782/facts>



Again, I find it amazing to have yet another DNA match with someone that goes back to our common ancestor, Samuel King Burks Sr., who was born in 1680.

Burks - Dead Ends - C. A. V.

While I am incredibly pleased to have all of these DNA matches to distant relatives in our Burks family line, not every DNA match worked out as well as the ones I have discussed above. For example, I have a DNA match with **C. A. V.** (administered by Norma Burks Vaughn):

★



C. A. V. (administered by NormaBurksVaughn)

Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins ?

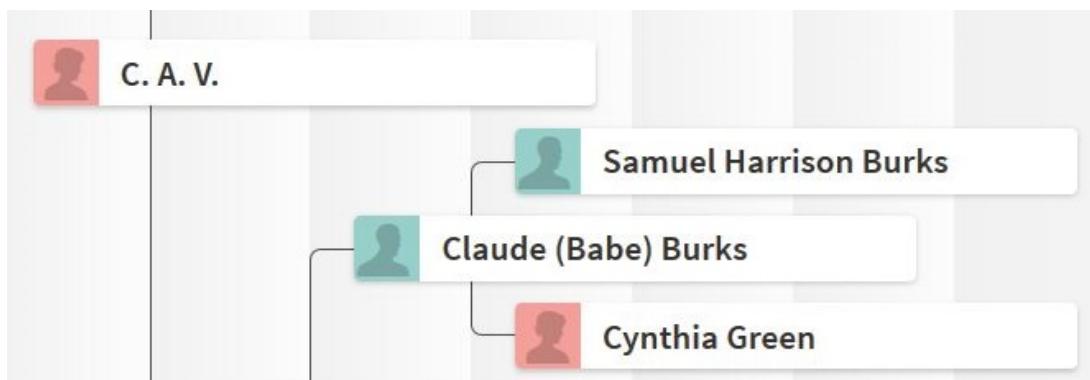
Confidence: High

Last logged in Aug 20, 2015

126 people

VIEW MATCH

Unfortunately, C. A. V. only has 126 people in his/her family tree and her Burks family line stops after Samuel Harrison Burks (date of birth unknown):



Samuel Harrison Burks was the father of Claude ("Babe") Burks (1892-1982). So while it is very likely that we are related through a common Burks ancestor, this line will take some additional research to prove.

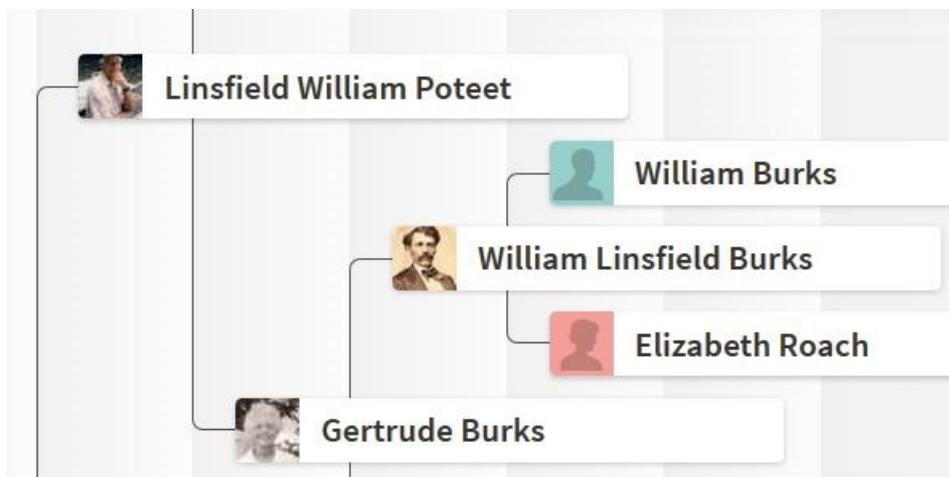
Burks - PeggyPoteet - Peggy Poteet

OK, I promise that this will be the last Burks DNA match that I will discuss. My final DNA match with an individual who has the surname Burks in her family tree is a woman with the username **PeggyPoteet**.

4TH COUSIN

A screenshot of a DNA match profile from Ancestry.com. At the top, a yellow star icon is followed by the name "PeggyPoteet". Below the name, the text "Possible range: 4th - 6th cousins" is shown with a question mark icon. A green progress bar indicates "Confidence: Extremely High". To the right, a green button says "VIEW MATCH". Above the match profile, an orange box says "4TH COUSIN". To the right of the match profile, there is a green icon with a person and the number "1120 people". Below the match profile, the text "Last logged in Aug 26, 2015" is displayed.

But the family tree she published on the Ancestry.com website only goes back to William Burks (1804-1856).⁶



However, a number of other family trees on the Ancestry.com website include William Burks (1804-1856), where he is listed as William J. Burks.

⁶ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/16815260/person/451867823/facts>

These trees list his father as George Burks (1768-1851)⁷ and his grandfather as William Burks (1750-1830).⁸ And finally, another family tree has William Burks (1750-1830) being the son of Samuel King Burks III (1725-1784).⁹

Of course, Samuel III's father was Samuel King Burks Jr. (aka "B2"), who was definitely my ancestor. It is amazing that so many of my Burks family DNA matches go back to Samuel King Burks Jr. (aka "B2").

So Peggy's Burks family pedigree is:

- Samuel King Burks Jr. (g-g-g-g-g-g grandfather)
- Samuel King Burks III (g-g-g-g-g grandfather)
- William Burks (g-g-g-g grandfather)
- George Burks (g-g-g-grandfather)
- William J. Burks (g-g-grandfather)
- William Linsfield Burks (g-grandfather)
- Gertrude Burks (grandmother)
- Linsfield William Poteet (father)
- Peggy Poteet (self)

Samuel King Burks Jr. was my 5th-great grandfather, so Peggy Poteet and I are sixth cousins, once removed.

Conclusion

At this point in writing this epistle, I am completely overwhelmed by all of the DNA evidence linking me directly to other descendants of John Burks (1655-1721), and thus indirectly linking me directly to John Burks himself. Recall what I wrote in my narrative about our Burks family history:

Generation 1: John Burks

John Burks was born in 1655 in Ireland. He died in 1721 in Virginia. He married Mary Partree Peartree in 1679. She was born in 1657 (some say 1660) in Virginia. She died in 1721 in Albemarle County, Virginia. So unlike our Oakley, Burr, and Miller ancestors who lived in New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, the Burks family that immigrated to America lived much farther south, in Virginia.

⁷ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/31060230/person/12358814106/facts>

⁸ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/44431438/person/6201741486/facts>

⁹ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/49056529/person/20418399935/facts>

Several online genealogies state that John Burks was the son of another John Burks, who was born in 1635 in County Mayo, Ireland, and who died in 1735 in Ireland at the age of 100.

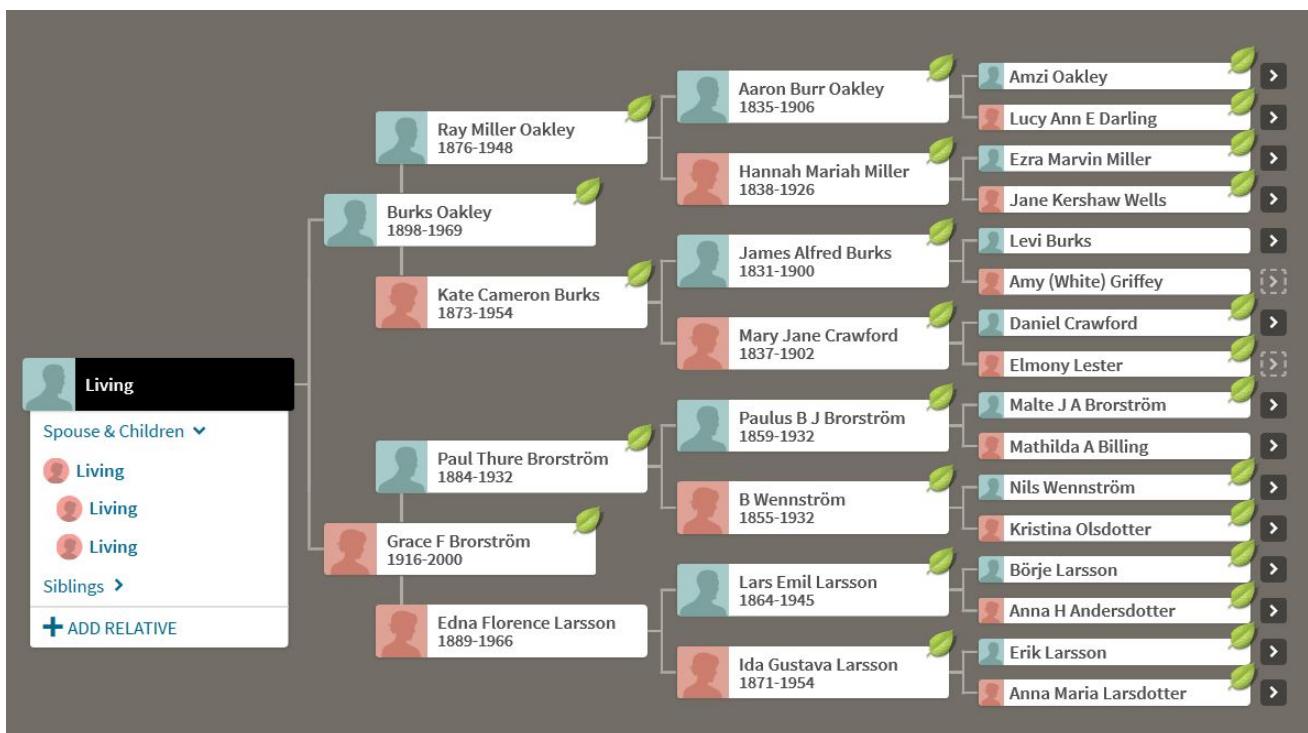
I note that several of my Burks family DNA matches on the Ancestry.com website include the earlier John Burks (1635-1735)¹⁰ in their family trees.

I will end by stating once again how impressed I am by the DNA analysis that can link me with another descendant of Samuel King Burks Sr., who was born in 1680. Wouldn't my father, who was born in 1898 and who really enjoyed researching our family genealogy, be amazed by all this!

Addendum

Of course, I'm also working on searching through my DNA matches on the AncestryDNA website for all eight of the family names represented by my great-great grandparents on my father's side of the family.

Here is my pedigree, showing where these different names come into my family tree:



¹⁰ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/65474163/person/36171239442/facts>

My goal in all of this is to find at least one DNA match (hopefully more) for each of the surnames going back to my great-great grandparents on the Oakley side of my family. These surnames are:

- Oakley
- Burks
- Miller
- Crawford
- Wells
- Darling
- White/Whyte Griffey
- Lester

Stay tuned for further developments!!