

Chapter 51

Going Back on One of Elmony Lester's Ancestral Lines on Geni.com

[originally written 9 July 2020]

Introduction

I have started using the Geni.com website to expand my knowledge of my family tree. Geni.com has what they call the “World Family Tree”. Unlike Ancestry.com, where everyone has their own complete (or incomplete) family tree, Geni.com is having its users collaboratively build just a single family tree. On Ancestry.com, there can be one thousand or more duplicate entries for the same person – and these entries often have conflicting information. On Geni.com, there should only be one entry on the entire website for any given person. Individual users on Geni.com can add their ancestral lines until they connect with people already in the World Family Tree. And then their lines immediately become part of this enormous family tree.

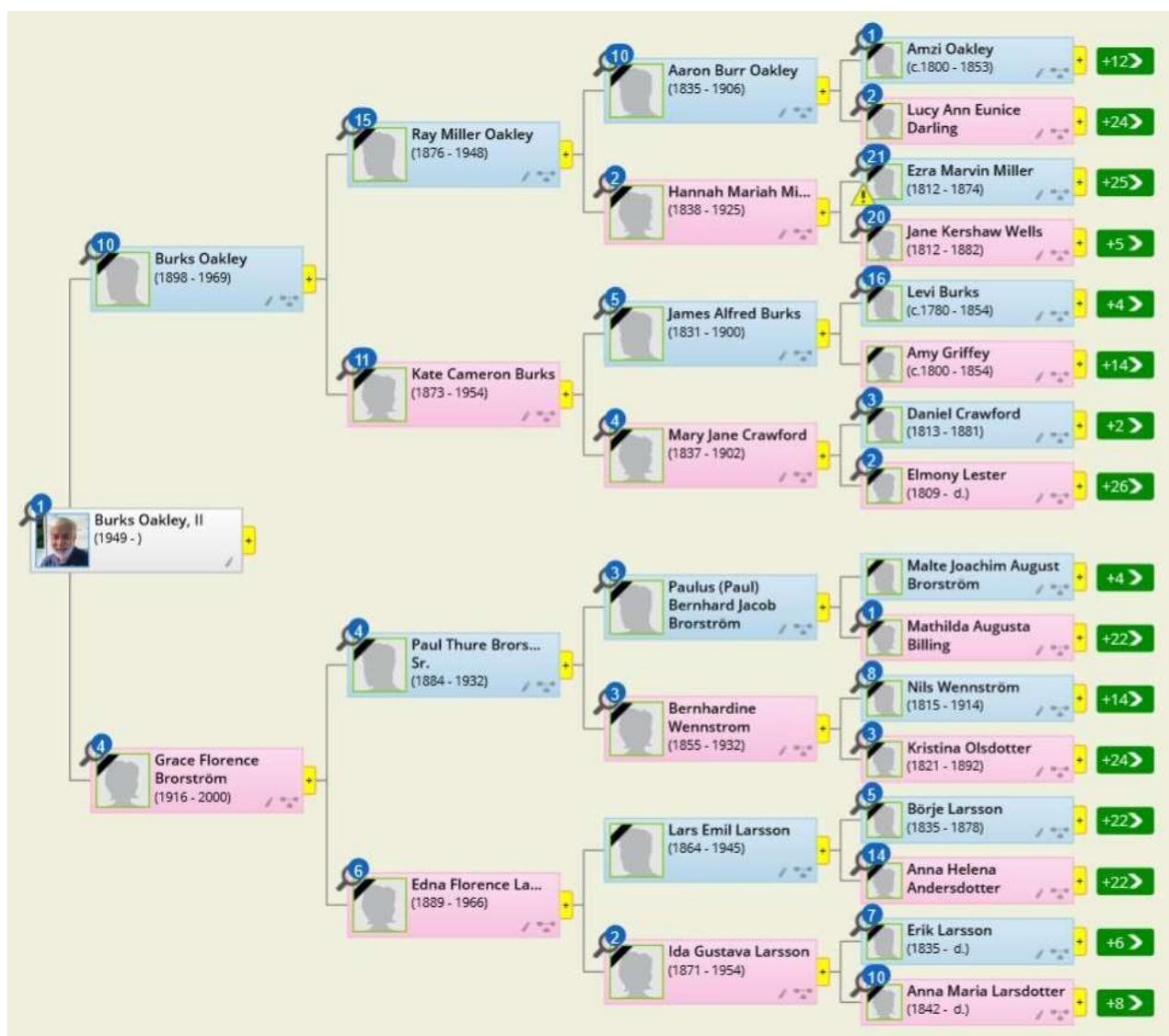


As of early July 2020, there are over 145 million individuals in the World Family Tree – see:

<https://www.geni.com/worldfamilytree>

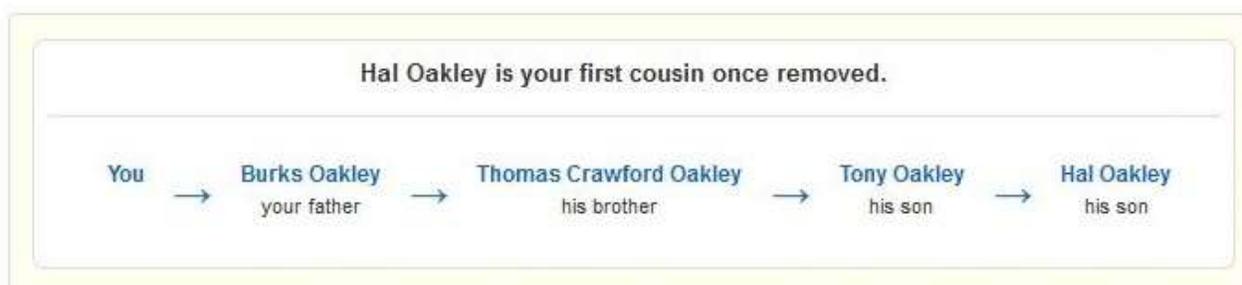
Over the past year, I have added various lines from my family tree to Geni.com, and then connected these lines to individuals already in the World Family Tree. I should add that in some cases, this just meant adding two or three generations of my family, and then discovering that the rest of the ancestral line was already in the World Family Tree.

Here is the initial portion of my pedigree on Geni.com:



I need to point out the numbers in the little green boxes at the far right of this chart. A user can click on one of these boxes to view the continuation of that line. For example, my 2nd-great grandmother Lucy Ann Eunice Darling is one down from the upper-right of this chart, and the green box next to her name has the number +24. This means that clicking on that box to view her ancestors will bring up a screen with 24 new individuals. If you count the number of boxes displayed in the chart above, you will see that +30 is the largest possible number of new ancestors that a user will be able to view on the next screen. Of course, it is possible to go on to additional screens, if there are more ancestors to view.

A feature of Geni.com is that it can use the World Family Tree to determine how two individuals are related. For example, here is my relationship with Hal Oakley:



Hal is my first-cousin once-removed. This is what Geni.com calls my “Shortest blood relationship”. If I were to see how I was related to Lucy Edget (my Uncle Thomas Crawford Oakley’s mother-in-law), it would show the “Shortest in-law relationship”:



Yes, this is correct – Lucy Edget was my Aunt Mary Susan Sullivan Oakley’s mother.¹

Anyone can be selected to be the “target” person for calculating relationships. For example, I made my cousin Hal Oakley the target, and then looked at his third-great grandfather Henry Heber Woodruff Sr.:



Geni.com correctly identified Henry Heber Woodruff Sr. as Hal’s 3rd-great grandfather.

Keep in mind that all of the people mentioned so far are part of the World Family Tree on Geni.com.

In the rest of this narrative, I will go back as far as I can on one of Elmony Lester’s ancestral lines on Geni.com. Elmony was my 2nd-great grandmother:

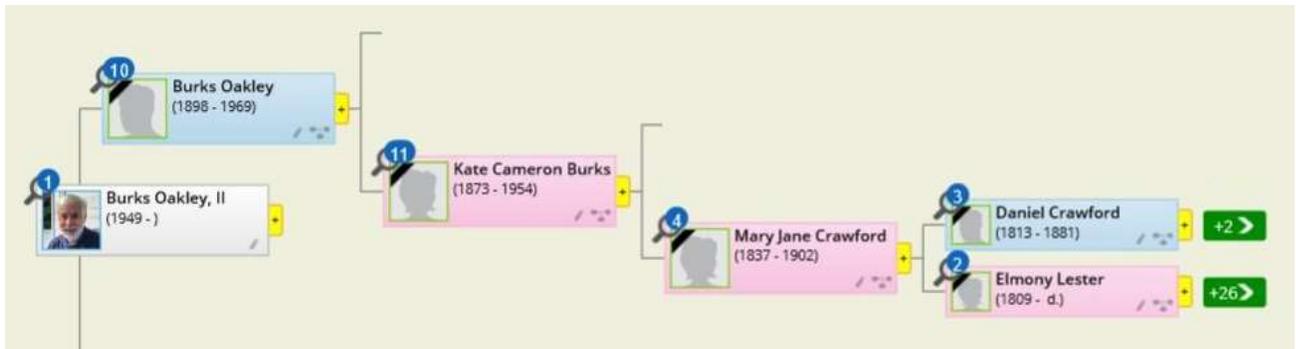


How far back will I be able to go? Will there be any “interesting” ancestors on this line? Read on!!

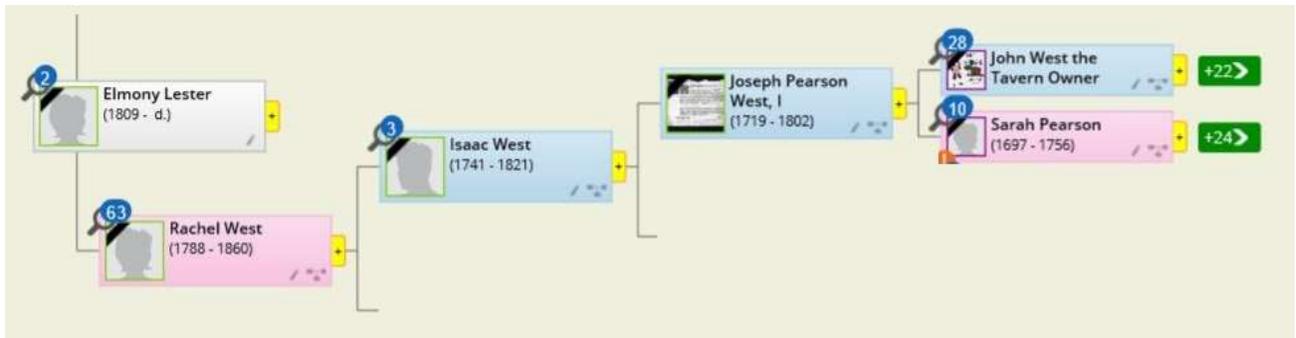
¹ Lucy is buried in the Oakley family plot in Woodland Cemetery in Quincy, IL. See: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/90737133/lucy-edget-sullivan>

Elmony Lester's Ancestors on Geni.com

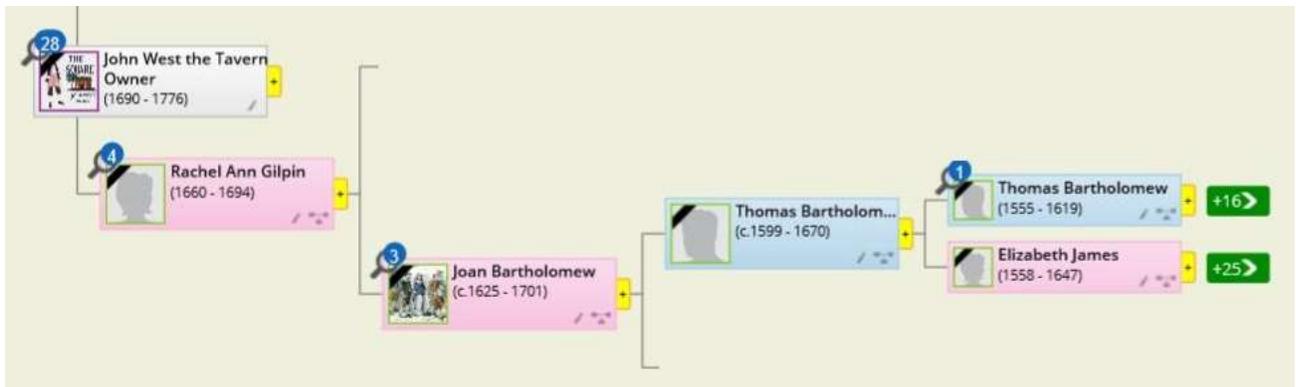
Here is my line to Elmony Lester on Geni.com:



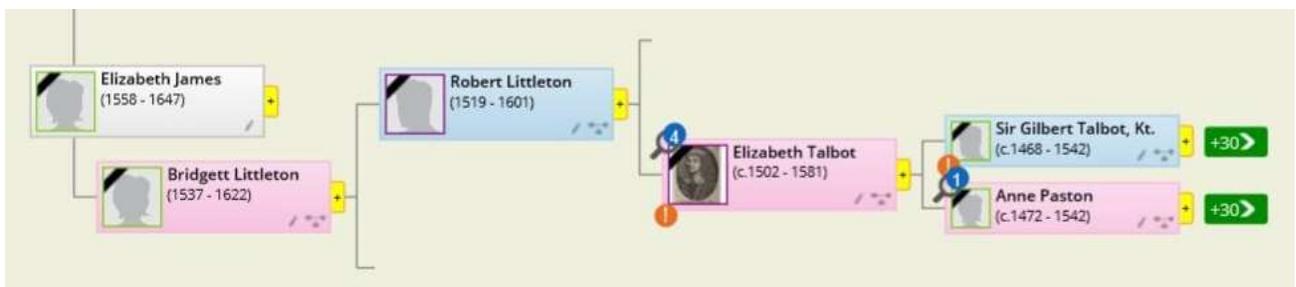
Continuing back from Elmony Lester – her mother was Rachel West (1788-1860), and I chose to go back on her West line:



I'll continue back from John West the Tavern Owner (no idea why someone gave him that name on Geni.com) on a branch of his maternal line:



Continuing back from Elizabeth James:



This got me to Sir Gilbert Talbot (1468-1542) – he was an English Knight and Sheriff of Worcestershire. In case you are wondering, I tried multiple paths going back from Elmony Lester before I ended up selecting the line to Sir Gilbert Talbot.

Sir Gilbert Talbot, Kt. 🌍

Gender: Male

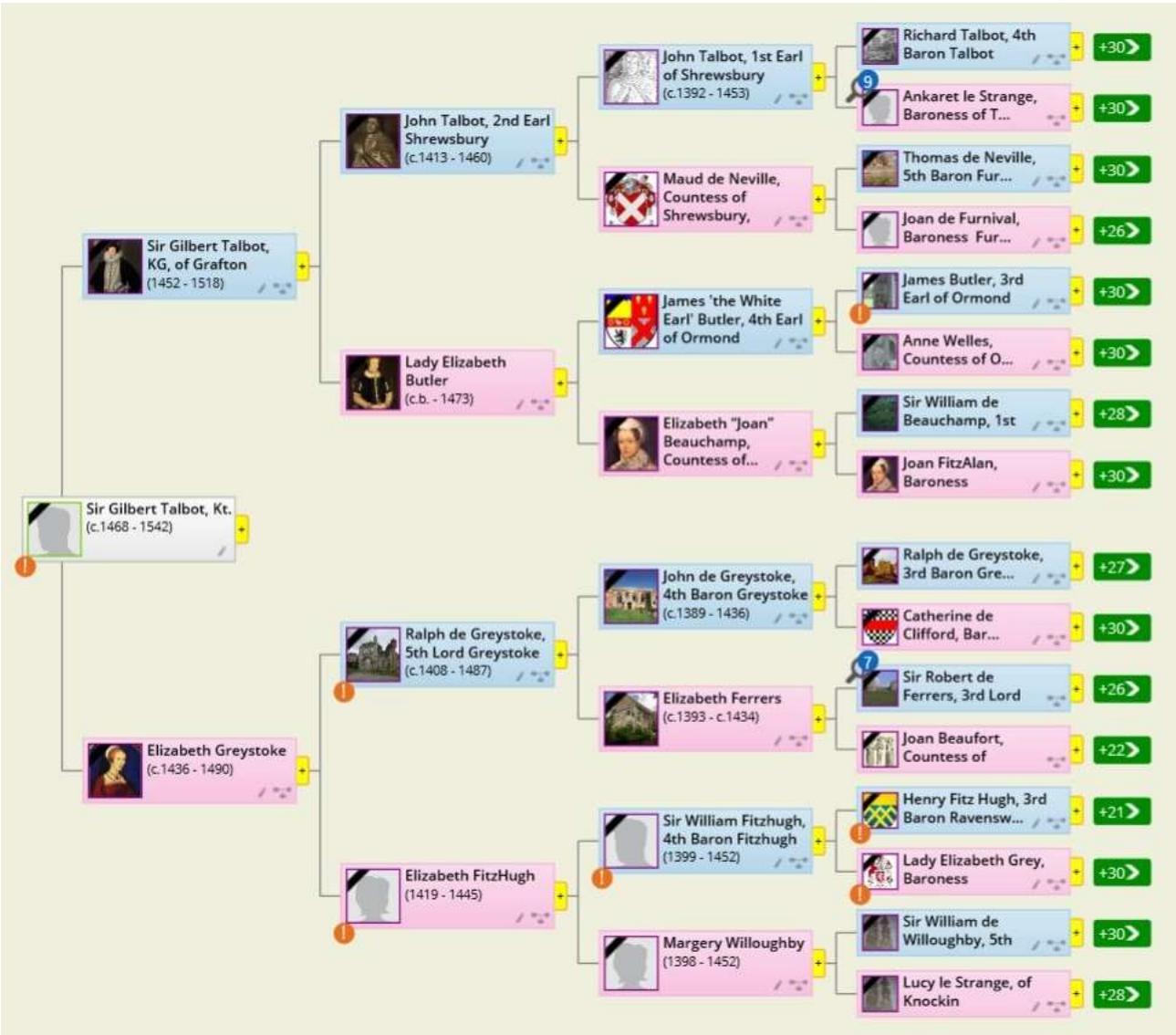
Birth: circa 1468
Grafton, Worcestershire, England

Death: October 22, 1542 (69-78)
Whitchurch, Shropshire, England

According to his profile on Geni.com:

Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sheriff of Worcestershire, was born circa 1468 at Grafton & Upton Warren, Worcestershire, England. He married Ann Paston, daughter of Sir William Paston, Burgess of Newcastle-upon-Tyne & Bedwin and Ann Beaufort, circa 1498. They had 3 daughters (Margaret, Elizabeth, & Mary). By an unknown mistress (or mistresses), Sir Gilbert Talbot also had Humphrey, Walter, Eleanor, & Margaret. Sir Gilbert Talbot, Sheriff of Worcestershire, died on 22 October 1542.

Here is Sir Gilbert's pedigree (I'll dispense with the Talbot name):



OMG! This is priceless! Look at all his ancestors who are nobility! I see an Earl, a Countess, a Lord, a Baron, etc. And of course, these are my ancestors as well.

Here is a summary of my line to Sir Gilbert Talbot:



Sir Gilbert Talbot, Knight, was my 14th-great grandfather. The line that I followed to get from me to him in the pedigree charts shown on the previous pages is exactly what is shown in this chart. It is the “shortest blood relationship” from me to Sir Gilbert.

Now let me look at a few of Sir Gilbert’s ancestors. I might as well start with King Edward I of England.



Edward of Westminster
 Spanish: Eduardo I, Rey de Inglaterra
 Gender: Male
 Birth: June 17, 1239
 Westminster Palace, London, Middlesex, England (United Kingdom)
 Death: July 07, 1307 (68)
 Burgh by Sands, Cumberland, England (United Kingdom) (Dysentery)
 Place of Burial: Westminster Abbey, London, England (United Kingdom)
 Immediate Family: Son of Henry III, king of England and Eleanor of Provence, Queen Consort of England

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_I_of_England

Edward I was a tall man (6'2") for his era, hence the nickname “Longshanks”. He was temperamental, and this, along with his height, made him an intimidating man, and he often instilled fear in his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he held the respect of his subjects for the way he embodied the medieval ideal of kingship, as a soldier, an administrator and a man of faith.

Here is the line from Sir Gilbert back to King Edward I:



King Edward I was Sir Gilbert’s 6th-great grandfather. Of course, since I am descended from Sir Gilbert, I’m also descended from King Edward I. Here is my line:



Wow! This line does NOT go through Elmony Lester and the rest of her ancestors back to Sir Gilbert. Instead, it goes through Ray Miller Oakley and several more generations of Oakleys, and then Sarah Burr (she was a first-cousin of Aaron Burr, the third Vice President of the United States).

Geni always calculates and displays the “shortest blood relationship”. Sir Gilbert was my 14th-great grandfather. This means that King Edward I would be my 22nd-great grandfather going back on the line through Elmony Lester and Sir Gilbert. Geni.com calculated that on my line through Sarah Burr, King Edward I was my 20th-great grandfather, so this is the line that was displayed.

From this, I know that I have at least two lines connecting me back to King Edward I – one through Elmony Lester, one through Sarah Burr. Actually, this is NOT a big surprise to me, since I wrote about this earlier:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/50-MyLines-to-KingEdward.pdf>

In fact, I have at least twelve different lines back to King Edward I. (!!)

Now let me move on to John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem & Emperor of Constantinople:



John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem & Emperor of Constantinople

Birth: circa 1170
Brienne-le-Château, Aube, Champagne-Ardenne, France

Death: March 21, 1237 (62-71)
Constantinople, Turkey

Immediate Family: Son of Erard II, count of Brienne and Agnès de Montfaucon
Husband of Jeanne De Chateaudun; Marie de Montferrat, queen of Jerusalem; Stephanie of Armenia, Rita and Berenguela de León, emperatriz consorte de Constantinopla
Father of Isabelle II, Queen of Jerusalem; John Brienne de Jerusalem, crown prince of Armenia; Agnese di Brienne; Jean II de Brienne, the Grand Butler of France; Marie de Brienne, Regent of Constantinople and Namur

As an aside, recall that The King of Jerusalem was the supreme ruler of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Crusader state founded by Christian princes in 1099

when the First Crusade took the city. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was finally dissolved with the fall of Acre and the end of the Crusades in the Holy Land in 1291.

Lots of information about John of Brienne on Wikipedia at:

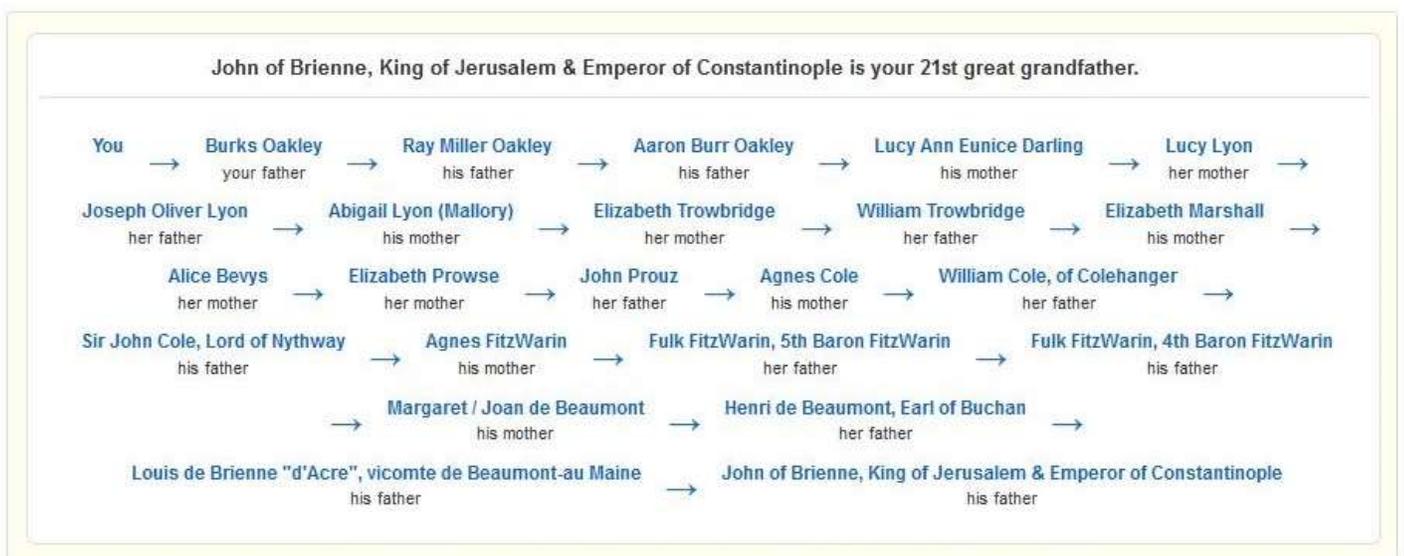
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_of_Brienne

Here is Sir Gilbert's line back to John of Brienne:



John of Brienne was Sir Gilbert's 8th-great grandfather.

Here is my line back to John of Brienne:



Once again, my line does NOT go through Elmony Lester and Sir Gilbert. This line goes back through my Lyon ancestors. On the line through Sir Gilbert, John of Brienne would be my 24th-great grandfather; using the Lyon line, he was my 21st-great grandfather. Again, this emphasizes how I have multiple lines back to nobility from the Middle Ages.

Now let me move on to Charles II “the Bald”, Western Emperor:



Charles De France

Birth: June 13, 823
Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Hesse, Germany

Death: October 06, 877 (54)
Mont Cenis, Brides-les-Bains, Savoie, Rhone-Alpes, France (Died while crossing the pass of Mont Cenis)

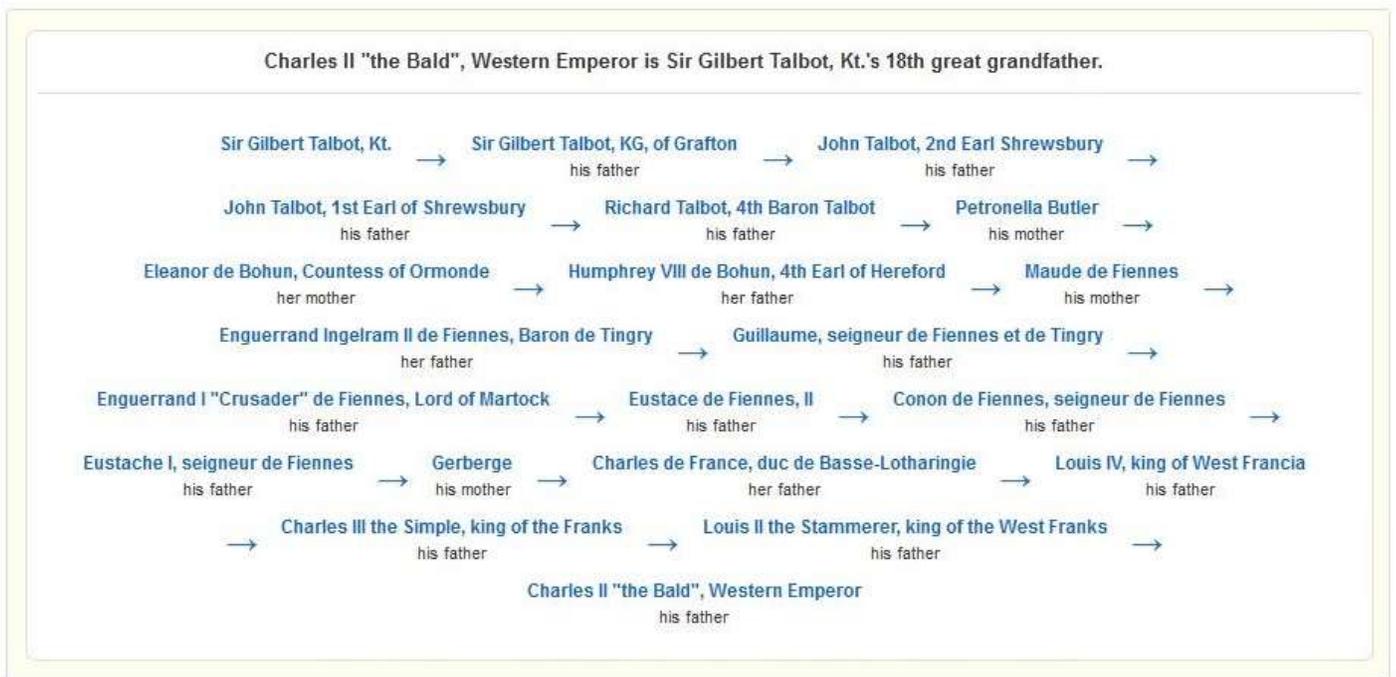
Place of Burial: Basilica Cathedral of Saint Denis, Saint-Denis, Seine-Saint-Denis, Île-de-France, France

Immediate Family: Son of [Louis I, The Pious](#) and [Judith of Bavaria](#)

From Wikipedia:

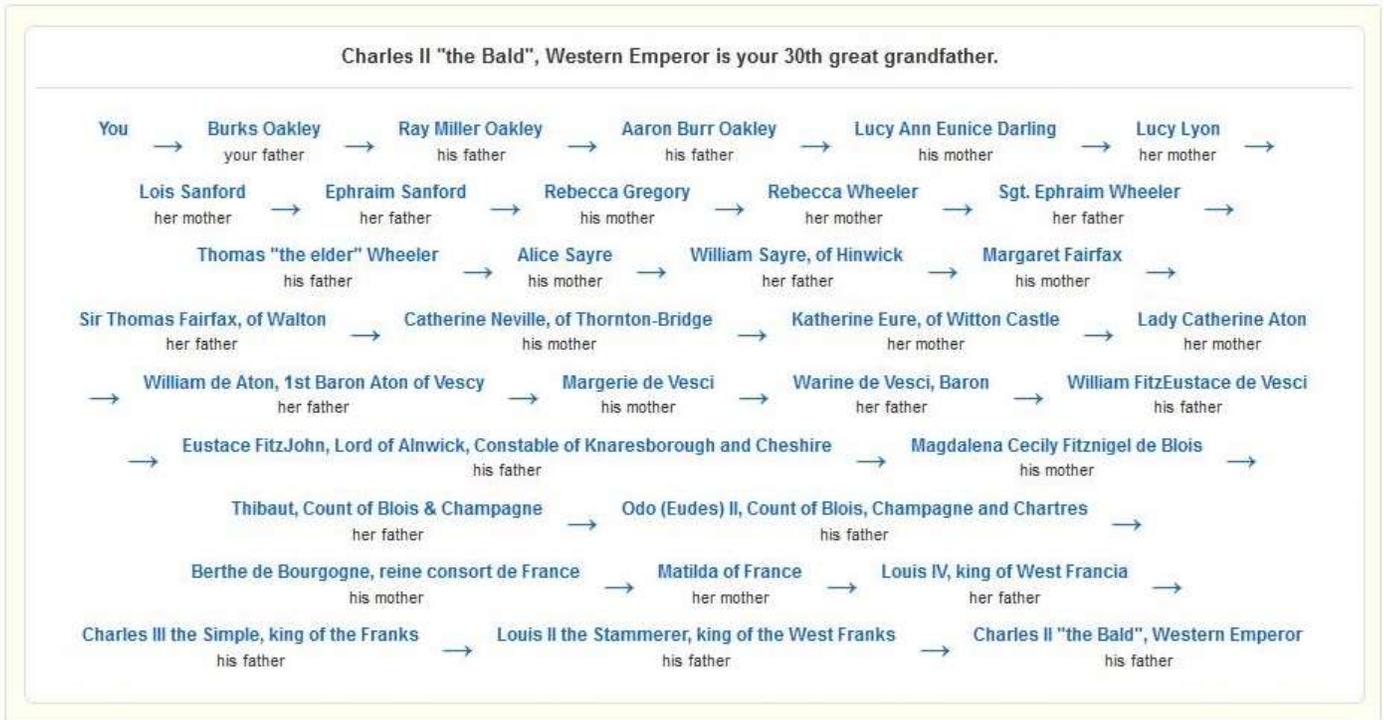
Charles II, also known as Charles the Bald (823-877), was a 9th-century king of West Francia (843-877), king of Italy (875-877), and emperor of the Carolingian Empire (875-877). After a series of civil wars during the reign of his father, Louis the Pious, Charles II succeeded, by the Treaty of Verdun (843), in acquiring the western third of the Carolingian Empire. He was a grandson of Charlemagne and the youngest son of Louis the Pious.

Here is Sir Gilbert’s line back to Charles II:



Charles II of France was Sir Gilbert’s 18th-great grandfather.

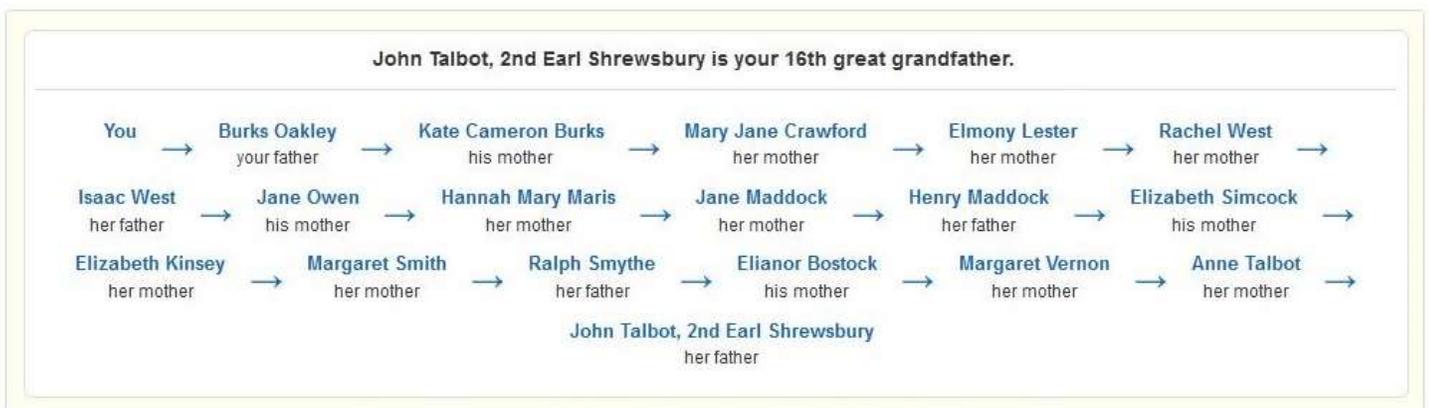
Here is my line back to Charles II:



This is yet another line for me! Again, it is NOT the line through Elmony Lester and Sir Gilbert. This line is Oakley-Darling-Lyon-Sanford-Gregory-Wheeler. And on this line, Charles II is my 30th-great grandfather. But on the line through Sir Gilbert, he would have been my 34th-great grandfather.

As an aside, my line back to Charles II goes through his son Louis II "The Stammerer" and his grandson Charles II "The Simple".

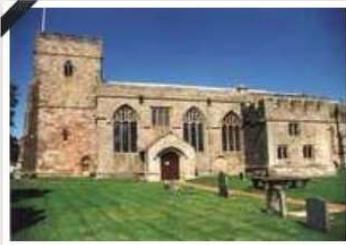
Sir Gilbert's paternal grandfather was John Talbot, 2nd-Earl of Shrewsbury. I won't bother showing Sir Gilbert's line to his grandfather, but here is my line to John Talbot:



Amazing that even this line doesn't go through Sir Gilbert. And this is a new line we haven't see yet in this narrative, going through Elmony Lester and Rachel West, but then Isaac West, Jane Owen, and Hannah Mary Maris.

So far, this is somewhat strange. I followed the line back through Elmony Lester to Sir Gilbert, and then I started looking at some of Sir Gilbert's "famous" ancestors. And my "shortest blood relationship" to each these ancestors does NOT go through Sir Gilbert.

Let me move on and see if this changes. John de Greystoke, 4th Baron Greystoke (c. 1390–1436), was a member of the northern English nobility in the early fifteenth century. He was the son and heir of Ralph Greystoke, 3rd Baron Greystoke:



John de Greystoke

Gender: Male
 Birth: circa 1389
 Owesley, Yorkshire, England
 Death: August 08, 1436 (42-51)
 Northamptonshire, England
 Place of Burial: Collegiate Church, Greystoke, Northumberland, England

More at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Greystoke,_4th_Baron_Greystoke

Here is Sir Gilbert's line to John Greystoke:



John Greystoke was Sir Gilbert's great-grandfather.

Here is my line to John Greystoke:



John de Greystoke was my 17th-great grandfather. And again, the ancestral line to him did NOT go through Sir Gilbert. This line started out going through Elmony Lester and Rachel West, but then jumped to my Lewis-Brooks-Warren ancestors.

It sure would be nice to find an ancestral line connecting through Sir Gilbert. So I'll press on. Next up is William de Ros, 1st Lord de Ros of Helmsley, Joint Lord and Warden of Scotland:



William de Ros, 1st Lord de Ros of Helmsley, Joint Lord and Warden of Scotland

Birth: June 27, 1255
 Helmsley, Yorkshire, England
 Death: August 08, 1316 (61)
 Youlton, Yorkshire, England
 Place of Burial: Kirkham Priory, Westow, North Yorkshire, England, United Kingdom

Lots about Lord William de Ros on Wikipedia at:

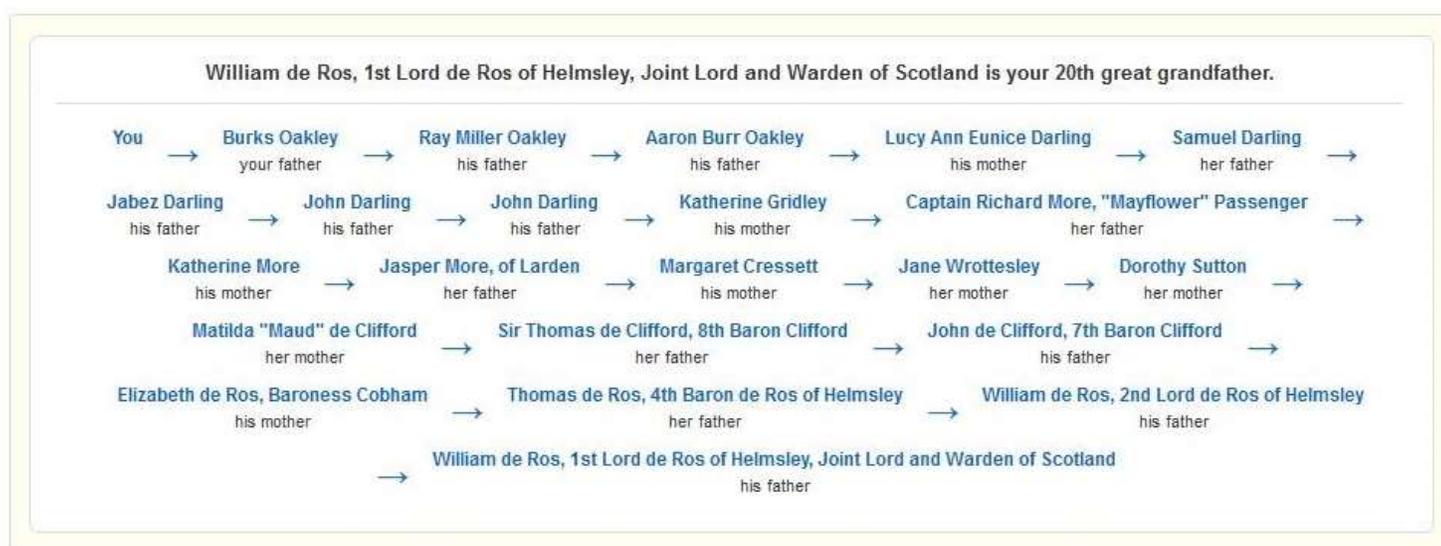
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Ros,_1st_Baron_Ros

Here is Sir Gilbert's line back to William de Ros:



William de Ros was Sir Gilbert's fourth-great grandfather.

Here is my line back to William de Ros:



William de Ros was my 20th-great grandfather. This is both good news and bad news. The good news is that this is yet another ancestral line, going through Jabez Darling and also Capt. Richard More, who came to America in 1620 on the *Mayflower*. See:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/48-RichardMore-MayflowerAncestor.pdf>

Of course, the bad news is that I still don't have a line through Sir Gilbert.

How about a woman ancestor? Will that change my luck? Let's try Ankaret Talbot le Strange, Baroness of Talbot:

Ankaret Talbot le Strange, Baroness of Talbot

Gender:	Female
Birth:	1361 Blackmere, Cornwall, England
Death:	June 01, 1413 (51-52) Shropshire, UK
Place of Burial:	Worksop Priory, Worksop, Yorkshire, England
Immediate Family:	Daughter of Sir John le Strange, Jr, 4th Lord Blackmere and Mary FitzAlan, Baroness Strange of Blackmere

Here is Sir Gilbert's line back to Ankaret le Strange:



She was his 2nd-great grandmother.

Here is my line back to Ankaret le Strange:



She was my 17th-great grandmother. And as you can see, this is another new ancestral line, going back through Elizabeth Mix and her father John Mix.

Well, let's just try a few more. Here is Sir John Willoughby:



John Willoughby

Birth: circa January 06, 1302
d'Eresby, Willoughby, Lincolnshire, England

Death: June 13, 1349 (43-51)
Willoughby, Lincolnshire, England

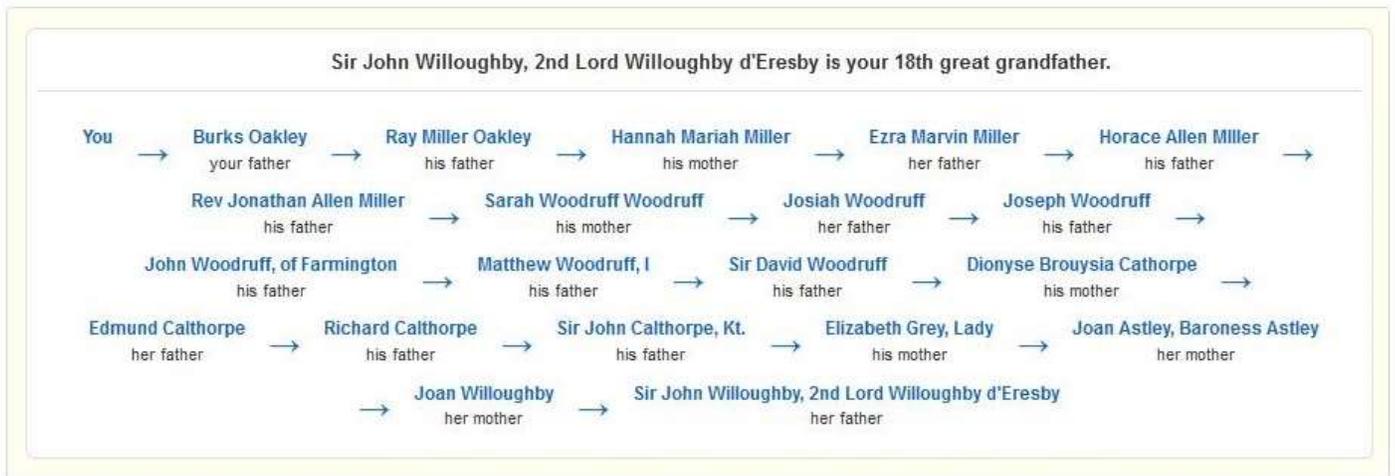
Place of Burial: Saint James Churchyard, Spilsby, Lincolnshire, England, United Kingdom

Here is Sir Gilbert's line back to Sir John Willoughby:



Sir John Willoughby was Sir Gilbert's 5th-great grandfather.

Here is my line back to Sir John Willoughby:



Surprise, surprise! Yet another ancestral line – this one involving my Oakley-Miller-Woodruff ancestors – very, very different than any of the other lines discussed so far in this narrative. I’m beginning to think that I won’t find any lines connecting back through Sir Gilbert.

Next I’ll look at Sir Hugh le Despenser I:



Sir Hugh le Despenser, I

Birth: 1195
Ryhall, Rutland, England (United Kingdom)

Death: February 23, 1238 (42-43)
Evesham, Worcestershire, England (United Kingdom)

Place of Burial: Abbey, Evesham, Worcestershire, England (United Kingdom)

Sir Hugh le Despenser (1195-1238) was a wealthy landowner in the East Midlands of England and served as High Sheriff of Berkshire. According to Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_le_Despenser_I

He was a descendant of a noble family who came to England from the same location as William the Conqueror and at the same time. This family, surnamed De Albetot, became William’s Stewards. Sir Hugh was appointed High Sheriff of Staffordshire and Shropshire in 1222 and High Sheriff of Berkshire in 1226 and 1238. He held eleven manors in England: in Leicestershire, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Rutland.

As an aside, Hugh le Despenser was the 10th-great uncle of John Spencer of Edworth. I visited the church in Edworth, England, in September 2019 and saw a number of Spencer gravestones, as well as a plaque dedicated to John Spencer and his wife Anne:

OK, time for a Hail Mary – let’s go for broke and look at Charlemagne:



Carolus 'Magnus', Rex Francorum & Imperator Romanorum

Birth: April 02, 742
Unknown - Likely in present day Belgium or Germany

Death: January 28, 814 (71)
Aachen, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany

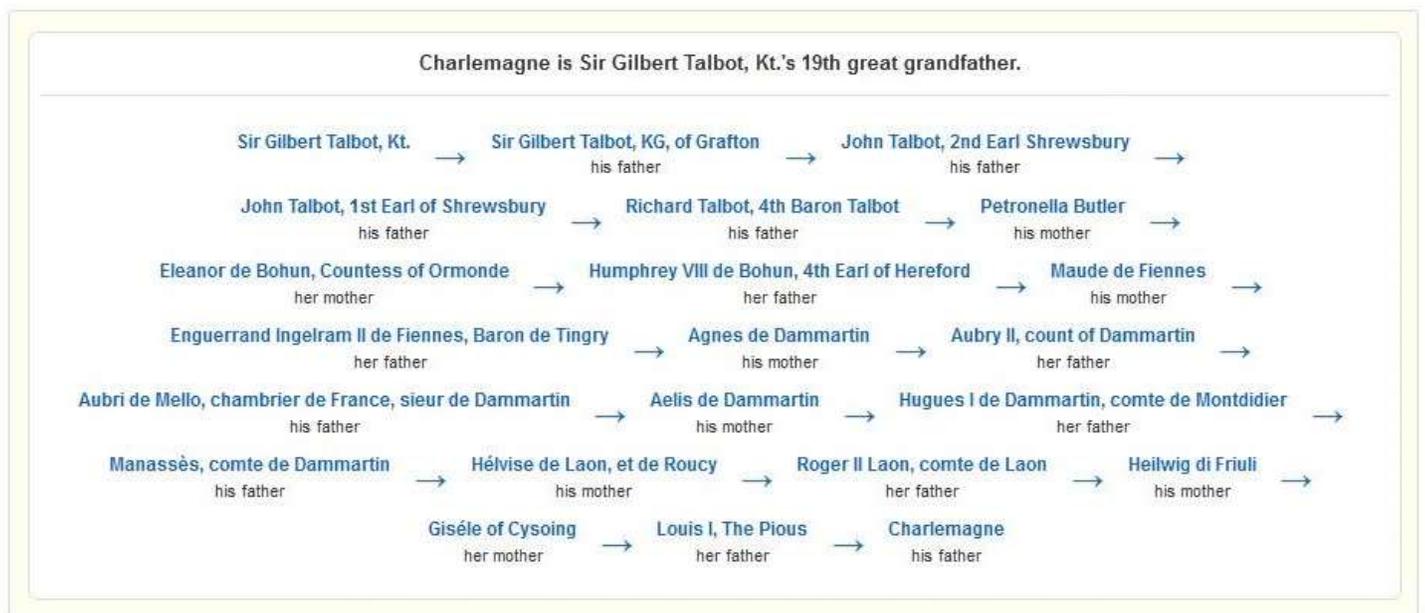
Place of Burial: Royal Church of St. Mary (present Aachen Cathedral or Kaiserdom), Aachen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Germany

Immediate Family: Son of Pépin III, King of the Franks and Bertha Broadfoot of Laon, Queen of the Franks

See the Wikipedia article at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlemagne>

Charlemagne or Charles the Great (748-814) was the King of the Franks from 768, the King of the Lombards from 774, and the Emperor of the Romans from 800. During the Early Middle Ages, he united the majority of western and central Europe. He was the first recognized emperor to rule from western Europe since the fall of the Western Roman Empire three centuries earlier. The expanded Frankish state that Charlemagne founded is called the Carolingian Empire. He was later canonized by Antipope Paschal III.

Here is Sir Gilbert’s line back to Charlemagne:



Charlemagne was Sir Gilbert’s 19th-great grandfather.

Here is my line back to Charlemagne:



Charlemagne was my 32nd-great grandfather on a line connecting through Sgt. Ephraim Wheeler – we saw this line earlier with Charles II “The Bald”. I should add that on the line going through Elmony Lester and Sir Gilbert, Charlemagne was my 35th-great grandfather.

OK, I’m going to quit here. I’m sure that there are more ancestral lines connecting me to European nobility in the Middle Ages, and I doubt that any of them go through Sir Gilbert.

Take Away Messages

Here are some thoughts about all this.

- Nobility in Europe in the Middle Ages intermarried. It appears that nobody who was nobility married a commoner.
- There appear to be amazing genealogical records for the nobility, considering how far back in the past these people lived.
- I have multiple ancestral lines going back to large numbers of European nobility from the Middle Ages.
- All my connections were through English ancestors who immigrated to America, even though their ancestors were from a number of European countries.
- All of the lines connecting me to European nobility go through people who settled in New England. The only outlier being Elmony Lester’s ancestors, who immigrated through Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Why don’t any of these ancestral lines connect through Sir Gilbert? The answer is actually quite simple. The lines DO indeed connect through Sir Gilbert – each and every one of them. But the lines through Sir Gilbert are not the SHORTEST lines, and Geni.com is programmed to only show the “Shortest blood relationship”.

● Shortest blood relationship

Sir Hugh le Despencer I is John Spencer, Sr., of Edworth's 10th great uncle.

On the line going back from me to Elmony Lester to Sir Gilbert, there must have been several more generations than on all the other lines. This would come about if my ancestors on this line had children at a young age, thus having more generations per century. And since Sir Gilbert was my 14th-great grandfather and was born more than 550 years ago (in 1468), there were a lot of centuries where a few additional generations could have been added.

And Geni.com is only programmed to display the shortest blood relationship between two people.

It would be nice if the good folks at Geni.com could provide the option to display the relationship between two people connecting through a specified intermediary. In this case, I could have selected Sir Gilbert as the intermediary.

Summary

In this narrative, I presented some information about Geni.com, and how I am using this website to expand my knowledge of my family tree. I then followed one of my ancestral lines back to my 2nd-great grandmother Elmony Lester, and from there back to my 14th-great grandfather Sir Gilbert Talbot, Knight.

Sir Gilbert came from a long line of European nobility, and I examined a number of his ancestors (who, of course, are my ancestors as well). I found it interesting that none of my ancestral lines on Geni.com going back to Sir Gilbert's ancestors went through Sir Gilbert. I found lots and lots of other ancestral lines, but none going through Sir Gilbert. But, one needs to keep in mind that Geni.com is programmed to only show the "shortest blood relationship" between two people. So while Geni.com didn't display my lines through Sir Gilbert, I always knew they were there.

Overall, I showed my lines going back to:

- Sir Gilbert Talbot
- King Edward I of England
- John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem & Emperor of Constantinople:
- Charles II "the Bald", Western Emperor
- John Talbot, 2nd-Earl of Shrewsbury
- John de Greystoke, 4th Baron Greystoke
- William de Ros, 1st Lord de Ros of Helmsley, Joint Lord and Warden of Scotland
- Ankaret Talbot le Strange, Baroness of Talbot
- Sir John Willoughby, 2nd Lord Willoughby
- Sir Hugh le Despenser I
- Charlemagne

Quite an impressive set of ancestors, for sure!