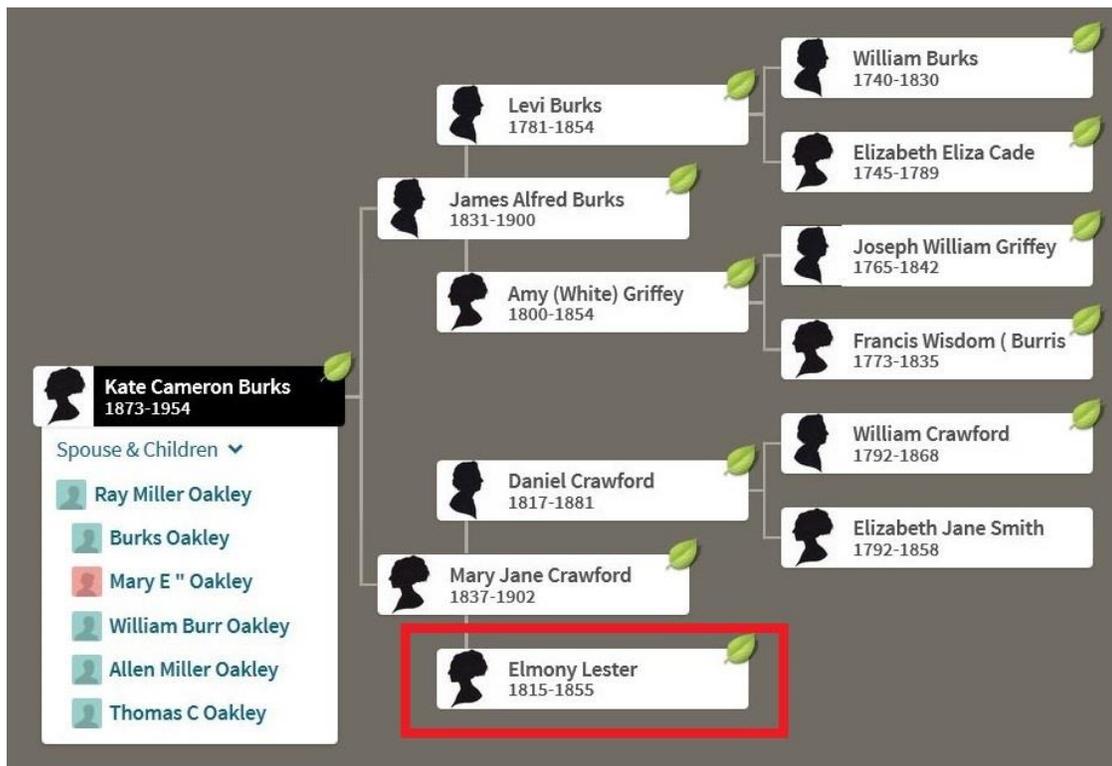


Who Were Elmony Lester's Ancestors?

By Burks Oakley II
14 April 2016

Introduction

Elmony Lester (1815-1855) was Kate Cameron Burks Oakley's maternal grandmother:



This means that Elmony Lester was one of the eight great-grandparents of my father, Burks Oakley, and his siblings Elisabeth, Bill, Allen, and Tom. As of November 2015, Elmony Lester was the only one of these eight great-grandparents for whom I did not have a family tree (or at least a hypothetical family tree supported by DNA matches).

Based on my father's genealogy (as given to me in electronic form by my cousin Hal Oakley), Elmony was born in 1815. She married Daniel Crawford on 24 October 1836 in Montgomery County, Virginia, and she died in 1855 at the young age of 40.

Elmony Lester

b: 1815

m: 24 Oct 1836 in Montgomery County, Virginia, United States (age 21)

d: 1855 (age 40)

Elmony Lester appears in the database “Virginia Marriages, 1785-1940”, which is on the FamilySearch.org website¹ (a free service provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints):

Elmony Lester	
mentioned in the record of Daniel Crawford and Elmony Lester	
Name	Daniel Crawford
Birth Date	1815
Age	21
Spouse's Name	Elmony Lester
Event Date	24 Oct 1836
Event Place	Montgomery County, Virginia
Father's Name	William Crawford

CITING THIS RECORD

"Virginia, Marriages, 1785-1940," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XR8J-Q8P> : accessed 24 August 2015), Daniel Crawford and Elmony Lester, 24 Oct 1836; citing Montgomery County, Virginia, reference P 256; FHL microfilm 32,633.

Searching the entire set of online records on the Ancestry.com website for Elmony Lester only turned up three hits, and those were simply to documents having the listings of Virginia marriages; Elmony doesn't appear in ANY family trees, census records, birth records, etc., on this site! Again, this meant that once again I had come up against the proverbial brick wall. How frustrating!

In the past, I have used autosomal DNA matches to support a hypothetical family tree for several of the ancestors on my father's side of the family. I now have used this same approach to break through the brick wall involving Elmony Lester's ancestry.

The remainder of this narrative is about my quest to discover Elmony Lester's branch of the "Quincy Oakley" family tree. Read on!

¹ <https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XR8J-Q8P>

The Lester Family in Montgomery County, Virginia

For many months now, I have gone back every few weeks to search for information about Elmony Lester. If she was married in Montgomery County, Virginia, then it would be reasonable to assume that she was born and raised in that same county. I finally discovered a book written in 1996 by Marguerite Tise, entitled "The Lester Family of Floyd County and Montgomery County, Virginia":²

THE LESTER FAMILY
OF
FLOYD COUNTY AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY
VIRGINIA
by
Marguerite Tise
Copyright © Marguerite Tise 1996
All rights reserved
Second (revised) printing 1997
Floyd, Virginia

Jerry Curtis Lester, who thinks of Marguerite as the "Queen of Lester Genealogy," wrote:³

"Remarkable, Marguerite did not use a computer to produce the manuscript of her book. She did it on a typewriter! And, she included the most complete index I have ever seen! Every person mentioned in the text is in the index with all the page numbers where the person is mentioned. At least, I've not found any exceptions. I've seen no "typos" or misspelled words or inconsistent formatting, and the formatting is very systematic with numbering, letters and indenting to delineate the various generations. I'm blown away by what she was able to do in her late 80's. Her mind was so good."

This book chronicles a branch of the *Lester* family that goes back to Peter Lester (1660-1742), an immigrant who came to America from Leicestershire, England. Note that *Lester* is most likely the American version of *Leicester* (which is

² <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~jerrycl Lester/Tise%20Book/Tise%20Book.pdf>

³ <http://jerrycl Lester.com/Tise%20Introduction/>

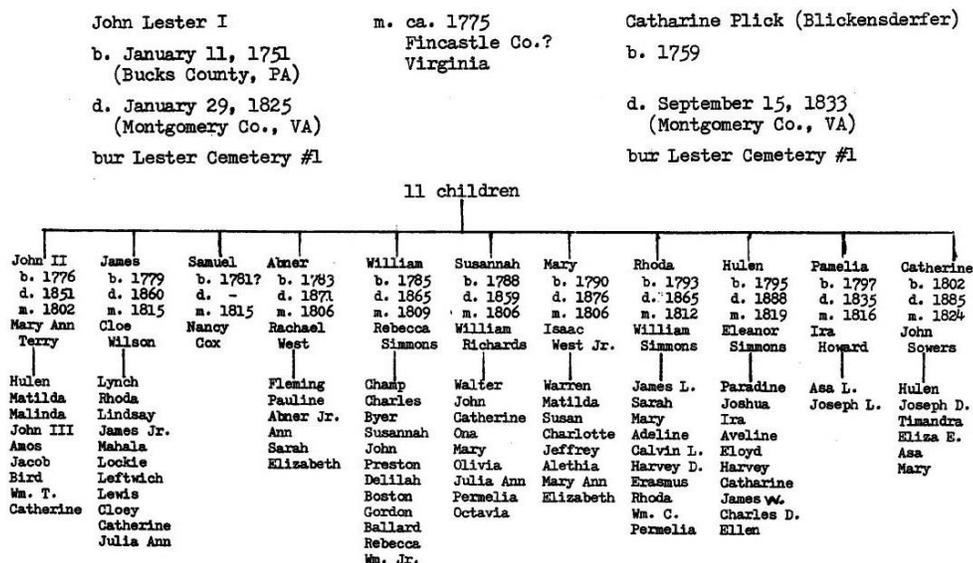
pronounced læstər or LESS-tər). Peter settled in Philadelphia; he was a Quaker, and most likely interacted with William Penn. [More about this in Appendix I.]

Peter's great-grandson, John Lester (1752-1825), was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania (north of Philadelphia), and as a young man, he and his two **Lester** cousins, George and William, moved to Montgomery County, Virginia. At the time, Montgomery County was the western frontier, and settlers were under constant threat of Indian attacks. In 1774, John Lester was a soldier in Col. Campbell's Company, and was paid 15 shillings for 10 days of service. He then served as a soldier in the Revolutionary War, as a private in Capt. Daniel Trigg's Company of Montgomery County Militia.

John Lester married Catherine Plickenstalver in 1775, when he was 24 years old and she was just 16 years old. Catherine's family was from Germany, and her last name also was spelled Blickensdoerfer or Blickensdorfer. Her father was Johannes Blickensdoerfer.⁴ Johannes was born in 1726 in Kohlhof, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany, and died in 1800 in Montgomery County, Virginia.

John and Catherine built a log cabin in Montgomery County, near the confluence of Brush Creek and Little River, near the Little River ford. John died in 1825 at the age of 73; Catherine died eight years later at the age of 74. They were both buried in the **Lester** family cemetery, on the knoll above their home.

John and Catherine had eleven children, who were born in Montgomery County in the 1770's and 1780's. Marguerite Tise's book includes a chart showing all eleven children of John and Catherine, as well as their grandchildren:



⁴ <http://person.ancestry.com/tree/49688982/person/13086721184/facts>

Elmony Lester – Descended from John Lester and Catherine Plickenstalver?

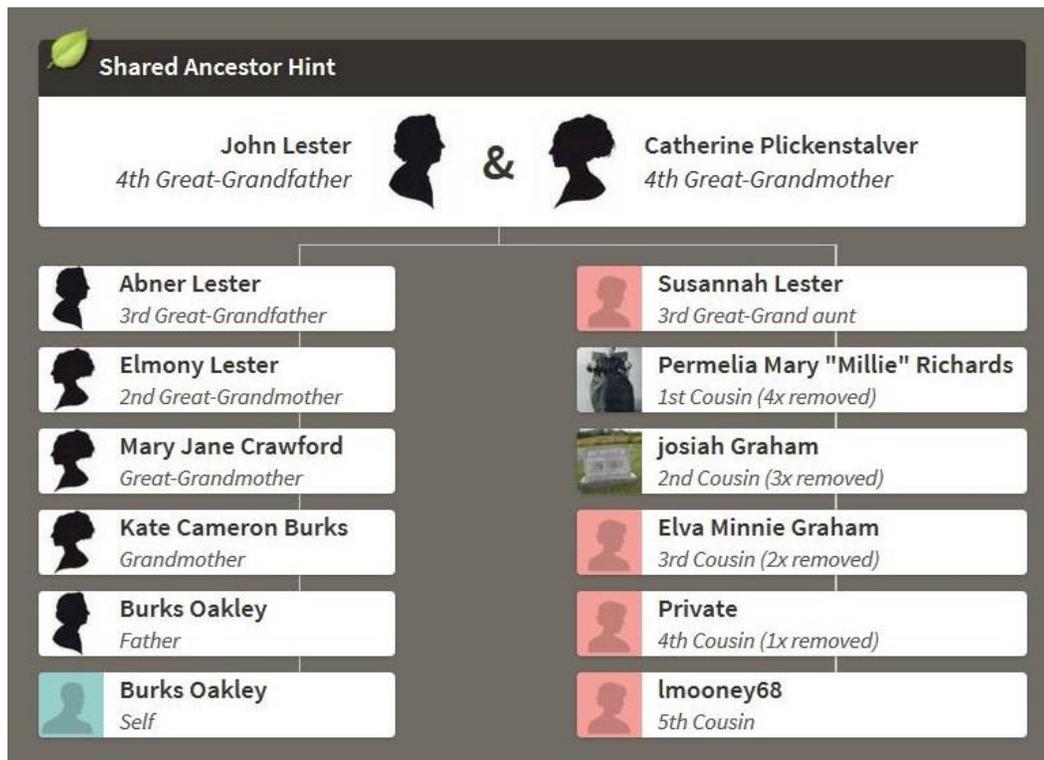
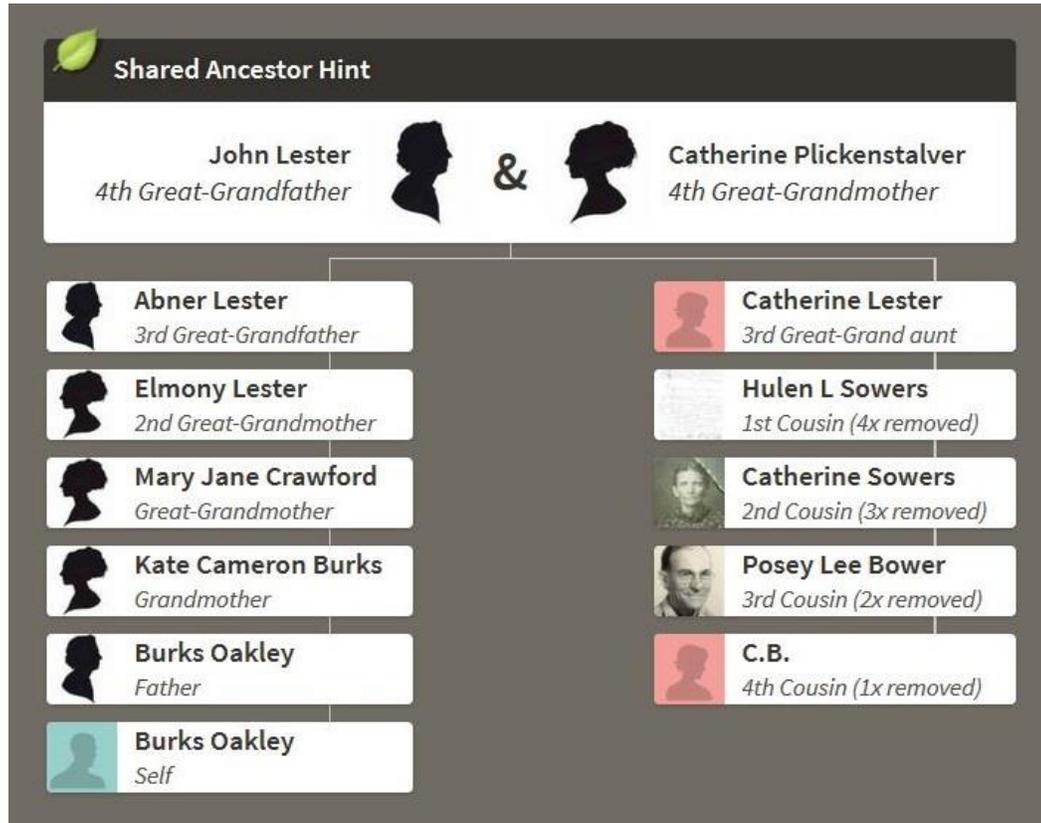
As shown in the diagram from Marguerite Tise’s book on the previous page, John Lester and Catherine Plickenstalver had sons John, Samuel, William, James, Hulen, and Abner. I actually posited that any of them could be the father of our Elmony. [*posited* – a word I’ve always wanted to use in my writing ... posit (verb): assume as a fact; put forward as a basis of argument.] I constructed full family trees assuming that each one of them was Elmony’s father; these hypothetical family trees included their wives and multiple generations on both sides of the family. I then looked to see if I had any autosomal DNA matches with living relatives who were descended from Elmony’s hypothetical ancestors in each of these family trees.

I was amazed to see that I had a number of DNA matches with living descendants of the people in Elmony’s pedigree assuming that Abner Lester (1783-1871) was her father and Abner’s wife Rachel West (1788-1860) was her mother:



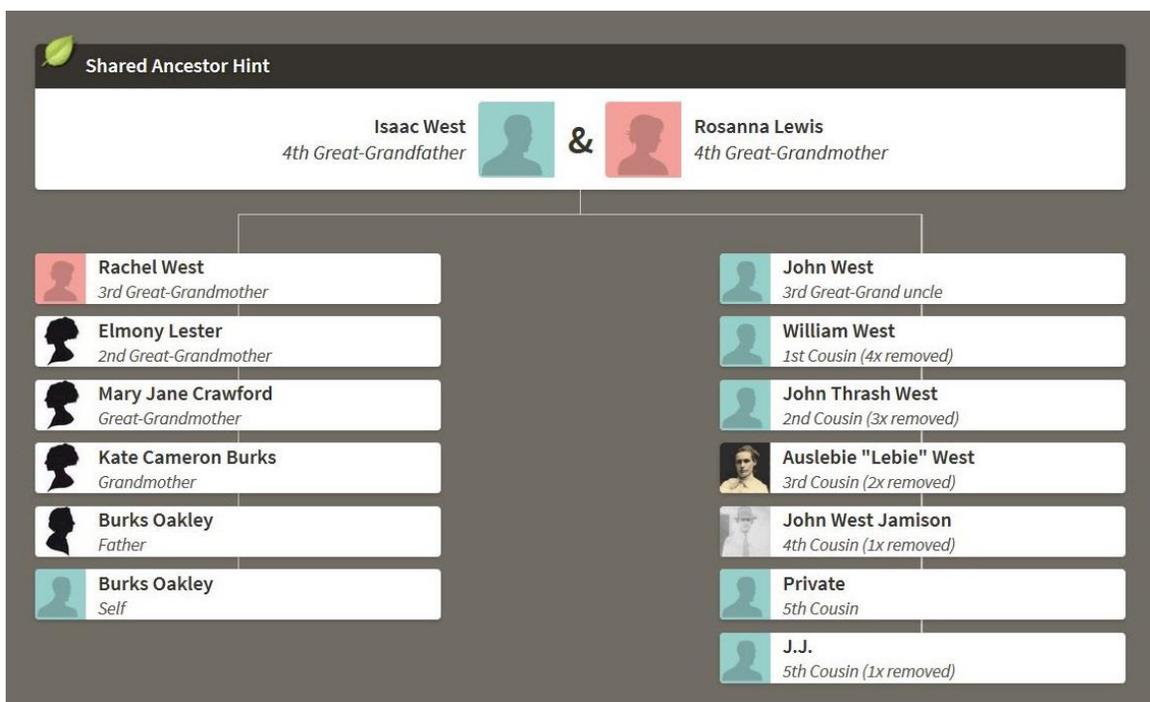
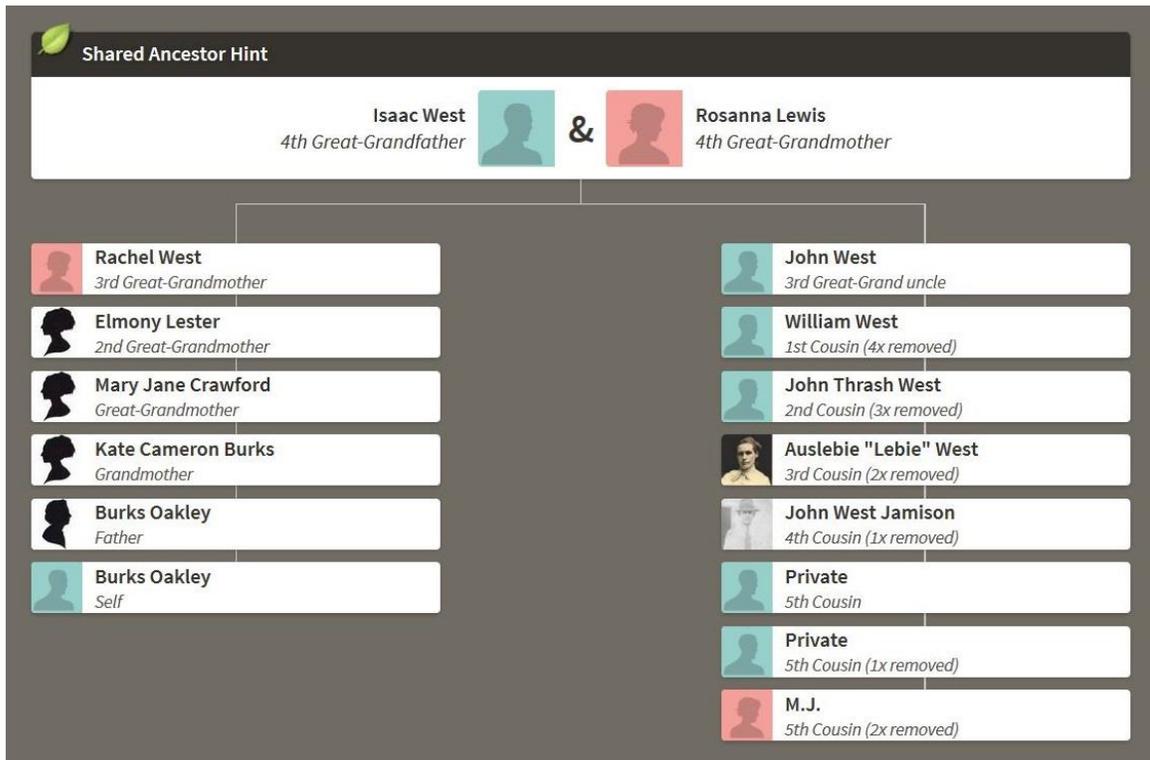
In turn, Rachel’s parents were Isaac West (1741-1821) and Rosanna Lewis (1752-1818). I added these six individuals (Elmony’s hypothetical parents and grandparents) to my family tree on the Ancestry.com website. And several hours later, I found that I had six new *Shared Ancestor Hints* on this site. Recall that a *Shared Ancestor Hint* means that one of my DNA matches and I both have the same person or couple as a direct ancestor; that is, we both are descended from the same person or couple AND we also have a DNA match.

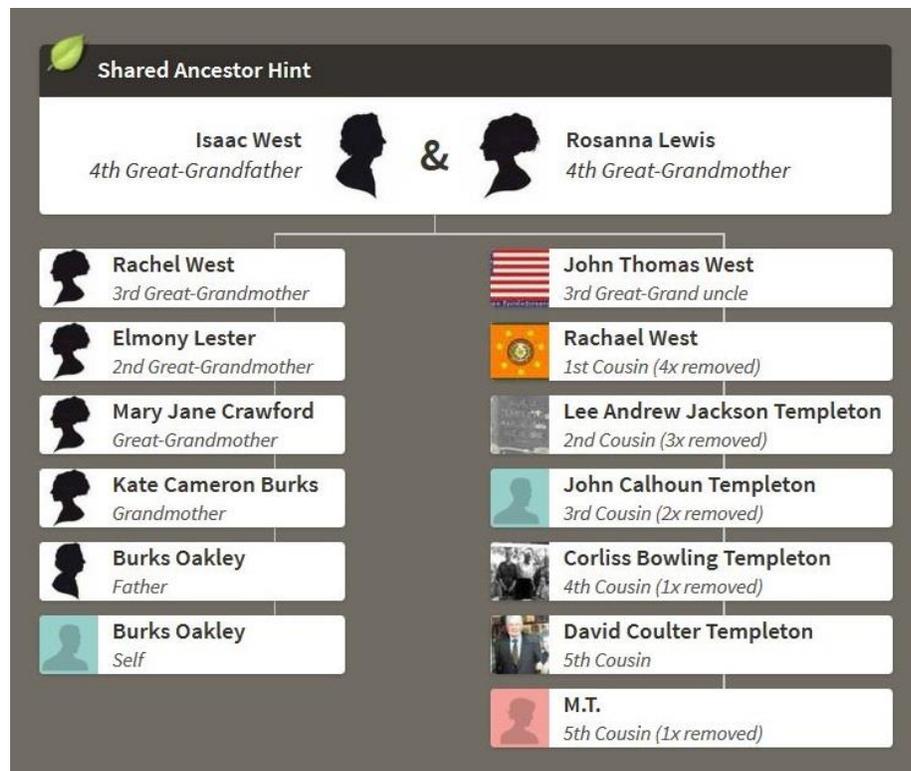
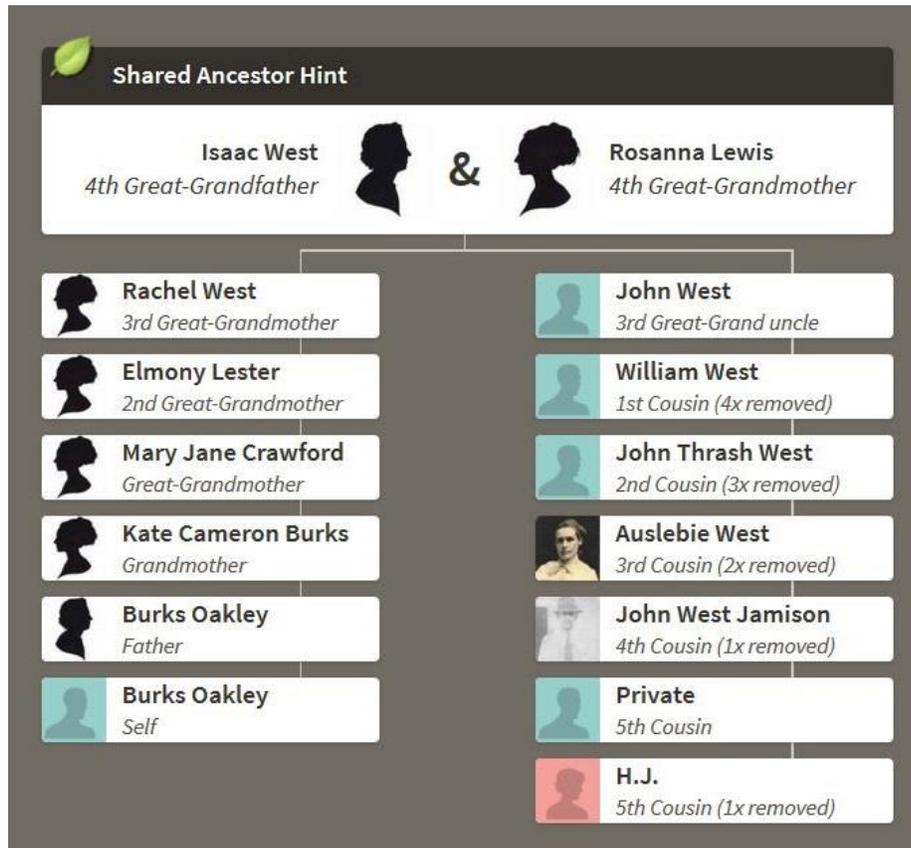
Two of these *Shared Ancestor Hints* went back to John Lester and Catherine Plickenstalver, my assumed paternal grandparents of Elmony Lester:



The match with **Imooney68** is interesting, in that she only has 342 people in her entire family tree (a relatively small number compared with most family trees on the Ancestry.com website), and many of her ancestors are in her **Lester** line.

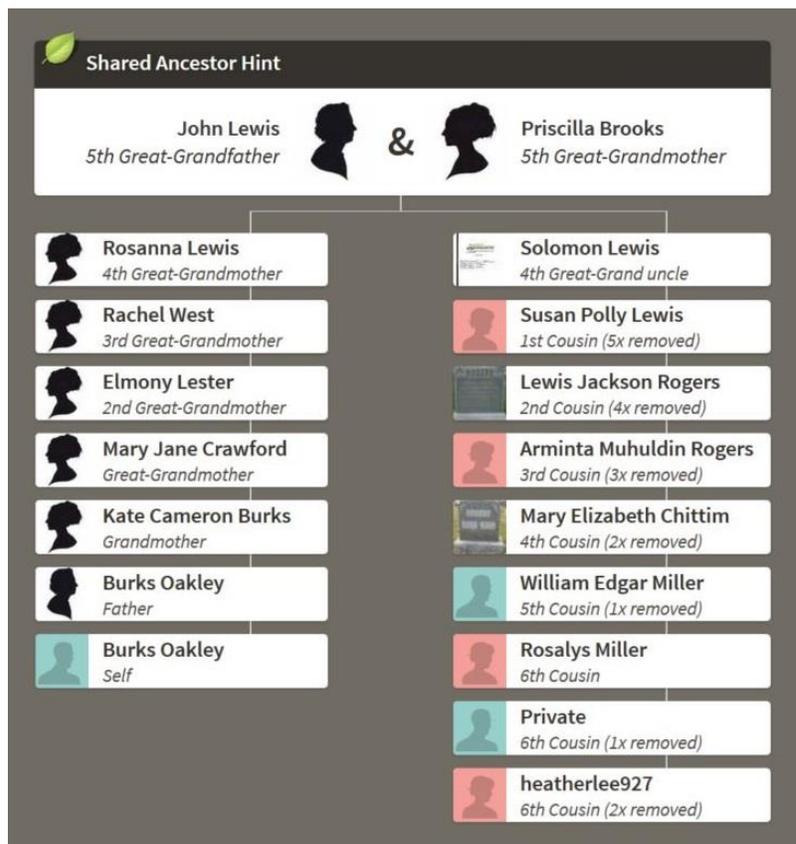
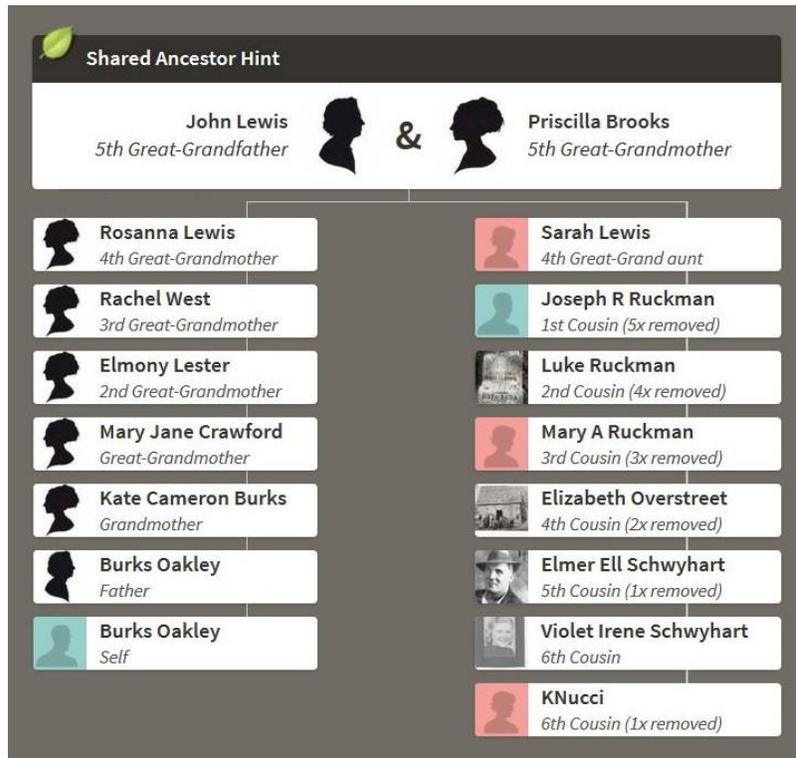
The next four *Shared Ancestor Hints* go back to Isaac West and Rosanna Lewis, my assumed maternal grandparents of Elmony Lester:

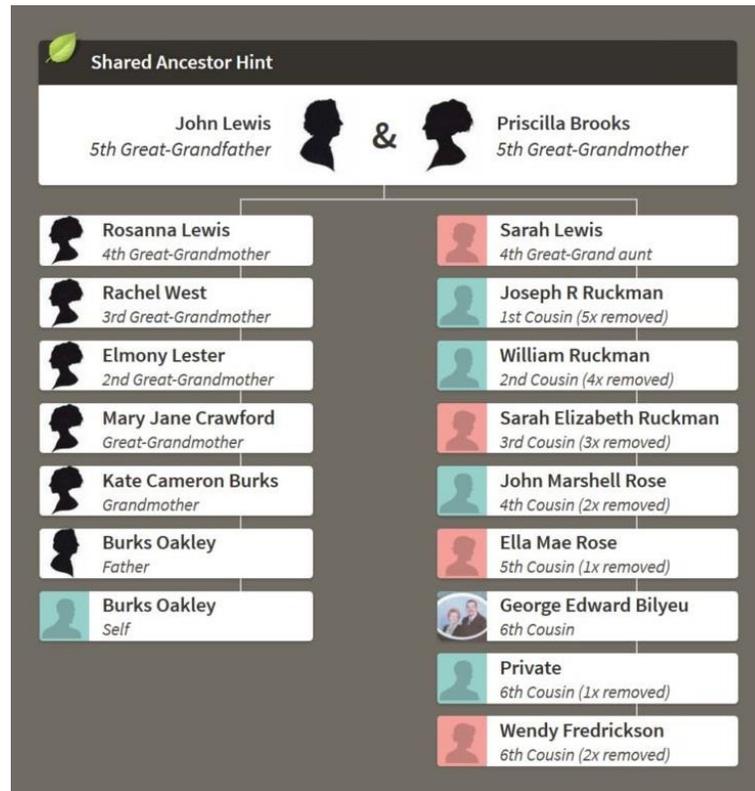




I was encouraged by these six new *Shared Ancestor Hints*, so I added several more generations to Elmony Lester's hypothetical pedigree, including John Lewis

(1719-1802) and Priscilla Brooks (1725-1797), who were the parents of Rosanna Lewis (my assumed maternal grandmother of Elmony Lester). Adding John and Priscilla gave me three more *Shared Ancestor Hints*:

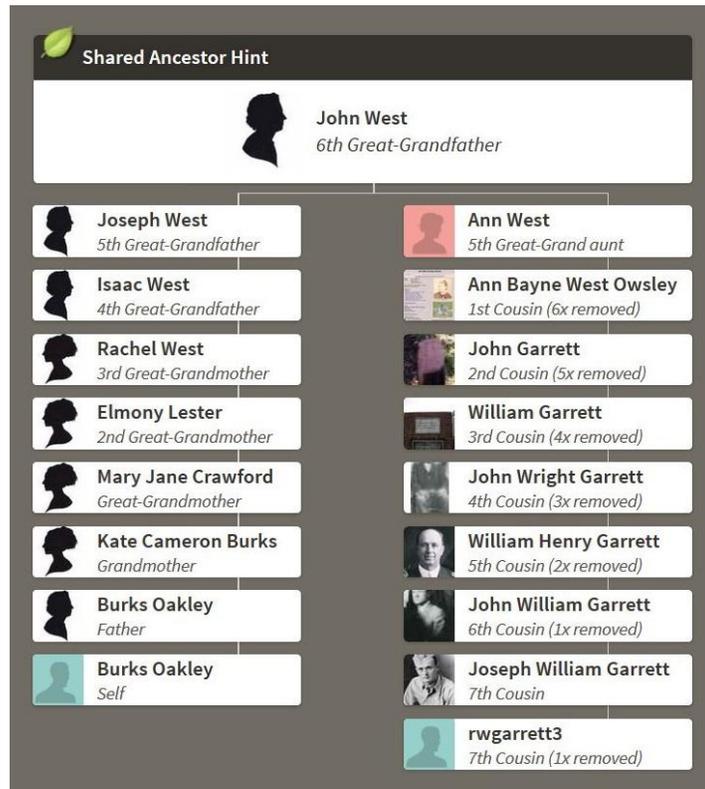




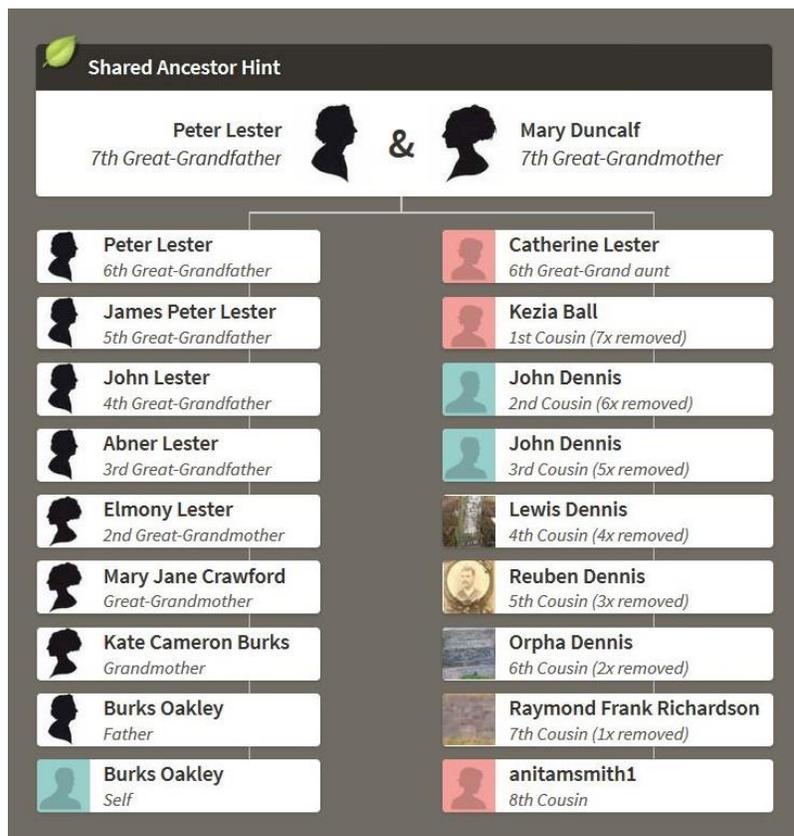
I also added Joseph West (1718-1802) and Jane Owen (1720-1791), who were the parents of Isaac West. That gave me another *Shared Ancestor Hint*:

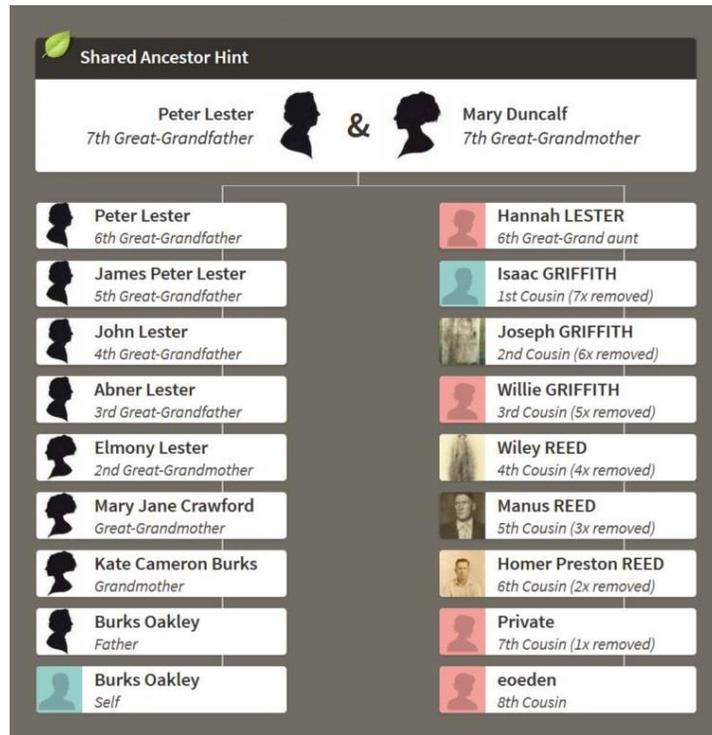


I then added John West (1690-1776), who was the father of Joseph West, and that gave me yet another *Shared Ancestor Hint*:



Several more *Shared Ancestor Hints* go all the way back to the immigrant Peter Lester (1660-1742) and his wife Mary Duncalf (1664-1742):





Overall, thirteen of my 104 *Shared Ancestor Hints* are related to this hypothesized pedigree for Elmony Lester. Actually, nine of the *Shared Ancestor Hints* link to private family trees, so I can't view these family trees to see how we are related. So it really is thirteen of the ninety-five that I can access that are due to this hypothesized line.

Other DNA Matches Linking to the John Lester Family

In searching through all of these family names, I found several other DNA matches that connect to this family. For example, a woman with the username of ***mabarker11*** goes back to Lindsey Johnson Lester, who was the son of James Lester and Chloe Wilson and the grandson of John Lester and Catherine Plickenstalver:

But mabarker11's **Lester** line ends with Lindsey Johnson Lester, so the Ancestry.com software doesn't detect this match.

Another DNA match in this same **Lester** line is with a woman having the username of **H.L.** (administered by tgtjames22). She is a descendant of Narcissa (Lia) Ellen Lester:

Direct ancestors with the surname Lester

From H.L. : Teresa Taylor family tree (1)

Narcissa (Lia) Ellen Lester

B: Apr 1853 in Virginia, USA

D: 06 Mar 1879 in Floyd, Floyd, Virginia, USA

Narcissa Ellen Lester's father was Lindsey Johnson Lester, and as mentioned above, he was a grandson of John Lester and Catherine Plickenstalver. Unfortunately, **H.L.**'s family tree doesn't go back past Narcissa Ellen Lester, so our DNA match doesn't result in a *Shared Ancestor Hint*:

The screenshot shows a user profile for 'H.L.' (administered by tgtjames22) with a 'SEND MESSAGE' button. Below the profile is a 'Predicted relationship: Distant Cousins' section with a 'Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins' and 'Confidence: Good'. A hint below states: 'Her Narcissa (Lia) Ellen Lester is a descendant of John Lester (1752-1825) and Catherine Blickensdorfer (1759-1833) - but her family tree doesn't go back past Narcissa. But her tree is easy to trace - see for example, <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/5818272/>'

I also found a DNA match with a woman with the username of **mkmdigs1**, whose pedigree actually goes all the way back to Peter Lester (the immigrant) and his wife Mary Duncalf. But for whatever reason, this doesn't show up in a *Shared Ancestor Hint*:

★  **mkmdigs1** Tucson - Member since 2010, last logged in 4 days ago SEND MESSAGE

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

📄 Goes back to Peter LESTER (the immigrant) and Mary DUNCALF. This is my assumed line for Elmony LESTER. She is descended from their daughter Catherine LESTER, and Elmony is descended from their son Peter LESTER.  

[View less](#)

When searching my DNA matches for ancestors born in Virginia and having the **West** surname, I came up with a user named **AyEm63**:

★  **AyEm63**  142 people

Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins  Confidence: Good 

VIEW MATCH

Last logged in Apr 2, 2016

This person is descended from Thomas West (1665-1696) and Rachel Ann Gilpin (1660-1684), who were the parents of John West (shown in one of the *Shared Ancestor Hints* above). John West was the paternal great-grandfather of Rachel West, the mother of Elmony Lester in my hypothesized family tree.

★  **AyEm63** Member since 2007, last logged in last week SEND MESSAGE

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

📄 Our match goes back to Thomas WEST and his wife Rachel Ann GILPIN. They were the parents of Thomas WEST Jr. in this family tree, and also the parents of John WEST. John WEST is the paternal great-grandfather of Rachel WEST in my hypothesized pedigree for Elmony LESTER.  

The *Shared Ancestor Hints* detailed above, as well as the other DNA matches with living descendants of the **Lester/Blickensdorfer** line, provide strong evidence in support of the hypothesis that Elmony Lester's parents were Abner Lester and Rachel West. This fills in the last remaining branch of the "Quincy Oakley" family tree, at the level of my father's eight great-great-grandparents.

Lingering Doubts

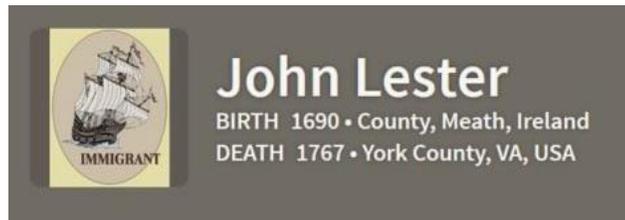
Even though I now have found DNA matches with a large number of living descendants of people found in my hypothetical family tree for Elmony Lester, I am not 100% convinced that I have found the correct line. Marguerite Tise was the "Queen of Lester Genealogy", and by all accounts she was an incredibly thorough person – and Elmony Lester doesn't appear in her book about the descendants of John Lester and Catherine Plickenstalver in Montgomery County, Virginia. Moreover, when searching through all of my DNA matches on the Ancestry.com website for people descended from someone with the surname of **Lester**, I have found several other **Lester** lines.

One such line involves a woman having the username of **Jmboll60**:

The screenshot shows three DNA match results for a 4th cousin relationship. Each result includes a star icon, a profile picture placeholder, the match name, administrative information, a possible range of 4th to 6th cousins, a confidence level of 'Extremely High' with a green progress bar, the number of shared people (1504), and a 'VIEW MATCH' button. All matches were last logged in on April 11, 2016.

Match Name	Administered by	Possible range	Confidence	Shared People	Last Logged In
J.G.	Jmboll60	4th - 6th cousins	Extremely High	1504	Apr 11, 2016
Jmboll60	Jmboll60	4th - 6th cousins	Extremely High	1504	Apr 11, 2016
D.I.	Jmboll60	4th - 6th cousins	Extremely High	1504	Apr 11, 2016

Her **Lester** line goes back to an Irish immigrant named John Lester and his wife, Sarah Whitehead:



Similarly, I have a DNA match with a woman having the username of **tamibethb**, and she also is descended from John Lester and his wife Sarah Whitehead:

But I don't have DNA matches with living descendants of others who appear in the **Lester-Whitehead** line from County Meath, Ireland – there simply are many more matches with the **Lester-Plickenstalver** line.

I have included this disclaimer that I am not 100% certain, just in case someone from a future generation of our family finds that my hypothesized line is not the correct one...

But wait, there is still one more line of evidence to consider!

The Maris Family Connection

In my hypothetical family tree for Elmony Lester, Elmony's mother was Rachel West, and Rachel's parents were Isaac West (1741-1821) and Rosanna Lewis (1752-1818). I was able to find a number of Isaac West's ancestors, including his maternal grandmother, Hannah Maris (1698-1752), and I also was able to go back on this **Maris** family line to Hannah's father, George Maris Jr. (1662-1753) and to her grandfather, George Maris Sr. (1632-1705). This part of our family tree is shown in the following diagram:



The name *Maris* is not very common, so I decided to see if I had any DNA matches related to the *Maris* family line.⁵ Using the software tools on the Ancestry.com website, I searched all of my DNA matches for anyone who was directly descended from a *Maris*:

Not surprisingly, this search turned up *OrvilleRSmith*:

⁵ In case you are wondering, Roger Maris, the professional baseball player who set the MLB record for home runs during the 1961 season with 61, was born Roger Eugene Maras on 10 September 1934. He later Anglicized his last name to "Maris". Roger Maris was the son of Rudolph S. "Rudy" Maras and Corrine Perkovich, who were both of Croatian origin.

Recall from one of the *Shared Ancestor Hints* above that he and I are both descended Joseph West (1718-1802) and Jane Owen (1720-1791), who were the parents of Isaac West. His family tree includes Hannah Maris, her father George Maris Jr., and her grandfather, George Maris Sr.

Next, this search turned up **H.J.** and **J.J.** (both administered by Jamison701).



The image shows two DNA match cards. The top card is for user H.J., administered by Jamison701. It features a red silhouette profile, a star icon, and a green 'VIEW MATCH' button. The text indicates a possible range of 5th to 8th cousins with good confidence, and that the user last logged in on April 10, 2016. To the right, it shows 878 other people with a green leaf icon. The bottom card is for user J.J., also administered by Jamison701. It features a teal silhouette profile, a star icon, and a green 'VIEW MATCH' button. The text indicates a possible range of 5th to 8th cousins with good confidence, and that the user last logged in on April 10, 2016. To the right, it shows 1605 other people with a green leaf icon.

Again, this isn't surprising, since in the *Shared Ancestor Hints* shown earlier in this narrative, they both are descended from Isaac West and Rosanna Lewis. Both of their family trees go back to Hannah Maris, her father George Maris Jr., and her grandfather, George Maris Sr. (although their trees have the wife of George Maris Sr. as Alice Wellsmith, while I have Alice Wilsmith).

The next **Maris** match was with a woman having the username of **halouf14** – someone I had not encountered previously:



The image shows a DNA match card for user halouf14. It features a red silhouette profile, a star icon, and a green 'SEND MESSAGE' button. The text indicates a predicted relationship of distant cousins with a possible range of 5th to 8th cousins and good confidence. A note at the bottom states: 'MARIS match going back to George MARIS and his wife Alice WILSMITH - in my assumed line for Elmony LESTER.' There is also a green leaf icon and a trash can icon.

Her **Maris** line went back to Sarah Maris (1697-1755). According to her family tree, Sarah's father was John Maris (1669-1747) and her grandparents were George Maris Sr. (1632-1705) and Alice Wilsmith (1632-1699). Bingo! Here I have a DNA match with a descendant of George Maris Sr. and Alice Wilsmith that is totally separate from Elmony Lester's line going back through Joseph West and Jane Owen.

Continuing on with my **Maris** DNA matches, the last ones were with **L.F.** and **J.F.** (administered by loretta_thom) – again, new matches that I hadn’t encountered previously:

★  **L.F.** (administered by loretta_thom) 
Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins 
Confidence: Good 
Last logged in Apr 10, 2016  46257 people 

★  **J.F.** (administered by loretta_thom) 
Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins 
Confidence: Moderate 
Last logged in Apr 10, 2016  46257 people 

Their **Maris** line went back through Alice Maris (1660-1726) to George Maris Sr. and Alice Wilsmith:

< Direct ancestors with the surname Maris

 **Alice Maris**

Vital Events (5 of 6 timeline events)

Birth 17 October 1660
Grafton Flyford, Worcester, UK

Marriage 15 Jan 1684 to Jacob Simcock
Ridley, Chester, Pennsylvania

Death 10 Oct 1726
Ridley, Chester, Pennsylvania

Parents

 **George Maris**
02 Dec 1632 - 15 Jan 1705

 **Alice Wilsmith**
16 Jan 1632 - 11 Mar 1699

Spouse

 **Jacob Simcock**
6 Jan 1658 - 10 Oct 1708

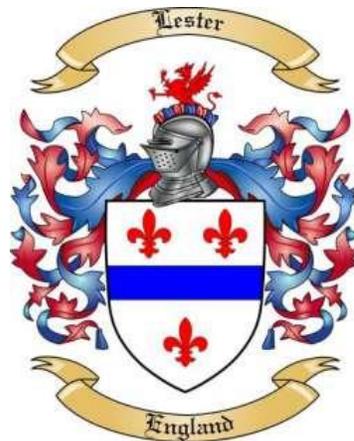
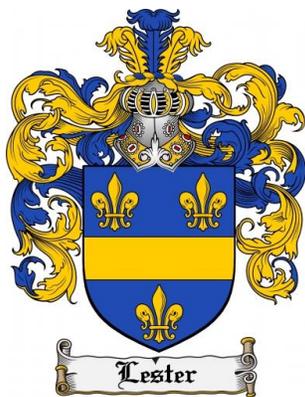
Yes! Another **Maris** line that is totally separate from Elmony Lester’s line going back through Joseph West and Jane Owen.

Overall, every single one of my **Maris** DNA matches on the Ancestry.com website go back to George Maris Sr. and Alice Wilsmith. And while some of these matches come from the Joseph West – Jane Owen line, three of them (**halouf14**, **L.F.**, and **J.F.**) are completely separate. The uniqueness of the **Maris** name, coupled with the fact that ALL of my DNA matches with people descended from someone having the name **Maris** go back to George Maris Sr. and Alice Wilsmith, really

have helped convince me that my hypothetical pedigree for Elmony Lester is correct.

The Lester Family Crest

Here are several versions of the **Lester** Family Crest:



The Lester Family Name

The name **Leicester** (**Lester**) is of Anglo-Saxon origin and is a locational surname deriving from Leicester, the county town of Leicestershire. The placename is recorded in the “Anglo-Saxon Chronicles” of 942 as “Ligora Ceaster”, and in the Domesday Book of 1086 as “Ledecestre”, the derivation being from the Old English pre-7th century tribal name “Ligore”, meaning “dwellers on the river Legra” with “Ceaster” a Roman fort, from the Latin “Castra”, legionary camp. The development of the surname has included Nicholas de Leycester, William Leycetter, Henry Lasisture, and Richard Lasseter. The modern surname can be found in forms as varied as “Leicester, Lestor, Lesseter and Laister”. On 17 December 1590, Elizabeth Leicester, an infant, was christened in St. Michael's, Wood Street, London. The first recorded spelling of the family name is shown to be that of Hugo de Legrecestra, which was dated 1130, in the “Leicestershire Pipe Rolls”, during the reign of King Henry 1, known as “The Lion of Justice”, 1100 - 1135. Surnames became necessary when governments introduced personal taxation. In England this was known as Poll Tax. Throughout the centuries, surnames in every country have continued to “develop” often leading to astonishing variants of the original spelling.⁶

⁶ <http://www.surnamedb.com/Surname/Leicester>

The Present Day Leicester, England

Leicester (pronounced læstər or LESS-tər) is a city and unitary authority area in the East Midlands of England, and the county town of Leicestershire (pronounced læstərʃər).⁷ The city is the burial place of King Richard III. In the 2011 census, the population of the City of Leicester unitary authority was 330,000, making it the most populous municipality in the East Midlands region.

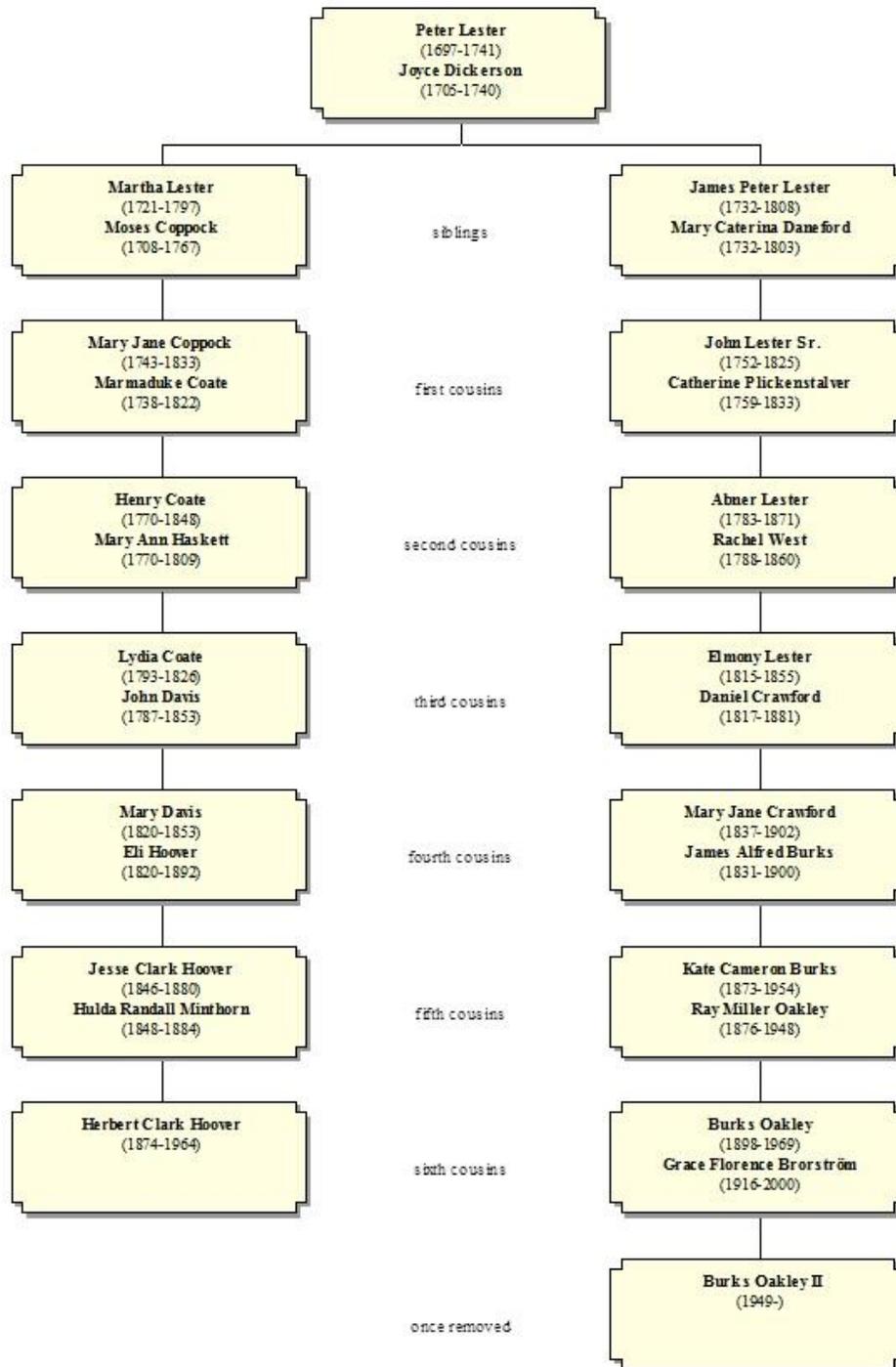


Leicester City Football Club (pronounced læstər sɪti), also known as the Foxes, are an English professional football club based in Leicester at the King Power Stadium. They play in the Premier League, having been promoted as champions of the Football League Championship in 2013-14, signaling a return to the top flight of English football after a decade away.

Peter Lester – Grandfather of U.S. Presidents

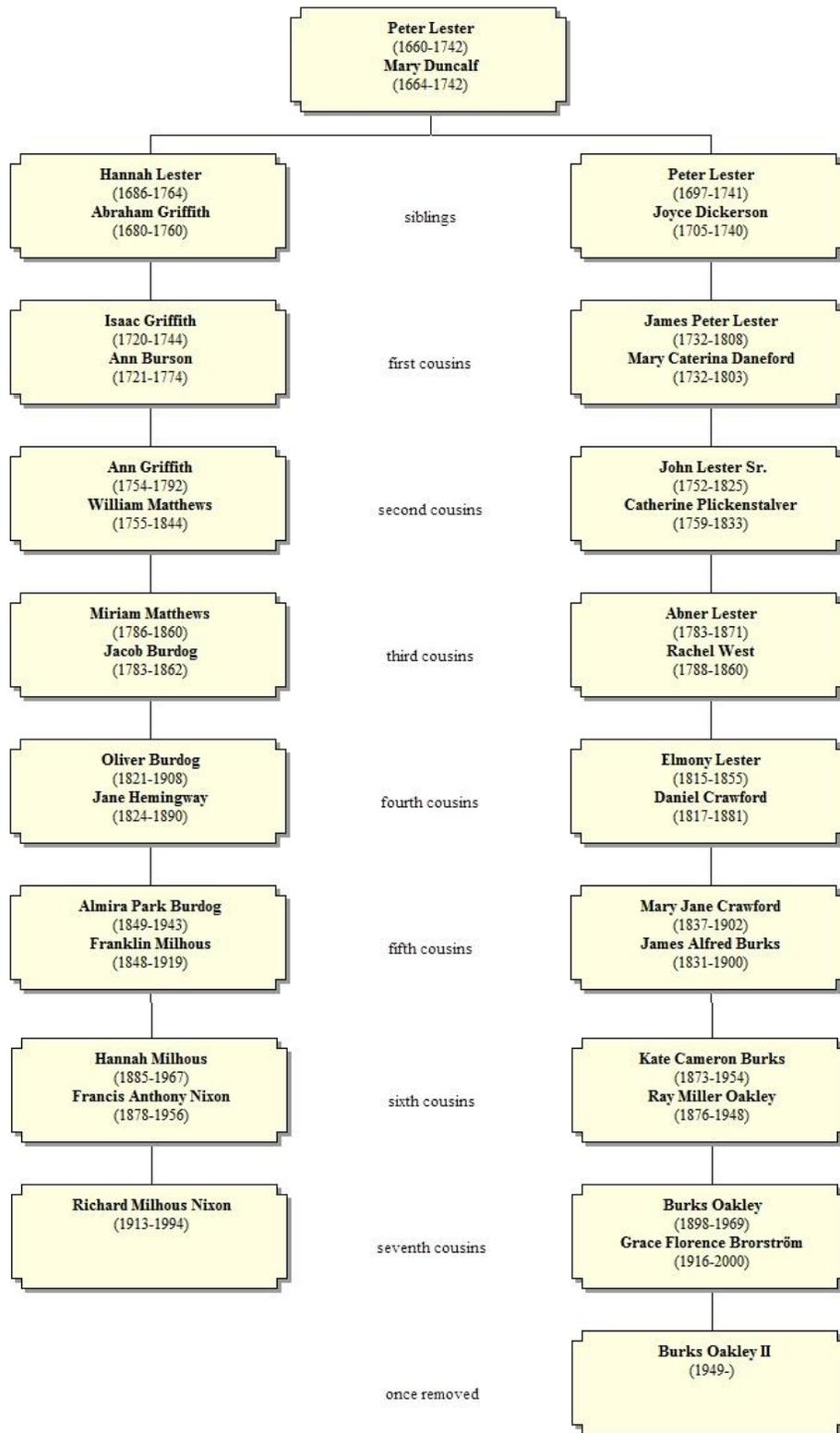
In reading about the English immigrant, Peter Lester, I found that he was the 6th-great grandfather of US President Herbert Clark Hoover. That means that Herbert Hoover was my sixth-cousin, once-removed, as shown in the following chart:

⁷ The astute reader of this tome will immediately think of the comparison of Leicestershire with Worcestershire sauce (wʊstərʃər), which sometimes is shortened to Worcester sauce (wʊstər).



But wait – it gets better. Peter Lester also was the 6th-great grandfather of
drum roll, please

US President Richard Milhous Nixon. That means that Tricky Dicky Nixon also was my sixth-cousin, once-removed, as shown in the following chart:



Who would have believed it!!!!

Concluding Remarks

When I started to research the genealogy of the “Quincy Oakley” family, one of my personal goals was to construct a pedigree for all eight of my father’s great-grandparents:

- Amzi Oakley
- Lucy Ann Eunice Darling
- Ezra Marvin Miller
- Jane Kershaw Wells
- Levi Burks
- Amy (White) Griffey
- Daniel Crawford
- Elmony Lester

In conducting my research, the resources on the Ancestry.com website, such as family trees and census records, have proved to be invaluable. But these resources alone were not enough to break through the “brick walls” that I encountered on several of these family lines. It really was through the use of DNA that I was able to identify some key ancestors that allowed me to expand our knowledge of the “Quincy Oakley” family tree. Certainly, determining Elmony Lester’s ancestry would not have been possible without finding a large number of DNA relationships that I have with living descendants of her ancestors.

I now have met my goal of constructing a pedigree for each of my father’s eight great-grandparents. This brings one phase of my research to a close – but certainly there is a lot more work to be done. Stay tuned!

Appendix I – Peter Lester Arrives in America⁸

Peter Lester, the first of the Lesters in Pennsylvania, came there in 1682 from Leicestershire, England and settled either in Chester or Philadelphia county. He was a member of the Society of Friends and declared intentions of marriage at Chester Monthly Meeting of the Friends with Mary Duncoff (or Duncalf), 6 month 6, 1685 (the old style of dating), or 4 month 6, 1685 (the new style of dating.)

⁸ <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mocaldwe/peterlester.htm>

(Double-dating had become common practice for the days January 1 through March 24 between the years 1607 and 1752. In 1752, the colonies switched to the Gregorian calendar which we now use. Before that, the American colonial year began March 25 and ended the next March 24. So March was the colonists' first month of the year until September, 1752. The Quakers dated in the manner of "1st mo. 16, 1700, which would have been up to 1752 "March 16, 1700."

"Lester" is a version of "Leicester." The name is taken from the locality of that name, which was Peter's home shire located in East central England. One historian points out that this region was spelled "Leicestre," taken from "Ligeracestre, afterward Leicestre, and Leycester, which is probably a corruption of the British 'Lloegr,' the name of the Midlands Britons. Leire (Leicester) preserves the 2nd Saxon form of Lloegr. Leire is the ancient name of the Soar River, principal tributary of the Trent, in the county of Leicester." Other spellings of the name have been "Lister", "Leister," and in the case of the passenger ship list for our Peter when he emigrated from England, "Luister," with the optional spelling put in brackets as "Leicester" (that is, "Luister (Leicester).") So this passenger-ship list acknowledges the variations in spelling used at that time. However, once Peter and his descendants used the name in America, it has always been spelled "Lester."

One account says that Peter Lester came to this country in 1682 with William Penn, who gave him a square of ground on Market Street in Philadelphia, which he afterward sold for 30 pounds. Another account says he bought land in Chester county or Philadelphia county about 1682 and sold it about 1699. On the other hand, a more detailed account comes from two other sources. This account begins with William Penn, an English teenager in training at Oxford University, who refused to conform to Church of England ways and was expelled from college. Young Penn, attaining his adulthood, leaned toward the new religious group formed by George Fox, called the Society of Friends. Penn became a member of this group, the Quakers, in 1667 at age 23 and became involved in Quaker settlement of an area where religious persecution was not a problem, then called West New Jersey. Penn applied to King Charles II of Great Britain in May, 1680 for land for what he called "the hold experiment." Within the year, on March 4, 1681, Penn received a charter from the King for a grant of 500,000 acres. To raise funds to settle his colony, Penn sold large tracts of land, starting in mid-July, 1681 and had sold out by April, 1682.

Altogether, Penn sold to 125 persons in two waves. A first group of 75 came to America in the summer or early fall of 1681. The second group of 50 bought land from the Penn grant between October 1681 and April 1682. This second group set sail probably on the vessel "Samuel", which left London toward the end of

May or early June 1682, reaching Philadelphia in mid-September 1682. One of this second group was "Peter Luister (Leicester)," who is recorded among those arriving at Philadelphia by the official passenger lists kept by ships' officers.

Probably Peter was accompanied to this country by a brother or other relatives, as the will of George Lester probated at Philadelphia on 14 October 1695 gave his estate to "kinsman Peter Lester." Also, the will of William Lester of the Manor of Rockland, county of New Castle, England, dated 24 September 1694 gives him a legacy as "cousin Peter Lester" and, as well, gave a legacy to "kinsman" George Lester.

In 1699, Peter purchased a tract of 316 acres in the Manor of Moreland, Philadelphia, now Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, just to the northwest of Philadelphia, where he lived until 1712. Then he sold this farm and moved with his family to the Great Swamp, where he had bought from Griffith Jones a tract of 600 acres of land by deed dated 24 June 1712. This land was located on both sides of the road from Philadelphia north to the crossroads of Rich Hill, most of it being on the east side (now this farmland at Rich Hill is split by the freeway leading from Philadelphia to Bethlehem.)

At the time, Abington was the closest Friends monthly meeting, so Peter had his membership there until a nearby Gwynedd monthly meeting organized. A concerted move to Gwynedd by dozens of families had begun in 1698. Gwynedd, as well as Abington, were some 20 miles south of Peter's eventual home at Rich Hill (later to adjoin Richland on the south). On 8 month 29, 1716, Abington meeting granted a certificate of change of membership to Gwynedd monthly meeting for Peter Lester, his wife Mary, and their daughter Elizabeth, "they having already removed to the Great Swamp." There at Gwynedd, he was an overseer of the monthly meeting. About 1715, permission was granted to the "Friends in the Swamp" to hold meetings for worship at the house of Peter Lester. They continued to worship at his house until 1723, when a small log meeting house was built near Peter's residence.

The Great Swamp was in the northwest Bucks County, Pennsylvania, that included the grant of "Richland Manor" what eventually included not only Richland Township, but parts of Milford, Springfield and Saucon townships. The term "Great Swamp" was used until about 1800, then "Richland" came into use, both for Quaker monthly meetings and the township, this being used because of the rich sod that produced lush grass and heavy timber. Then came into prominence "Quakertown", including a new city area as well as the old Richland. "Great Swamp" actually was a misnomer. In Peter Lester's time, some water lay on the surface during wet sessions. Actually, most of the "swamp" was heavy

timber with a four mile, largely open grass basin toward its center for the town of Richland (later Quakertown). This settlement in the Great Swamp was a kind of overflow of Quakers who were crowding the Abington, Byberry, and Gwynedd monthly meeting areas. And Gwynedd was the nearest early settlement where there was a Friends meeting house before Quakers moved to the Great Swamp.

Peter Lester is mentioned as a pioneer of this early migration from Gwynedd to the Great Swamp, he being spoken of as “our ancient Friend” in the settling of Richland monthly meeting. Friends clerk Samuel Foulke in 1773 reported: “The first settlement of Friends in this place was about the year 1710 by our ancient Friend Peter Lester, of Leicestershire, England, who with his wife and children and other families, became members of Gwynedd monthly meeting, and a meeting for worship was, with the concurrence of that monthly meeting, held at the said Peter Lester’s house for several years.”

The first edition of Clarence Roberts’ *Early Friends Families of Upper Bucks* says that, after Peter Lester and family had moved to the Great Swamp, they were soon joined by other Friends families, including sons in-law John Ball (he married daughter Catharine) and Abraham Griffith (he married daughter Hannah), who settled on lands adjoining. Another historian, Ellwood Roberts, notes that Peter “and his sons in law [and their wives] were the pioneers of the extensive migration which occurred between 1708 and 1720. He had settled in Gwynedd, 20 miles distant. Peter Lester and his family located a short distance below where he is now, but later moved to the upper portion of the settlement [Richland, or Quakertown], where 5 or 6 generations of the family dwelt.” In a later edition, Roberts says that John Ball, the son in law, was the first settler in the Great Swamp. Ball is said to have settled there 25 March 1712, after buying 600 acres of land from Griffith Jones. (Jones was the largest grantee in the Swamp region, having obtained 6,000 acres from Penn. However, he never reached the colonies and his land was taken over by others such as Ball and Lester). Abraham Griffith, the other son in law mentioned above, bought 300 acres on the same date and George Phillips, a brother in law of Abraham Griffith, purchased 300 acres.

Peter Lester’s land included 600 acres. He naturally called it “Leicestershire.” He sold 200 acres of this tract at Richland to son in law John Ball in 1717, (another report says this 200 acres was turned over to son Peter who sold it in 1741) and the remaining 200 acres to son Peter in 1721.

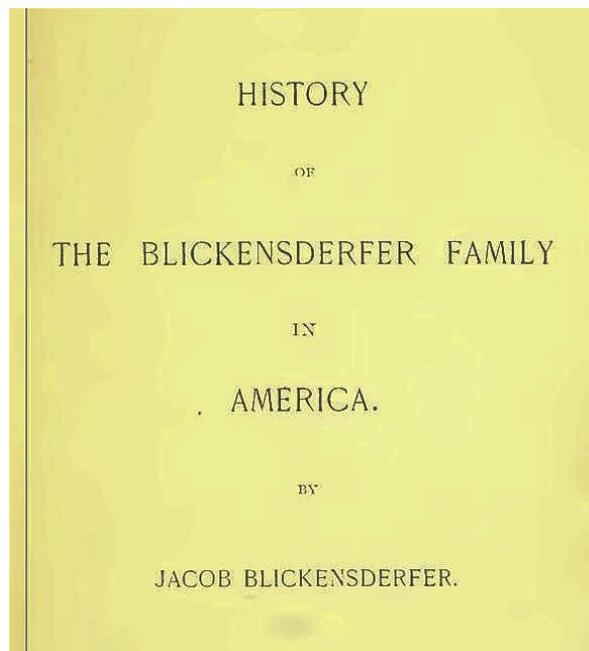
John Lester, son of Peter and Mary Duncalf Lester, was born in 1689 in Springfield Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania. He accompanied his father upon the move to Richland in 1712. He lived for a time on part of his

father's farm, but in 1728 purchased a farm of 158 acres from Morris Morris and in 1748 bought 246 acres from Samuel Mickle. Both tracts were located just west of the early borough limits of Quakertown along a road leading to Bethlehem.

John Lester first married Catharine Griffith at Gwynedd monthly meeting in March, 1715-16; she died in winter of 1731-32.

Appendix II - Plickenstalver - Blickensdoerfer - Blickensderfer

While I have focused on the **Lester** family in this treatise, much is known about the ancestors of John Lester's wife Catherine Plickenstalver (also spelled Blickensdoerfer and Blickensderfer). In 1899, Jacob Blickensderfer (1816-1899) published a book entitled ***History of the Blickensderfer family in America***. The full text of this book is available online on the Internet Archive site.⁹



I'll leave it to the ambitious reader to access this book.

One last item – The Blickensderfer typewriter¹⁰ was designed by George Canfield Blickensderfer (1850-1917) in 1892. Like Catherine Plickenstalver, he was a descendant of Hans Jakob Blickensdoerfer (1665-1712). The Blickensderfer typewriter was originally intended to compete with Remington desk typewriters, but ended up being known for its portability.

⁹ <https://archive.org/details/historyofblicken00blic>

¹⁰ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blickensderfer typewriter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blickensderfer_typewriter)

Instead of the common mechanism with letters on the end of individual bars connected to the keys, the Blickensderfer used a cylindrical wheel with letters embossed on it. Pressing a key caused the cylinder to turn so the correct letter was positioned over the paper, and continuing caused it to be inked by a roller as it moved to press down on the paper. The mechanism was very similar to the IBM Selectric design introduced decades later, with the only major change being the shape of the striker. Like the Selectric, one could easily change the typeface on a Blickensderfer simply by changing the type cylinder.

The Blickensderfer system dramatically reduced complexity of the design. A typical example contained only 250 parts, compared to the 2,500 parts of a standard typewriter. It was much smaller, lighter, and cheaper than other typewriters. The first known aluminum typewriter (marketed as the Blickensderfer 6 or the “Featherweight Blick”) was made by Blickensderfer, as was the first electric typewriter.



1894 Blickensderfer No. 5 typewriter

The home row of keys contained the most commonly used letters, DHIATENSOR, allowing keyboardists to keep their hands on the home row as much as possible, minimizing extraneous hand movement and increasing efficiency.