

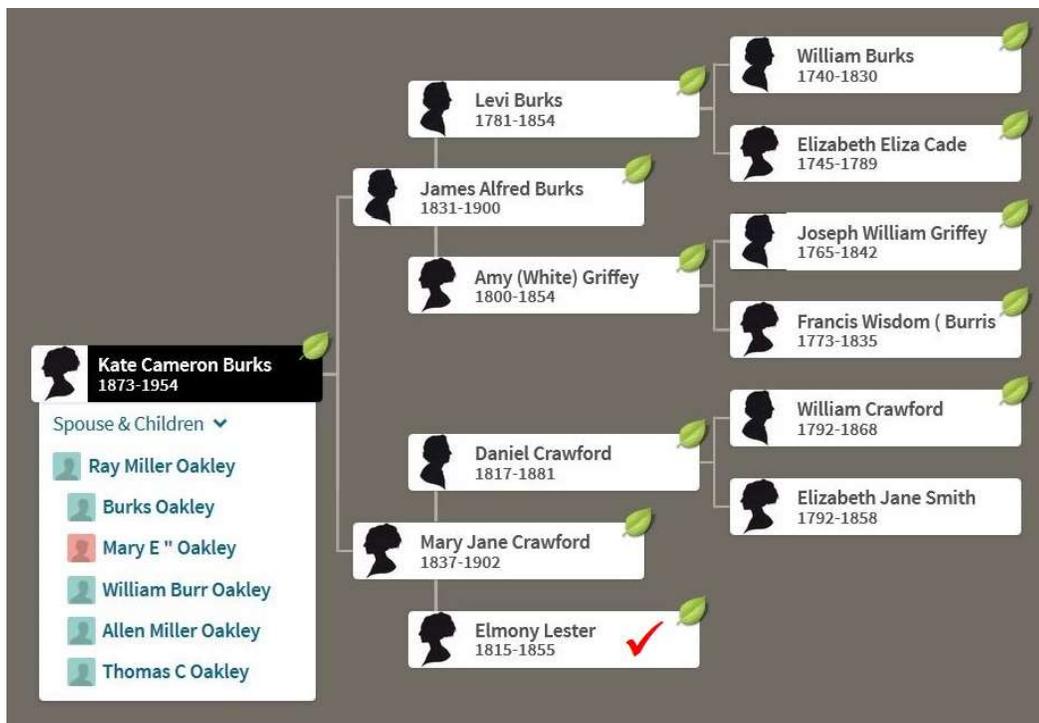
Chapter 9B

The Elmony Lester Ancestral Line, Revisited

Updated 29 July 2019

Introduction

My paternal grandmother was Kate Cameron Burks (1873-1954), and it is from her family name that I got my first name of Burks. Here is her pedigree, as it appeared in 2015.



Kate's maternal grandmother was Elmony Lester (red check in the pedigree chart), and this woman was a "brick wall" – at the time, I had no idea about Elmony Lester's ancestors.

In the spring of 2016, I wrote about using my autosomal DNA matches on Ancestry.com to break through the brick wall for Elmony Lester.

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/9A-LesterGenealogy.pdf>

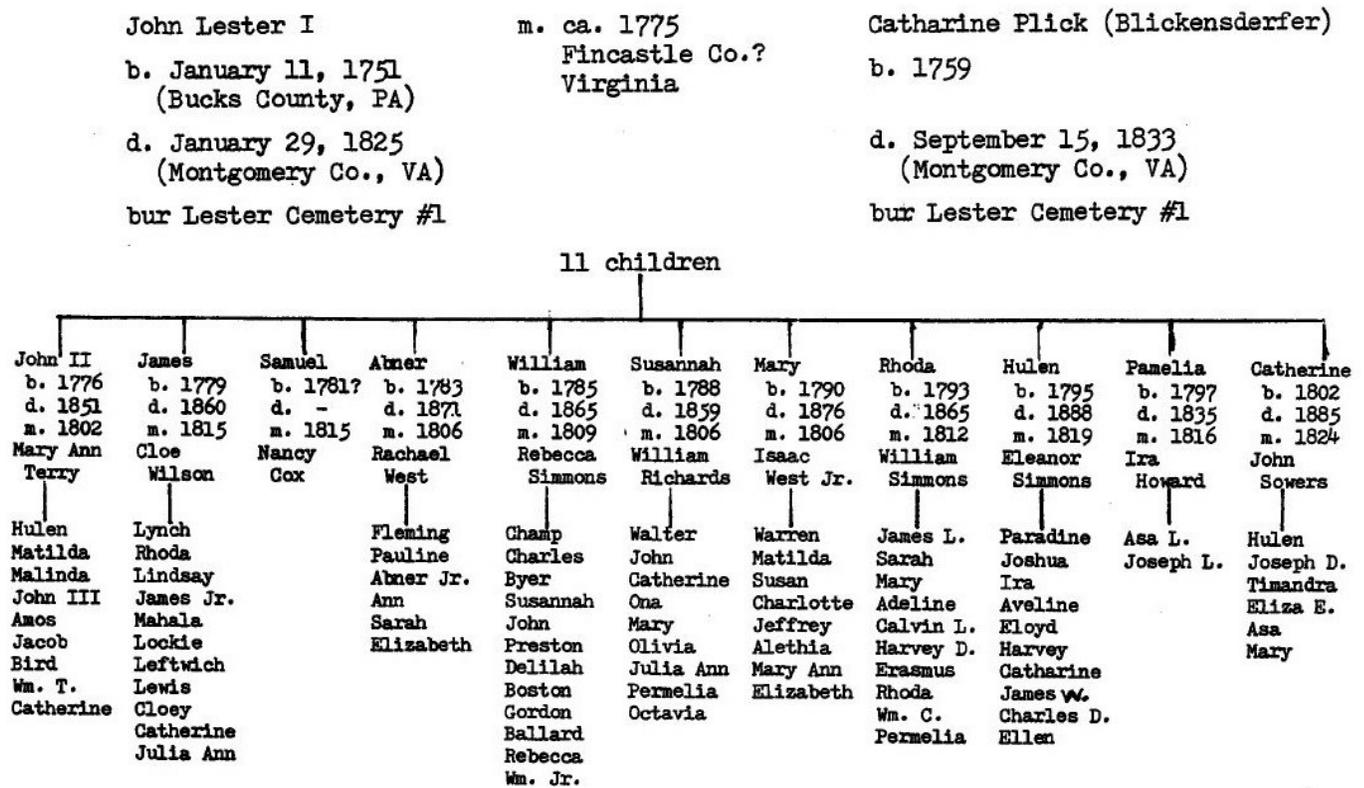
In the process of figuring out Elmony's line, I used a book about the Lester family that was published in 1996 by Marguerite Tise.

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

In this book, Marguerite included a chart showing the family of John Lester and his wife Catherine Plickenstalver (also written as Plickensdorfer or Blickensderfer):



For several reasons, I hypothesized that Elmony Lester's parents were Abner West and Rachael West, shown in the fourth-column from the left in the above chart. [You'll have to go back and read the earlier document to learn what those reasons were.] While I found lots of DNA evidence to support my hypothesis, there were still some lingering doubts in my mind.

Using ThruLines™ to Confirm Elmony Lester's Pedigree

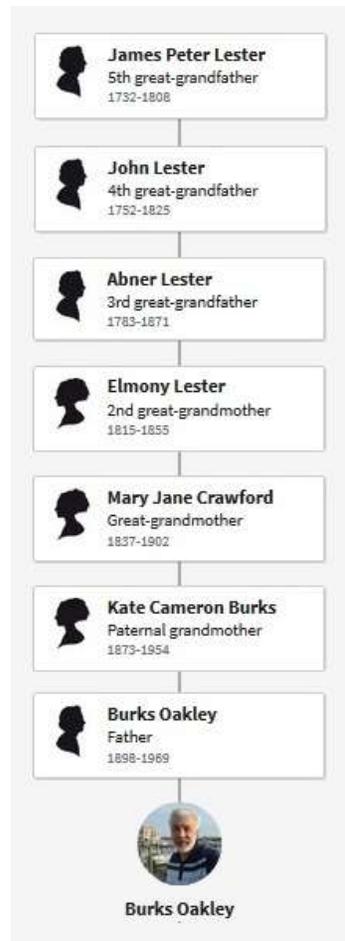
In February 2019, Ancestry released beta versions of several new software tools for exploring, organizing, and identifying a user's DNA matches. There are two parts to this software: a new "Matches" interface and a separate feature called ThruLines™, which uses both DNA and family tree information to suggest possible relationships that would account for a user's DNA matches.

The ThruLines™ on Ancestry.com are organized in a hierarchical manner, starting with a person's two parents and going all the way to the person's one hundred twenty-eight 5th-great grandparents.

On July 1st, the software came out of beta. On a whim, I went back and looked at my ThruLines™ for Elmony Lester's ancestors in my hypothesized line, to see if any of the ThruLines™ would provide additional support for this ancestral line.

DISCLAIMER – The ThruLines™ show *suggested* relationships that could account for DNA matches between two people. The ThruLines™ are based on family trees on the Ancestry.com website, and these trees might contain errors. The reader should keep in mind that the ThruLines™ are only suggestions and should not be taken as proof of a relationship. So while I will use the terminology that a certain ThruLines™ accounts for my DNA match with someone, it really isn't proof.

I will begin with the Lester family line that I have hypothesized. Here is my line going back to my 5th-great grandfather, James Peter Lester (1732-1808):



Abner Lester – My Third-Great Grandfather

Here is my ThruLines™ for Abner Lester:



This chart shows lines that go back to Abner Lester through his son Fleming Lester and his daughter Sarah Lester. Both of these children appear in the John Lester family chart in Marguerite Tice's book. This ThruLines™ accounts for three of my DNA matches.

John Lester – My Fourth-Great Grandfather

Let me now go back on the Lester line to John Lester, who was my 4th-great grandfather. Here is my ThruLines™ for John Lester:



This chart is unreadable at this magnification, and the magnification is small because the chart has so many different lines on it. I'll show it on the next page in landscape view.

Here is the ThruLines™ in landscape view:



Overall, this ThruLines shows that I have DNA matches with 29 people who are descendants of John Lester, through eight of his eleven children: James T. Lester, Samuel Lester, Abner Lester, William S. Lester, Susannah Lester, Rhoda Lester, Hulen Lester, and Catherine Lester. This is really amazing – and it strongly supports the hypothesis that Elmony Lester was descended from John Lester. I should add that my ThruLines™ for John Lester’s wife Catherine Plickenstalver is identical to the one shown above (which is rather amazing).

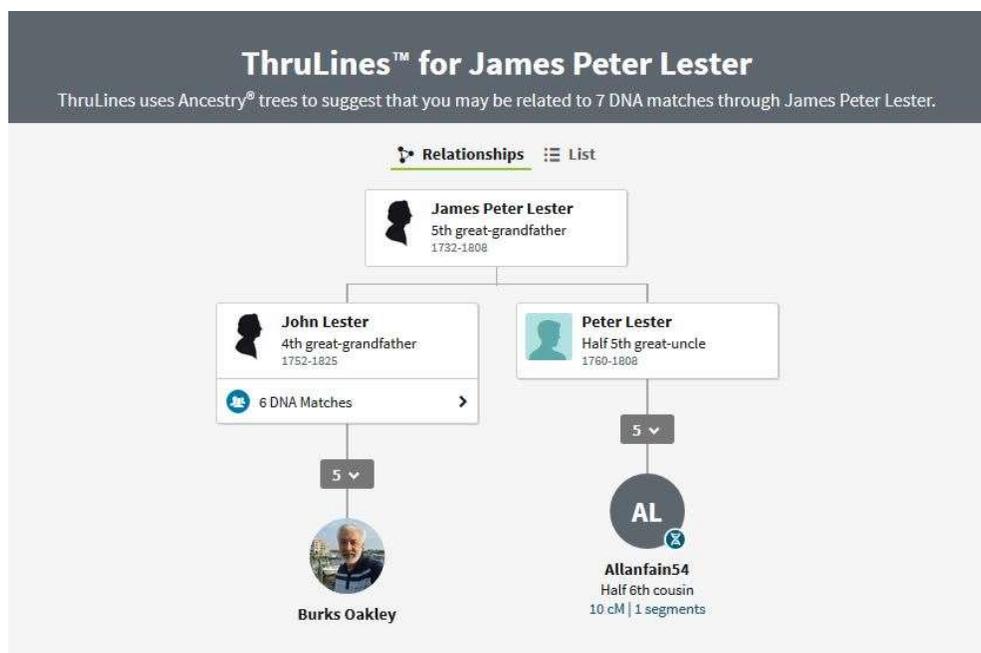
As an aside, I doubt that when Marguerite Tise produced her family chart in 1976 that she ever could have imagined how the lines in this chart would have been duplicated in 2019 based on DNA matches.

I won't take the time or space to show all 29 of the DNA matches in my ThruLines™ for John Lester – but I will show the part of this ThruLines™ that goes through his daughter Susannah Lester. Susannah married William Richards (1774-1844), and I have 15 total DNA matches with descendants of six of their children, as shown in this chart:



John Peter Lester – My Fifth-Great Grandfather

Going back one more generation on the Lester line, I get to my 5th-great grandfather, James Peter Lester. Here is my ThruLines™:



This ThruLines™ accounts for just a single one of my DNA matches.

Overall, the very large number of DNA matches with descendants of the line of Lesters indicate to me that I have the correct Lester ancestral line for Elmony Lester. But do I have the correct son of John Lester and his wife Catherine Plickenstalver?

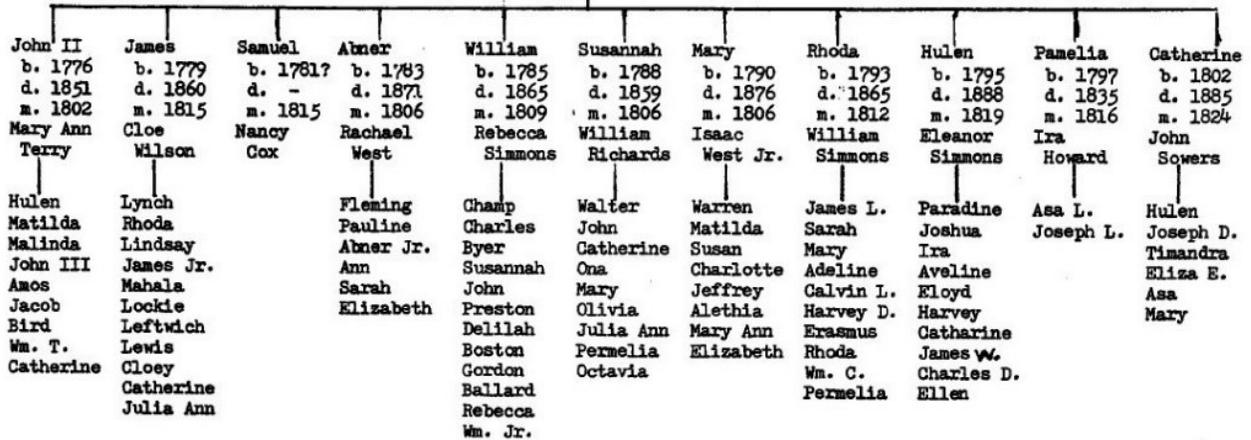
Here again is the John Lester family chart from Marguerite Tice's book:

John Lester I
 b. January 11, 1751
 (Bucks County, PA)
 d. January 29, 1825
 (Montgomery Co., VA)
 bur Lester Cemetery #1

m. ca. 1775
 Fincastle Co.?
 Virginia

Catharine Plick (Blickensderfer)
 b. 1759
 d. September 15, 1833
 (Montgomery Co., VA)
 bur Lester Cemetery #1

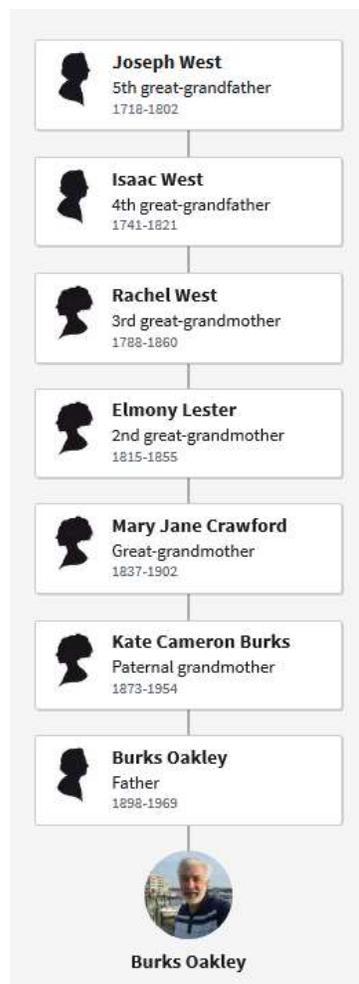
11 children



John Lester and his Catherine Plickenstalver had six sons – John II, James, Samuel, Abner, William and Hulen. While I found some DNA evidence that Elmony was a daughter of Abner and his wife Rachel West, I kept wondering if Elmony might really be the daughter of one of the other sons.

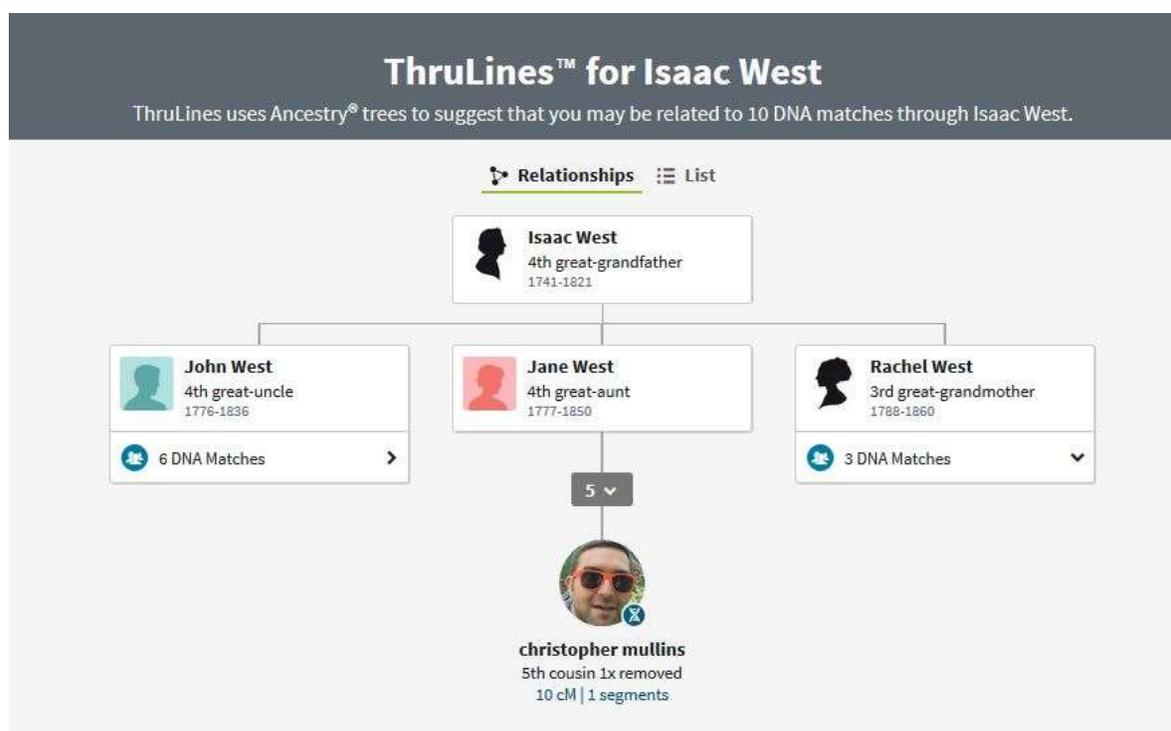
Examining the Rachel West Line

Elmony Lester's mother in my hypothesized tree was Rachel West. Let me now go back on the West line. If Elmony was in the Abner Lester – Rachel West family, then I should have DNA matches with descendants of Rachel West's ancestors. Here is my West line, which goes back to Joseph West:



Isaac West – My Fourth-Great Grandfather

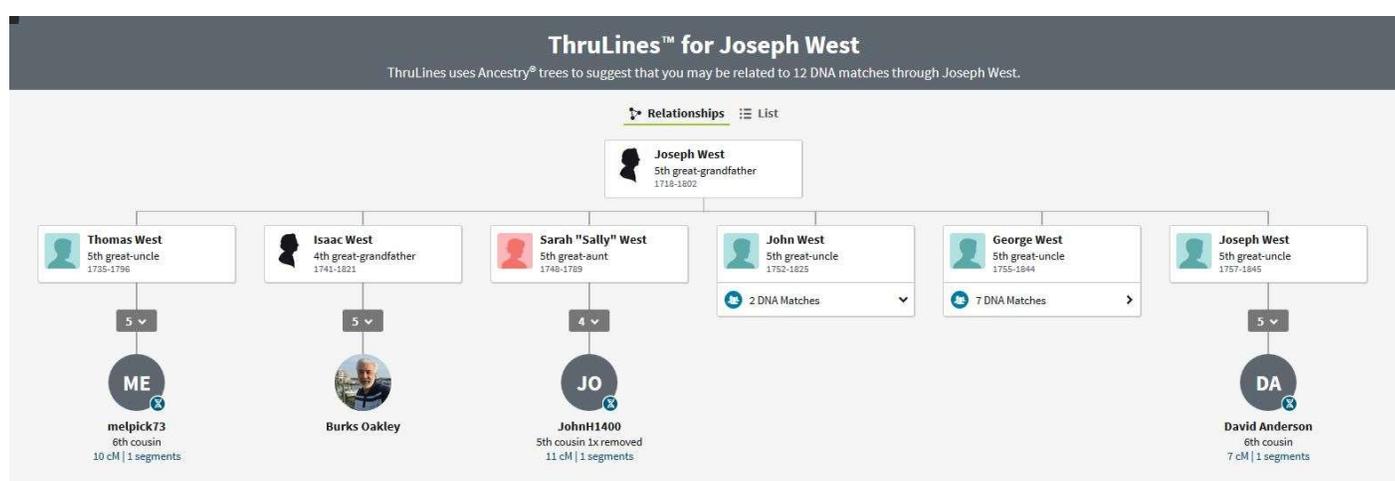
Rachel West's father was Isaac West (her mother was Rosanna Lewis). Here is my ThruLines™ for Isaac West:



Wow! I have ten DNA matches with descendants of Isaac West. This is very useful information, and certainly supports the hypothesis that Elmony Lester was in the Abner Lester – Rachel West family. I should add that my ThruLines™ for Rosanna Lewis (the wife of Isaac West) is the same as this one.

Joseph West – My Fifth-Great Grandfather

Going back one more generation is Joseph West, my 5th-great grandfather. Here is his ThruLines™:



This ThruLines™ gives another 12 DNA matches. Again, this provides even more support for my hypothesized family line for Elmony Lester. It isn't likely that I would have so many DNA matches with descendants of Joseph West if my hypothesized line was incorrect.

While I won't show all 12 of the DNA matches, I will show the line that goes through Isaac West's son George West, which accounts for another seven DNA matches:

all ThruLines Provide feedback

ThruLines™ for Joseph West

ThruLines uses Ancestry® trees to suggest that you may be related to 12 DNA matches through Joseph West.

Relationships List

Joseph West
5th great-grandfather

Siblings ← ↑ → Joseph West

George West
5th great-uncle
1755-1844

Mary West
1st cousin 5x removed
1776-1858

4 ▾

JA

jackie_bragg02
6th cousin
7 cM | 1 segments

Sarah West Bartley
1st cousin 5x removed
1789-1836

4 ▾

CC

Cathy Casteleiro
6th cousin
8 cM | 1 segments

Samuel Irving West
1st cousin 5x removed
1793-1889

4 ▾

TP

T.P.
6th cousin
23 cM | 1 segments

Mary Poly WEST
1st cousin 5x removed
1798-1880

4 ▾

BB

bbmc82014
6th cousin
8 cM | 1 segments

Elizabeth Ann West
1st cousin 5x removed
1817-1854

3 ▾

DH

D.H.
5th cousin 1x removed
7 cM | 1 segments

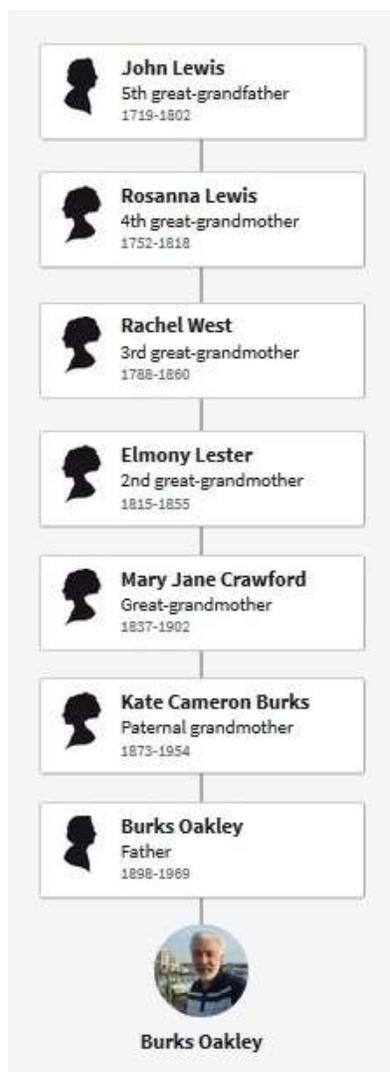
Private
1st cousin 5x removed

2 DNA Matches

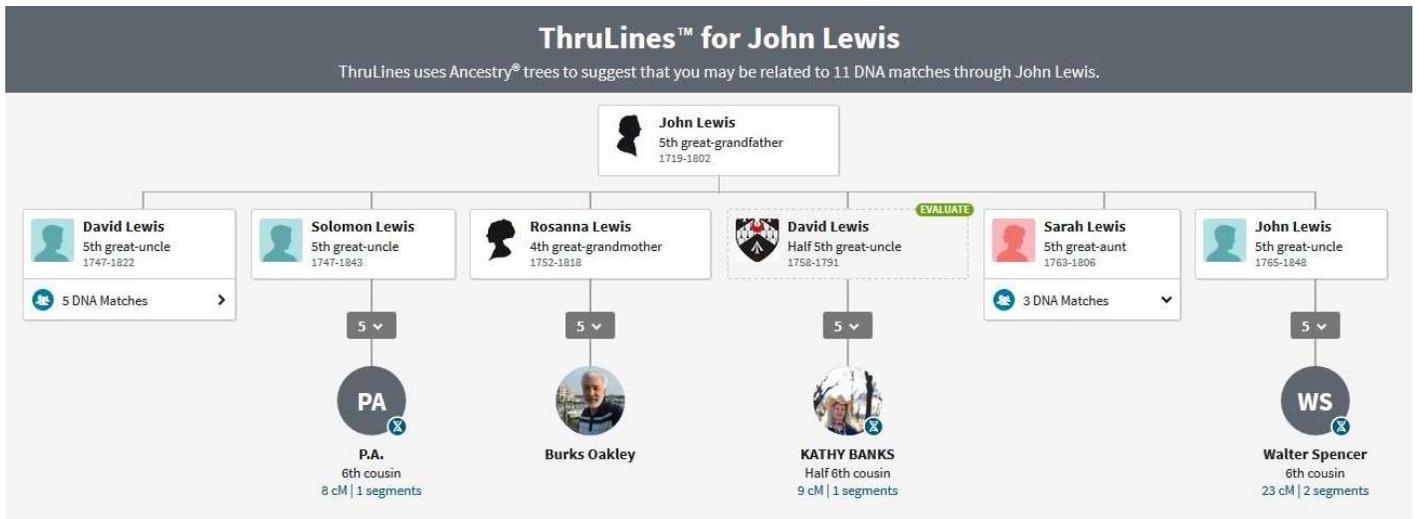
Again, all these DNA matches with the West family strong supports the idea that Elmony's mother was Rachel West.

John Lewis – My Fifth-Great Grandfather

Going back on the Rachel West line, her maternal grandfather was John Lewis. Here is my complete Lewis line:



I'll jump right to my ThruLines™ for John Lewis (since as I mentioned earlier, the ThruLines™ for Rosanna Lewis was identical to the one for her husband, Isaac West). Here is my ThruLines™ for John Lewis:



This ThruLines™ accounts for another 11 DNA matches. While I won't show all of them, here is the line through his son David Lewis (the one at the far left of the ThruLines™ shown above):



This is really cool – to see that I have so very many DNA matches with descendants of Rachel West's ancestors – on the West line and also on the Lewis line. This is really strong support of the hypothesized line for Elmony Lester.

As an aside, note that my ThruLines™ for John Lewis (at the top of this page) has a second son named David Lewis; I think that this may be an error:

David Lewis

David Lewis may be the son of John Lewis. Below is some of the information used to suggest this relationship:

Trees Linked to DNA Matches

None of the trees linked to your DNA matches identify David Lewis as the son of John Lewis.

1 tree linked to your DNA matches has David Lewis, but not as the son of John Lewis.

1 linked tree with David Lewis

Ancestry Member Trees

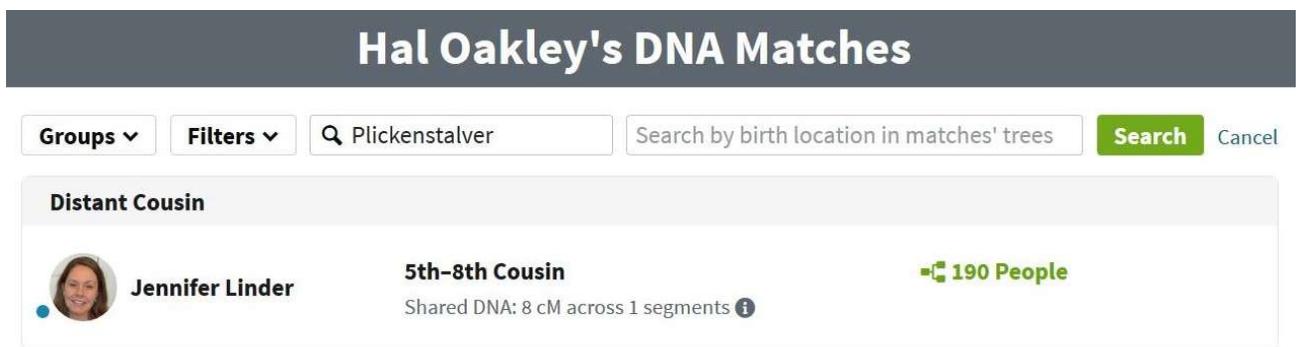
No other member trees identify David Lewis as the son of John Lewis.

My Cousins Hal Oakley and Mark Eidem

On Ancestry.com, I have access to the DNA tests of two of my Oakley cousins – Hal Oakley and Mark Eidem. My father, Hal’s paternal grandfather, and Mark’s maternal grandfather were all brothers. That makes Hal and Mark my first-cousins once-removed. I often check their ThruLines™ to find additional DNA evidence for a family line on the Oakley side of my family. However, that doesn’t work in this case, since Hal and Mark don’t have any of my hypothesized ancestors for Elmony Lester in their family trees on Ancestry.com. And somehow, the ThruLines™ software hasn’t used the information in MY family tree to help construct theirs. In brief, this means that I can’t use their ThruLines™ to see if they have DNA matches with this hypothesized branch of the family. Bummer!

But wait! Let me go out on a limb here. What are the odds that Hal and/or Mark would have a DNA match with someone descended from Catherine Plickenstalver? Recall that she was John Lester’s wife, and my ThruLines™ for her has 29 DNA matches. Of all the names in the hypothesized pedigree from Elmony Lester, the Plickenstalver name has to be the most unique.

I first looked at Hal’s DNA matches and searched for anyone having a Plickenstalver ancestor in their pedigree. This turned up **Jennifer Linder**:



Hal Oakley's DNA Matches

Groups ▾ Filters ▾ 🔍 Plickenstalver Search by birth location in matches' trees Search Cancel

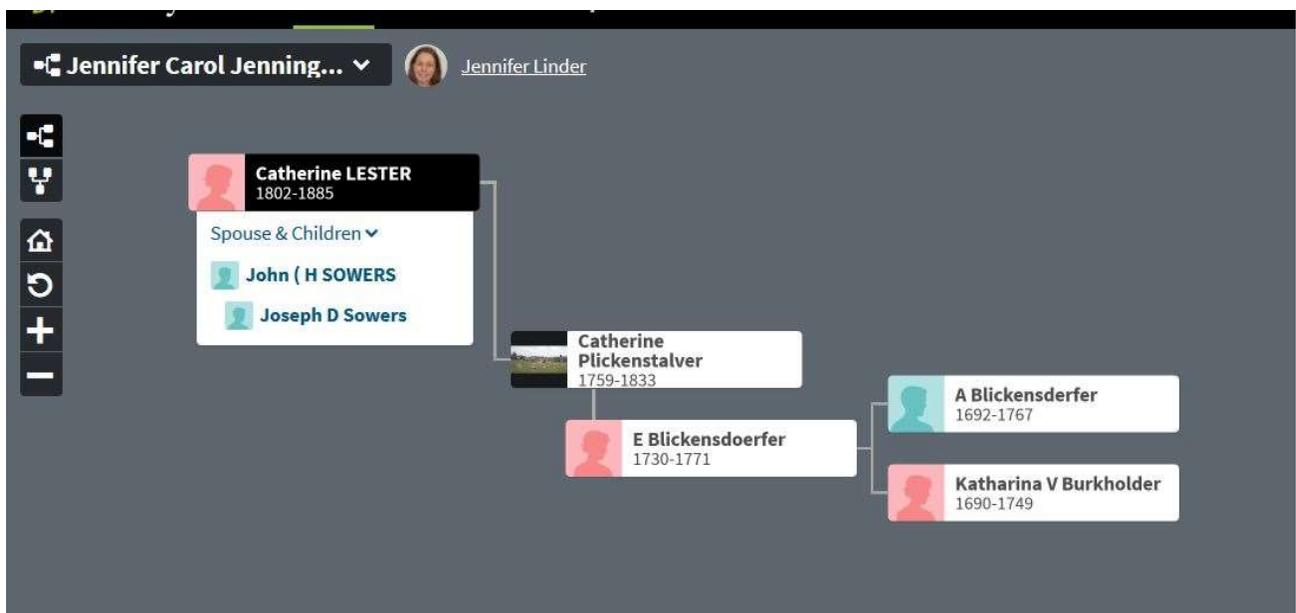
Distant Cousin

 **Jennifer Linder** **5th-8th Cousin** **190 People**

Shared DNA: 8 cM across 1 segments ⓘ

This is pretty amazing, since Jennifer only has 190 people in her entire family tree. What are the odds of finding a Plickenstalver? But is this the Plickenstalver part of my Lester line? It has to be, right?

I searched Jennifer’s tree for the Plickenstalver ancestor, and this is what I found:



Jennifer Carol Jennings... Jennifer Linder

Catherine LESTER
1802-1885

Spouse & Children ▾

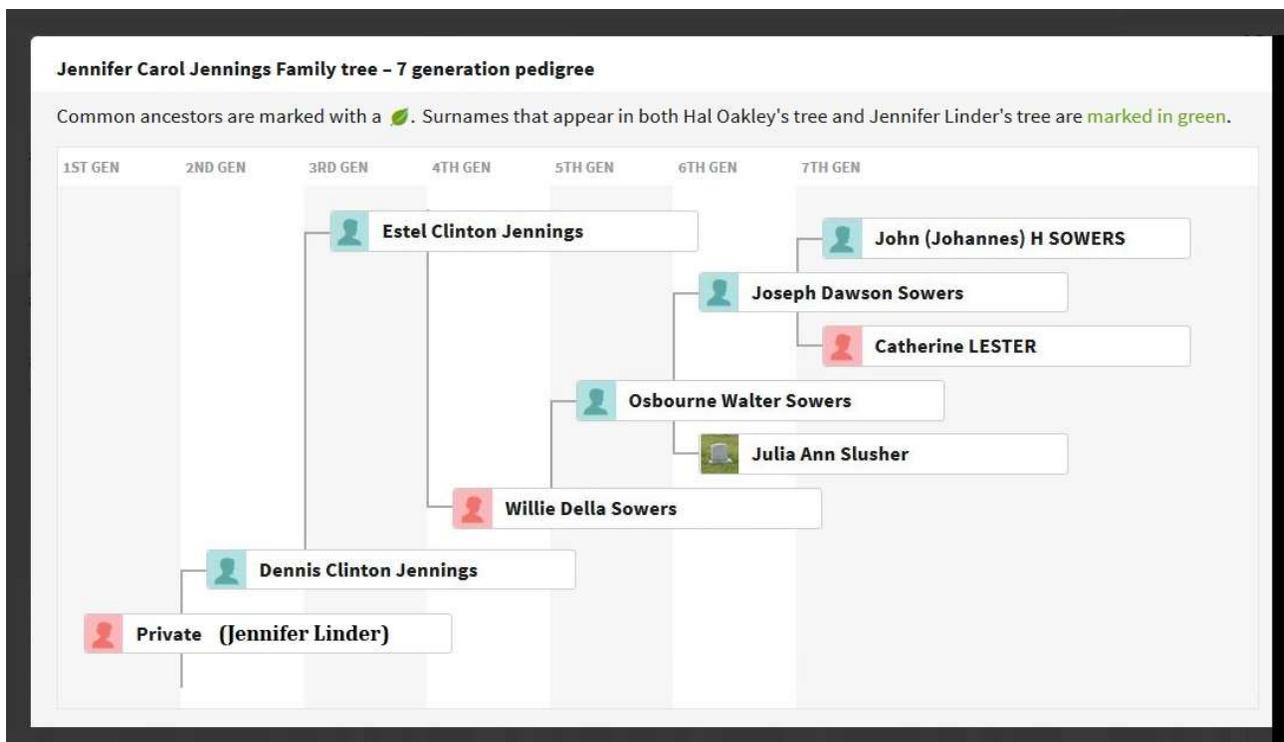
- John (H) SOWERS**
- Joseph D Sowers**

Catherine Plickenstalver
1759-1833

- E Blickensdoerfer**
1730-1771
 - A Blickensderfer**
1692-1767
 - Katharina V Burkholder**
1690-1749

OMG – She is descended from Catherine Plickenstalver (1759-1833), who was the wife of John Lester. Their daughter was Catherine Lester (1802-1885).

Another view of Jennifer's pedigree shows that she is indeed descended from this Catherine Lester:



Son of a gun! Hal has a DNA match with Jennifer Linder, and she is descended from our common ancestors Catherine Plickenstalver and her husband John Lester. This single bit of evidence certainly supports my hypothetical line for Elmony Lester.

So let's now look at Mark Eidem. I searched Mark's DNA matches for someone having an ancestor named Plickenstalver – here is what I found:

Mark Eidem's DNA Matches

Groups ▾ Filters ▾ Search by birth location in matches' trees

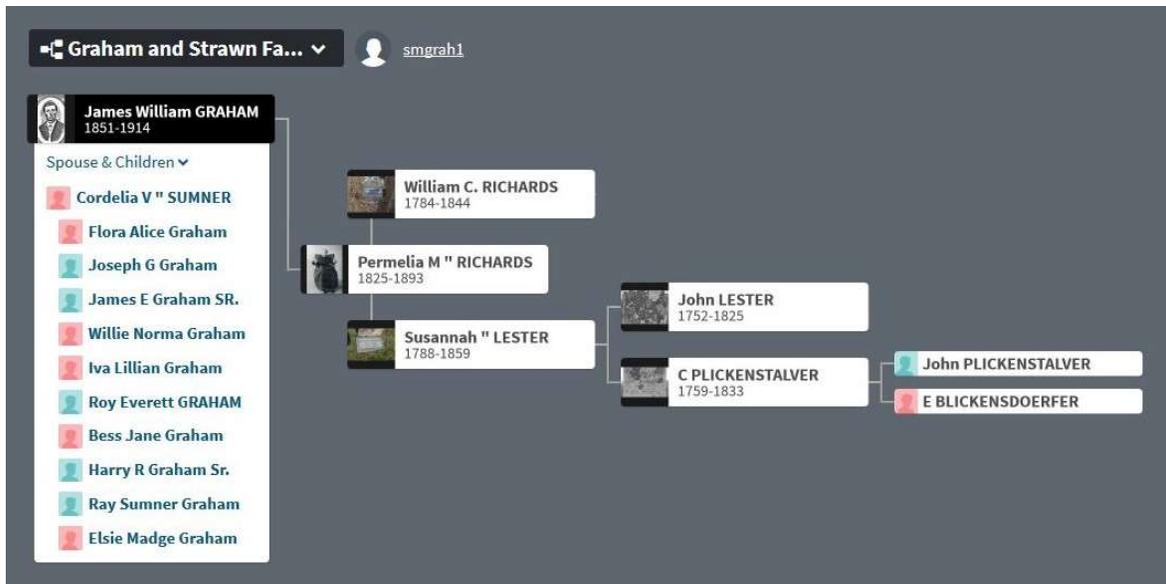
Distant Cousin

 **R.G.**
Managed by smgrah1

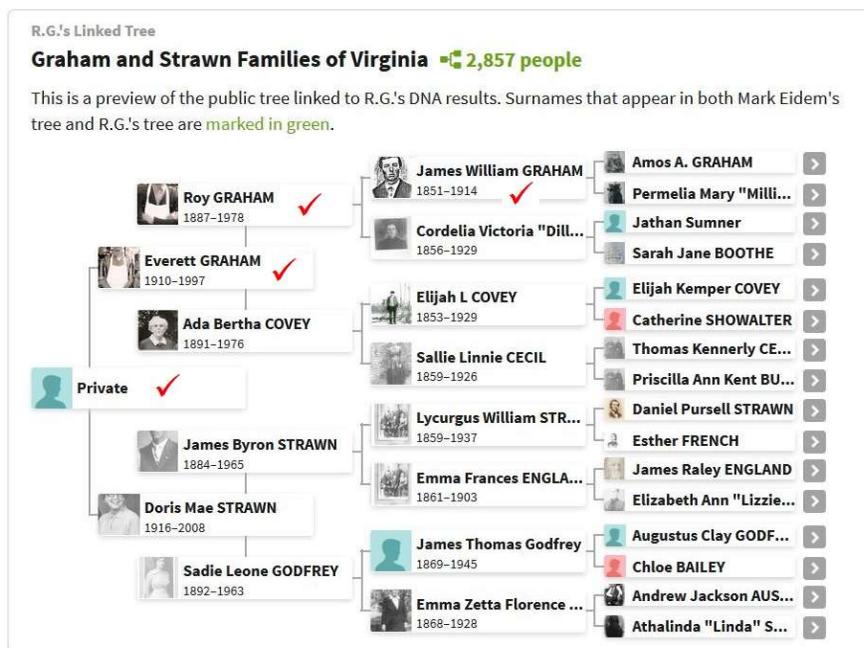
5th-8th Cousin
Shared DNA: 7 cM across 1 segments ⓘ

 **2,857 People**

This shows that Mark has a DNA match with **R.G.**, whose pedigree goes back to a Plickenstalver. And sure enough, the part of **R.G.**'s pedigree on the next page show that this Plickenstalver is Catherine Plickenstalver, who was married to John Lester:



This part of the pedigree shows the line from Catherine Plickenstalver down to James William Graham (1851-1914). The rest of the line down to **R.G.** is here:



R.G.'s last name must be Graham.

Amazing to see that like Hal, Mark has a DNA match with someone who is descended from Catherine Plickenstalver. This is too much to be just a chance occurrence. It has to result from our connection through Elmony Lester.

When I do this same search for my own DNA matches, I get three DNA matches, and all of them are known to me from my ThruLines™:

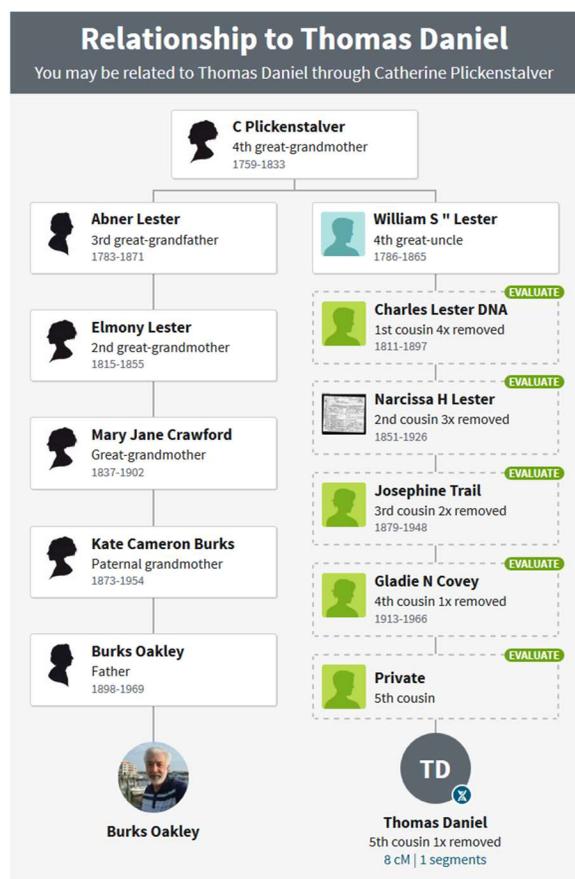
Burks Oakley's DNA Matches

Groups ▾ Filters ▾ Search by birth location in matches' trees

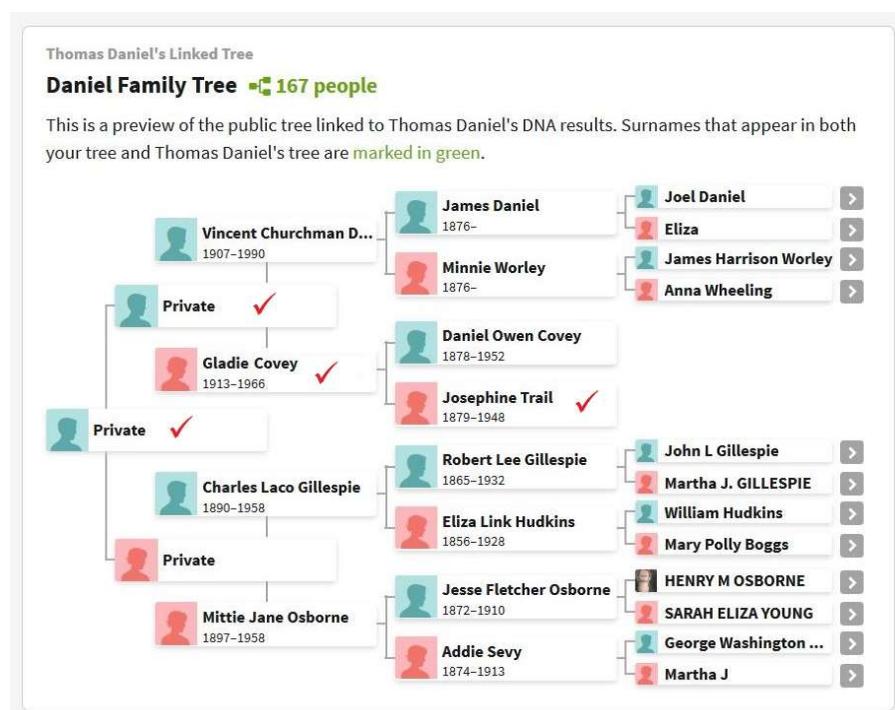
Distant Cousin			
	williamBower41	5th-8th Cousin Shared DNA: 10 cM across 1 segments ⓘ	6,389 People Common ancestor ★ Add to group ThruLines suggests she is descended from John LESTER and Catherine....
	Sharon Dee Hrdlicka Managed by Edward Lee Hastings	5th-8th Cousin Shared DNA: 9 cM across 2 segments ⓘ	3,089 People Common ancestor ★ Add to group ThruLines suggests she is descended from John LESTER and Catherine....
	tammy walker	5th-8th Cousin Shared DNA: 7 cM across 1 segments ⓘ	1,539 People Common ancestor ★ Add to group ThruLines suggests she is descended from John LESTER and Catherine....

But why just three? Why don't I get more? After all, I have 29 DNA matches from my ThruLines™ for Catherine Plickenstalver. The answer is actually quite simple.

The ThruLines™ are constructed using information from many different family trees on the Ancestry.com website. A given person that I have a DNA match with might only have a few generations in his/her tree, yet the ThruLines™ software is able to use information from other trees to construct a complete line back to a common ancestor. Here is an example. One of my DNA matches for my ThruLines™ for Catherine Plickenstalver is with a man named Thomas Daniel. Here is how the software says we are related:



But Thomas Daniel isn't aware that he is descended from Catherine Plickenstalver. His pedigree on the Ancestry.com website stops with his great-grandmother Josephine Trail:



So naturally, Thomas Daniel won't turn up when I search my DNA matches for people having ancestors named Plickenstalver.

Given the need for a complete tree back to Catherine Plickenstalver, it is amazing that I found DNA matches for both Hal and Mark.

Conclusion

As the software tools on Ancestry.com continue to evolve, it gets easier to connect DNA matches with various branches of family trees. The ThruLines™ software on Ancestry.com now is able to automate the connections between DNA matches, based on common ancestors, all the way back to a person's 5th-great grandparents.

In this narrative, I have gone back and revisited my hypothesized line for Elmony Lester, who was one of my 2nd-great grandparents. When I first became seriously interested in genetic genealogy, she was a brick wall. I used DNA to break through that wall in 2016, but still had some lingering doubts about the pedigree I had constructed for her.

The huge number of DNA matches that I have with descendants of her hypothesized ancestors, as shown in the ThruLines™ in this narrative, put those lingering doubts to rest. I simply wouldn't have all these DNA matches if this family line was not correct.

I have DNA matches on the Lester line, the West line, and the Lewis line. Moreover, my cousins Hal and Mark also have DNA matches with descendants of Catherine Plickenstalver, who I now believe was the paternal grandmother of Elmony Lester. Overall, it is really great to see so much DNA evidence in support of my hypothesized line for Elmony Lester.



The family tree is now visible through the hole in the brick wall....