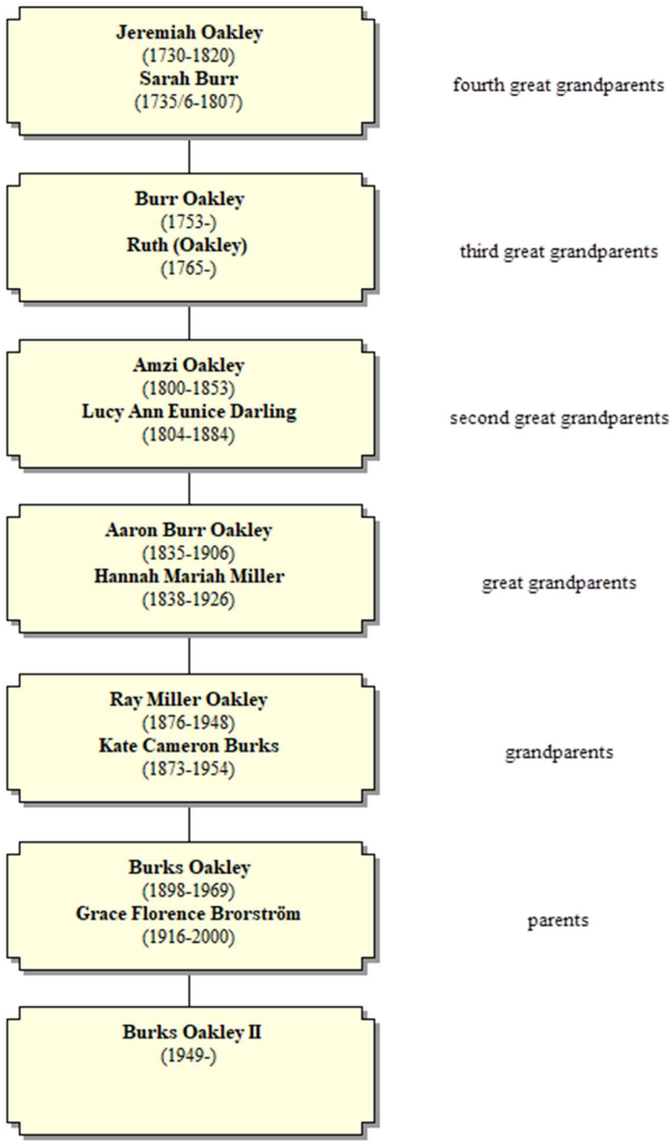
My Efforts to Learn More about Burr Oakley and his Family

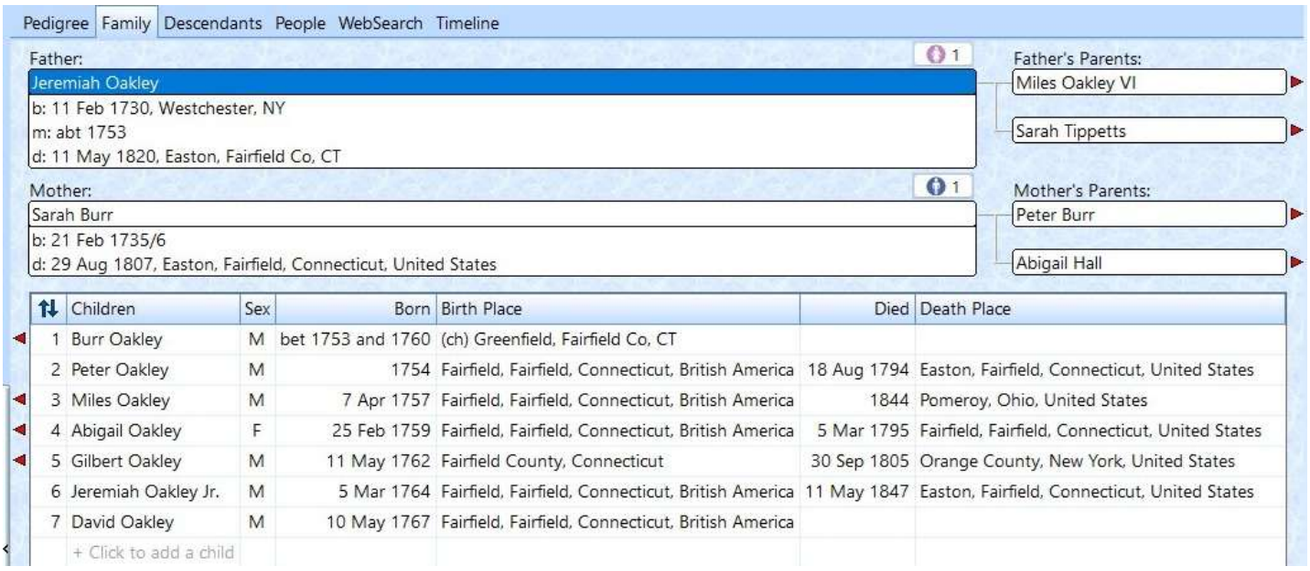
By Burks Oakley II
23 January 2025

Burr Oakley (who I thought was born in 1753) was my third-great-grandfather, as shown in the following chart, which was produced using the RootsMagic software on my Windows 11 PC:



Burr Oakley was a son of Jeremiah Oakley (1730-1820) and his wife Sarah Burr (1735-1807). And Sarah Burr was a first-cousin of Aaron Burr (1756-1836), who was the third Vice-President of the United States.

Burr Oakley appeared in my RootsMagic database as the first child of Jeremiah Oakley and Sarah Burr:



	Children	Sex	Born	Birth Place	Died	Death Place
1	Burr Oakley	M	bet 1753 and 1760	(ch) Greenfield, Fairfield Co, CT		
2	Peter Oakley	M	1754	Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, British America	18 Aug 1794	Easton, Fairfield, Connecticut, United States
3	Miles Oakley	M	7 Apr 1757	Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, British America	1844	Pomeroy, Ohio, United States
4	Abigail Oakley	F	25 Feb 1759	Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, British America	5 Mar 1795	Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, United States
5	Gilbert Oakley	M	11 May 1762	Fairfield County, Connecticut	30 Sep 1805	Orange County, New York, United States
6	Jeremiah Oakley Jr.	M	5 Mar 1764	Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, British America	11 May 1847	Easton, Fairfield, Connecticut, United States
7	David Oakley	M	10 May 1767	Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, British America		
	+ Click to add a child					

My RootsMagic database originally came from my father's genealogical research, supplemented by my cousin Hal Oakley's work on the ***Oakley*** family tree.

The family oral history that I remember was that ***Burr*** women usually named their first-born son Burr. It made sense to me that Burr Oakley would have been the first son of Jeremiah and Sarah. However, I have not been able to find any ***Burr*** women from those times who named their first son Burr. I looked on Ancestry.com and Geni.com to no avail. Even if there were some sons with the given name of Burr that I wasn't able to find, it wasn't a common practice. So much for my recollections of oral family history…

The family tree that my father had only listed Burr's wife as Ruth, with no last name, and I have not been able to find any more information about her. And of course, the ancestral line going back from Ruth remains unknown to me. My cousin Mary Oakley Winters has a family tree on Ancestry.com, and this tree has Ruth Hill as the wife of Burr Oakley.[1] But from what I have learned, Ruth Hill was married to David Oakley, who was Burr Oakley's brother (see Appendix).

On a totally unrelated topic (or so I thought), I recently found on Ancestry.com that I have a DNA match with a woman named Victoria Vought, and it appears that she is an ***Oakley*** descendant who most likely matches a whole group of ***Oakley*** descendants on Chromosome 15. I wrote a narrative about this – it is on my website at:

http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/VictoriaVought_6Jan25.pdf

OK – now fast forward a few weeks. I was still trying to get some information about Burr Oakley's wife, and to my surprise, I found lots and lots of family trees on Ancestry.com that listed Burr's wife as Mary Higgins (or Mary Jane Higgins):

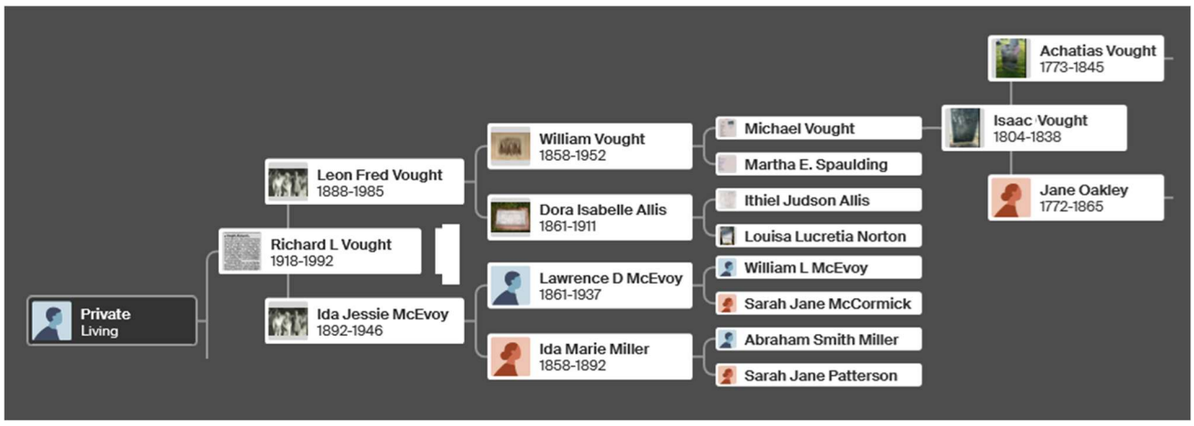
[1] https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/tree/17468930/family?cfpid=122228179442

Many of these trees had Burr Oakley born in 1770 or even 1775, which is much later than the date in my father's family tree (1753).

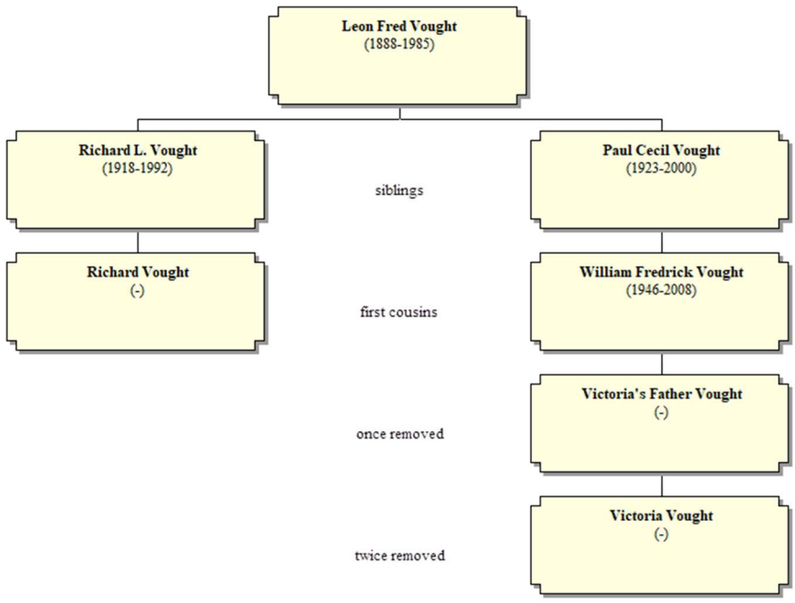
I was somewhat surprised to see that one of the links in the screenshot shown above was to Burr Oakley's profile in the "VOUGHT Family Tree" (as indicated by the red star). ***Vought*** isn't a common surname, and I had just written about Victoria Vought being an ***Oakley*** descendant. What are the odds that the owner of this family tree is related to Victoria???

Here is the profile for Burr Oakley in the "VOUGHT Family Tree":

This tree is owned by Richard Vought – and no, he and I don't have a DNA match. But it turns out that he is an ***Oakey*** descendant! Here is his line back to Jane Oakley (1772-1865):



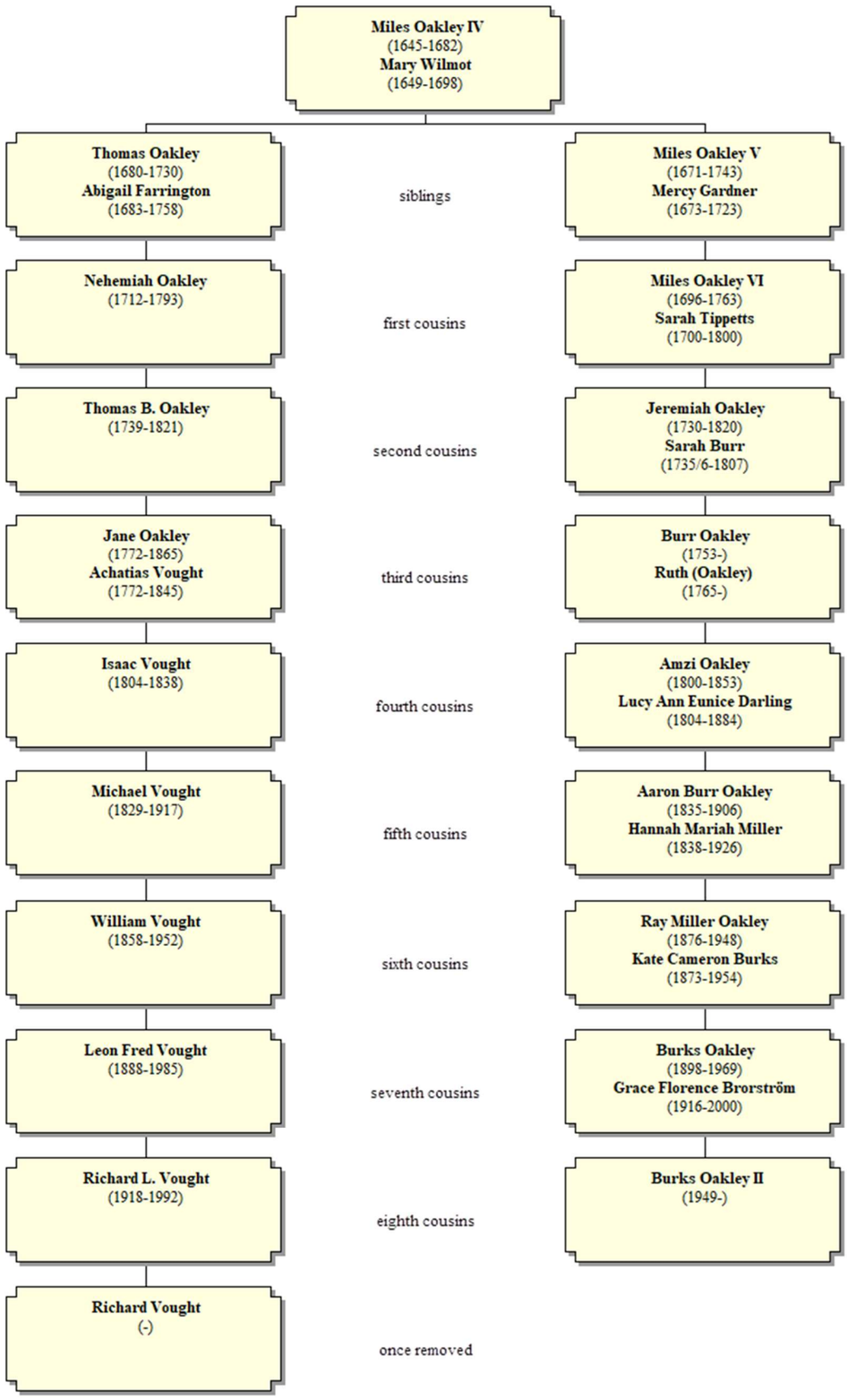
Bingo! This is just like Victoria Vought – she also is descended from Jane Oakley. In fact, Victoria and Richard are both descended from Leon Fred Vought (1888-1985). Here is a chart showing how Victoria and Richard are related:



Richard and Victoria are first-cousins, twice-removed. And remember that Victoria and I have a DNA match, and we have shared DNA matches with a group of people that I know are ***Oakley*** descendants with the same matching segment on Chromosome 15. Again, the narrative I recently wrote about my DNA match with Victoria is at:

http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/VictoriaVought_6Jan25.pdf

Here is a chart showing how Richard and I are related:



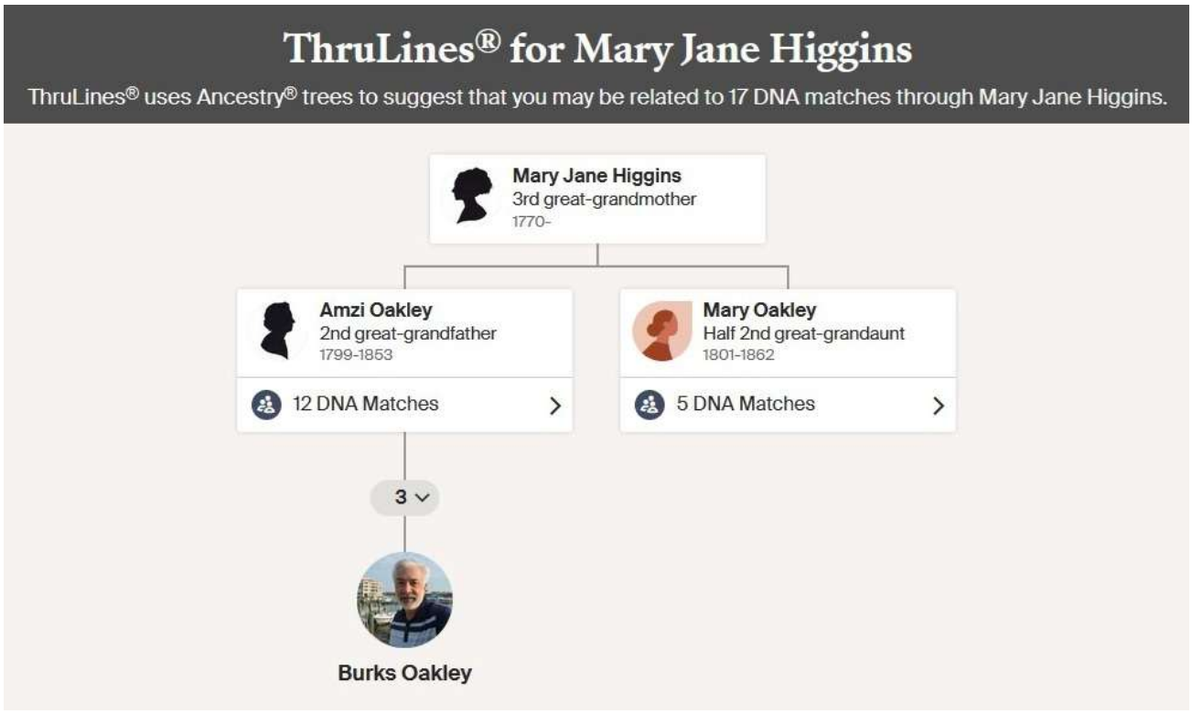
We are eighth-cousins once-removed.

But I have digressed, just to mention this interesting coincidence….

After that slight detour, I went back to Mary Jane Higgins. I figured that I had nothing to lose by adding her as the wife of Burr Oakley in my family tree on the Ancestry.com website. I added her using the same information as is in the profile for this woman in Richard Vought's family tree.

I hoped that by adding Mary Jane Higgins to my tree I would find some new DNA matches with distant relatives carrying her DNA. I should note that the Ancestry.com website only updates every day or two, so I had to wait a few days before checking for new DNA matches.

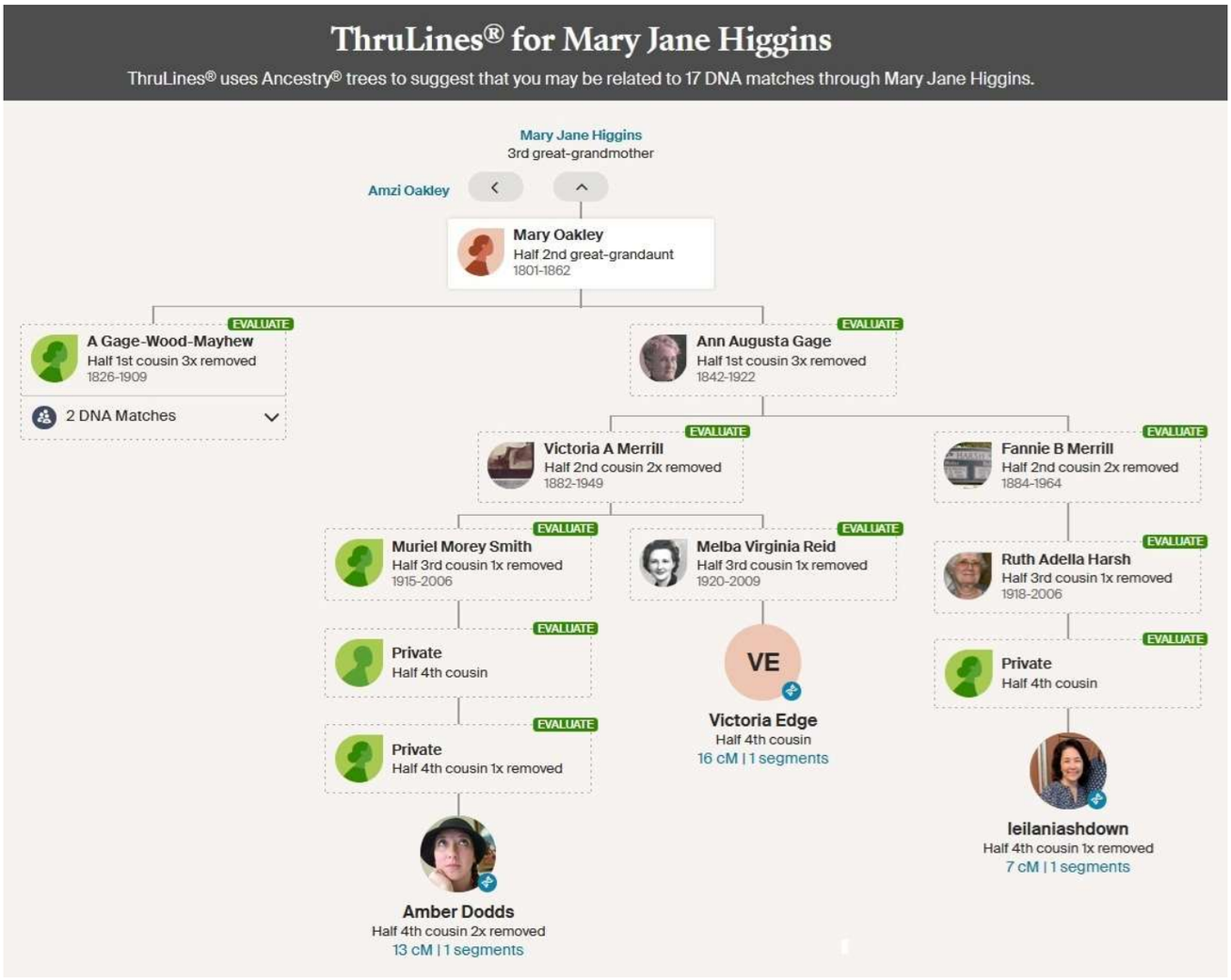
Software on the Ancestry.com website automatically created my ThruLines® chart for Mary Jane Higgins:



Oh my! The right side of this chart shows that I have five new DNA matches with descendants of Mary Oakley (1801-1862), who was a daughter of Burr Oakley and Mary Jane Higgins. [For some reason, I don't seem to have the correct profile information for Burr or Mary Jane, or there are errors in other family trees on Ancestry.com, and therefore Ancestry.com shows Mary as a half-sister to Amzi, when she really was a full sister.]

Of course, I went on to look at these five new DNA matches. Here are the first two, which connect back to Mary Oakley through her daughter Annie Delight Gage (1826-1909):

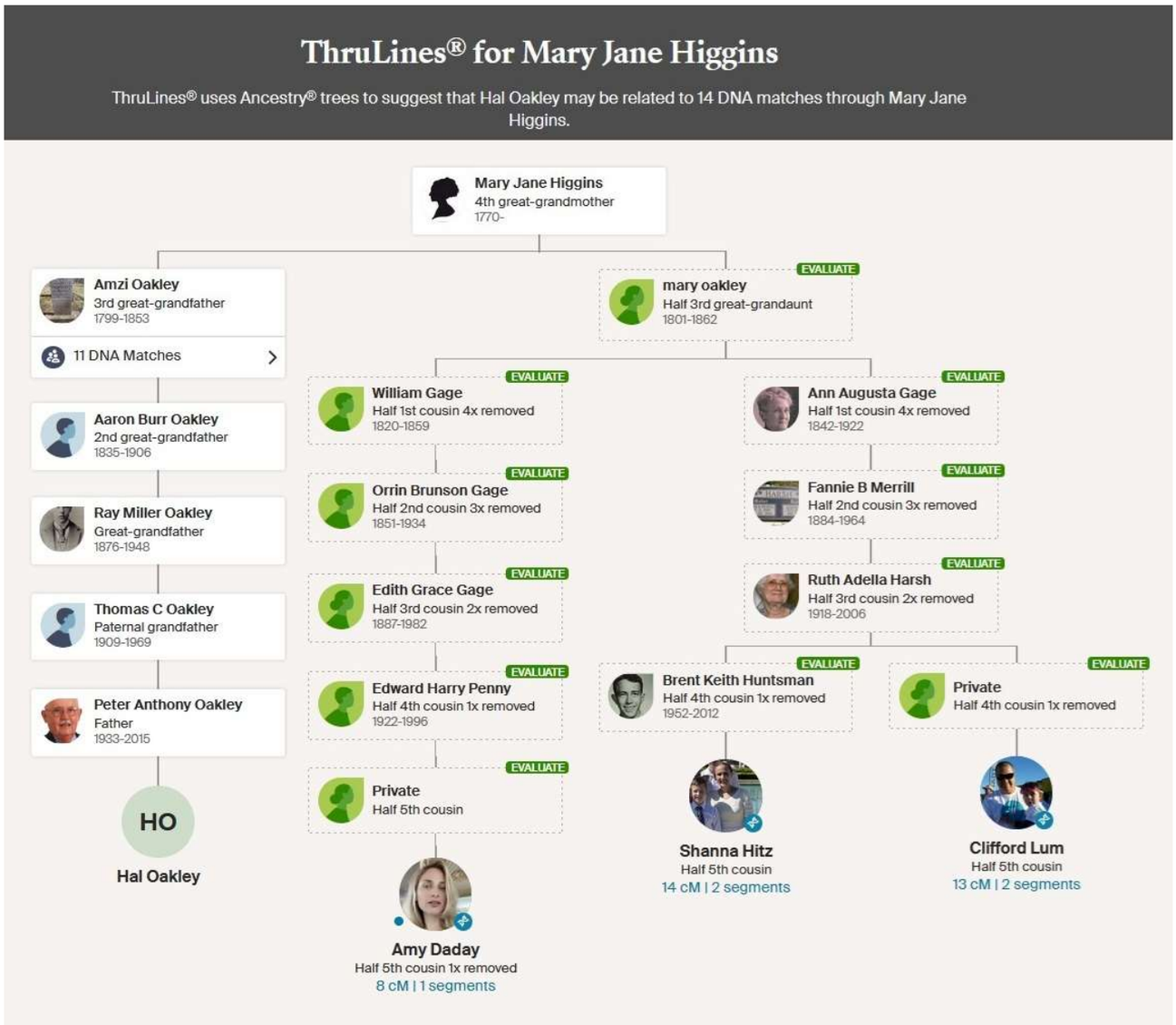
Here are the next three DNA matches, which connect back to Mary Oakley through her daughter Ann Augusta Gage (1842-1922):



Wow! These five new DNA matches certainly support the idea that Burr Oakley's wife was Mary Jane Higgins. [When I only had Burr Oakley in my tree, married to Ruth Unknown, Ancestry.com didn't know that Mary Jane Higgins was my ancestor, and therefore couldn't figure out the connection between these five individuals and me. But once I added Mary Jane Higgins as one of my direct ancestors, then software could figure out the relationship between these five individuals and me, which is why they now appear in these ThruLines® charts. I have to note that these five individuals don't connect back to the Burr Oakley in my family tree – and I have no idea why.]

Since I have editing privileges for my cousin Hal Oakley's family tree on the Ancestry.com website, I added Burr Oakley and Mary Jane Higgins as the parents of Amzi Oakley in <u>his</u> family tree. When I looked the next day, software had created Hal's ThruLines® charts for both Burr and Mary Jane. Unfortunately, the same "half" errors show up in Hal's ThruLines® charts. But he does have three new DNA matches that connect back to Mary Jane Higgins through her daughter Mary Oakley:

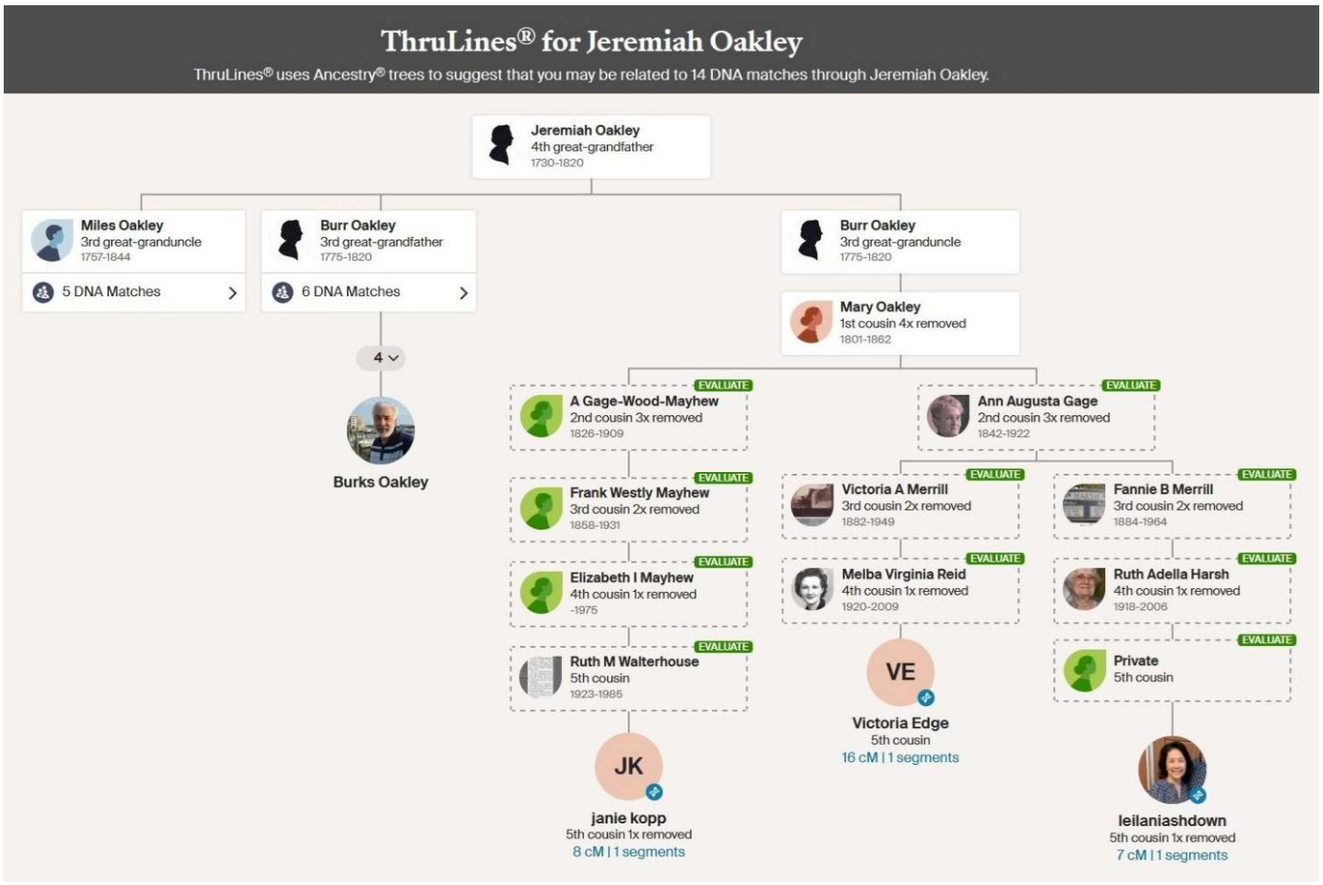
Here is the same ThruLines® chart, but with the lines “open”:



Oh my! Hal has three completely different DNA matches than I do, going back to Mary Jane Higgins through her daughter Mary Oakley. In turn, these matches go back to Mary Oakley through her son William Gage (1820-1859) and her daughter Ann Augusta Gage (1842-1922).

Since Hal also has new DNA matches that connect back to Mary Jane Higgins, I'm becoming even more convinced that Mary Jane Higgins was the wife of Burr Oakley.

Just for fun, I went back one more generation and looked at my ThruLines® chart for Burr Oakley's father, Jeremiah Oakley:



The good news here is that three of my new DNA matches (with Janie Kopp, Victoria Edge, and ***leilanishdown***) appear in this chart. The other two new DNA matches are too many generations removed from Jeremiah Oakley to appear in this chart. The bad news, of course, is that Burr Oakley appears TWICE in this ThruLines® chart – and I have checked over and over – I only have one entry for Burr Oakley in <u>my</u> family tree on the Ancestry.com website. Remember that the ThruLines® charts are based on family trees on the Ancestry.com website, and it appears that one or more of them is/are leading to these errors.

Being more than a little curious about this, I went back and searched "Public Member Trees" on Ancestry.com for Burr Oakley, born in 1775 plus or minus 10 years. This search returned 124 unique results, and a sampling of these results is shown in the following table:

Burr oakley found in **124 public trees**

Burr oakley from tree debbs Family Tree

Birth	1775 Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah oakley** (1730-1820)
Residence	1866 Indiana, USA	Mother	**Sarah Sherwood Burr** (1735-1807)
Death	7 Nov 1870	Spouse	**Mary Higgins** (Born 1772)

1668 *People* **6** *Records* **7** *Sources*

Burr Oakley from tree VOUGHT Family Tree

Birth	20 Jun 1770 Easton, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah Oakley** (1729-1820)
Marriage	1791 Westchester, New York, USA	Mother	**Sarah Burr** (1736-1807)
Death	1820 Fairfield, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Spouse	**Mary Jane Higgins** (1770-1807)

11213 *People* **1** *Record* **1** *Source*

Burr Oakley from tree sean iphone

Birth	1773 Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah Oakley** (1730-1820)
Marriage	1794	Mother	**Sarah Burr** (1736-1807)
Residence	1830 Danbury, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Spouse	**Mary ROBERTS**

9410 *People* **4** *Records* **13** *Sources*

Burr Oakley from tree Owen Jones Family Tree

Birth	1773 Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah Oakley** (1734-1820)
Marriage	1794	Mother	**Sarah Burr** (1736-1807)
Residence	1830 Danbury, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Spouse	**Anna Manley** (1770-1820)

8402 *People* **2** *Records* **5** *Sources*

Burr Oakley from tree Elston-Bauer-Brenner-Bloomfield Family

Birth	1773 Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah Oakley** (1734-1820)
Marriage	1794	Mother	**Sarah Burr** (1736-1807)
Residence	1830 Danbury, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Spouse	**Anna Higgins Manley** (1770-1820)

1945 *People* **2** *Records* **3** *Sources*

Burr Oakley from tree Catlin-Whitehouse Family Tree

Birth	1770 Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah Oakley** (1730-1820)
Death	Putnam, New York, USA	Mother	**Sarah Burr** (1736-1807)
		Spouse	**Jane**

29938 *People* **0** *Records* **0** *Sources*

Burr Oakley from tree nock Family Tree

Birth	1770 Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah Oakley** (1730-1820)
Residence	1830 Danbury, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Mother	**Sarah Sherwood Burr** (1734-1819)
		Spouse	**Ruth** (Born 1765)

27519 *People* **2** *Records* **4** *Sources*

Burr OAKLEY from tree Oakley-Willard-Oliver-Darrow.GED.FTW(2.5)_2017-04-29

Birth	1770 Connecticut, USA	Father	**Jeremiah OAKLEY** (1730-1820)
Residence	Weston, Fairfield, Connecticut, USA	Mother	**Sarah BURR** (Died 1807)
		Spouse	**Jane UNKNOWN**

25266 *People* **0** *Records* **0** *Sources*

These profiles list Burr's wife as:

- Mary Higgins
- Mary Jane Higgins
- Mary Roberts
- Anna Manley
- Anna Higgins Manley
- Jane
- Ruth
- Jane Unknown

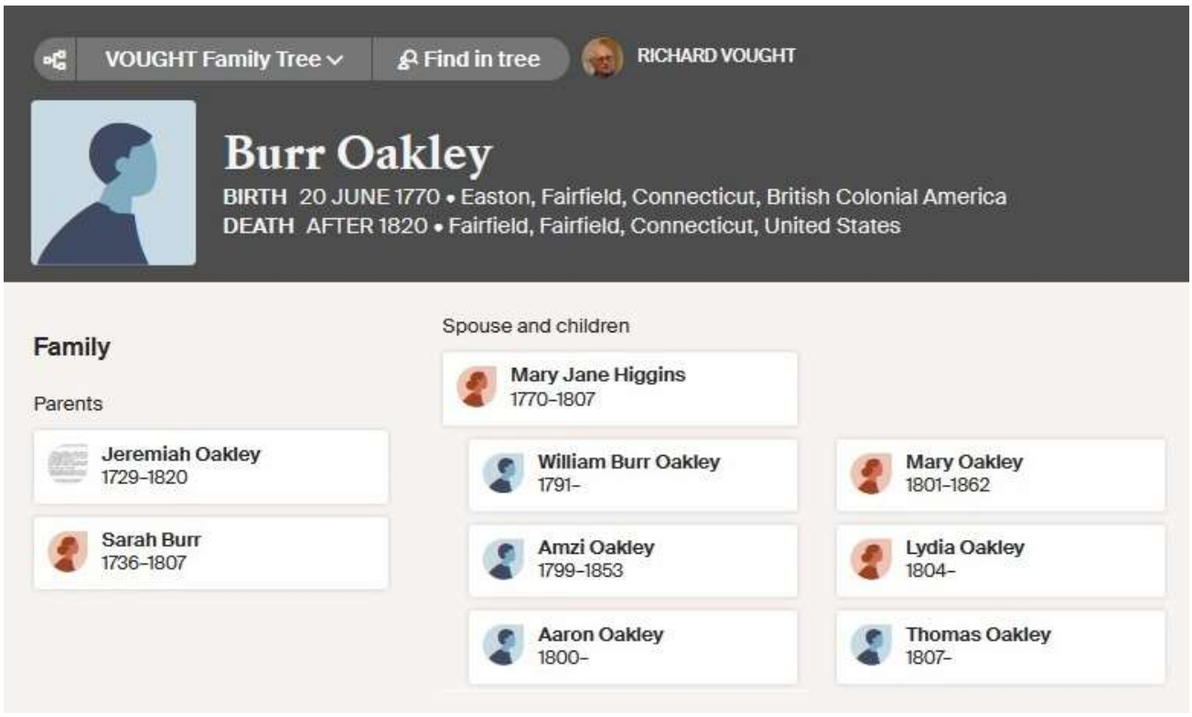
In addition, these profiles list Burr's place of birth as:

- Norwalk, Fairfield, Connecticut
- Easton, Fairfield, Connecticut
- Fairfield, Connecticut
- Connecticut

And they list the year of his birth as 1770 or 1773 or 1775.

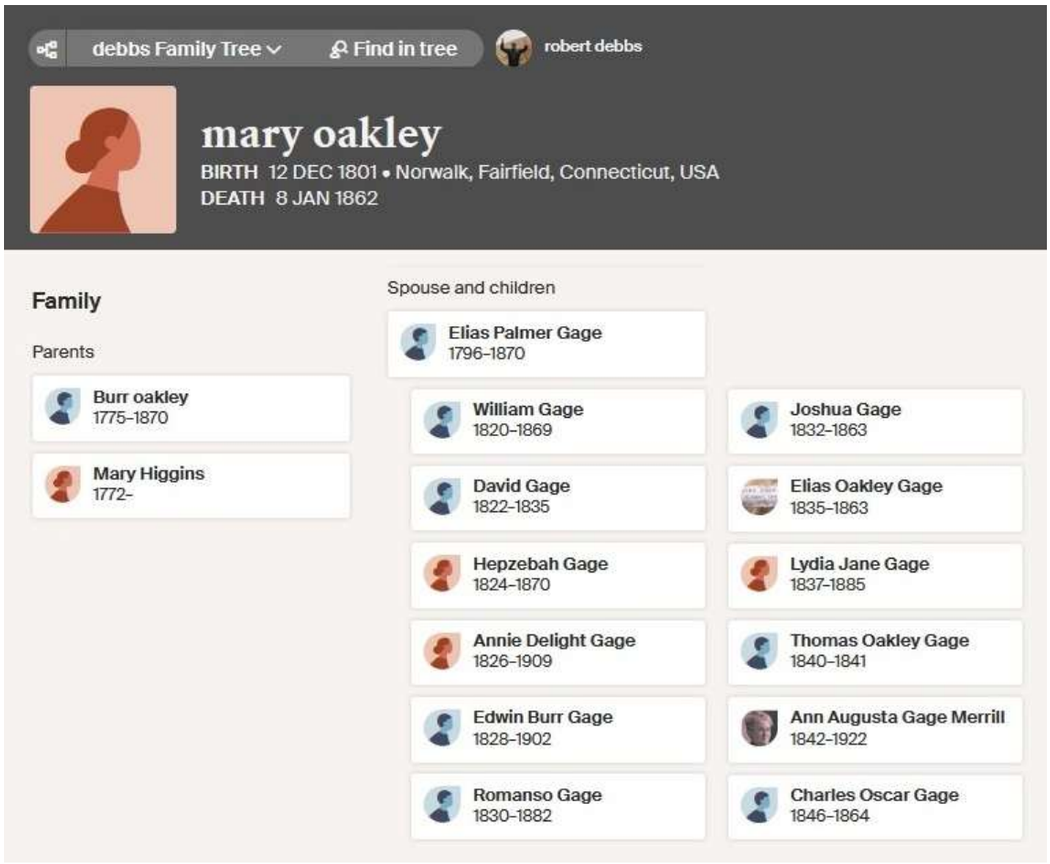
Is it any wonder that the ThruLines® software is producing charts that show "half" relationships when they should be full relationships, and connecting children just to Mary Jane Higgins, when they should be connected to both Burr Oakley and Mary Jane Higgins. [I'm not sure if this was a question, so maybe I should have used a question mark….]

One More Thing – In looking at my DNA matches with descendants of Burr Oakley and Mary Jane Higgins, I felt that I needed to verify the ancestral lines. I went back and looked at Burr Oakley in Richard Vought's family tree:



Indeed, Burr Oakley had a son Amzi Oakley (my second-great grandfather) and a daughter Mary Oakley (1801-1862).

I also looked at Mary Oakley's profile – this one is from the Debbs Family Tree:



Indeed, Mary had a son William Gage (1820-1869) and daughters Annie Delight Gage (1826-1909) and Ann Augusta Gage (1842-1922). So it would appear that the ancestral lines connecting me to my five new matches are legitimate. Ditto for Hal's three new DNA matches.

Summary:

In this rambling narrative, I documented how I tried to learn more about my third-great grandfather, Burr Oakley. My starting point was the information in my RootsMagic database, which included his birth in 1753 and his wife's name of Ruth (unknown last name).

I found a number of family trees on Ancestry.com that list Mary Jane Higgins as the wife of Burr Oakley, and when I edited my family tree to have this woman as Burr's wife (and my third-great grandmother), I subsequently found that I had five new DNA matches with descendants of this couple. I did the same for my cousin Hal Oakley's family tree, and found that he had three new DNA matches with descendants of this couple. I take both of these results to support that idea that Burr's wife was indeed Mary Jane Higgins.

Along the way, I found a profile for Burr Oakley in a family tree owned by Richard Vought, and since I have a DNA match with a woman named Victoria Vought, I examined Richard's tree in detail. It turns out that we are eighth-cousins once-removed. And Richard was a first-cousin of Victoria's paternal grandfather.

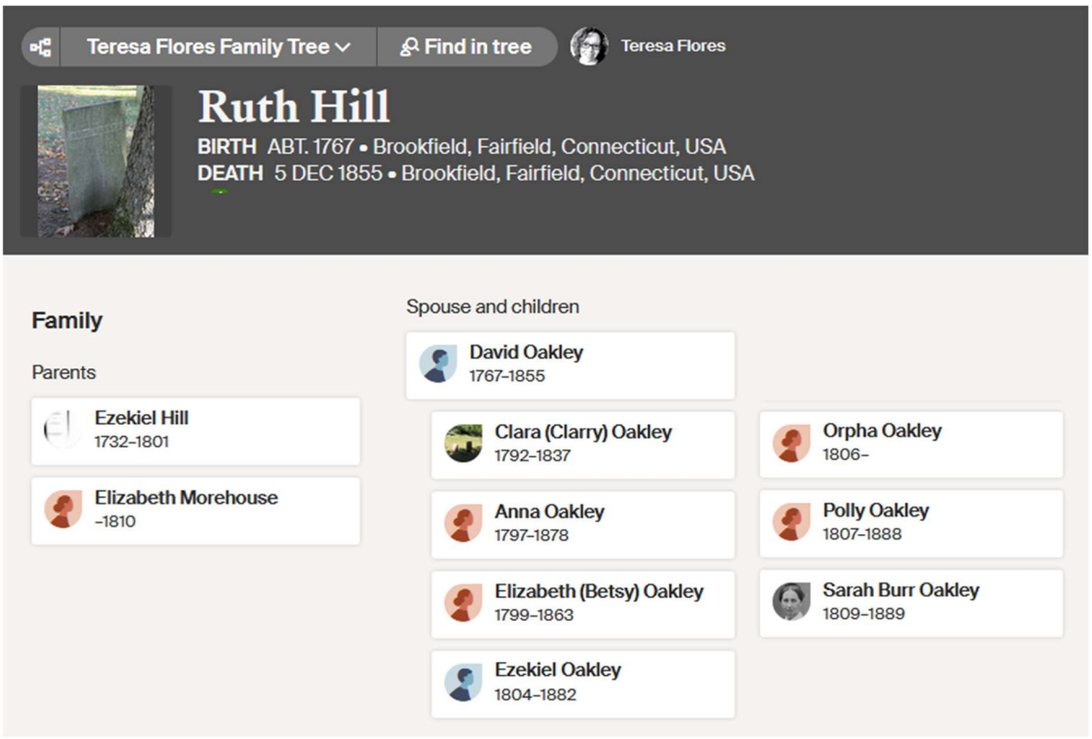
I also found that the software on Ancestry.com doesn't deal very well with Burr Oakley, since there are so many trees with conflicting information for his date of birth, his place of birth, and the name of his wife. So I have ThruLines® charts that show Burr Oakley as both my third-great grandfather AND my third-great granduncle. The same goes for my cousin Hal Oakley. I guess this is something we'll just have to live with.

Appendix

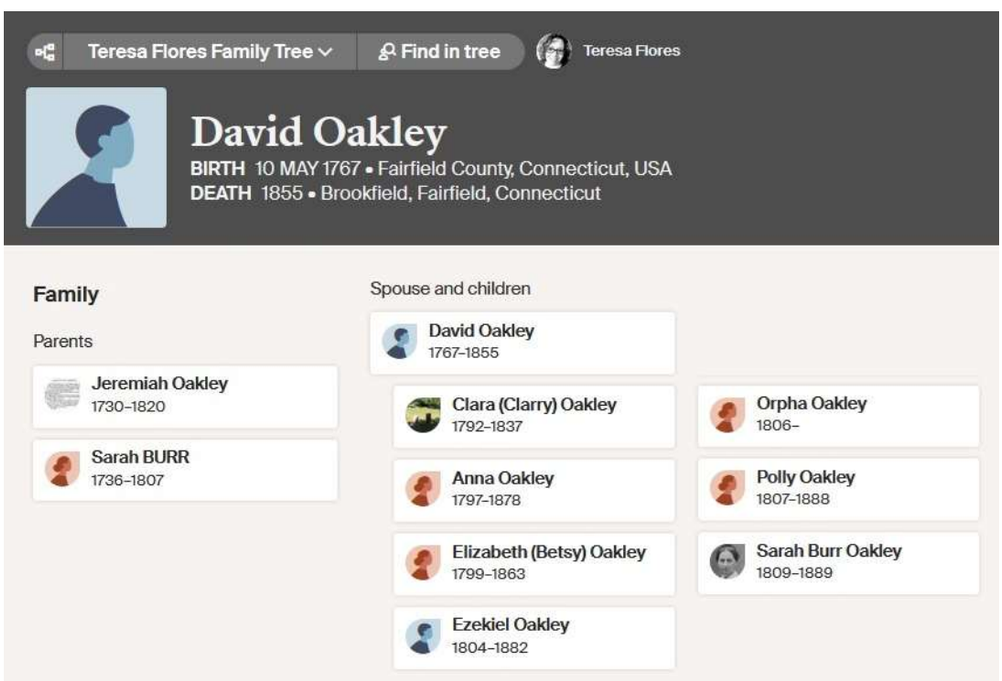
Mary Oakley Winters' family tree has Ruth Hill being the wife of Burr Oakley:

Searching Ancestry.com for Ruth Hill produced lots of trees with Ruth Hill being married to David Oakley:

One of those trees is managed by Teresa Flores – and here is her profile for Ruth Hill:



And here is her profile for David Oakley:



David's parents were Jeremiah Oakley and Sarah Burr – and this means that David Oakley was Burr Oakley's brother.