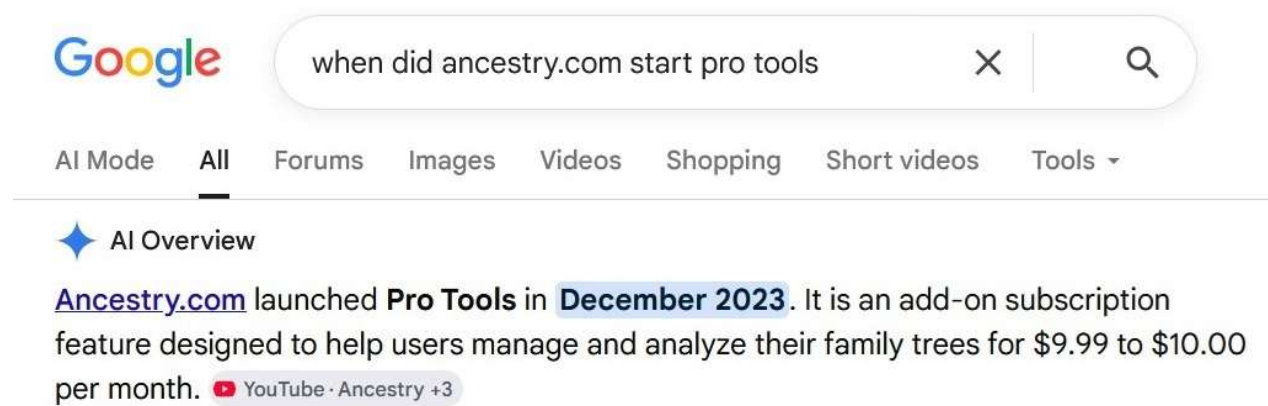


The “Enhanced” Shared DNA Matches Feature on Ancestry.com – With an Application to my DNA Match with David Smith

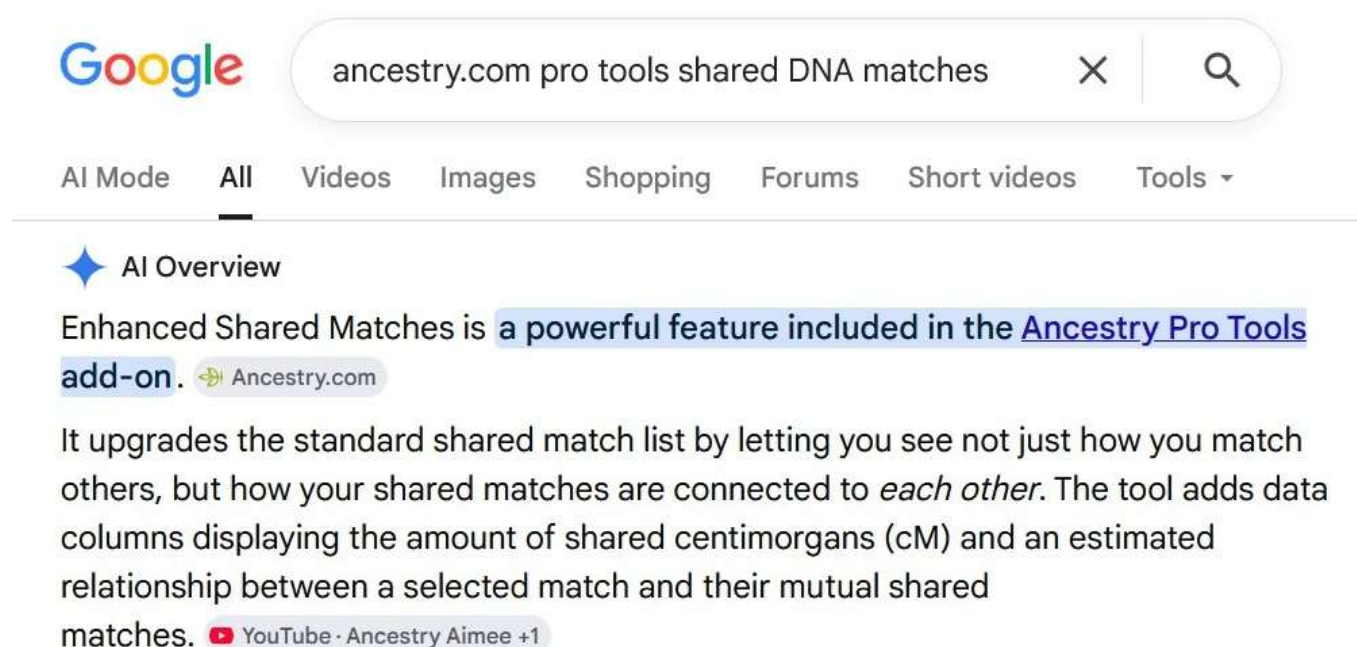
By Burks Oakley II
14 July 2026

I am interested in genetic genealogy – that is, the use of DNA matches to extend and to confirm my family tree. In this hobby/pastime/obsession, I make extensive use of the Ancestry.com website. Several years ago, I upgraded my subscription to Ancestry.com to include their “Pro Tools”. A Google search informed me that Ancestry launched their Pro Tools in December 2023:



(Don’t you just love that price range?!)

The only feature of Pro Tools that I actually use regularly is called the “Enhanced Shared Matches”:



Here is a blurb from the Ancestry.com website about the “Enhanced Shared Matches” tool:

Have you ever wondered how your DNA matches are related to you and even more so, how they are related to each other? Ancestry now offers this with enhanced shared matches!

As a professional genealogist, enhanced shared matches is an absolute game changer, and could be for anyone using their DNA matches as genetic evidence to identify a previously unknown ancestor or build and verify their family tree. This new feature helps you to determine how DNA matches without a family tree (or with a small family tree) are connected to your common ancestors by showing how much DNA matches share with each other.

<https://www.ancestry.com/c/ancestry-blog/pro-tools-dna-matches>

I would like to demonstrate the usefulness of the “Enhanced Shared Matches” in this narrative. But to set the stage, let me begin with my DNA match with Tim Oakley, who is my first-cousin once-removed. Tim and I shared 511 cM of DNA.

The people on Ancestry.com who have DNA matches with both Tim and with me are called our “Shared DNA Matches”, and there are almost 600 people on this list. Here are the top four, based on the size of their DNA matches with me:

TreesOriginsShared MatchesPro		
Filter shared matches		
Shared match:	Your:	Tim Oakley's:
 Amy Oakley	  + Your: Daughter 3,455 cM Both sides	 Tim's: 2nd cousin 284 cM
 Hal Oakley	  + Your: 1st cousin 1x removed 418 cM Paternal side	 Tim's: 1st cousin 704 cM
 Mark Eidem	  + Your: 1st cousin 1x removed 418 cM Paternal side	 Tim's: Half 2nd cousin or 2nd cousin 1x removed 155 cM
 AmandaMervin	 + Your: 1st cousin 2x removed 325 cM Paternal side	 Tim's: 2nd cousin 1x removed 135 cM

The top four shared DNA matches are with my daughter Amy Oakley, my first-cousin once-removed Hal Oakley, my first-cousin once-removed Mark Eidem, and my first-cousin twice-removed Amanda Mervin. Again, these matches are shown in decreasing order, based on the size of the DNA match with me. Note that since I am using Pro Tools, I also can see the size of Tim’s DNA match with each of these four individuals.

It also is possible to sort the shared matches from Tim’s perspective, that is, based on the size of their DNA matches with Tim:

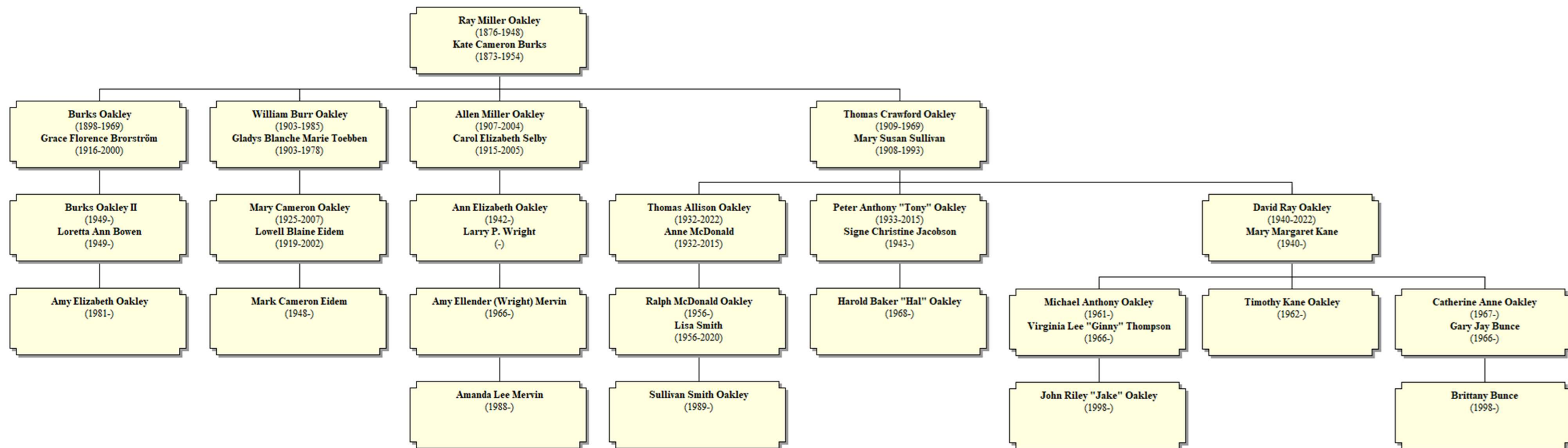
TreesOriginsShared MatchesPro

Filter shared matches

Shared match:	Your:	Tim Oakley's:
 Brittany Bunce Managed by Sherry Monday 	Your: 1st cousin 2x removed 213 cM Paternal side	Tim's: Niece 1,940 cM
 J. O. Managed by ginnyoak 	Your: 1st cousin 2x removed 196 cM Paternal side	Tim's: Nephew 1,875 cM
 Hal Oakley 	Your: 1st cousin 1x removed 418 cM Paternal side	Tim's: 1st cousin 704 cM
 Sullivan Oakley 	Your: 1st cousin 2x removed 201 cM Paternal side	Tim's: 1st cousin 1x removed 386 cM

This list begins with Tim’s niece Brittany Bunce, his nephew ***J.O.*** (Jake Oakley), his first-cousin Hal Oakley, and his first-cousin once-removed Sullivan Oakley.

Here is a chart showing all of these relationships:



This overall relationship chart begins at the top with my paternal grandparents, Ray Miller Oakley (1876-1948) and his wife Kate Cameron Burks (1873-1954). It continues with their four sons – Burks, William, Allen, and Thomas. The important thing to note is that each of the ancestral lines shown in this chart ends with the people on the list of Shared DNA Matches – (from L to R) Amy Oakley, Mark Eidem, Amanda Mervin, Sullivan Oakley, Hal Oakley, Jake Oakley, Tim Oakley, and Brittany Bunce.

This overall chart is consistent with the relationships shown in the two screenshots on the previous page. For example, Brittany is Tim’s niece and Amanda is my first-cousin twice-removed.

So my DNA match with Tim yielded a huge amount of information about our extended **Oakley** family. Since Ray and Kate raised their family in Quincy, Illinois, I usually refer to our family as the “Quincy Oakleys”. A listing of all of my narratives about the genealogy of this family is on my personal website at:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/>

As an aside, it is really nice that our largest DNA matches include relatives in all four branches of the family.¹

As I mentioned earlier, the purpose of this narrative is to provide a concrete example of the use of “Enhanced” Shared Matches on Ancestry.com.

I began by looking at some of my ThruLines® charts for ancestors on my father’s side of my family tree. I decided to look at Samuel Darling and his wife Lucy Lyon. This couple were my fourth-great grandparents, and each of them had very interesting ancestors.

Samuel Darling was descended from George Darling (1514-1693), the Scottish prisoner. I wrote about George Darling earlier – see:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/4A-DarlingGenealogy.pdf>

In short, George was a Scotsman who was captured by the British at the Battle of Dunbar in 1653. He and thousands of other captured Scots were force-marched to London. A number of them were sold as indentured servants, to be taken to America. George was one of them, and he ended up at the Saugus Iron Works in Lynn, Massachusetts. After serving his seven years as an indentured servant, he became a Freeman, he married, raised a family, and led a prosperous life.

Lucy Lyon also had a fascinating ancestry, going back to the **Lyon** family in Scotland, who were peers, with titles such as Lords and Baronesses. See:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/27-OurLyonFamilyAncestry.pdf>

Sir John Lyon, 7th Lord Glamis, and his wife Lady Janet Keith Lyon, Baroness Glamis, were my 10th-great grandparents. They also were the late Queen Mother’s 10th-great grandparents. That means that I was an 11th-cousin of the late Queen Mother, and my daughters are 12th-cousins of the late Queen Elizabeth II, and my grandchildren are 13th-cousins of King Charles III.

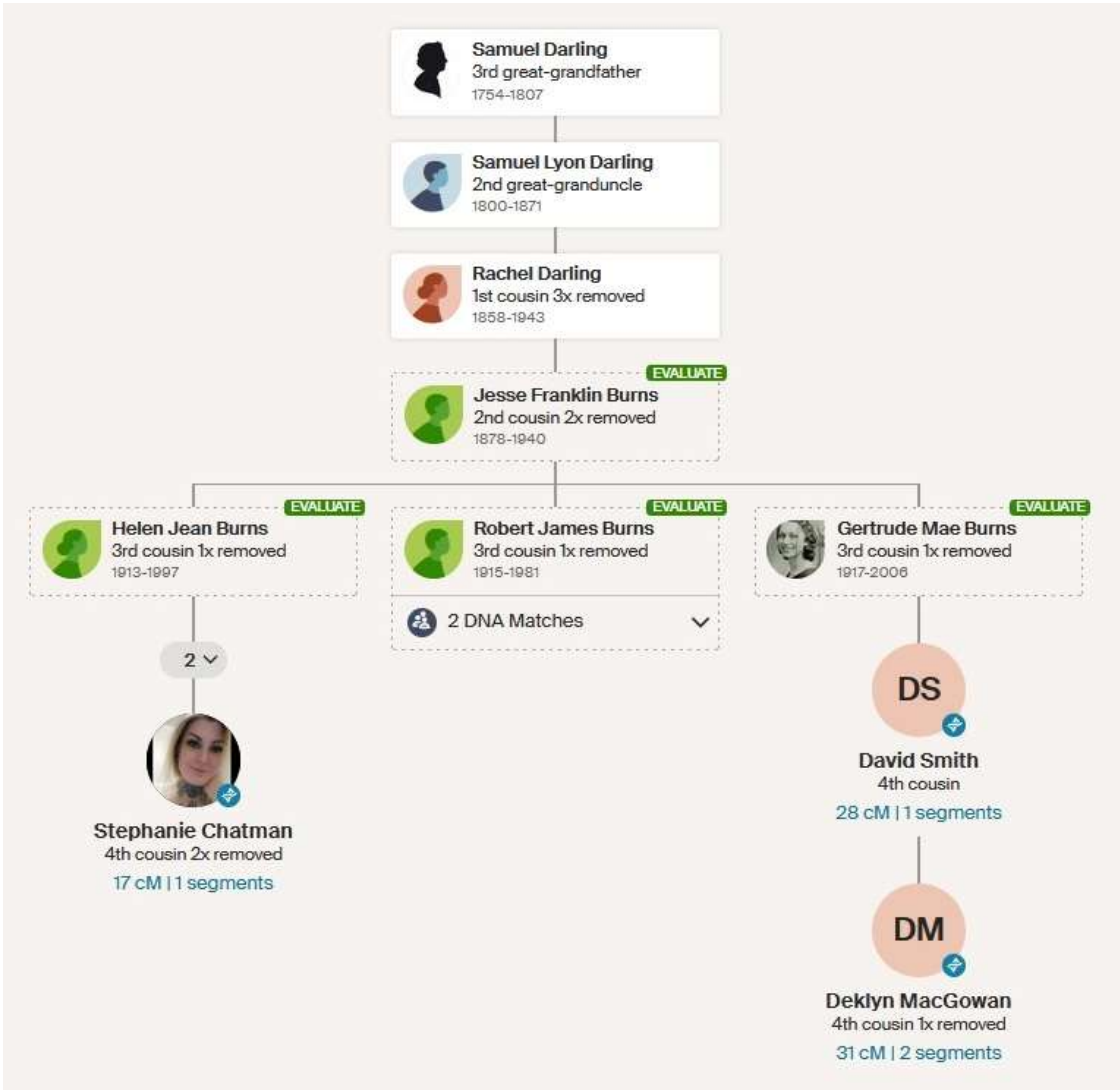
Here is my ThruLines® chart for Samuel Darling (although my ThruLines® chart for Lucy Lyon looks identical):

¹ Ray and Kate’s daughter, Mary Elisabeth “Ebby” Oakley (1900-1966), did not have any children.



I have DNA matches with 29 individuals who are descended from Samuel Darling (and his wife Lucy Lyon).

Here is part of the branch of the ThruLines® chart going back through Samuel Lyon Darling:



Since I have DNA matches with David Smith and his son Deklyn MacGowan, I decided to look at the details of my DNA match with David Smith. Here is a chart from Ancestry.com showing how David and I are most likely related:



Based on this chart, David and I are fourth-cousins.

As an aside, David has a very complete pedigree chart on Ancestry.com:



Note that this pedigree includes his great-grandmother Rachel Darling (1858-1943) and his 2nd-great grandfather, Samuel Lyon Darling (1800-1871).

Remember that the purpose of this narrative is to illustrate the use of “Enhanced” Shared DNA Matches on Ancestry.com. So let me jump right now to my shared DNA matches with David Smith.

It turns out that David and I have 124 shared DNA matches, which are impossible to display in a single image. Of the 124, our common ancestors are known for 14:

Common ancestor		
Shared match:	Your:	David Smith's:
 Amy Oakley	Your: Daughter 3,455 cM Both sides	David's: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed 22 cM
		
 Karen Rowser	Your: 3rd cousin 44 cM Paternal side	David's: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 23 cM
TL suggests that Karen Rowser is descended from Anna Oakley and Lucy ...		
 bmstruck_bs	Your: 3rd cousin 2x removed 42 cM Paternal side	David's: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed 23 cM
Shared DNA matches with Hal and Jeani Trana - Jeani is an Oakley desc...		
 Deklyn MacGowan Managed by kmacgowan213	Your: 4th cousin 1x removed 31 cM Paternal side	David's: Son 3,447 cM
TL suggests that he is descended from Samuel Darling & Lucy Lyon. Note ...		
 Walter Spencer	Your: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 23 cM Paternal side	David's: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 33 cM
ThruLines suggests he is descended from John LEWIS and Priscilla BRO...		
 Leanne Heckel	Your: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed 19 cM Paternal side	David's: 3rd cousin 1x removed or half 2nd cousin 2x removed 51 cM
TL suggest that she is descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon. Th...		
 Stephanie Chatman	Your: 3rd cousin 2x removed or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 17 cM Paternal side	David's: 1st cousin 2x removed or half 1st cousin 1x removed 259 cM
TL suggests she is descended from Samuel Darling and his wife Lucy Lyo...		
 deborahsouth1	Your: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 15 cM Paternal side	David's: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin 30 cM
ThruLines suggests she is descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon...		
 Heidi Liska	Your: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin 14 cM Paternal side	David's: 3rd cousin 1x removed or half 2nd cousin 2x removed 54 cM
Shared Ancestor Hint going back to Samuel DARLING and Lucy LYON (par...		
 carolross23	Your: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 13 cM Paternal side	David's: 2nd cousin or half 2nd cousin 186 cM
TL suggests that she is descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon on...		
 LynnRobertHalpin	Your: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 12 cM Paternal side	David's: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 24 cM
Descended from Joseph Oliver Lyon & Lois Sanford, 1Apr19.		
 Felicity Lynn	Your: 3rd cousin 2x removed or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 9 cM Paternal side	David's: 2nd cousin 2x removed or half 1st cousin 3x removed 68 cM
 Crystal Green	Your: 3rd cousin 2x removed or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 8 cM Paternal side	David's: 1st cousin 2x removed or half 1st cousin 1x removed 242 cM
TL suggests she is descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon, Shere...		
 Summer Smallwood	Your: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin 7 cM Paternal side	David's: 1st cousin 1x removed or half 1st cousin 364 cM
ThruLines suggests she is descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon...		

It actually is pretty amazing to have so many shared matches with known common ancestors, going back to a person’s fourth-great grandparents.

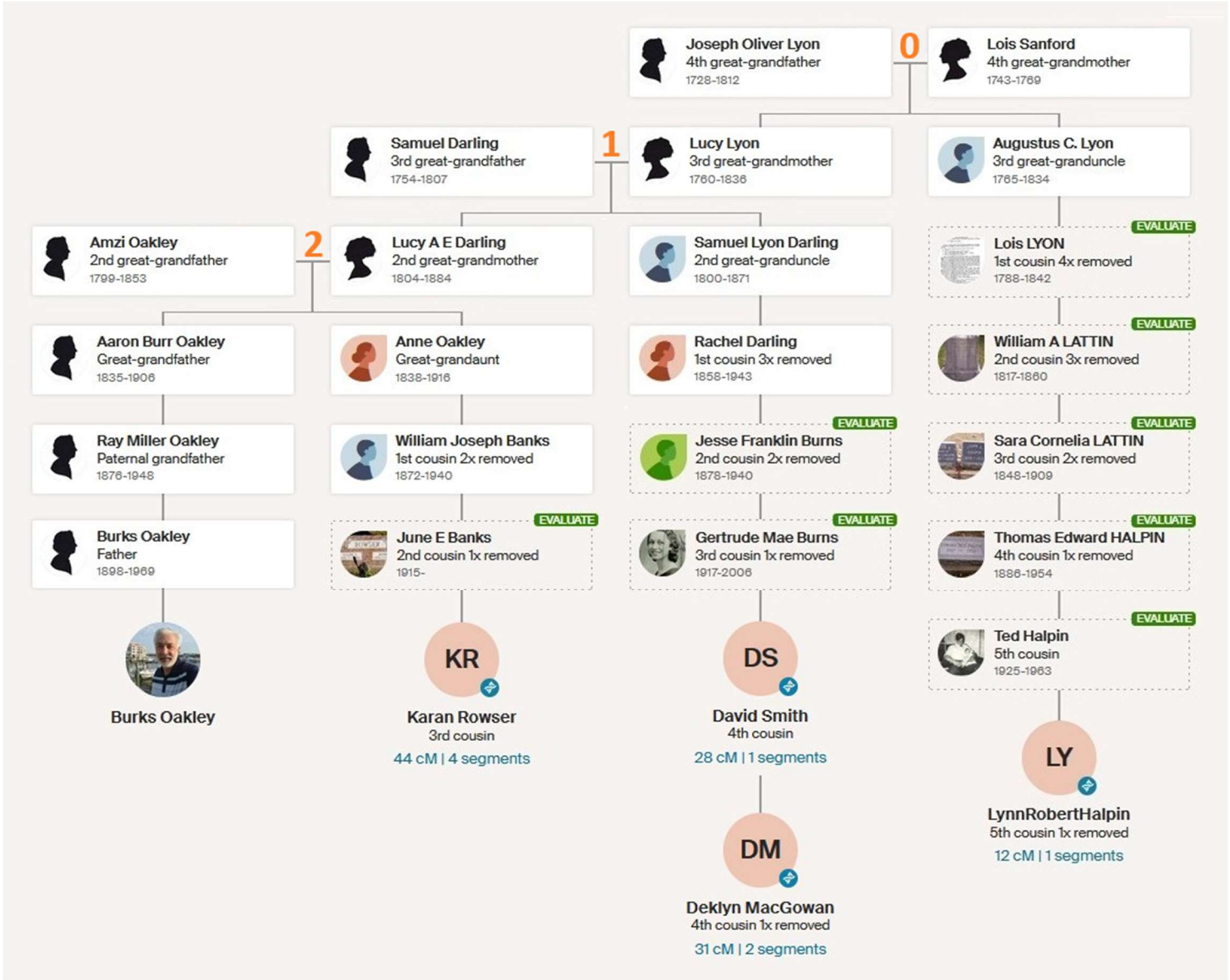
Note that on the list of 14, the first match on my list (from largest to smallest) is my daughter Amy. Also on this list is Deklyn MacGowan, who is David’s son.

I have a 3,455 cM match with my daughter Amy, while David has a 22 cM match with Amy. David has a 3,447 cM match with his son Deklyn, while I have a 31 cM match with Deklyn.

In looking through the 14 people on this list, several stood out to me. One was Karan Rowser – my notes about my DNA match with her state that she is descended from Amzi Oakley and his wife Lucy Ann Eunice Darling. Lucy A. E. Darling was a daughter of Samuel Darling and his wife Lucy Lyon.

Another interesting shared DNA match is Lynn Robert Halpin – my notes about my DNA match with him state that he is descended from Joseph Oliver Lyon and his wife Lois Sanford. This couple were the parents of Lucy Lyon.

Since I am a visual learner, I next constructed a chart, showing how I am related to Karan, David, Deklyn, and Lynn Robert.



In this chart, Couple #1 are Samuel Darling and his wife Lucy Lyon. I began with them, since they are the common ancestors that I share with David Smith and his son Deklyn MacGowan.

Couple #0 are Joseph Oliver Lyon and his wife Lois Sanford. They were Lucy Lyon’s parents, and they are the common ancestors that I share with Lynn Robert Halpin.

Couple #2 are Amzi Oakley and his wife Lucy Ann Eunice Darling. They are the common ancestors that I share with Karan Rowser. And Lucy A. E. Darling was the daughter of Couple #1.

Of course, looking at this chart, it is obvious that all of us – myself, Karan, David, Deklyn, and Lynn Robert – are descended from Couple #0, the **Lyon-Sanford** couple.

I already know that David and I have DNA matches with Karan, Deklyn, and Lynn Robert. But what about the others? Do they have DNA matches with each other?

Karan has a DNA match with Lynn Robert:



Karan Rowser

Your:

3rd cousin

44 cM

Paternal side

LynnRobertHalpin's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed

28 cM

TL suggests that Karan Rowser is descended from Amzi Oakley and Lucy ...

Deklyn has a DNA match with Lynn Robert:



Deklyn MacGowan

Managed by kmacgowan215

Your:

4th cousin 1x removed

31 cM

Paternal side

LynnRobertHalpin's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin

25 cM

TL suggests that he is descended from Samuel Darling & Lucy Lyon.

Karan has a DNA match with Deklyn:



Deklyn MacGowan

Managed by kmacgowan215

Your:

4th cousin 1x removed

31 cM

Paternal side

Karan's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin

23 cM

TL suggests that he is descended from Samuel Darling & Lucy Lyon. Note ...

At this point, I would like to say that all of these shared DNA matches provide exceptionally strong support for the genealogical record. This gives me great confidence that this part of my family tree is “rock solid”.

Of course, all of this became visible to me because of the “Enhanced” Shared DNA Matches that are available through Ancestry’s Pro Tools. I not only was able to see my DNA match with someone, but I also was able to see how my DNA matches matched each other. It certainly is a very powerful tool!

Appendix:

Here is my DNA match with David Smith on Ancestry.com:

Distant Family



David Smith

Managed by kmacgowan215

[4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed](#)

Paternal side

28 cM | < 1% shared DNA

 [Public linked tree](#)

[11,866 people](#)

 [Common ancestor](#)

 Descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon. 26Mar19.

My note about this match indicates that he is descended from Samuel Darling and Lucy Lyon – and this note was dated 26 March 2019.

According to this screenshot, David’s profile on Ancestry.com is managed by **kmacgowan215**. When I followed the link, I saw her profile:



WILLING TO HELP

kmacgowan215

Grand Haven, Ottawa, Michigan, USA

Age: 40-49

Speaks

English

Joined

29 Dec 2011

Last active

Today

Family History Experience

Advanced

Since 1992

Researches almost every day

When I followed another link, I found that she manages the profiles of David Smith (DS) AND his son Deklyn MacGowan (DM):

DNA relationship to Burks Oakley (you)▼

kmacgowan215 is either not a DNA match or has not taken a DNA test.

However, Burks Oakley is a DNA match to tests associated with kmacgowan215's account including:

DM

DS

My guess was that **kmacgowan215** is Deklyn’s wife. A quick Google search turned up Katherine Marie MacGowan and Deklyn Callan MacGowan living in Grand Haven, Michigan. I’ll certainly try to send her this narrative, so that she can share it with her husband and father-in-law.