

My DNA Match with Heather L. DesChene – A *Burks* Family Relative

By Burks Oakley II
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In early 2017, I learned that I had a new DNA match on Ancestry.com with a woman having the username of *Heather hdeschene*. Heather and I have a relatively-large DNA match of 72 cM:

Burks Oakley's DNA Matches

All matches

By parent

By ancestor

By location

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search | Sort

Extended Family



Heather hdeschene

3rd – 4th Cousin
72 cM | 1% shared DNA
Unassigned

No Trees

Ancestry.com produced a chart showing the probabilities of the various ways in which Heather and I could be related. This chart is based solely on the size of our DNA match (72 cM):



You and Heather hdeschene

Shared DNA: 72 cM across 4 segments
Unweighted shared DNA: 83 cM
Longest segment: 27 cM

Possible DNA relationships

This table shows the percentage of the time people sharing 72 cM have the following relationships:

Percent	Relationship
39%	2nd cousin 1x removed Half 2nd cousin 1st cousin 3x removed Half 1st cousin 2x removed
34%	3rd cousin 2nd cousin 2x removed Half 2nd cousin 1x removed Half 1st cousin 3x removed
13%	3rd cousin 1x removed Half 3rd cousin Half 2nd cousin 2x removed 2nd cousin 3x removed

Our most likely relationship (having a 39% probability) is that we are second-cousins once-removed. Another likely relationship (having a 34% probability) is that we are third-cousins.

Unfortunately, Heather didn't have a family tree on Ancestry.com when I first learned about our DNA match.

The only real clue that I had about how Heather and I might be related is that we have "Shared DNA Matches" with a number of **Burks** family descendants:

- Hal Oakley and his son Allen (Hal's great-grandmother was Kate Cameron Burks)
- Mark Eidem (his great-grandmother was Kate Cameron Burks)
- Stephen Slane (his maternal grandfather was Paul Dore Burks)
- Mike Cascone (his great-grandfather was Paul Dore Burks)
- Rebecca Post (her great-grandmother was Lola Lisle Burks)
- Don Conyers and his son Trenton Conyers (Don's great-grandfather was Paul Dore Burks)

For completeness, I should add that Kate Cameron Burks was my paternal grandmother, Paul Dore Burks was one of Kate's older brothers, and Lola Lisle Burks was one of Kate's older sisters.

Given that Heather and I both have DNA matches with these **Burks** family descendants, I had every reason to believe that Heather was related to me through the **Burks** family.

Since the name **Burks** is near and dear to me, I really wanted to learn how Heather and I are related. On 20 February 2017, I sent Heather a message using the message system on Ancestry.com, but she didn't respond. From time to time, I would see my DNA match with Heather on Ancestry.com, but without more information, I wasn't able to make any progress on figuring out how we are related.

Then out of the blue, Heather sent me a message through the Ancestry message system on 11 April 2024:

Hello -- This is Heather DesChene and I live in DuPont, WA. I do have a family tree that someone in my father's side of the family made up. The easiest way to look it up is under my sister's name – Holly Elizabeth DesChene. I do not know very much about my grandfather's side of the family on my mother's side because my grandfather was adopted. It looks like my mother's side of the family is more likely our relation so it would be wonderful to keep in touch! My mother's maiden name is Nora Rosena Slane. Sorry it took so long, I just signed up today for membership.

Bingo! This was all I needed to figure out how Heather and I are related. Heather's mother was Nora Rosena Slane. Stephen Slane (mentioned above) is descended from Paul Dore Burks, and Paul Dore Burks was married to Rosena Dortha Brogle. So the combination of the names **Slane** and **Rosena** in Heather's message meant that Heather had to be a **Burks** descendant in a branch of the family going back through Paul Dore Burks.

Back in 2019, when I was trying to figure out how Stephen Slane and I are related, I corresponded with Stephen's wife Julia. In an e-mail dated 23 September 2019, Julia wrote:

After Leonard [Leonard Hackney, Pauline's first husband and the father of Stephen and his older brother Oliver] died, Pauline married a Robert Slane, who adopted the two boys. Afterwards they had a daughter, Nora Slane. She [Nora] eventually married David Dechene [sic] and they have two daughters.

The Pauline mentioned here was Pauline Louise Burks, a daughter of Paul Dore Burks. Julia specifically mentioned Nora Slane as being Pauline's daughter. And Heather mentioned that her mother was Nora Rosena Slane. In addition, Heather mentioned that she has a sister Holly – so Holly and Heather are Nora's two daughters mentioned in Julia's e-mail from 2019.

Unfortunately, Julia's e-mail used the spelling "Dechene", while Heather's real last name is "DesChene". And since Heather's username on Ancestry.com includes "hdeschene", I never made the connection.

After figuring out how Heather fits into the **Burks** family, I sent her several more messages. She wrote back on 12 April 2024:

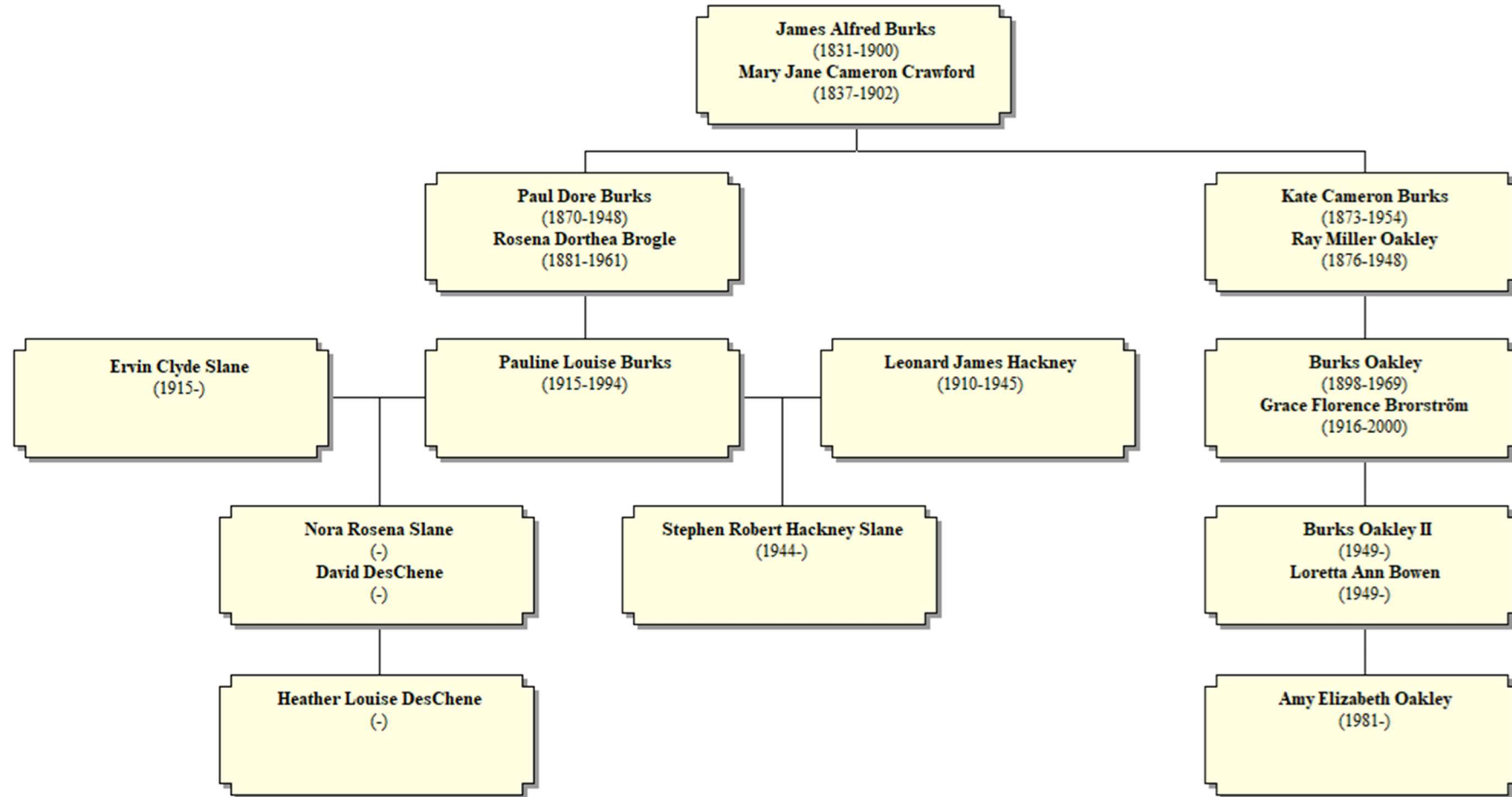
Wow! Pauline is my grandmother and yes Stephen and Oliver are my uncles. My middle name is Louise. I met Julia a long time ago when I was still in high school.

Note that Pauline's full name was Pauline Louise Burks, and Heather's middle name is Louise. Paul Dore Burks' wife was Rosena Dortha Brogle, and Heather's mother's middle name is Rosena. Nice how they have been able to use some of the same names in successive generations.

I put together a chart showing a few of these relationships, since a picture is worth a thousand words:



This relationship chart is shown in landscape view on the next page:

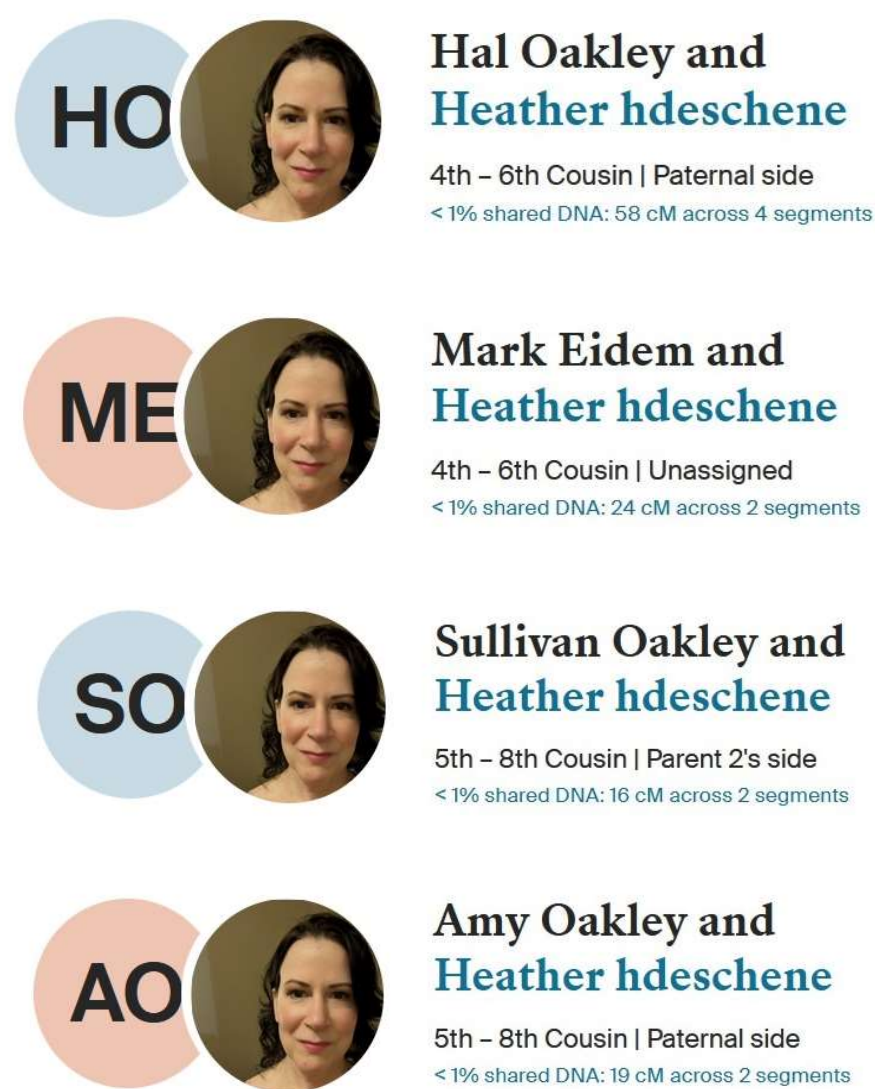


This chart shows my daughter Amy and me in the lower-right. Amy and I have DNA matches on Ancestry.com with Heather DesChene and Stephen Slane, who are shown in the lower-left and lower-middle of the chart, respectively.

Not shown in the relationship chart are Heather DesChene’s sister Holly DesChene and Stephen Slane’s brother Oliver Slane, since I created this chart based on my known DNA matches.

A number of relationships are apparent from this chart. Nora Rosena Slane and Stephen Slane are half-siblings (same mother, different father). Stephen and I are second-cousins, and Nora and I are also second-cousins. Heather and I are second-cousins once-removed, and Heather and Amy are third-cousins. Note that based solely on the size of our DNA match, Ancestry.com calculated that Heather and I were most likely to be second-cousins once-removed.

I should add that a number of my close family members have DNA matches with Heather:



Interestingly, our cousin Tim Oakley doesn’t have a DNA match with Heather, and Tim is the one who always seems to have the most DNA matches of anyone in our family. I note that Hal, Mark, Amy, and Tim are all in the same generation (great-grandchildren of James A. Burks). Hal and Heather have a 58 cM DNA match, while Tim and Heather don’t even have a DNA match. This really points out how randomly autosomal DNA is inherited.

So at this point, I feel really good that I finally have solved the mystery of how Heather Louise DesChene fits into the **Burks** branch of our family tree.

Appendix A – Certificate of Marriage for Pauline Louise Burks Hackney

In looking into Heather’s ancestors on the Ancestry.com website, I ran across several interesting artifacts. One of the more interesting items was the “Certificate of Marriage” for Pauline Louise (Burks) Hackney. Recall that Pauline was Heather’s maternal grandmother:

50M-4-45

MARGIN RESERVED FOR BINDING

V. S. 77

CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

11890

COUNTY OF Warwick

FULL NAME OF GROOM Ervin Clyde Slane CLERK'S NO. 89

PRESENT NAME OF BRIDE Pauline Louise Hackney MAIDEN NAME Pauline Louise Hackney

GROOM BRIDE

AGE	RACE	SINGLE, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED	NO. TIMES PREV. MARRIED
<u>31</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Divorced</u>	<u>1</u>

OCCUPATION Soldier INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS USA Army

BIRTHPLACE Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

FATHER'S FULL NAME Clyde Everett Slane

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME Nora Davis

RESIDENCE: CITY OR COUNTY MAILING ADDRESS Fort Eustis, Va. 0940

AGE	RACE	SINGLE, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED	NO. TIMES PREV. MARRIED
<u>31</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Widowed</u>	<u>1</u>

OCCUPATION None INDUSTRY OR BUSINESS

BIRTHPLACE San Diego, Cal.

FATHER'S FULL NAME Paul Dure Burks

MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME Rose Dorothy Brogle

RESIDENCE: CITY OR COUNTY MAILING ADDRESS Fort Eustis, Va. 0940

Date of Proposed Marriage April 29, 1947 Place of Proposed Marriage Fort Eustis, Va.

Given under my hand this 29th day of April, 1947.

Geo. S. DeShazor, Jr. Clerk of Warwick County Circuit Court.

CERTIFICATE OF DATE AND PLACE OF MARRIAGE

I, William F. Martin, a Chaplain, USA of the United Lutheran Church, or (Denomination) City of 0940,

religious order of that name, do certify that on the 29th day of April, 1947 Co. Warwick Virginia, under authority of this license, I joined together in the Holy State of Matrimony the persons named and described therein. I qualified and gave bond according to law authorizing me to celebrate the rites of marriage in the county (or city) of Newport News Commonwealth of Virginia.

Given under my hand this 30th day of April, 1947.

Address of celebrant 3107 West Ave. Newport News, Va. William F. Martin (Person who performs ceremony sign here.)

I found this certificate included as one of the sources referenced on the profile for Pauline Louise Burks Slane on the family tree owned by my cousin Mary Oakley Winters.¹

This certificate is dated 29 April 1947, and shows that Pauline Louise Hackney (age 31, widowed) married Ervin Clyde Slane (age 31, divorced) in Newport News, Virginia, on that date. It shows that Ervin Slane was a soldier in the US Army stationed at Fort Eustis, Virginia.

Most importantly, this certificate shows that Ervin Slane’s mother’s maiden name was Nora Davis. And, of course, Ervin and Pauline named their daughter Nora Rosena Slane. Once again, this branch of the family passed family names along from one generation to another.

¹ <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/17468930/person/122209799456/facts>

Another interesting item was the profile for Paul Dore Burks on the tree owned by Mary Oakley Winters:²



mwintersrop
Your role: Guest



Paul Dore Burks

BIRTH 5 APR 1870 • Des Moines, Polk, Iowa, United States
DEATH 9 JUL 1948 • Ft. Eustis, Virginia, United States

According to this profile, Paul Dore Burks died on 9 July 1948 in Ft. Eustis, Virginia. He must have been visiting his daughter Pauline and her husband. In fact, part of his obituary included:

Funeral services for Paul Dore Burks, former San Diegan who died July 9 while visiting a daughter at Ft. Eustis, Virginia., will be 1 p.m. tomorrow in the Little Church of the Flowers, Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Glendale.

² <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/17468930/person/122209799456/facts>

Appendix B – Photos of Some People Mentioned in this Narrative

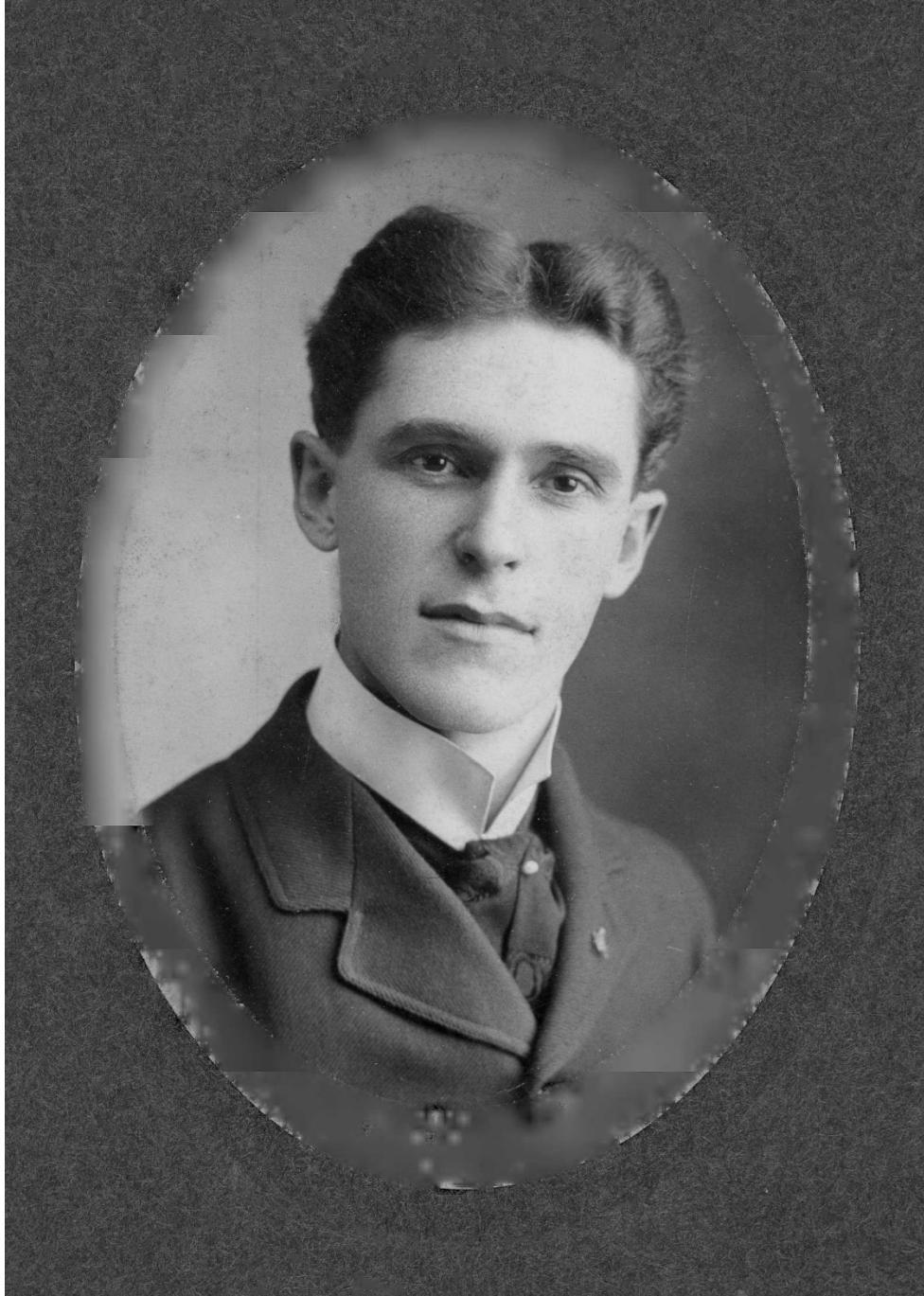
James Alfred Burks (1831-1900):



Kate Cameron Burks (1873-1954):



Paul Dore Burks (1870-1948):



Rosena Dorothea (or Dorthea) Brogle (1881-1961):

