

Jeffrey Johnston – My DNA Match with a *Wisdom* Relative Going Back on Amy Griffey’s Ancestral Line (and where it took me)

By Burks Oakley II
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A few days ago, I was going through my usual routine of looking for new DNA matches on the Ancestry.com website. I saw that I had a new DNA match with a man named Jeffrey Johnston:

Burks Oakley's DNA Matches

[All matches](#)[By parent](#)[By ancestor](#)[By location](#)

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search | Sort

Distant Family



Jeffrey Johnston

4th – 6th Cousin
29 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree
7 People

Common ancestor

Jeffrey and I share 29 cM of DNA, and software on the Ancestry.com website was able to identify a common ancestor (really ancestors).

I next looked at our common ancestors:

How are you and Jeffrey Johnston related?

Common Ancestors

According to Ancestry member trees, these are the common ancestors that connect you and Jeffrey Johnston. View a common ancestor to see the relationship path that connects you.

Jeffrey Johnston could be your 6th cousin through:



John Wisdom

5th great-grandfather

1698–1762

View Relationship



Ann Collins

5th great-grandmother

1718–1799

View Relationship

It appears that Jeffrey and I are both descended from John Wisdom (1698-1762) and his wife Ann Collins (1718-1799). This couple were my fifth-great grandparents. Wow! This is going back a long time into the past!

I went on to see how Ancestry.com thinks Jeffrey and I are related:



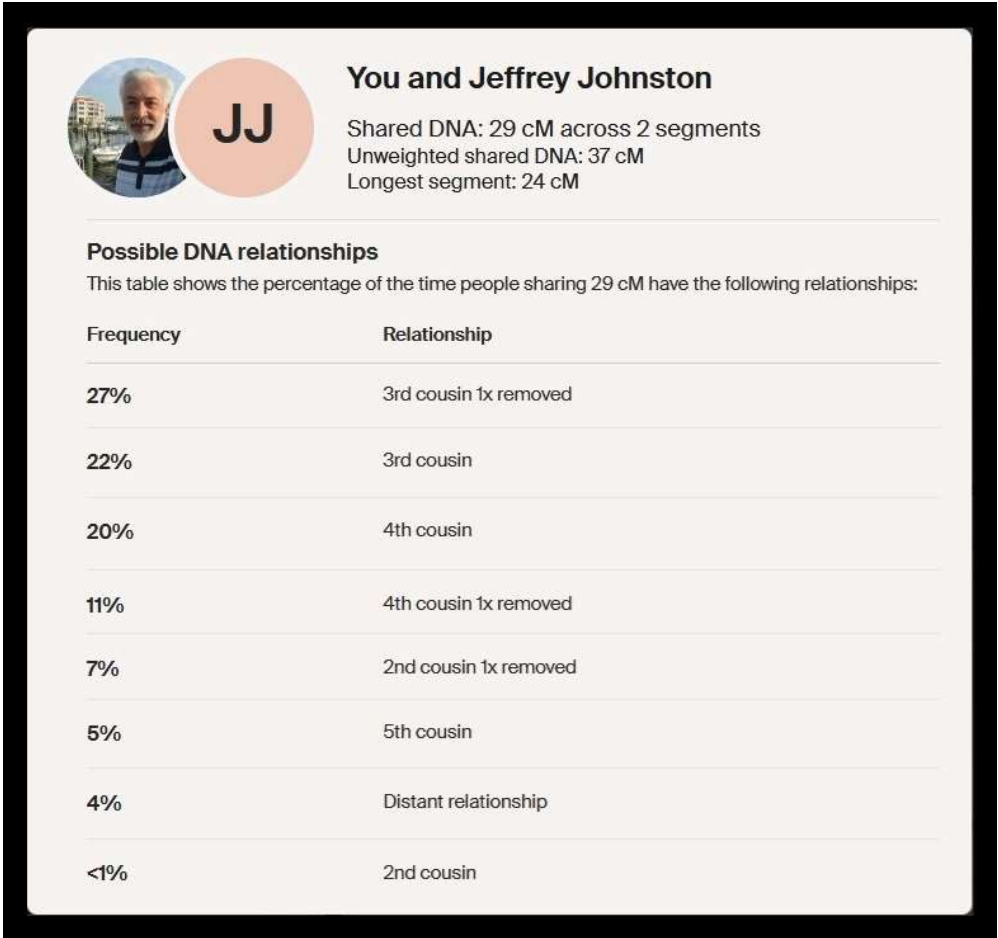
I am descended from the **Wisdom-Collins** couple through their daughter Mary “Mollie” Wisdom (1732-1826), while Jeffrey is descended from this couple through their son Thomas Lewis Wisdom (1757-1825).

Several things in this relationship chart stood out to me. Mary “Mollie” Wisdom was born in 1732, while her mother Ann Collins was born in 1718. That means that Ann was just fourteen years old when she had Mary “Mollie”. John Wisdom was born in 1698, meaning that he was twenty years older than his wife Ann. So he was 34 years old and Ann was 14 years old when Mary “Mollie” was born. Hmmm....

Jeffrey is descended from Thomas Lewis Wisdom, who was born in 1757. That means that Thomas was born 25 years after Mary “Mollie”.

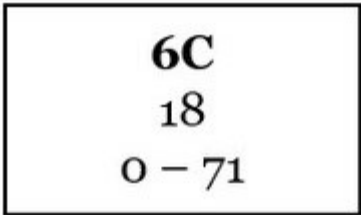
I also noted that Jeffrey’s mother was Jewel Laverne Wisdom (1943-1983), and she came from an unbroken line of **Wisdom** males.

According to the relationship chart shown above, Jeffrey and I are sixth-cousins. And we share 29 cM of DNA. Based solely on the size of our DNA match, software on Ancestry.com calculated the probabilities of various relationships:



The largest probabilities were in the range of third- to fourth-cousins. And there was only a 4% probability of a “Distant relationship”. So our 29 cM DNA match is much larger than would be expected for us being sixth-cousins.

I looked at the data from Bettinger’s “Shared cM Project”. He found that sixth-cousins (6C) share on average 18 cM of DNA, with a range of 0-71 cM:



So my DNA match with Jeffrey is larger than average, but still well within the reported range.

I have to admit that I was intrigued by the various ages that I mentioned on the previous page. So I looked at the profile I have for John Wisdom in my family tree on the Ancestry.com website:

Burks Oakley II

Find in tree

John Wisdom

BIRTH 1698 • Orange, Orange, Virginia

DEATH 26 AUG 1762 • Orange, Orange, Virginia

Family

Spouse and children

Parents

Francis Wisdom

1676–1750

Ann Miller

1680–1728

Ann Collins

1718–1799

Mary "Mollie" Wisdom

1732–1826

Thomas Lewis Wisdom

1742–1820

Joseph Wisdom

1752–1818

Winifred Wisdom

1735–1818

Rachel Wisdom

1745–1799

Clarey Wisdom

1754–1810

Clara Wisdom

1740–1836

Sarah Wisdom

1746–1808

Catherine Ann Wisdom

1756–1808

Susanah Ann Wisdom

1741–1806

Drusilla Wisdom

1747–1775

Thomas Lewis Wisdom Sr

1757–1825

Elizabeth Wisdom

1741–1826

Elizabeth Betty Wisdom

1748–1827

Joseph Wisdom

1742–1820

Tabitha Wisdom

1750–1829

Oh my! John Wisdom and his wife Ann Collins had sixteen children! The first, Mary “Mollie”, was born when Ann was 14 years old. The last, Thomas Lewis Wisdom Sr., was born when Ann was 39 years old. Phew!

Note that John Wisdom lived his entire life in Orange, Virginia, which presumably was the edge of the frontier in the early 1700’s.

A map of the state of Virginia, showing its county boundaries. The county of Orange is highlighted in a solid red color, located in the central-eastern part of the state, near the North Carolina border.

Maybe it was common at that time and place for older men to have teenage wives....

I next looked to see if Jeffrey and I had any “Shared DNA Matches”. Recall that in order to be on the list of Shared DNA Matches, an individual has to have DNA matches with both Jeffrey and me that are at least 20 cM in size. Since Jeffrey and I are such distant relatives, I wasn’t very hopeful that I would find anyone on the list of Shared DNA Matches. Boy, was I wrong....

There were 27 individuals on the list of Shared DNA Matches!

I only recognized five of the people on this list:



You and Jeffrey Johnston

4th – 6th Cousin | Paternal side

< 1% shared DNA: 29 cM across 2 segments

Trees

Ethnicity

Shared Matches

Filter by:

Unviewed

Common ancestors

Search | Sort

Close Family



Hal Oakley

1st cousin 1x removed
418 cM | 6% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree

417 People

Common ancestor

Extended Family



Allen Oakley

1st cousin 2x removed
173 cM | 2% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree

1 person

Distant Family



Julie Langston

4th – 6th Cousin
32 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree

13,067 People



D.D.

Managed by Julie Langston

4th – 6th Cousin
29 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree

13,067 People



M.H.

Managed by Julie Langston

4th – 6th Cousin
29 cM | < 1% shared DNA
Paternal side

Public linked tree

13,067 People

My cousin Hal Oakley is on this list, as well as his son Allen Oakley. Hal is my first-cousin once-removed, which means that Allen is my first-cousin twice-removed. That means that Jeffrey and Allen are sixth-cousins twice-removed.

Bettinger found that 6C2R on average share 13 cM, with a range of 0-45 cM:

6C2R

13

0 – 45

And since Allen is on the list of Shared DNA Matches, his DNA match with Jeffrey has to be at least 20 cM.

Hal’s DNA match with Jeffrey is 22 cM:

HO

JJ

Hal Oakley and Jeffrey Johnston

4th – 6th Cousin | Paternal side

< 1% shared DNA: 22 cM across 2 segments

So this segment of DNA seems to be passed through the generations without much decrease in size (since Allen’s match must be at least 20 cM).

But what about the other three people on the list of Shared DNA Matches, Burks?

The other three people are Julie Langston, **D.D.** (managed by Julie Langston), and **M.H.** (managed by Julie Langston). So my guess is that the three of them are close relatives. I actually had notes for two of them going back to 2016-17:

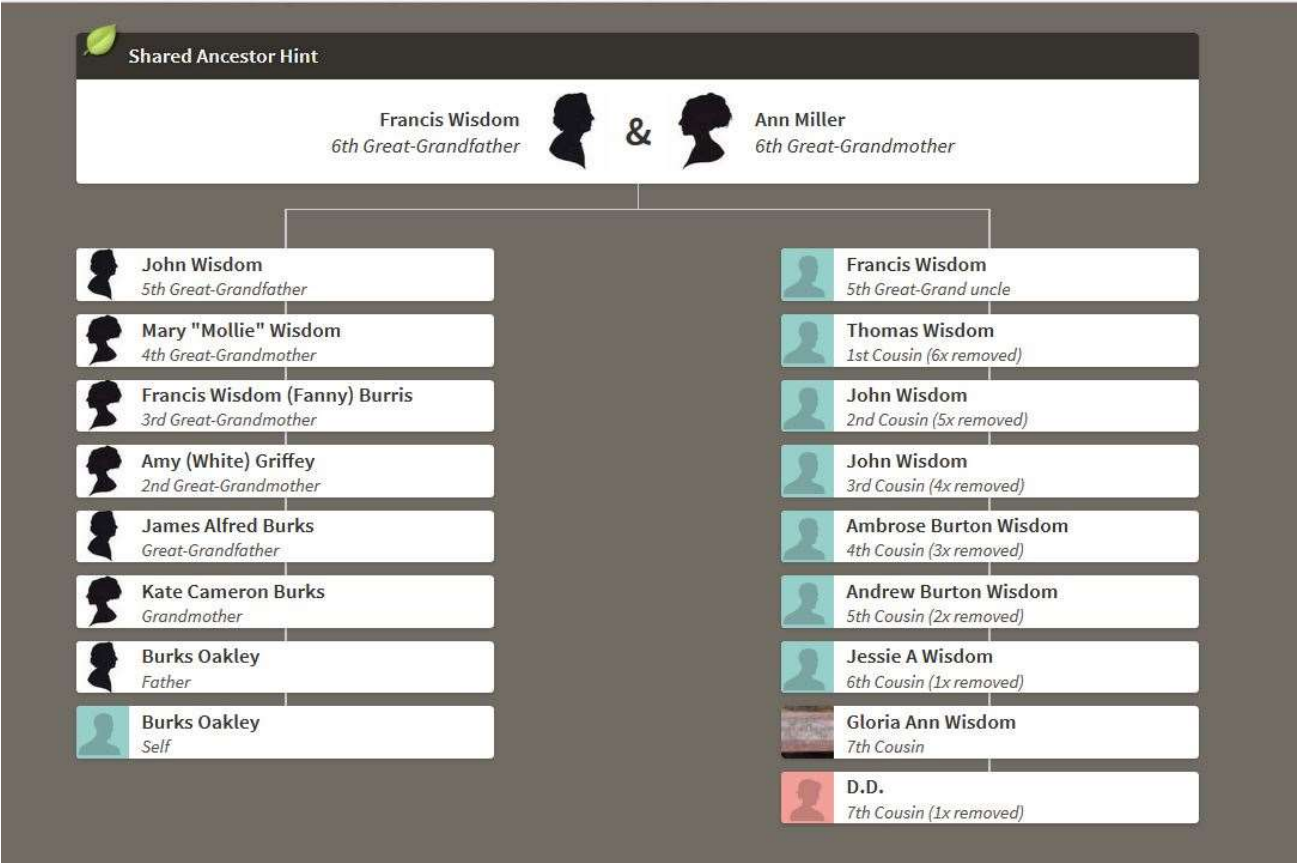
Julie: “She has common WISDOM ancestors. And she is a Shared Match with **D.D.** (managed by Julie_Langston) - and **D.D.** and I have a Shared Ancestor Hint going back to a WISDOM. 29Jul17.”

D.D.: “Shared Ancestor Hint going back to Francis WISDOM and Ann MILLER on the Amy Griffey line. 10Jul16.”

I searched the huge genealogy folder on my Windows PC for “Julie Langston” (no quotes), and I found a file named:

D.D.(administered by julie_langston)_SharedAncestorHint_10Jul16.JPG

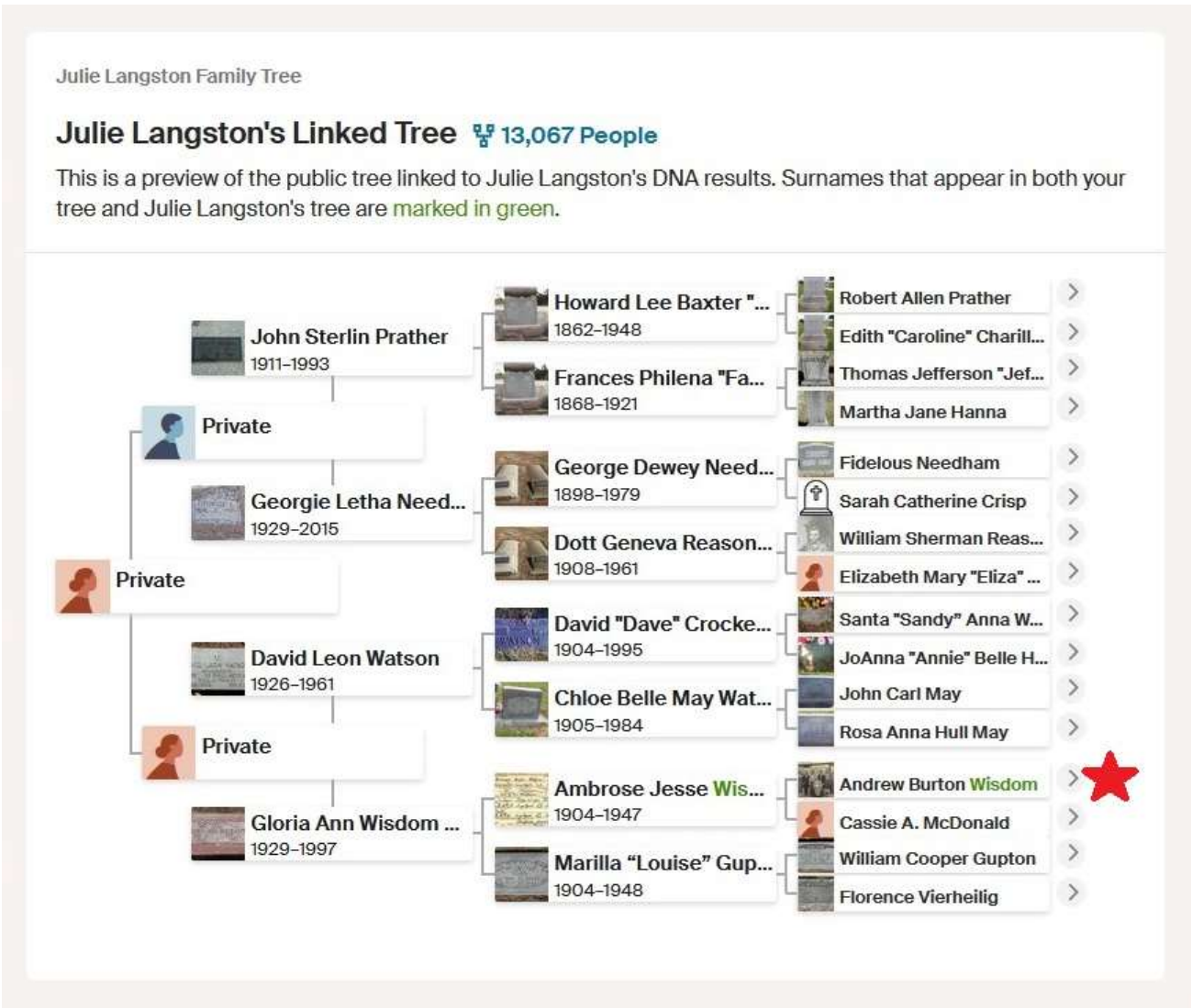
Here is that file:



Bingo!! **D.D.** is descended from Francis Wisdom (1676-1750) and his wife Ann Miller (1680-1728). This couple were my sixth-great grandparents, and they

were the parents of John Wisdom. Amazing that I would have saved this file on my computer! And now Ancestry.com has ThruLines® charts that only go back to a person’s fifth-great grandparents. No more Shared Ancestor Hints.

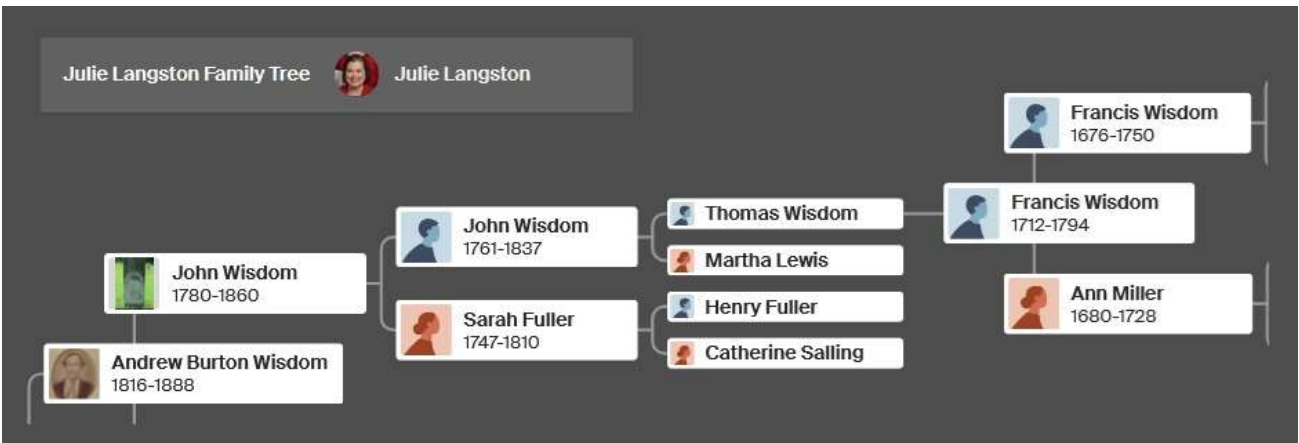
I also looked at Julie Langston’s tree. Here is the initial part of her pedigree:



Assuming that Julie is the “home” person in this chart, then her maternal grandmother was Gloria Ann Wisdom (1929-1997) – and Gloria Ann appears as the mother of **D.D.** in the chart on the previous page. So maybe **D.D.** is Julie’s mother.

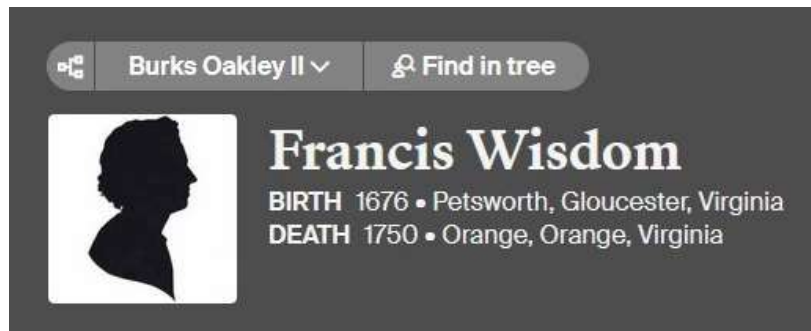
Julie’s line continues back to Andrew Burton Wisdom (1865-1940) – marked with the red star.

I then looked at Julie’s family tree – here is the relevant portion, beginning with Andrew Burton Wisdom Sr. (1816-1888):

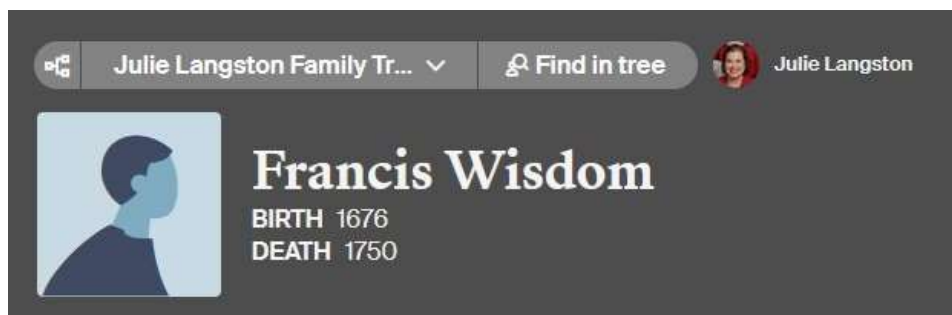


Wow! Julie's Wisdom line goes back to Francis Wisdom (1676-1750) – just like in my Shared Ancestor Hint from 2016.

Here is my profile for Francis Wisdom:



And here is Julie's profile for Francis Wisdom:



At this point, I knew that my new DNA match with Jeffrey Johnson goes back to John Wisdom, and my DNA matches with Julie Langston, **D.D.**, and presumably **M.H.** go back to John Wisdom's parents, Francis Wisdom and Ann Miller. And the **Wisdom-Miller** couple were my sixth-great grandparents! And if I've counted correctly, this couple were Julie's eighth-great grandparents!!!

Autosomal DNA is not usually passed on for so many generations. But this seems to be an exception.

I note that when I looked at my list of Shared DNA Matches with Julie, Hal's son Allen Oakley appeared on it. So Allen and Julie have a DNA match that is at least 20 cM in size, and my guess is that they are ninth-cousins. Amazing!!

I looked at my DNA match with Julie Langston – specifically at our list of Shared DNA Matches. And there are 122 people on this list!!! One of these individuals is Shirley Hill. Shirley and I have a 31 cM DNA match, and we both are descended from John Wisdom and his wife Ann Collins. Another individual is William Wisdom. He and I have a 33 cM DNA match, but unfortunately, he doesn't have a family tree on Ancestry.com. He certainly is a **Wisdom**. Interestingly, Allen Oakley appears on our list of Shared DNA Matches.

I can't believe that I have so many people on these Shared DNA Matches lists.

I finally got around to looking at the ThruLines® chart for John Wisdom (my fifth-great grandfather). Recall that he and his wife Ann Collins had sixteen children. What do you think I found in the ThruLines® chart?

I was amazed to see that I have DNA matches with 80 individuals who are descended from John Wisdom:

ThruLines[®] for John Wisdom

ThruLines[®] uses Ancestry[®] trees to suggest that you may be related to 80 DNA matches through John Wisdom.

John J Wisdom Family Line

3 matches

Mary "Mollie" Wisdom Family Line

7 matches



You

John Wisdom is your 5th great-grandfather.

Winifred Wisdom Family Line

2 matches

Elizabeth Wisdom Family Line

18 matches

Susanah "Ann" * Wisdom Family Line

3 matches

Rachel Wisdom Family Line

11 matches

Drusilla Wisdom Family Line

4 matches

Elizabeth Betty Wisdom Family Line

2 matches

Tabitha Wisdom Family Line

5 matches

Joseph Lee Wisdom Family Line

5 matches

Anna Wisdom Family Line

1 match

Clara Wisdom Family Line

1 match

Catherine Ann "Catey" Wisdom Family Line

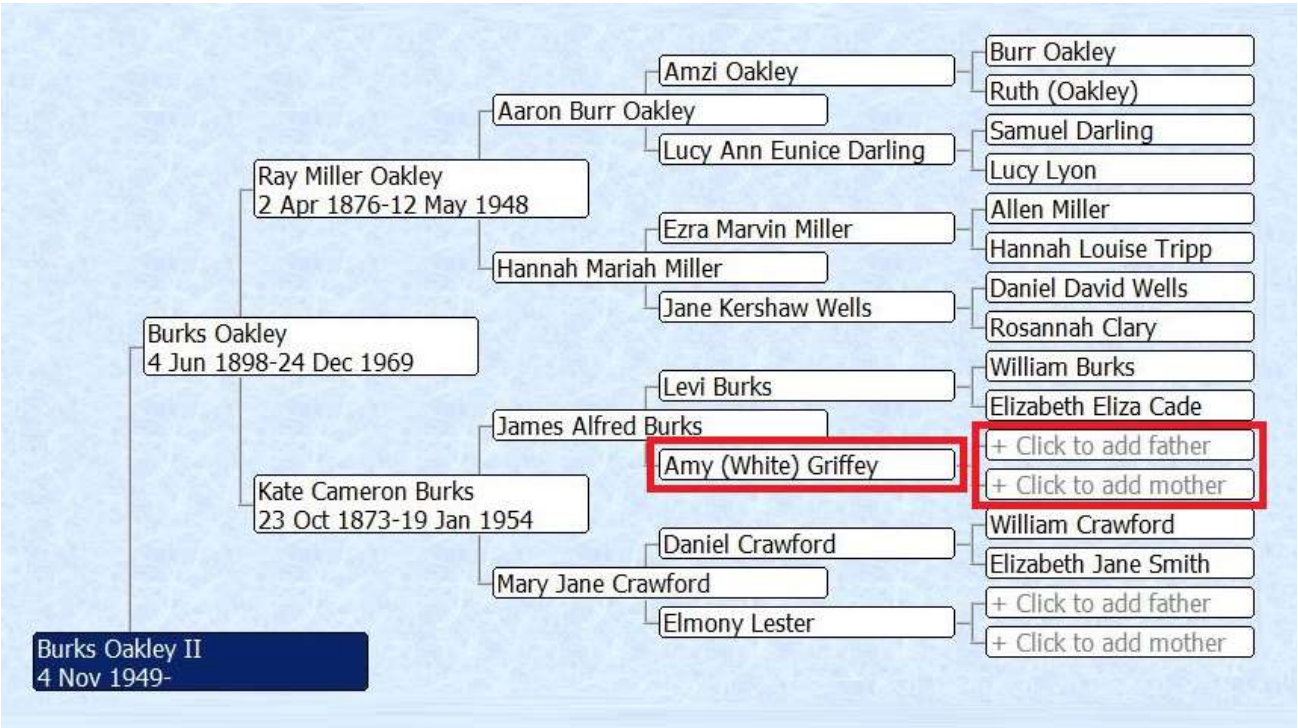
12 matches

Thomas Lewis Wisdom Family Line

6 matches

And these matches connect back to John Wisdom through fourteen of his children!! This is really amazing!! Even if not all the lines are valid, this is still an incredible number.

Let me now go back to November 2015. At that time, my second-great grandmother, Amy Griffey (1800-1854), was a brick wall – I had no idea about her parents:



Through DNA matches on Ancestry.com, I was able to gather strong evidence to support the branch of the family tree shown here:



Back in late 2015, I wrote about this breakthrough:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/8A-GriffeyGenealogy.pdf>

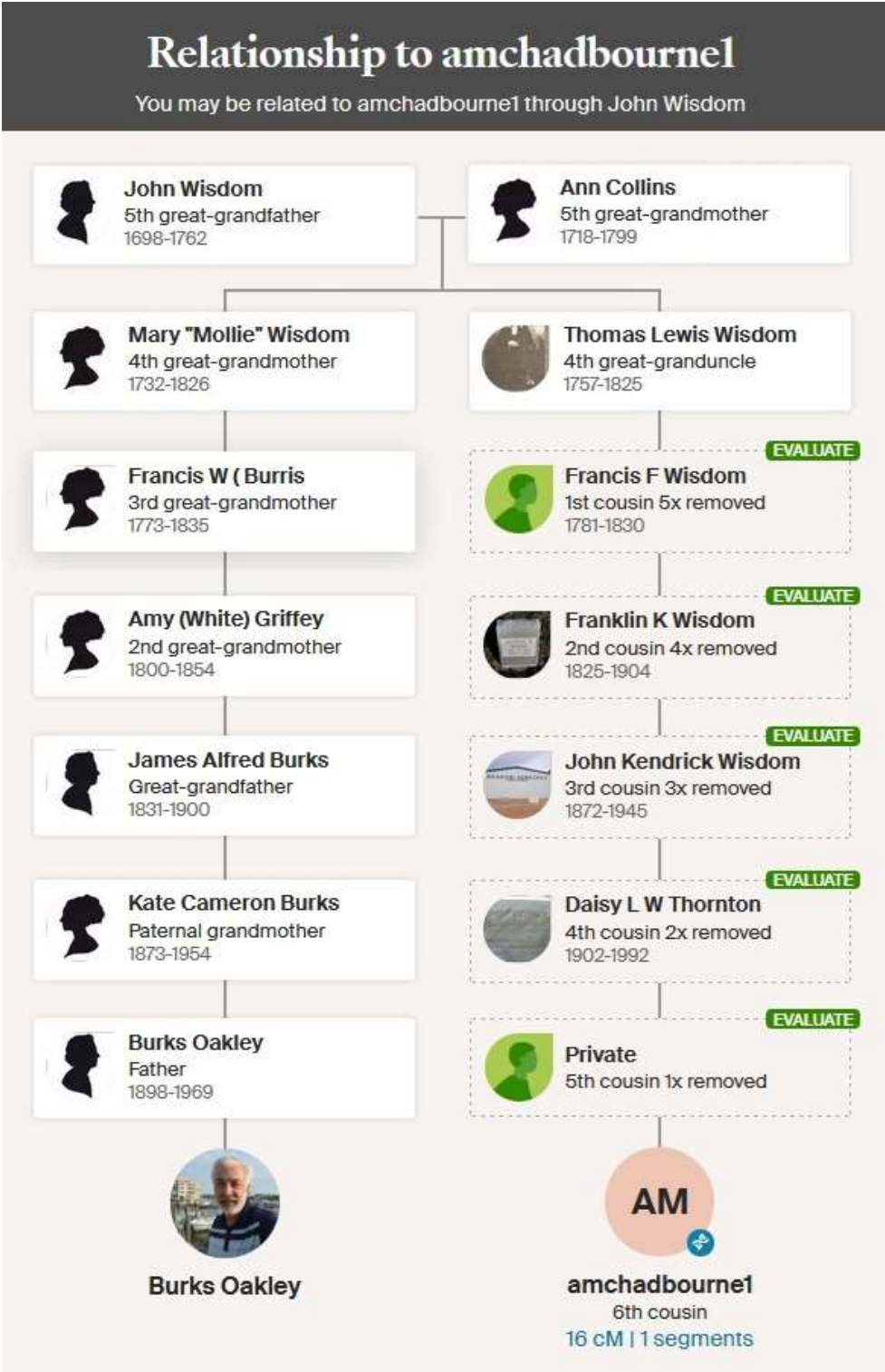
I have to say that the DNA matches described in this narrative really provide incredibly strong support for the **Wisdom** branch of the family tree shown above.

In closing, I have to get in touch with Jeffrey Johnston and Julie Langston and ask them to put their DNA profiles on the free GEDmatch.com website. We have one of those very few autosomal DNA matches that seem to be passed through the generations with little change. My guess is that it will be very similar to our **Spencer-Whitbread** segment on Chromosome 8:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/15-OurSpencer-WhitbreadAncestors.pdf>

Addendum

Of course, just as soon as I had finished writing this narrative, I went to the Ancestry.com website to see if I had any new DNA matches. And I saw a new DNA match with a woman having the username of **amchadbourn1** (I learned that her name is Angela Michelle Thornton Chadbourne). Of course, she also is descended from John Wisdom (1698-1762) and his wife Ann Collins (1718-1799) through their son Thomas Lewis Wisdom (1757-1825):

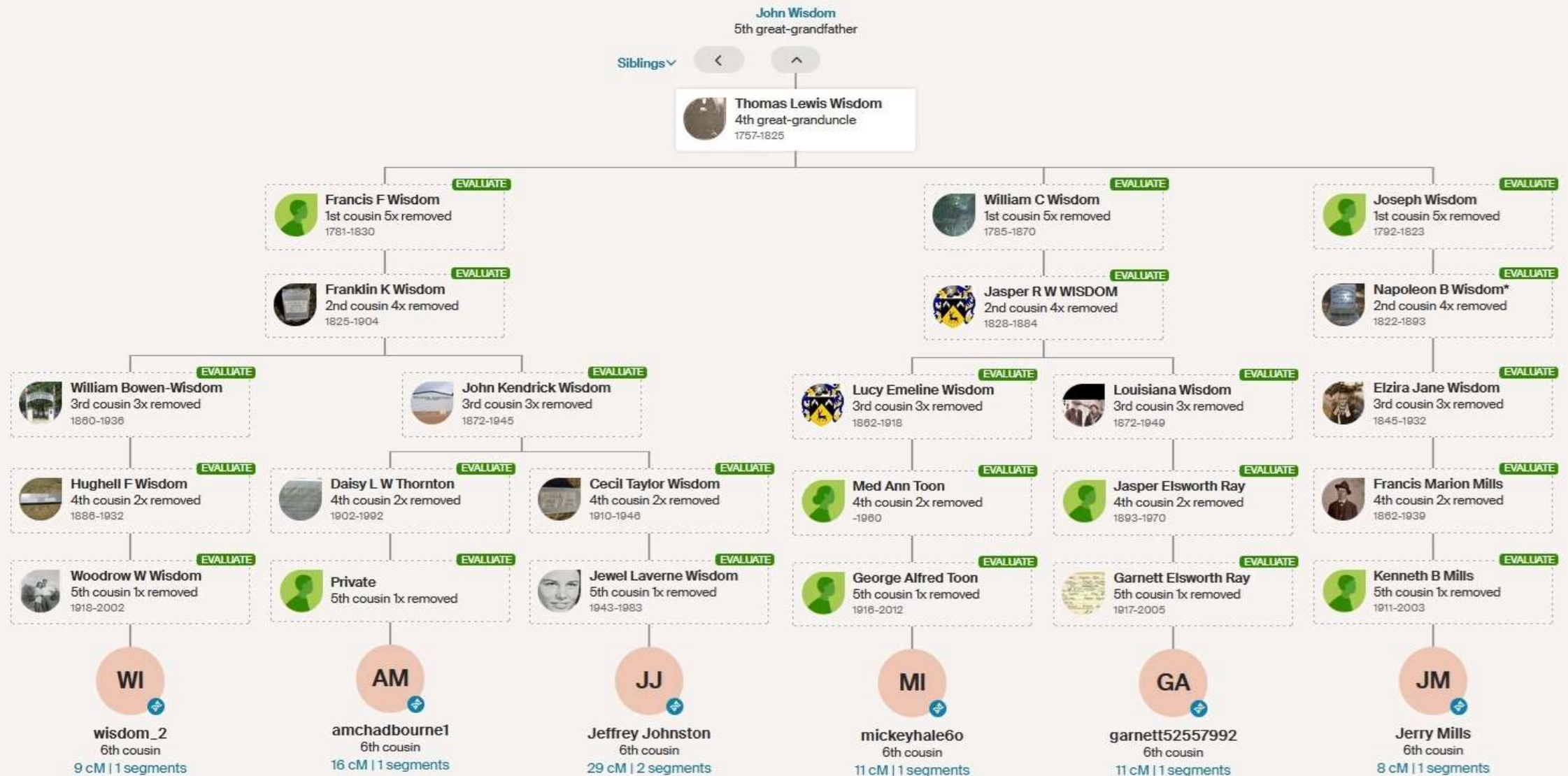


My guess (and only a guess) is that someone edited a family tree and software on Ancestry.com suddenly was able to connect descendants of Thomas Lewis Wisdom back to his parents.

I thought it would be worthwhile to show all my DNA matches with descendants of the **Wisdom-Collins** couple through their son Thomas Lewis Wisdom. And that part of my ThruLines® chart is shown in landscape view on the next page:

ThruLines® for John Wisdom

ThruLines® uses Ancestry® trees to suggest that you may be related to 80 DNA matches through John Wisdom.



I have DNA matches with six individuals who are descended from the ***Wisdom-Collins*** couple through their son Thomas Lewis Wisdom.

I note that ***amchadbourn1*** is a second-cousin of Jeffrey Johnston.

Finally, I note that the man in the lower-left corner (***wisdom_2***) still retains the ***Wisdom*** surname.