

My New DNA Match with Jennifer Wills (and where it took me)

By Burks Oakley II
20 June 2026

A few days ago, I learned that I had a new DNA match on Ancestry.com with a woman having the username *lopezfamiliytn*:

Distant Family



lopezfamiliytn

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed

Paternal side

10 cM | < 1% shared DNA

 Public linked tree

 224 people

 Common ancestor

This woman and I share just 10 cM of DNA, so we are likely to be very distant cousins.

I next looked at the ancestors that *lopezfamiliytn* and I have in common:

How are you and lopezfamiliytn related?

Common Ancestors



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

lopezfamiliytn could be your 6th cousin through:



John Wisdom

5th great-grandfather

1698-1762

[View Relationship](#)



Ann Collins

5th great-grandmother

1718-1799

[View Relationship](#)

We both are descended from John Wisdom (1698-1762) and his wife Ann Collins (1718-1799). This couple were my fifth-great grandparents.

Of course, I next looked to see the specifics of how *lopezfamiliytn* and I are most likely related. Here is the chart that was automatically created by software on the Ancestry.com website:



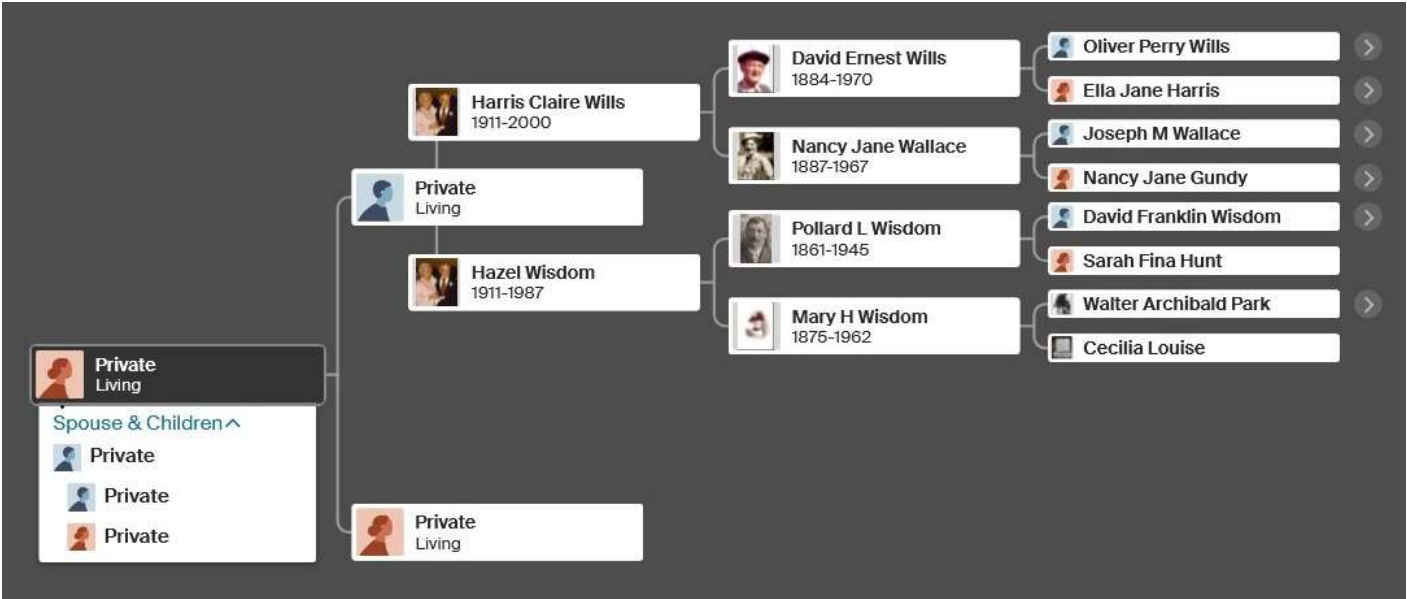
I am descended from the **Wisdom-Collins** couple through their daughter Mary “Mollie” Wisdom (1732-1826), while **lopezfamilytn** is descended from this couple through their son Joseph Lee Wisdom (1752-1820). Based on this chart, **lopezfamilytn** and I are 6th-cousins.

I note that **lopezfamilytn**’s father was John David Wills, so this woman’s maiden name was most likely **Wills**. I looked at her family trees on her profile page on the Ancestry.com website:

Family Trees	
Jennifer Wills Lopez Maternal Ancestry People: 224; Records: 337; Media: 115	JWL Paternal (actively editing) People: 389; Records: 337; Media: 100
Mark Lopez Maternal Ancestry People: 124; Records: 219; Media: 38	Jenelle Lopez Maternal Ancestry People: 52; Records: 93; Media: 33
Mark Lopez Paternal Ancestry People: 49; Records: 155; Media: 15	Dwight's Tree People: 45; Records: 146; Media: 20

Her family trees include “Jennifer Wills Lopez Maternal Ancestry” and “JWL Paternal (actively editing)”. That’s good enough for me – this woman must be Jennifer Wills (married name Lopez).

Here is the first part of her paternal pedigree chart:



This agrees with her *Wisdom* line in the relationship chart on the previous page. So from now on, I will refer to *lopezfamilyn* by her birth name of Jennifer Wills.

I next wanted to look at my ThruLines® charts for our common ancestors – John Wisdom and his wife Ann Collins. Here is my ThruLines® chart for John Wisdom:



This chart is unreadable at this magnification – but the important thing to know is that I have DNA matches with 87 descendants of John Wisdom, and they go back to this man through FIFTEEN of his children!!! Oh my....

I’ll show this ThruLines® chart as several sections in landscape view in the Appendix.

I should add that my ThruLines® chart for Ann Collins is very similar to the chart shown above, except that I have DNA matches with 92 of her descendants. This emphasizes that these ThruLines® charts are based on family trees on the Ancestry.com website, which are known to have errors and inconsistencies. And I’m not going to take the time trying to find the errors in other people’s family trees. Let’s just say that I have a very large number of DNA matches with descendants of the *Wisdom-Collins* couple.

Here is my ThruLines® chart for John Wisdom in the “List” mode:

ThruLines[®] for John Wisdom

ThruLines[®] uses Ancestry[®] trees to suggest that you may be related to 87 DNA matches through John Wisdom.

Relationships

List

Mary "Mollie" Wisdom Family Line

7 matches

You

John Wisdom is your 5th great-grandfather.

Winifred Wisdom Family Line

4 matches

Clara Wisdom Family Line

1 match

Elizabeth Wisdom Family Line

20 matches

Susanah Ann Wisdom Family Line

4 matches

Joseph Wisdom Family Line

1 match

Rachel Wisdom Family Line

8 matches

Drusilla Wisdom Family Line

5 matches

Elizabeth Betty Wisdom Family Line

1 match

John Wisdom Family Line

1 match

Tabitha Wisdom Family Line

5 matches

Joseph Lee Wisdom Family Line

9 matches

Clarey Wisdom Family Line

1 match

Catherine Ann Wisdom Family Line

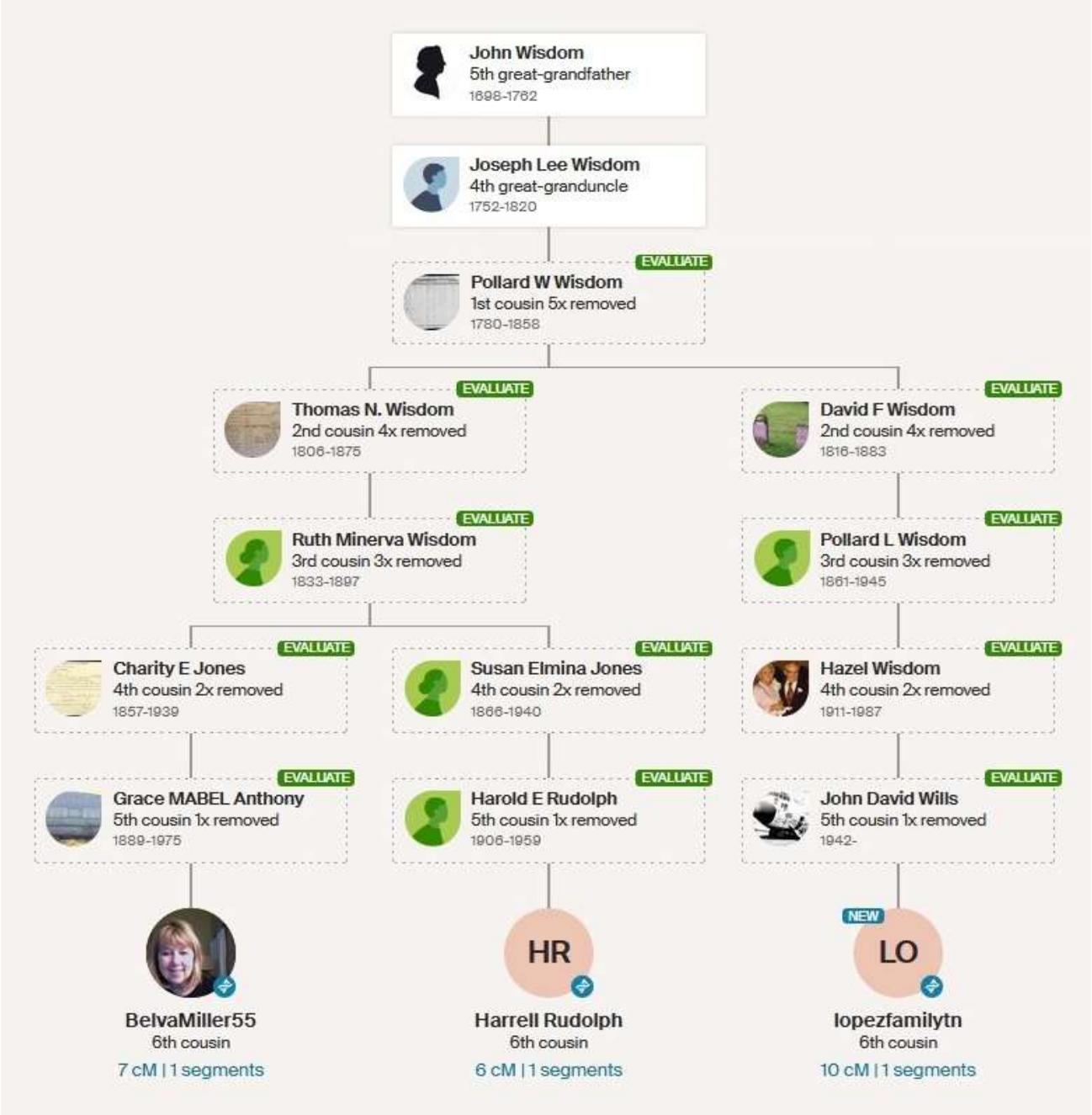
14 matches

Thomas Lewis Wisdom Family Line

6 matches

In this view, one can see the names of all fifteen of his children that appear in the relationship chart on the previous page.

Here is the branch of the ThruLines[®] chart that shows Jennifer Wills (*lopezfamilytn*):



Note that Jennifer’s paternal grandmother was Hazel Wisdom (1911-1987) – amazing that the *Wisdom* surname lasted for so many generations.

I went on to look at the DNA matches that Jennifer and I have in common – our so-called “Shared DNA Matches”. We have 41 shared matches, but our common ancestors are only known for three of them:

Common ancestor × Clear all		
Shared match:	Your:	lopezfamilytn's:
 KaydeHolton124 9 	Your: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 13 cM Paternal side	lopezfamilytn's: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed 21 cM
 TL suggests that she is descended from Edmund Burris and his wife Mary ...		
 RVARVA 	Your: 4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 7 cM Paternal side	lopezfamilytn's: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed 20 cM
 ThruLines suggests she is descended from Ann COLLINS. 29May19.		
 Harrell Rudolph 	Your: Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin 6 cM Paternal side	lopezfamilytn's: 3rd cousin 2x removed or half 3rd cousin 1x removed 20 cM
 ThruLines suggests he is descended from John WISDOM and Ann COLLI...		

I am rather unsure of our shared match with the woman having the username of **RVARVA**, since this woman is apparently only descended from Ann Collins and not John Wisdom. So I'll disregard her for now.

But Jennifer and I still have “Shared DNA Matches” with **KaydeHolton1249** and Harrell Rudolph – and here is a chart showing how the four of us are related:



Kayde, Harrell, Jennifer (**lopezfamilytn**), and I all are descended from the **Wisdom-Collins** couple at the top of the chart. Kayde and I connect back to this couple through their daughter Mary “Mollie” Wisdom, who was married to Edmund Burris (1720-1781). Harrell and Jennifer connect back to the **Wisdom-Collins** couple through their son Joseph Lee Wisdom.

Harrell appeared in one of my recent narratives about John Wisdom and Ann Collins, but in a different set of comparisons – see:

http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/ReeceYoungJr_11Mar26.pdf

So I decided to look at my DNA match with Harrell in a little more detail. Harrell and I have a whopping 53 “Shared DNA Matches” (quite amazing since we are descended from a couple who lived in the early 1700’s), and our common ancestors are known for 13 of them, as shown in the following screenshot:

Shared match:



Your:



Harrell Rudolph's:



dsouthworth175



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
11 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
33 cM

ThruLines suggests she is descended from Ann COLLINS on my Amy (Whi...



R. M.
Managed by
RebeccaMPatterson



Your:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
10 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
20 cM

TL suggests s/he is descended from John Wisdom and Ann Collins - they ...



lopezfamilytn



Your:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 3rd cousin 2x removed
10 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

3rd cousin 2x removed or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
20 cM



Gregg
Goodpaeter



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
10 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
24 cM

TL suggests that he is descended from Joseph William Griffey and his wif...



mnda78



Your:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
8 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
24 cM

TL suggests that she is descended from John Wisdom and Ann Collins. T...



J. K.
Managed by
LindaKing299



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
8 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
39 cM

WISDOM - possible line back to our WISDOM family.



heneleyrd



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
8 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
23 cM

ThruLines suggests she is descended from Edmund BURRIS and Mary "M...



BelvaMiller55



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
7 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

2nd cousin 1x removed or half 2nd cousin
123 cM

ThruLines suggests he is descended from John WISDOM and Ann COLLI...



Vicki Holt



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
7 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
25 cM

ThruLines suggests he is descended from Joseph William GRIFFEY and Fr...



C. C.
Managed by Cari
Hager



Your:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
7 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
34 cM

GRIFFEY/BURRIS match going back to Joseph William Griffey and Francis ...



S. L.
Managed by Cari
Hager



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
7 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
34 cM

Shared Ancestor Hint going back to Joseph William GRIFFEY and Francois ...



DeloriaMSweazy



Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
6 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

Half 3rd cousin 1x removed or 4th cousin
22 cM

TL suggests she is descended from Edmund BURRIS and Mary "Mollie" W...



girltetchr



Your:

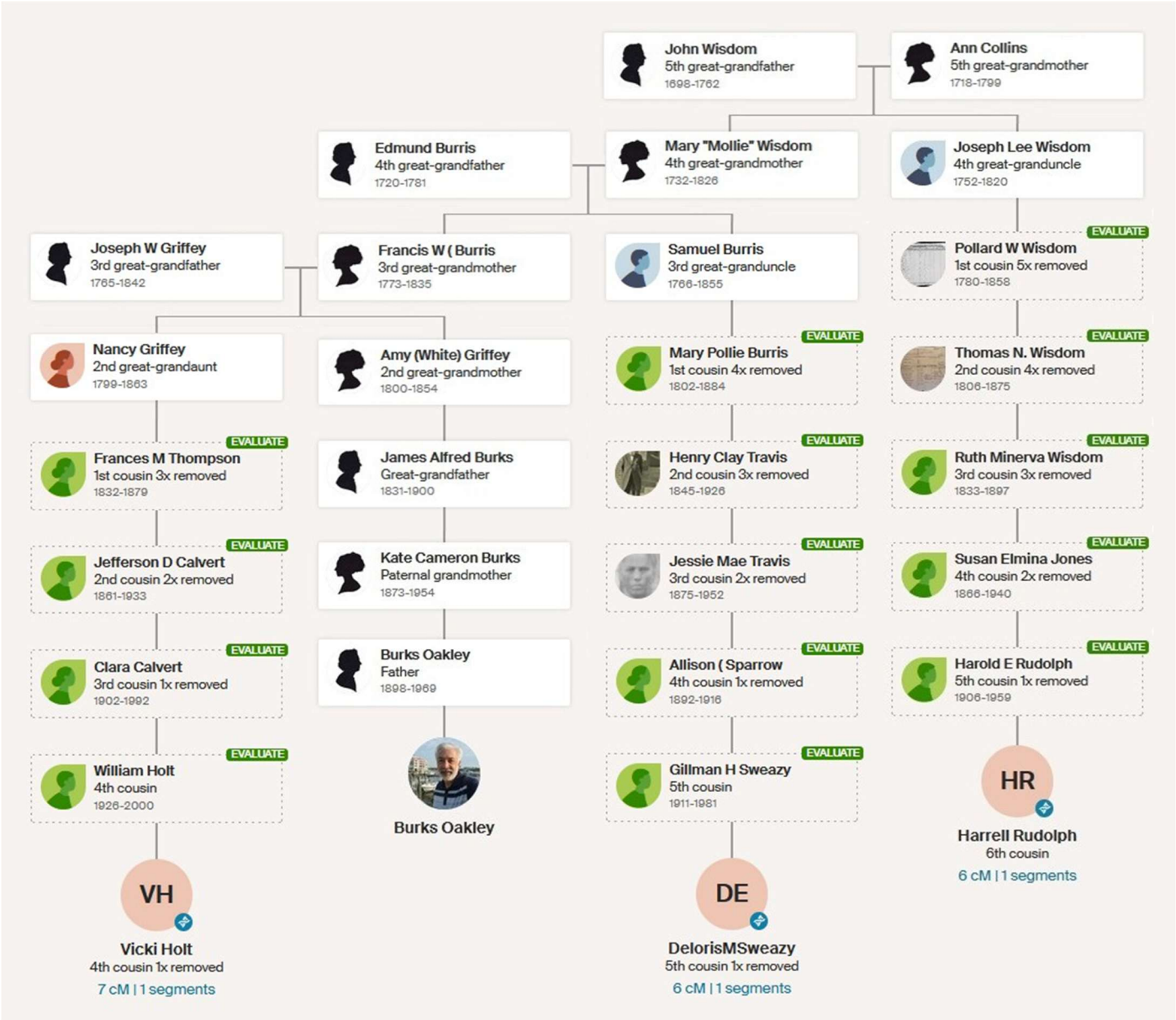
4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
6 cM
Paternal side

Harrell Rudolph's:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed
23 cM

TL suggests she is descended from John WISDOM and Ann COLLINS on ...

I looked through these thirteen for some “interesting” shared DNA matches, and I settled on Vicki Holt and Deloris M. Sweazy. Here is a chart showing how the four of us are related:



Remember that Harrell and I have “Shared DNA Matches” with Vicki and Deloris. As an aside, Vicki and Deloris have a 48 cM DNA match with each other:

DelorisMSweazy

Your:

4th cousin or half 3rd cousin 1x removed

6 cM

Paternal side

Vicki's:

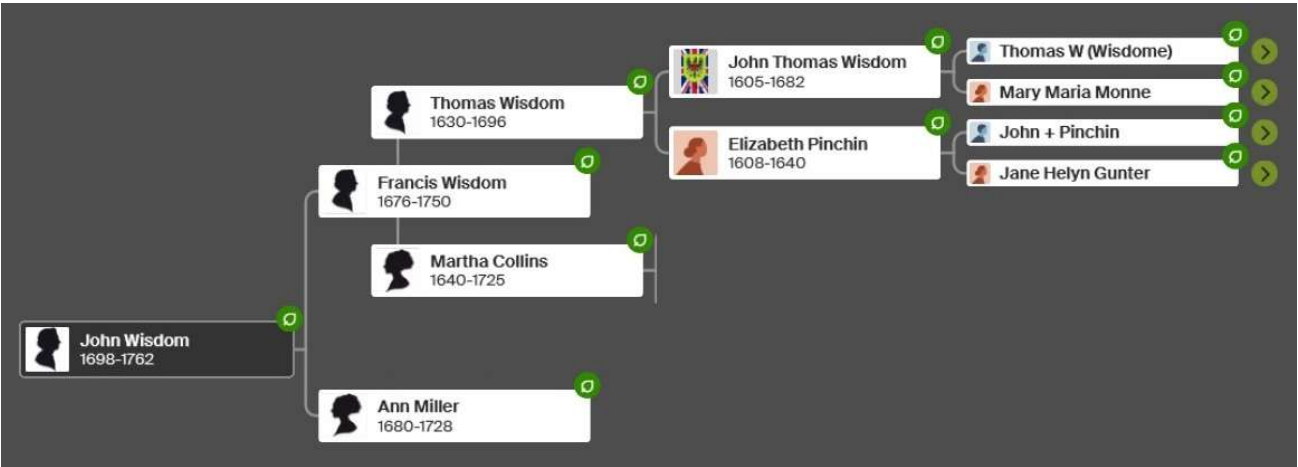
Half 3rd cousin or 3rd cousin 1x removed

48 cM

TL suggests she is descended from Edmund BURRIS and Mary "Mollie" W...

At this point in the narrative, I have presented a number of DNA matches and their associated genealogical records (family trees). While all of this might be interesting in its own right, the important feature of all of this is that everything involves my ancestral line going back through Amy (White) Griffey, the second wife of Levi Burks. The reason that this is so important to me is that when I first began my “hobby” of genetic genealogy more than a decade ago, Amy Griffey’s parents were unknown to me. She was, using the jargon of genealogy, the proverbial brick wall. But now, I have a huge amount of evidence about her ancestors, and most all of this evidence involves DNA matches. And with each new set of DNA matches, the evidence supporting her ancestral lines gets stronger and stronger.

Changing gears now, I would like to follow the *Wisdom* line back from John Wisdom. Here is what I have in my family tree on the Ancestry.com website:



Let me begin with John Wisdom himself:



John Wisdom

BIRTH 1698 • Orange, Orange, Virginia

DEATH 26 AUG 1762 • Orange, Orange, Virginia

It appears that John lived his entire life in Orange, Virginia. Orange is the county seat of Orange County, which I highlighted in red in the following map:



Going back, John’s father was Francis Wisdom (1676-1750):



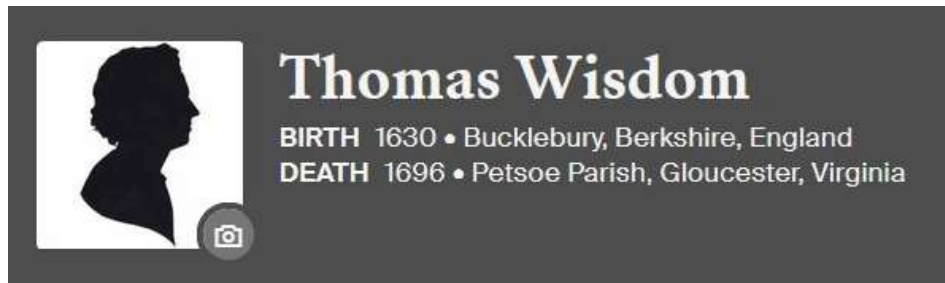
Francis Wisdom

BIRTH 1676 • Petsworth, Gloucester, Virginia

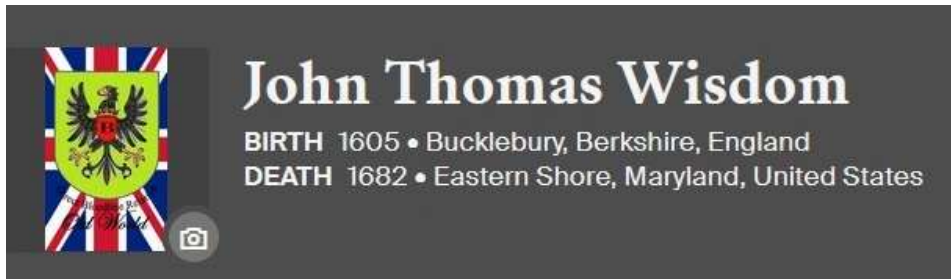
DEATH 1750 • Orange, Orange, Virginia

Francis appears to have been the first *Wisdom* to live in Orange, Virginia.

Francis’ father was Thomas Wisdom (1630-1696):

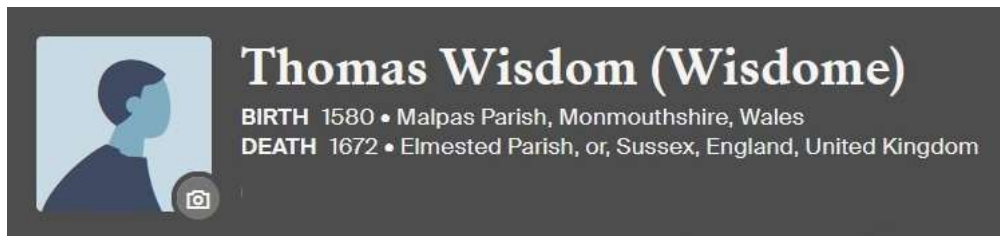


Thomas' father was John Thomas Wisdom (1605-1682):



Thomas and John Thomas both immigrated from England to America.

John Thomas Wisdom's father was Thomas Wisdom (Wisdom):



This man was born in Wales in 1580 and died in England in 1672.

Now let's go the other way from John Wisdom. His daughter was Mary "Mollie" Wisdom:

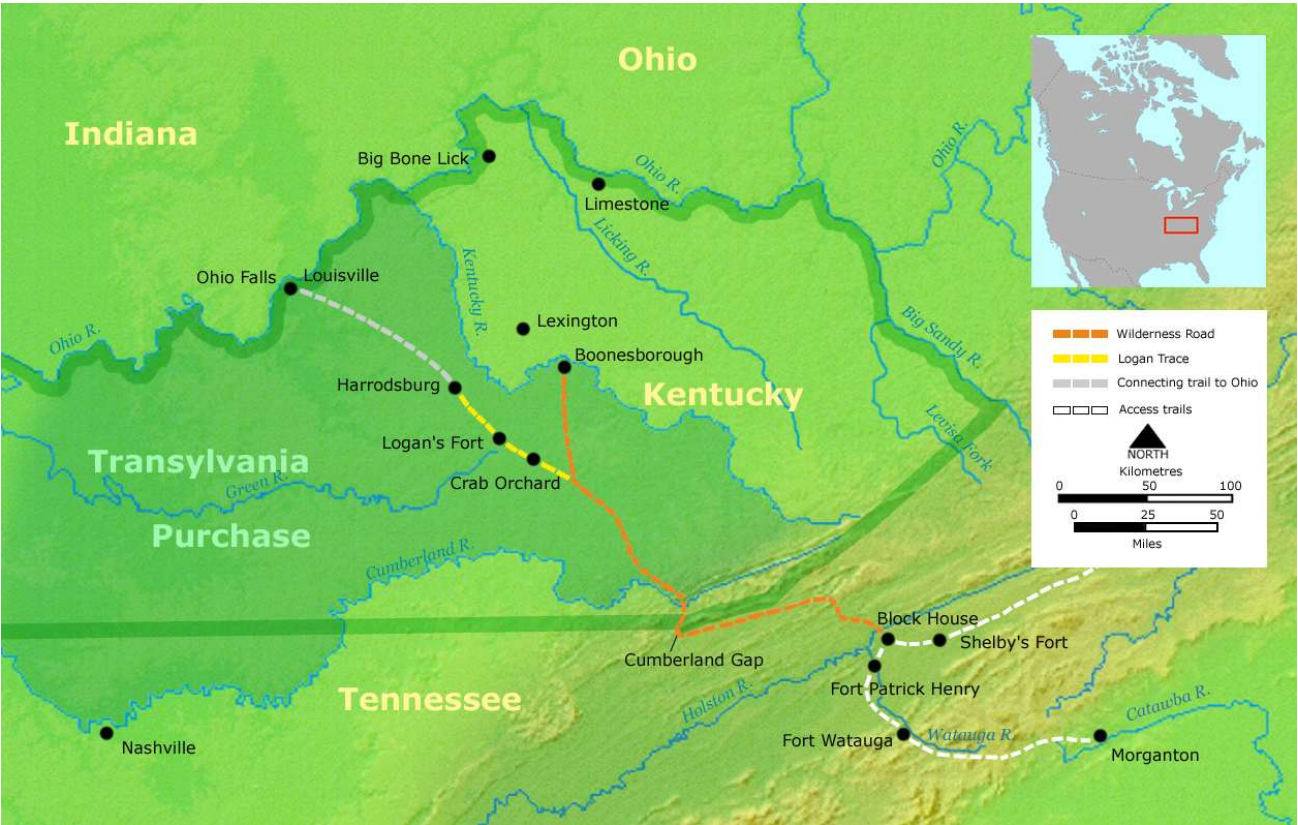


Mollie lived her entire life in Orange, Virginia. Her daughter was Francis "Fanny" Wisdom – married name Burris:



Now this is getting interesting! After being in Orange, Virginia, for multiple generations, the family migrated west to Lawrenceburg, Kentucky. In the time of Fanny's life, the only way to get from Orange, Virginia, to Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, was through the Cumberland Gap, an historic mountain pass in the Appalachian Mountains, located exactly where the borders of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia converge.

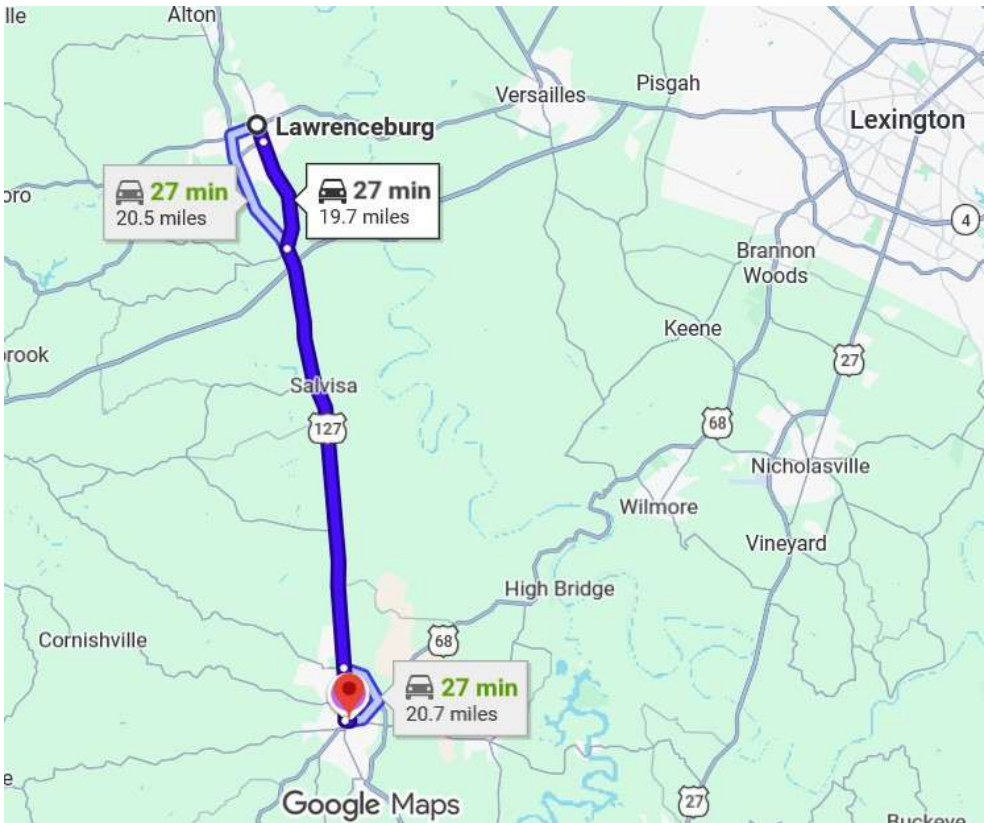
Here is a graphic showing the location of the Cumberland Gap:



Once in Kentucky, the Wilderness Road continued on, but then split, with the western branch being called the Logan Trace:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logan_Trace

Logan's Trace continued on to Logan's Fort, and then on to Harrodsburg, Kentucky. And from there, it was another 20 miles to Lawrenceburg, where Fanny Wisdom eventually ended up.



Note that the **Burks** family did the same – beginning in Orange, Virginia, and ending up in Harrodsburg, Kentucky. Levi Burks died in Salvisa, Kentucky, which is half way between Harrodsburg and Lawrenceburg.

Levi Burks married Fanny Burris’ daughter, Amy Griffey, in 1830.



Since Amy was born in Orange County, Virginia, it would appear that she migrated west through the Cumberland Gap with her family.

Here is some background information from Google about pioneers moving west through the Cumberland Gap:

when did pioneers move west through the cumberland gap?

AI Mode

All

Images

Forums

Videos

Shopping

News

More

Tools

AI Overview

Pioneers primarily moved west through the Cumberland Gap **between 1775 and 1850**. The heaviest period of migration occurred after trailblazer Daniel Boone blazed the Wilderness Road in 1775. This critical passage allowed an estimated 300,000 settlers to cross into Kentucky and the Ohio Valley. [National Park Service History Electroni... +3](#)

The history of the Cumberland Gap’s pioneer migration unfolds in three main phases:

- **1775 – The First Crossing:** Hired by the Transylvania Company, Daniel Boone led 30 frontiersmen to widen existing Native American trails into a path for western settlement. Initially, it could only be traversed on foot or horseback. [Wikipedia +2](#)
- **1796 – The Wagon Era:** The trail was officially named the Wilderness Road. It was widened to accommodate wagon traffic, allowing families to transport more belongings in Conestoga wagons. [EBSCO +2](#)
- **1800 to 1850 – Peak Migration:** The gap became a major two-way thoroughfare, serving as the main western artery for American pioneers until canals and railroads diverted traffic elsewhere. [National Park Service History Electroni... +2](#)

And here is more information than you probably want to know about continuing on to Lawrenceburg, Kentucky:

◆ AI Overview

In the early pioneer days (late 18th to early 19th centuries), the journey from the Cumberland Gap to Lawrenceburg, Kentucky, was a grueling 150-mile trek. Pioneers traversed the famous [Wilderness Road](#) on foot or horseback, navigating rugged terrain, enduring harsh weather, and facing [constant threats of attack](#) from Native tribes. [Federal Highway Administration \(.gov\) +3](#)

Pioneers traveling from the Cumberland Gap to the Lawrenceburg area (historically part of Anderson County and the surrounding Bluegrass region) followed a specific sequence of westward migration: [Federal Highway Administration \(.gov\) +1](#)

1. The Initial Ascent (Cumberland Gap to Hazel Patch)

Travelers crossed through the narrow notch of the Cumberland Gap, initially a worn Native American and buffalo trace. The path led them northwest through the heavily wooded Appalachian foothills, passing near present-day Middlesboro, Barbourville, and London to a major junction at Hazel Patch. [RootsWeb.com Home Page +4](#)

2. The Fork to the Bluegrass (Hazel Patch to Harrodsburg)

At the Hazel Patch fork, pioneers veered northwest toward Kentucky's fertile Bluegrass interior rather than taking the northern route toward the Falls of the Ohio (Louisville). They traveled through modern-day Mount Vernon and Crab Orchard before reaching Harrodsburg, which was the first permanent English settlement in Kentucky. [RootsWeb.com Home Page +4](#)

3. The Final Stretch to Lawrenceburg

From the staging hub of Harrodsburg, pioneers traveled a short distance north to establish homesteads in the region that eventually became Anderson County. The seat of this area, Lawrenceburg, was established in 1820 on land initially settled by early Virginia and Pennsylvania pioneers working their way inland from the Wilderness Road trails. [RootsWeb.com Home Page +3](#)

I knew that the **Burks** family went west through the Cumberland Gap. Now I can add my **Wisdom-Griffey** ancestors to this.

As an aside, one of my DNA matches in the **Burks** family still lives in Harrodsburg:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/64-JoshCocanougher-BurksRelative.pdf>

To conclude this rambling narrative, here is some information about a classic painting of pioneers on the Wilderness Road in the Cumberland Gap:

◆ AI Overview

The definitive painting of pioneers on the Wilderness Road and Cumberland Gap is **George Caleb Bingham's 1851 oil-on-canvas masterpiece**, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap*.   Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum +2

This iconic artwork captures the quintessential spirit of American westward expansion through several key details:

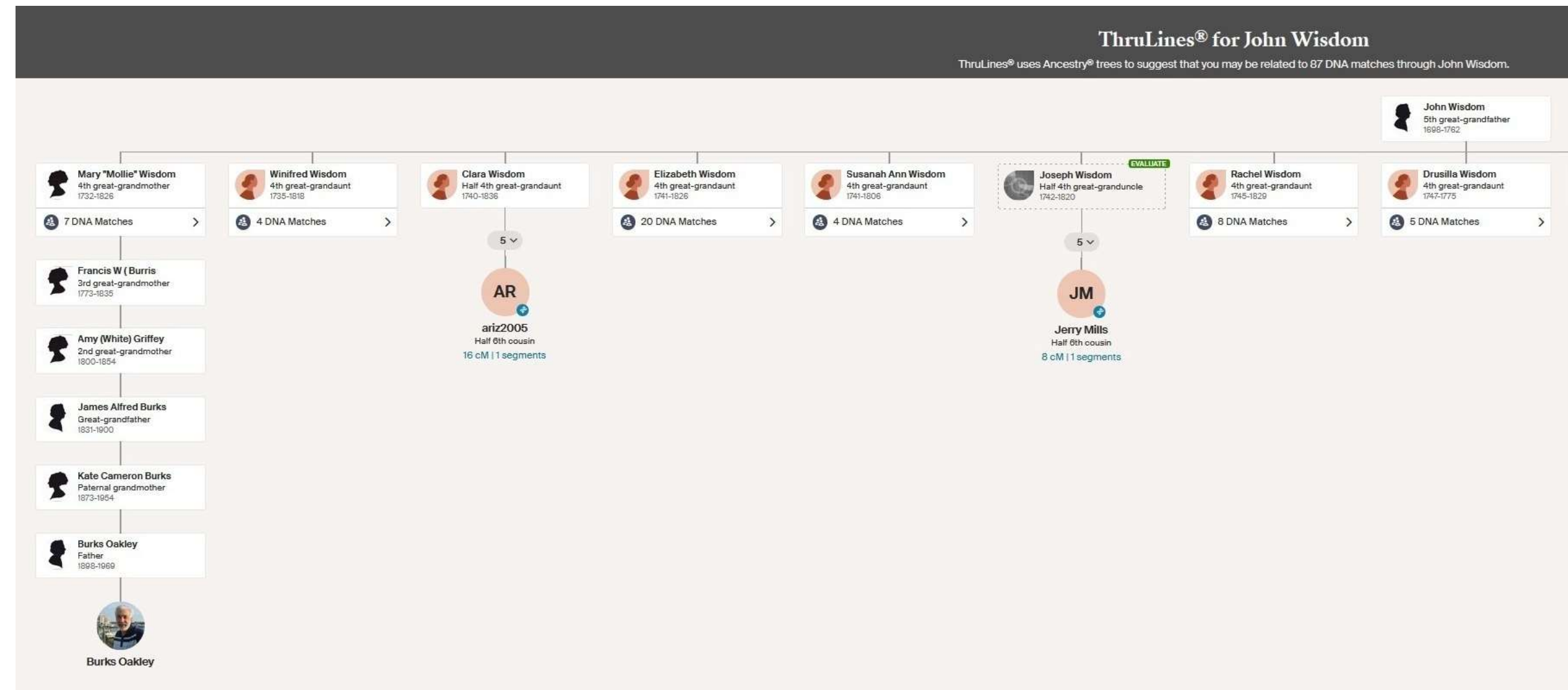
- **The Subject:** It depicts frontier icon Daniel Boone, with his long rifle, leading a group of heavily laden pioneers and pack animals through the rugged Appalachian mountain pass.  Facebook · Legends Of America +4
- **The Symbolism:** Art historians often compare Bingham's composition to Moses leading his people to the Promised Land, using classical iconography to embody the concept of Manifest Destiny.  Facebook · Legends Of America +2
- **The Geography:** While visually dramatic, Bingham's rendition of the gap was heavily embellished, giving the forested Appalachian pass more of a rugged, canyon-like appearance.  Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine
- **Where to View It:** The original painting is housed at the [Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum](#) at Washington University in St. Louis.  Facebook · Legends Of America +1



And how cool to think that our **Burks** and **Wisdom** ancestors were part of this!

Appendix: My ThruLines® Chart for John Wisdom

Left side:



Right side:

