

How Many People Know the Names of All Sixteen 2nd-Great Grandparents of One of Their 14th-Great Grandfathers?

By Burks Oakley II
30 April 2026

Well, I do!

Since King Charles III is visiting the United States this week, I decided to search my ancestral lines on the Geni.com website to see if I could find any interesting lines going back to medieval England.¹ I was hoping to find ancestors who were Earls, Barons, and Members of Parliament. Or even Knights.

I should add that the Geni.com website has just a single family tree, which they have named the “World Family Tree”. This family tree currently has almost 210 million people:

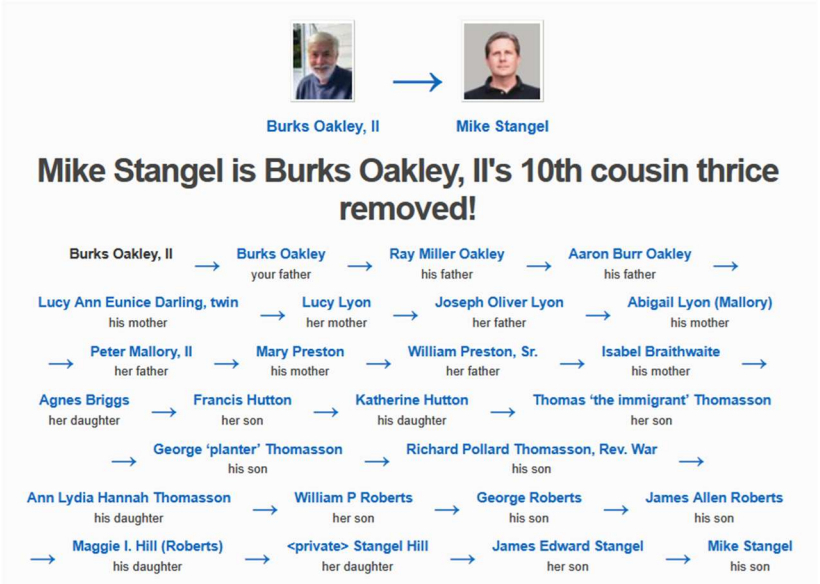
Profiles connected by Geni's World Family Tree:

209,535,499

Geni is creating one family tree for the entire world, built from the collaborative research of millions of genealogists. [Learn more about the World Family Tree](#)

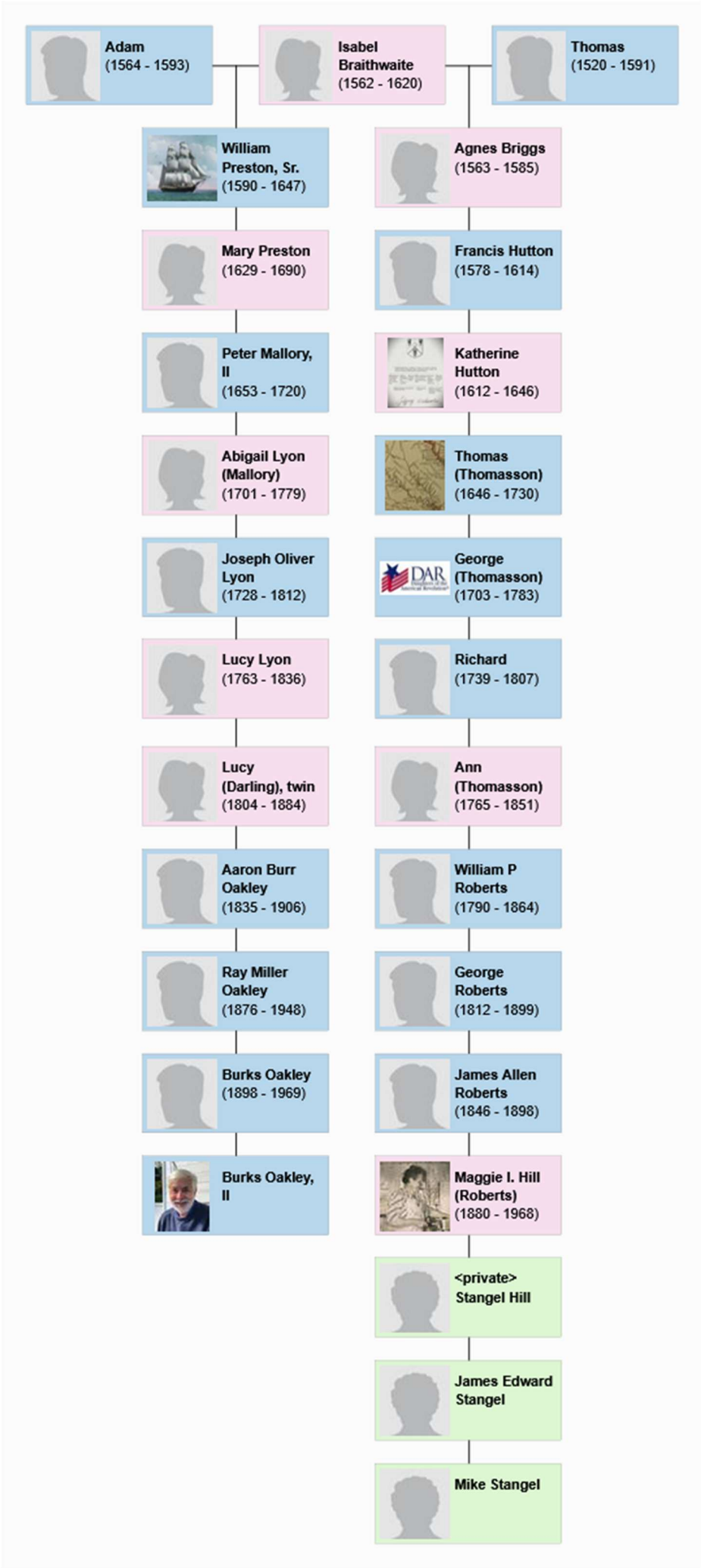
Unlike Ancestry.com, where each user builds their own family tree, Geni.com has just this single family tree. Users construct their ancestral lines back until they connect with an ancestor already in the World Family Tree, and then magically, they are connected to the entire tree. And software on the site can readily determine how various people in the overall tree are related. For example, the General Manager of Geni.com is Mike Stangel, and Mike was a computer engineering student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ca. 1990 who assisted me developing educational software.

When I looked on Geni.com to see if Mike and I are related, I learned that we are 10th-cousins thrice-removed:



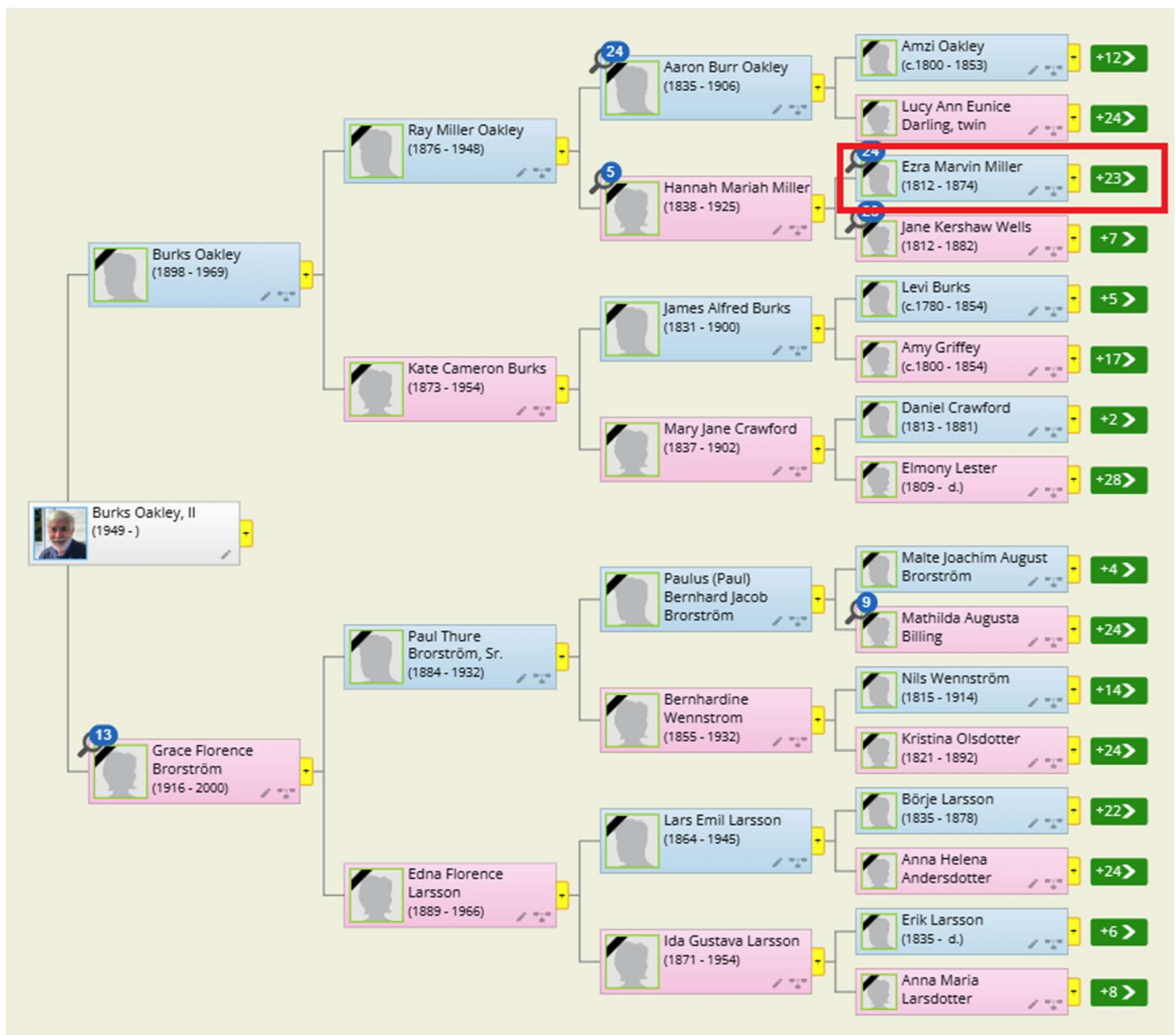
¹ Medieval England spanned roughly 1,000 years, traditionally defined from the end of Roman rule (c. 410) to the start of the Tudor dynasty (1485). It is generally divided into the Early (410-1066), High (1066-1272), and Late Middle Ages (1272-1485). [from a Google search]

Here is a chart from Geni.com that shows this relationship in a different form:



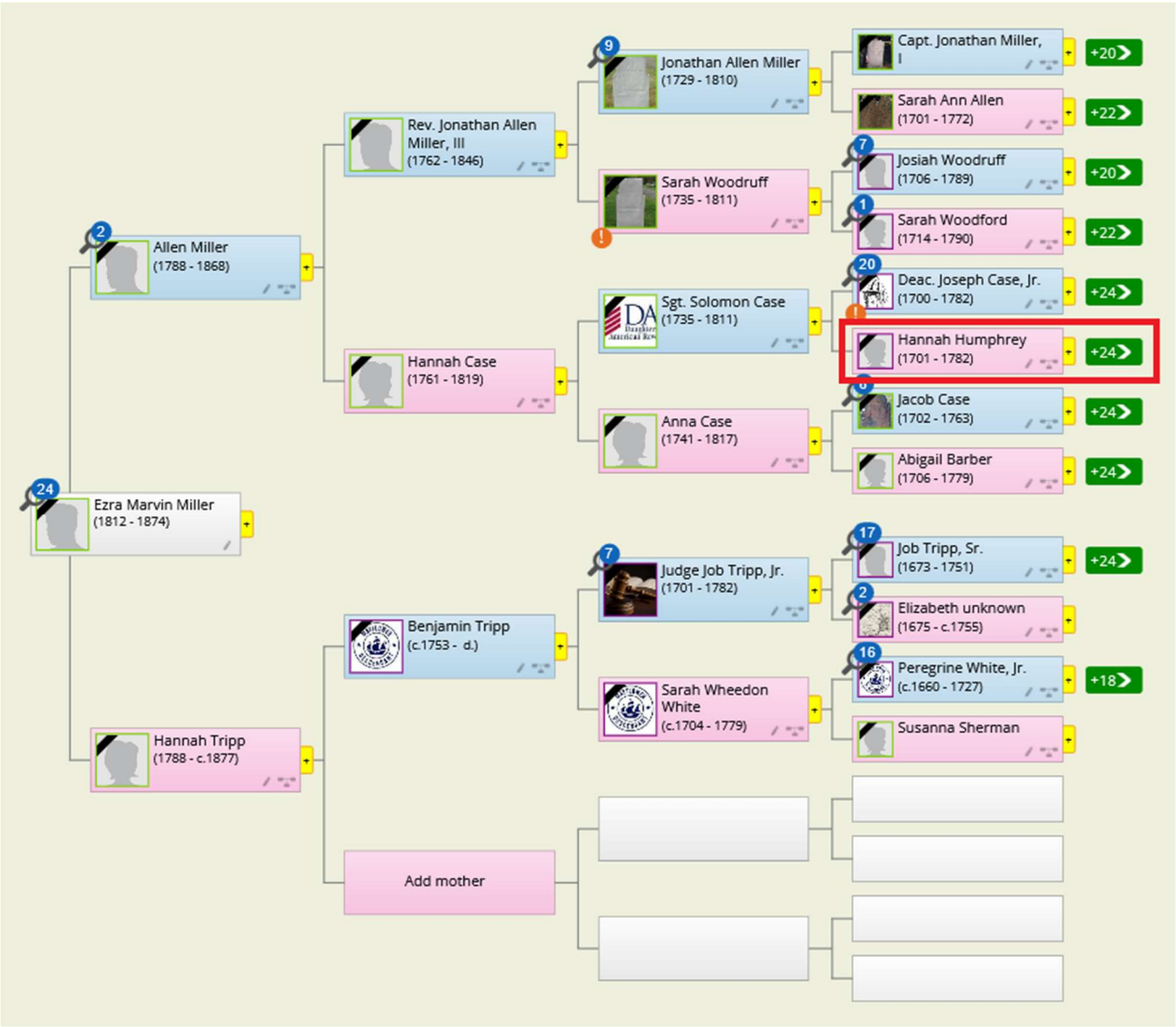
Now let me return to my search for some interesting ancestors in England in medieval times.

I began with my ancestral line back to my 2nd-great grandfather, Ezra Marvin Miller (1812-1874):



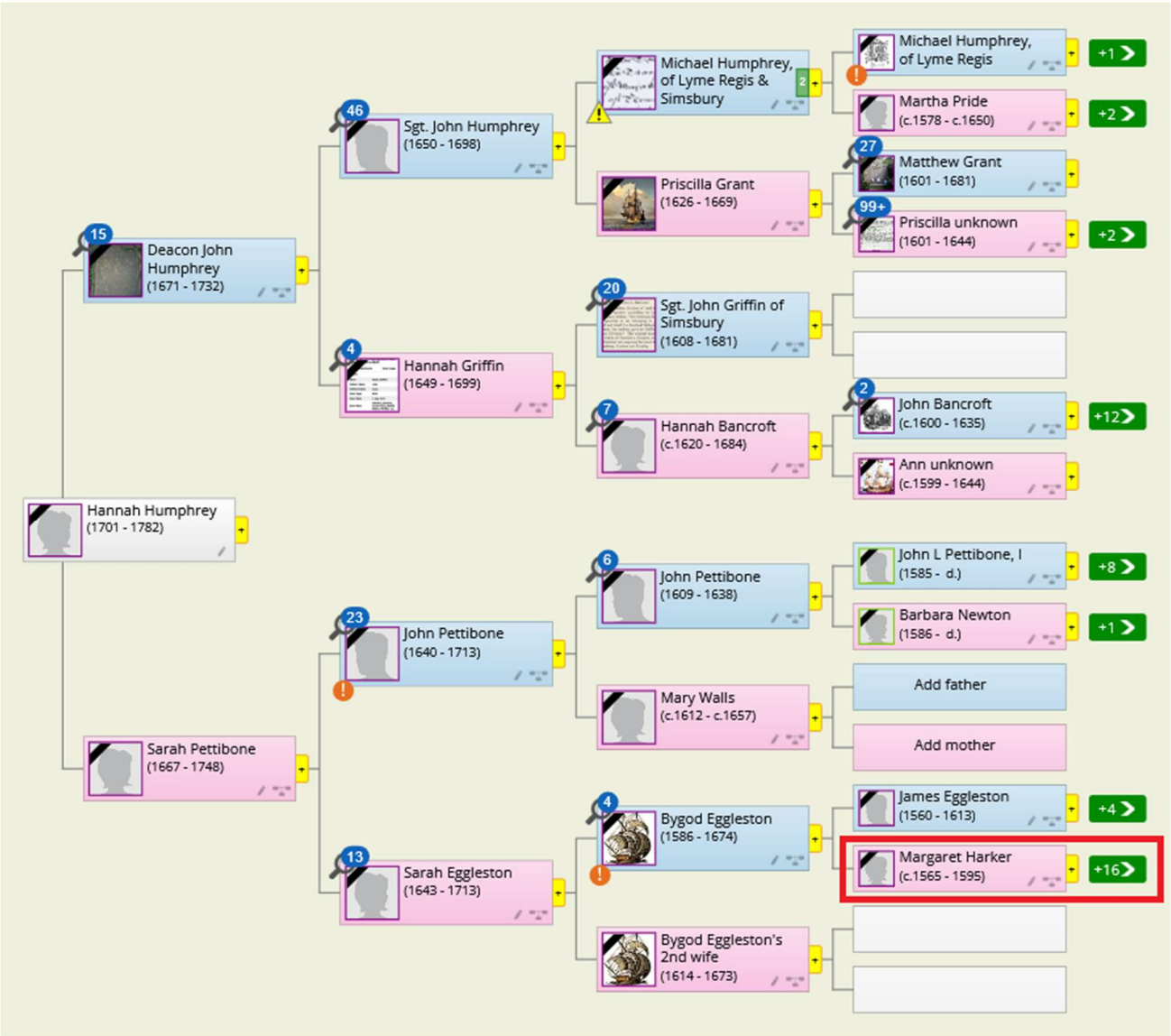
Ezra is shown inside the red rectangle in the upper-right of this pedigree chart. The green box with the arrow to the right of Ezra has an integer showing the number of his known ancestors who appear in the next four generations. Note that if all the ancestors are known for four generations (that is, to the level of the second-great grandparents), then this number will be thirty. If you don't believe me, a person has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and sixteen 2nd-great grandparents – and $2 + 4 + 8 + 16$ equals 30. So when I write that someone is a “30”, what I really mean is that all of their sixteen 2nd-great grandparents are known.

I next looked at the ancestral line from Ezra Marvin Miller back to his 2nd-great grandmother, Hannah Humphrey (1701-1782):



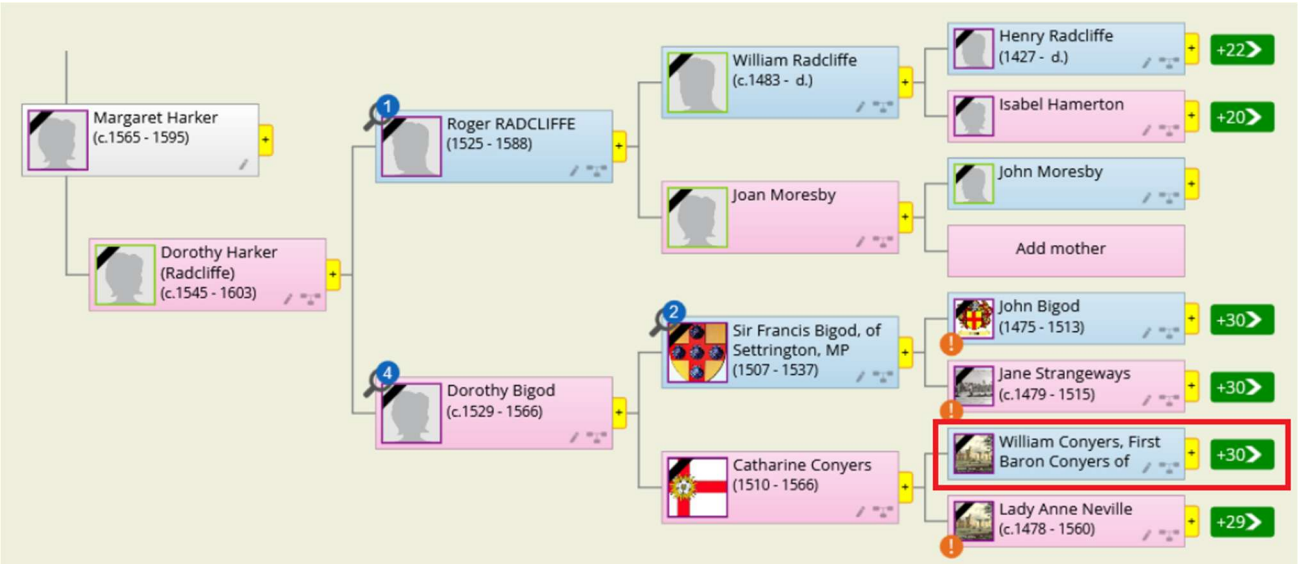
Hannah Humphrey is shown in the red box on the right-side of this pedigree chart. Note that she is a “24” – meaning that 24 of her ancestors in the next four generations are known.

I then looked at Hannah Humphrey’s ancestral lines:



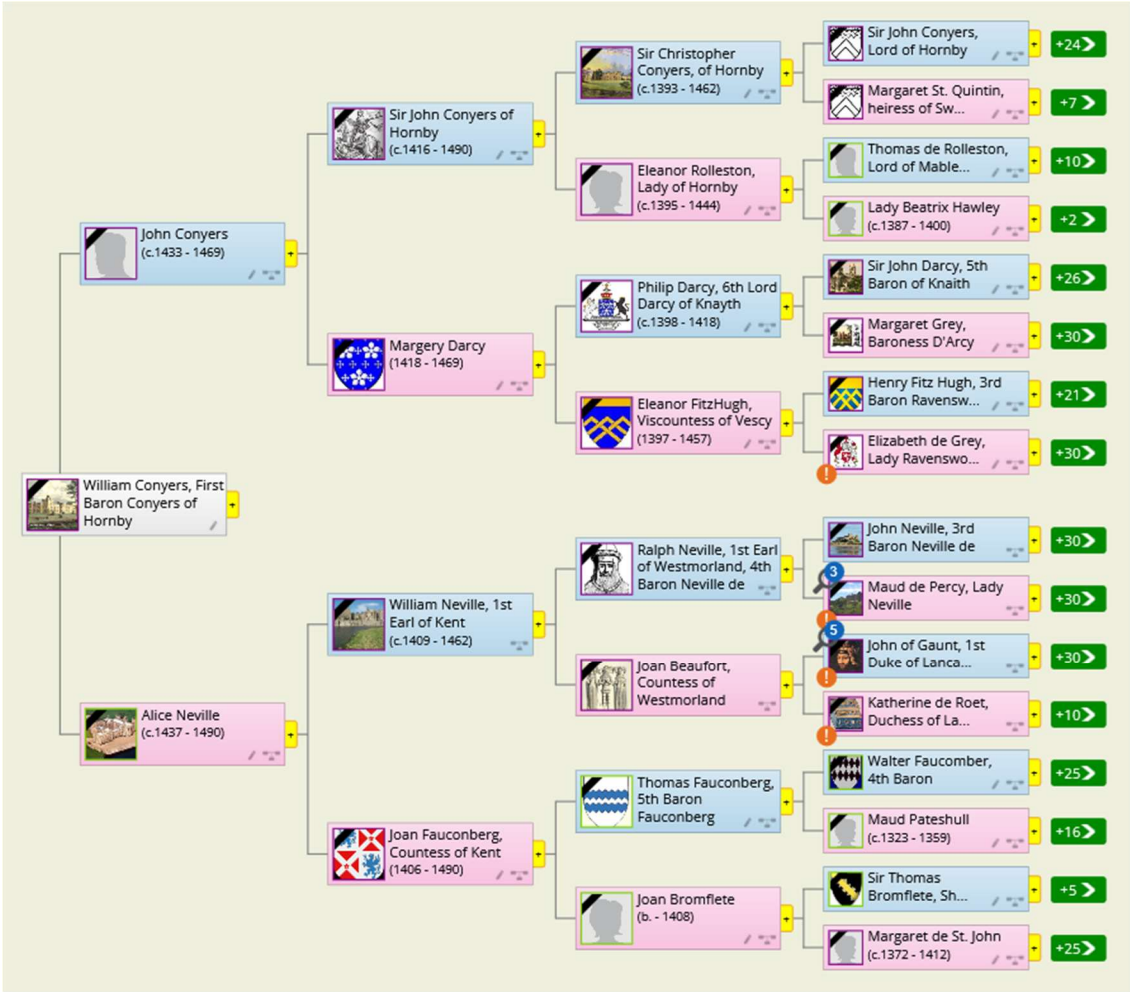
Hannah’s 2nd-great grandparents are shown in the right-hand column of this chart. And the 2nd-great grandparent with the most number of ancestors in the next four generations is Margaret Harker (1565-1595). Margaret is shown in the red box in the lower-right of this pedigree chart, and she has sixteen ancestors in the next four generations (using my jargon, she is a “16”).

I then followed Margaret’s ancestral line back to William Conyers, First Baron Conyers of Hornby:



Note that the number in the green box next to William Conyers is 30, meaning that all sixteen of his 2nd-great grandparents are known. Amazing! [Of course, there are two other 2nd-great grandparents with 30’s, as well as one with a 29.]

Here is William Conyer’s pedigree chart:



Note that all eight of his 2nd-great grandfathers had titles, including Sir, Lord, Baron, Baron, Baron, Duke, Baron, and Sir. Quite a lineage!

Here is an excerpt from the Wikipedia article about William Conyers, 1st Baron Conyers:

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The Wikipedia article about William Conyers mentioned Hornby Castle. Here is the Wikipedia article about this place:

WIKIPEDIA

25 years of the free encyclopedia

Hornby Castle, North Yorkshire

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Hornby Castle is a grade I listed fortified manor house in the village of [Hornby](#) on the edge of Wensleydale between [Bedale](#) and [Leyburn](#), in the county of [North Yorkshire](#), England.

Originally 14th century, it was remodelled in the 15th, 18th and 20th centuries. It is constructed of coursed sandstone rubble with lead and stone-slate roofs.^[1] The present building is the south range of a larger complex, the rest of which has been demolished.

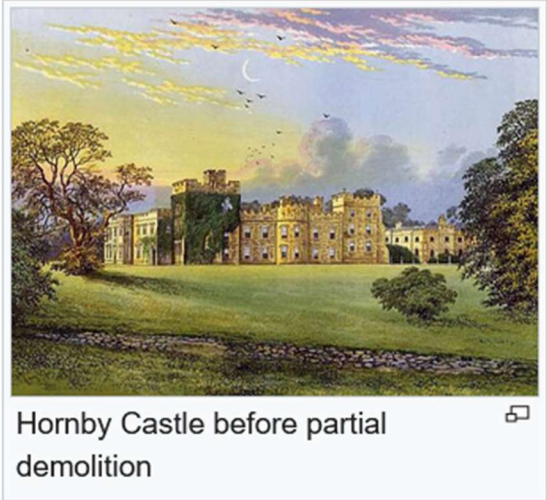
History

At the end of the 14th century Hornby castle belonged to the St Quintin family^[2] until heiress Margaret Quintin married John Conyers (died 1422).

It was largely rebuilt in the fifteenth century by [William Conyers, 1st Baron Conyers](#), but retained the fourteenth-century St Quintin's tower (demolished in 1927) named after the previous owners.^[3] On the death in 1557 of [John Conyers, 3rd Baron Conyers](#), the estate passed to his daughter Elizabeth, who was married to Thomas Darcy. It descended in the Darcy family (made the [Earls of Holderness](#) in 1682) to [Robert Darcy, 4th Earl of Holderness](#), who died in 1778. [Conyers Darcy, 2nd Earl of Holderness](#), was elected MP for [Boroughbridge](#) in 1660 and for [Yorkshire](#) in 1661.^[4]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornby_Castle,_North_Yorkshire

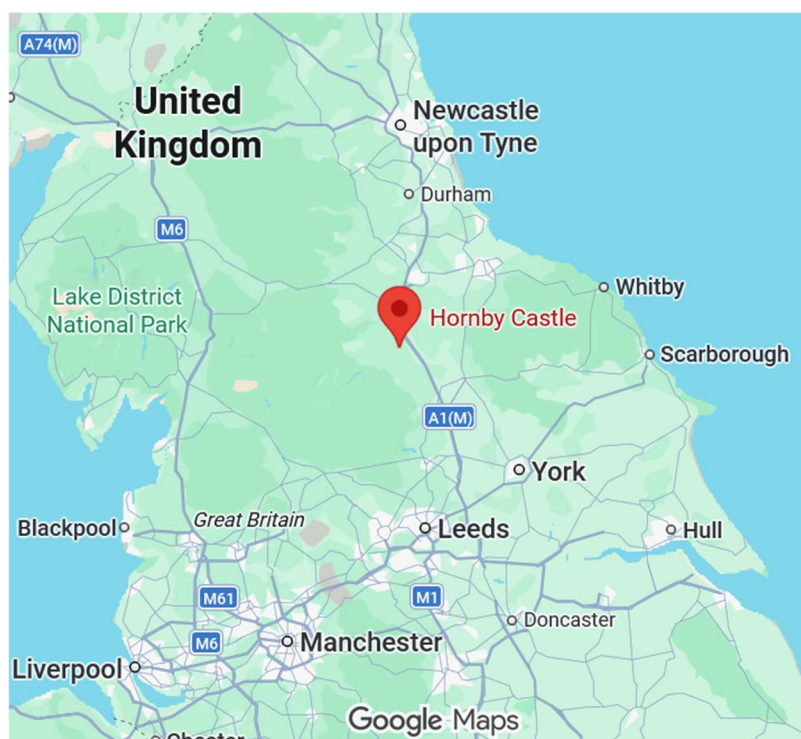
Here are some photos of Hornby Castle from the Wikipedia article:



And here is a drone view of the current Hornby Castle:

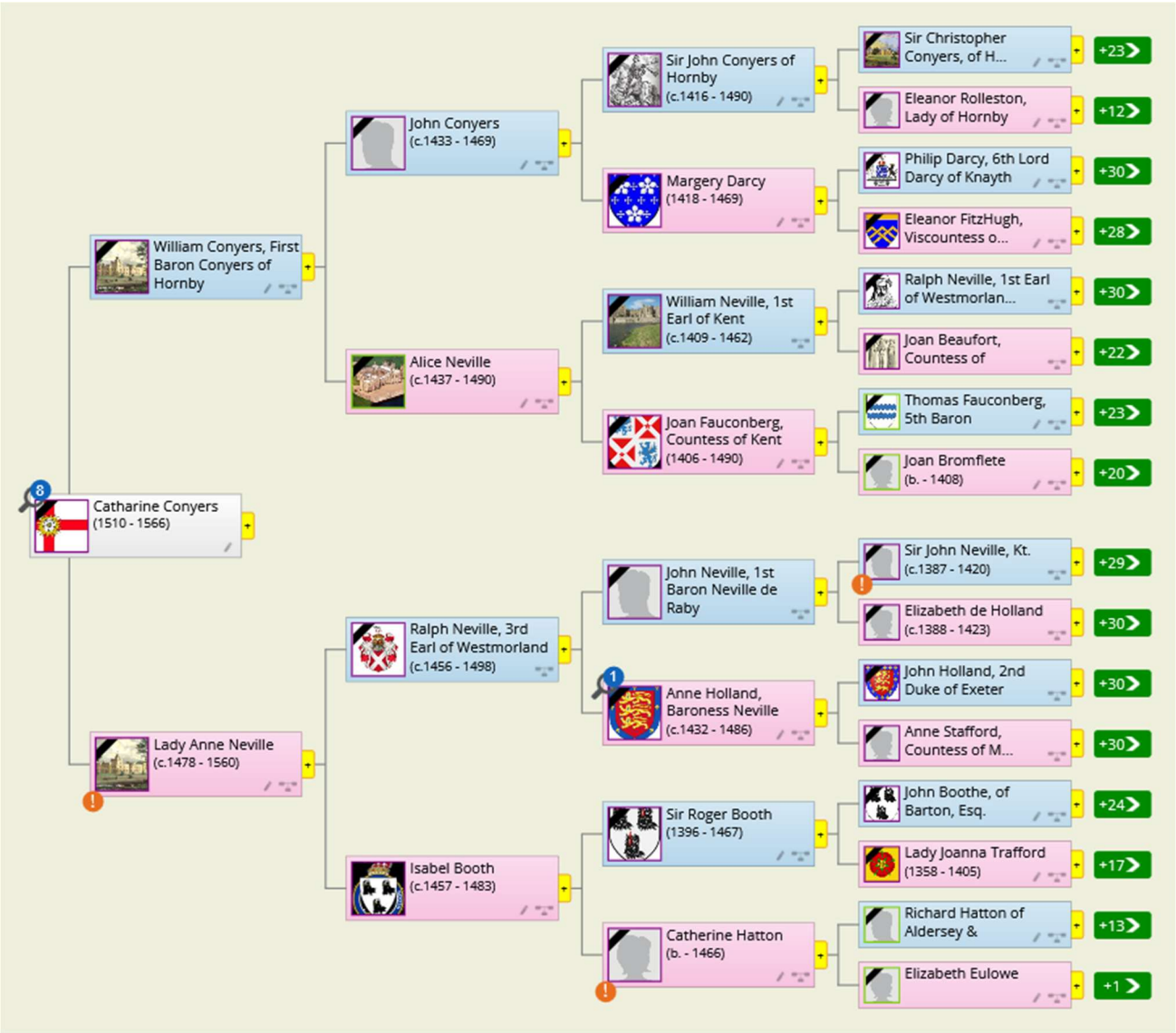


Here is a Google Map showing the location of Hornby Castle:



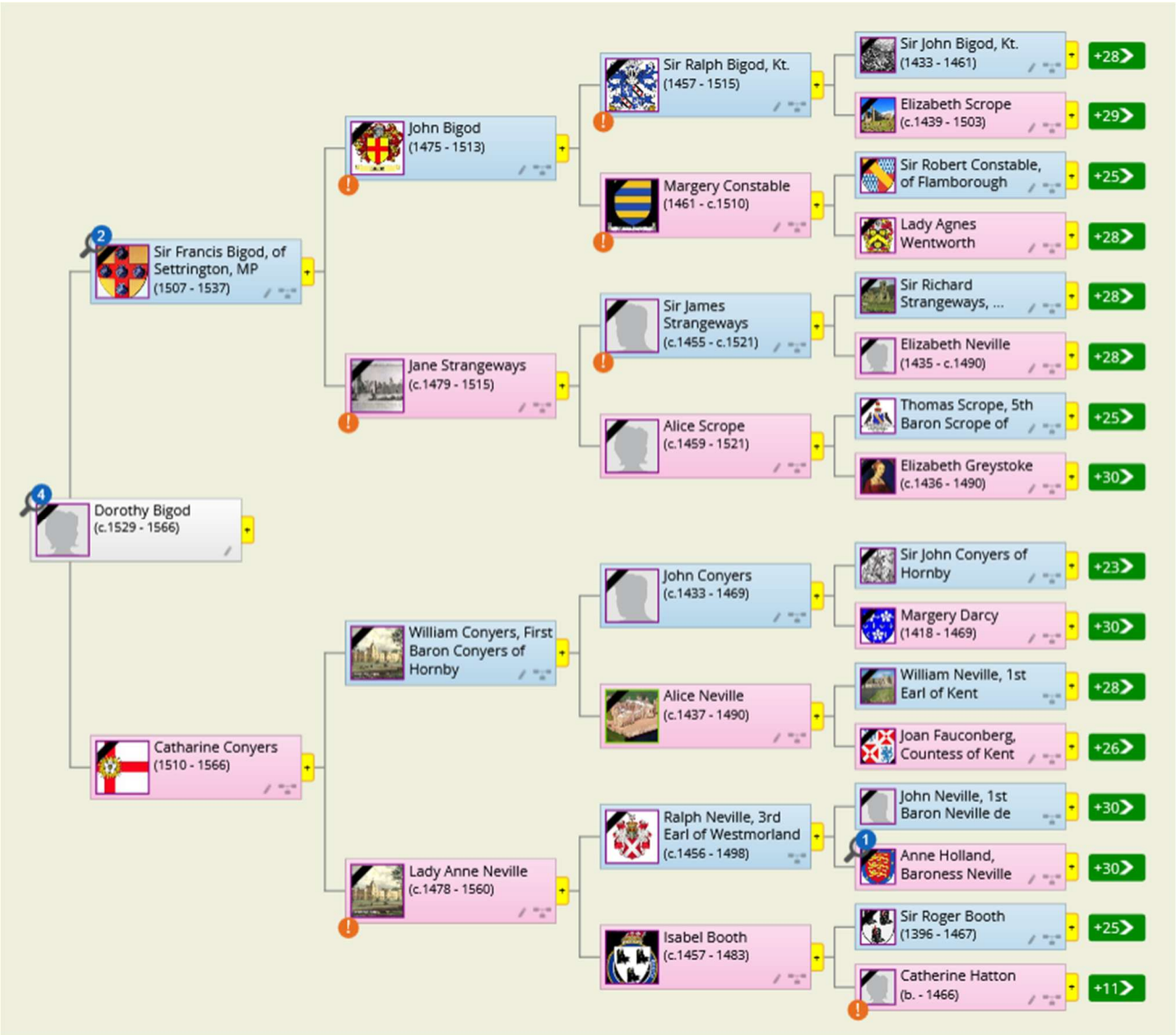
This castle is about 50 miles north of Leeds.

My line back to William Conyers goes through his daughter, Catharine Conyers (1510-1566). Of course, she also is a “30”:



Note that she has several 30's among her 2nd-great grandparents. Amazing!

Catherine Conyers' daughter was Dorothy Bigod (1529-1566), and Dorothy was my 12th-great grandmother. Of course, she also was a "30":

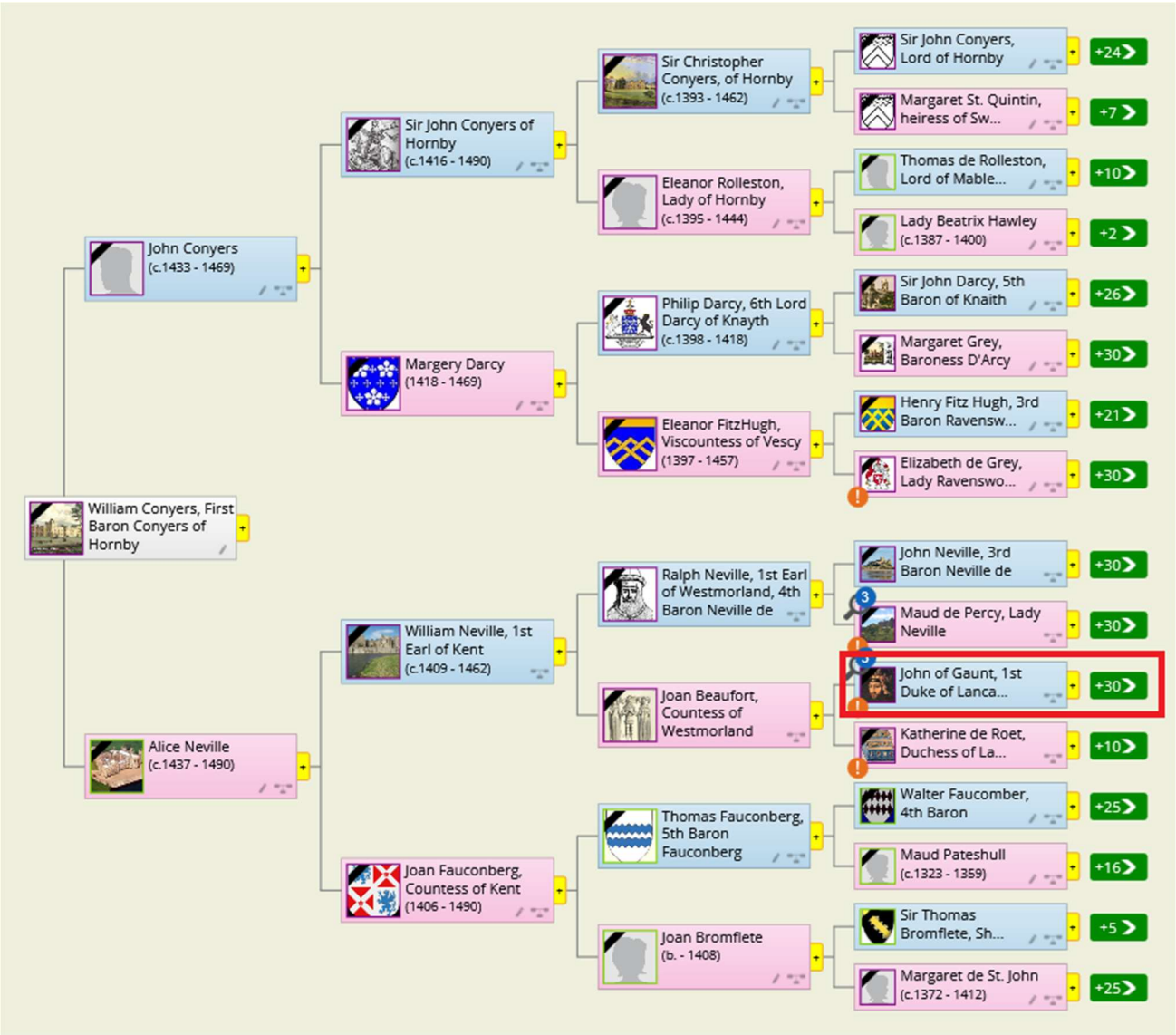


Note that among Dorothy’s 2nd-great grandparents, there are lots of 30’s and 29’s and 28’s. Amazing!

I think that it is pretty cool to be able to go back to the 1500’s and find complete family trees going back four or more generations.

I’m sure that if I looked at some of these ancestors, I would find a number of interesting stories about their lives.

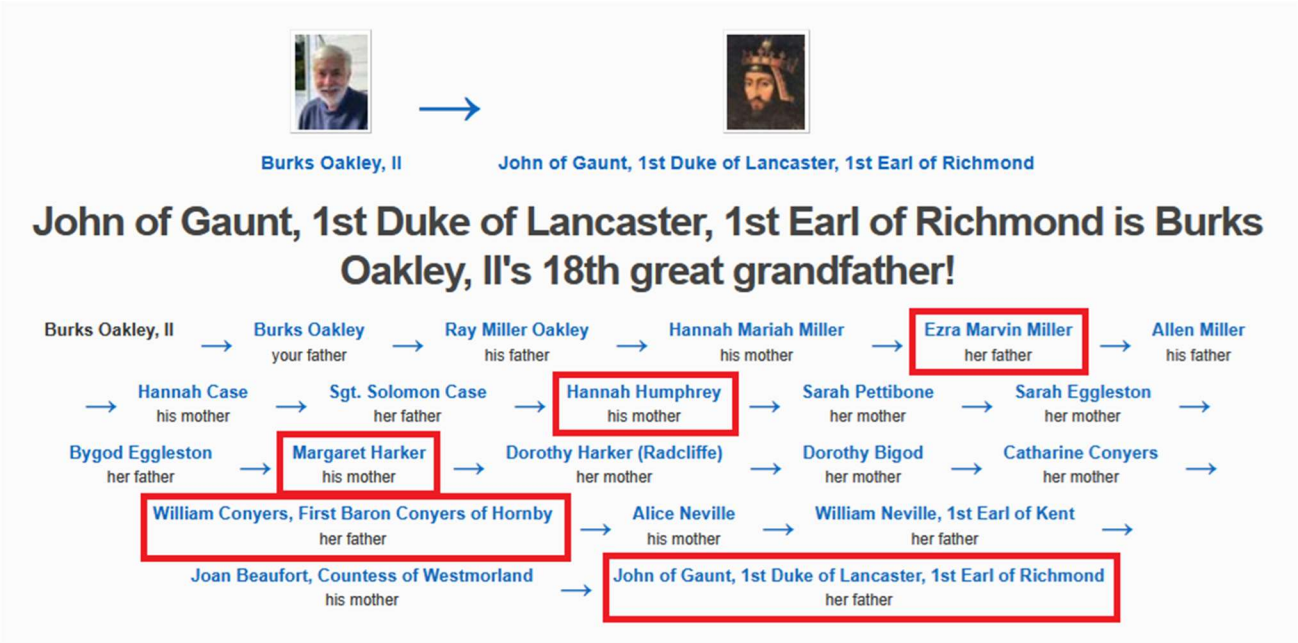
After a while, I decided that I couldn’t just stop this narrative at this point. So I looked again at William Conyer’s pedigree:



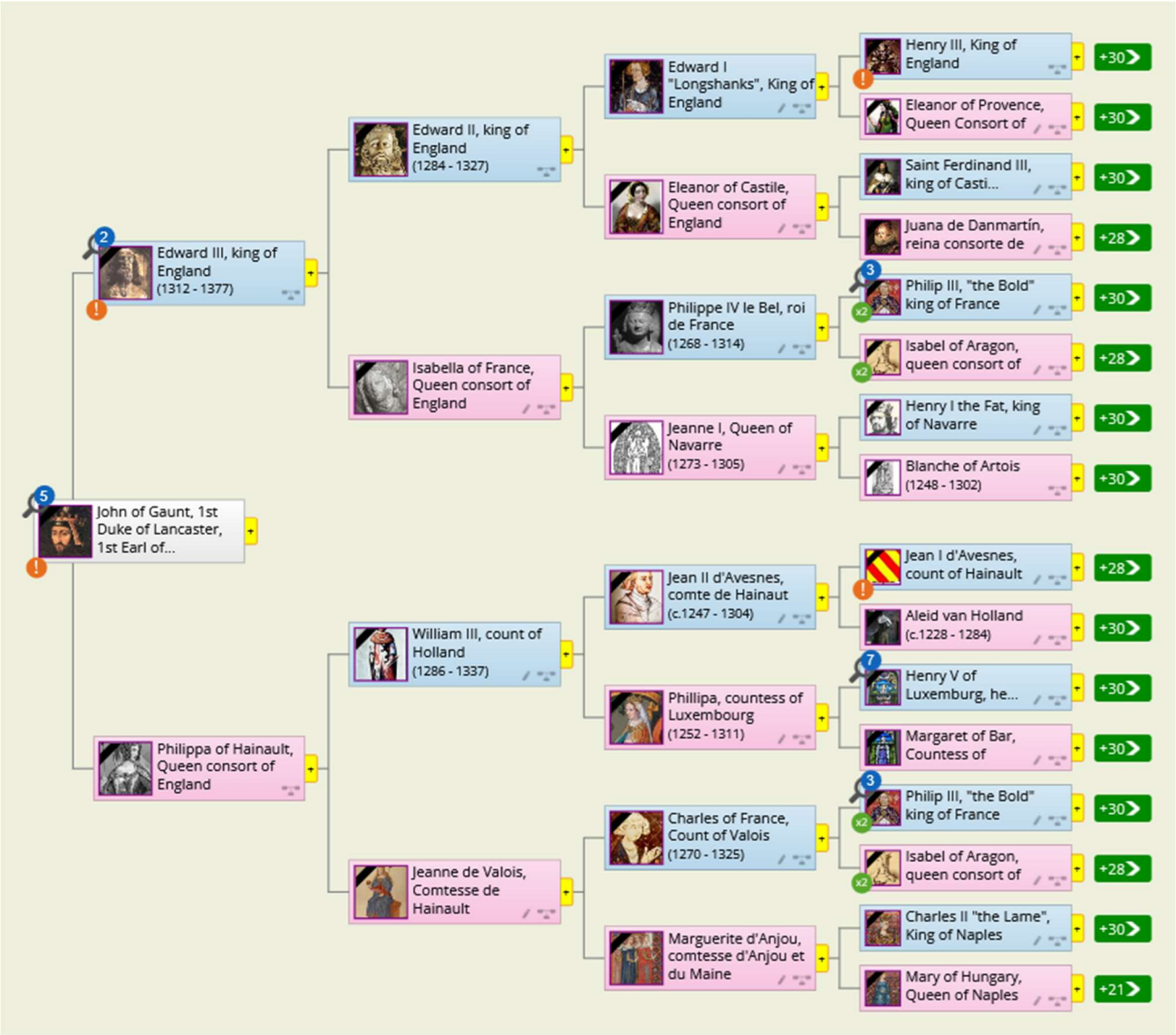
I saw that there were a number of 30's among his 2nd-great grandparents. I recognized the name "John of Gaunt", since he appeared in several of my ancestral lines back to King Edward I – see:

<http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/50-MyLines-to-KingEdward.pdf>

So I went on to look at John of Gaunt, 1st Duke of Lancaster, 1st Earl of Richmond. John lived from 1340 to 1399, and he was my 18th-great grandfather on my ancestral line going back through Ezra Marvin Miller, Hannah Humphrey, Margaret Harker, and William Conyers:



Of course, I then looked at John of Gaunt's pedigree chart:

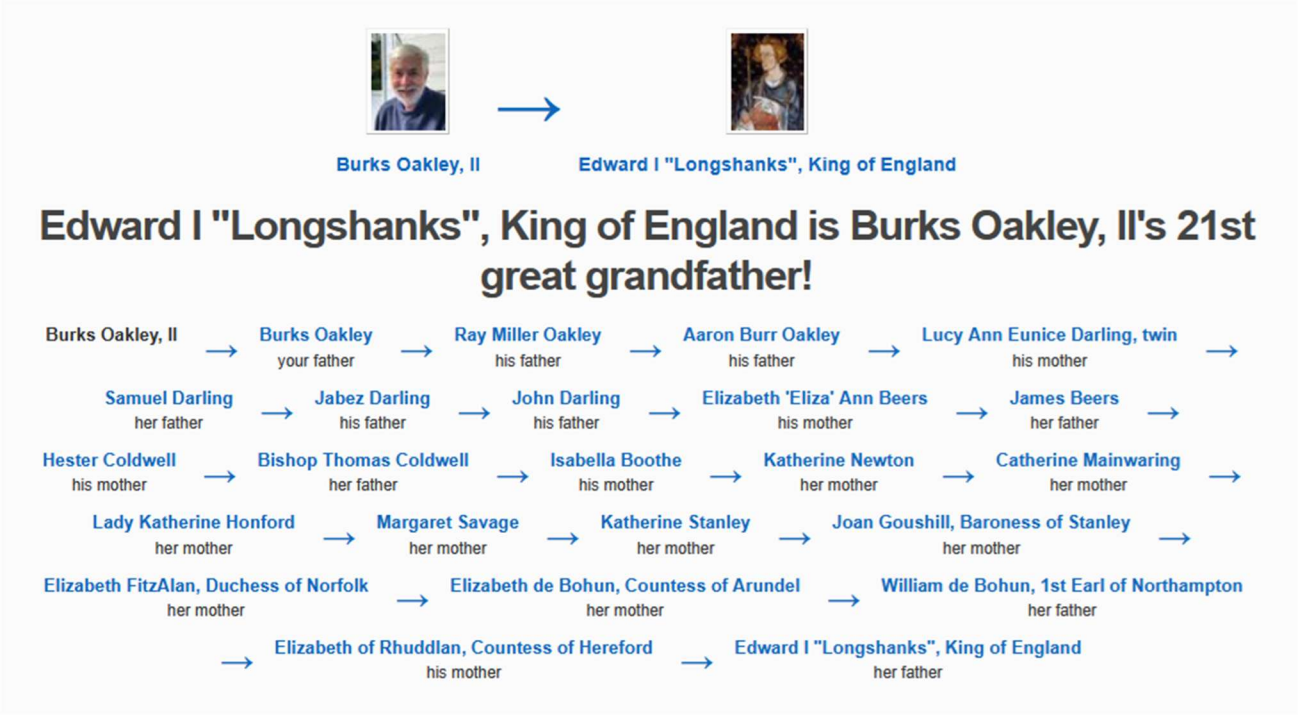


OMG! Not only are all of John's 2nd-great grandparents known, but this pedigree chart includes:

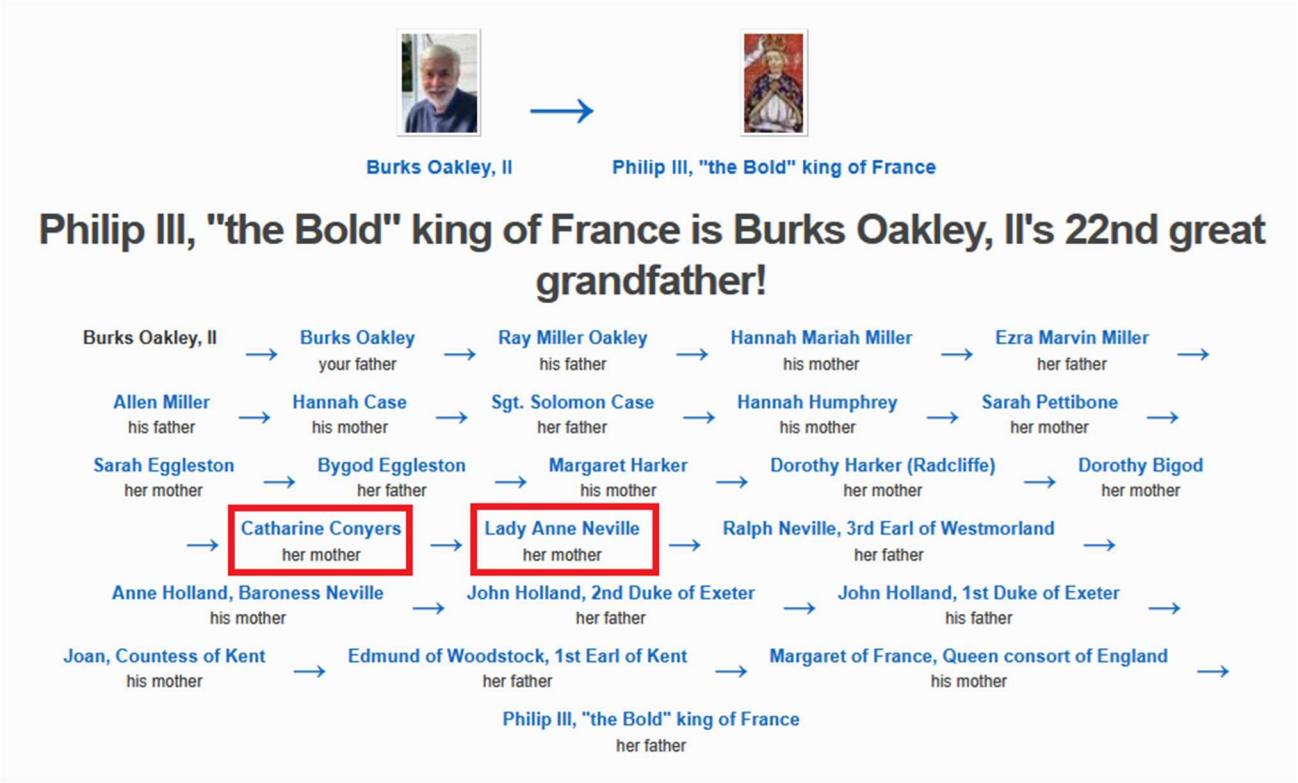
- Edward III, King of England
- Edward II, King of England
- Edward I, King of England
- Henry III, King of England
- Saint Ferdinand III, King of Castile & León
- Phillip III, King of France
- Charles II, King of Naples
- Mary of Hungary, Queen of Naples
- Philip IV, King of France

And all of these people were my ancestors!! Amazing!

Recall that I have twelve separate lines back to King Edward I. And the line going back through John of Gault is NOT the shortest line. When I look at King Edward I on Geni.com, I see that he was my 21st-great grandfather on a line that does NOT include William Conyers or John of Gault:

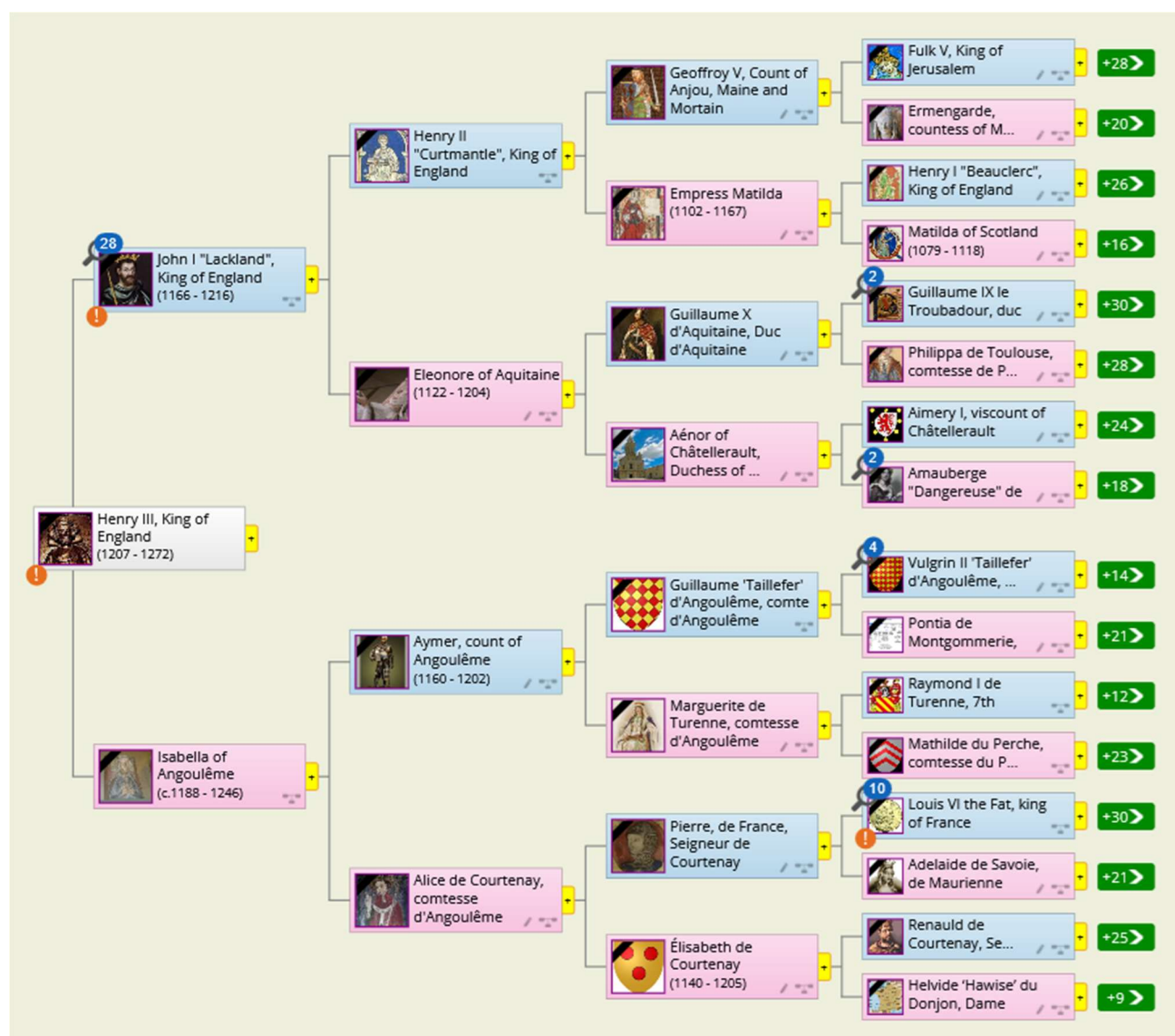


The same holds for Philip III, King of France. My shortest line back to him does NOT go through William Conyers and John of Gault:



Instead, this line goes through Catharine Conyer and her mother, Lady Ann Neville (in the red boxes).

Of course, King Henry III is also a “30”:



Since all thirty of Henry III's ancestors for four generation are known, and since Henry III was my 23rd-great grandfather, perhaps I should have entitled this narrative "How Many People Know the Names of All Sixteen 2nd-Great Grandparents of One of Their 23rd-Great Grandfathers?".

I note that Henry III's paternal grandmother was Eleanor of Aquitaine (1122-1204), who was duchess of Aquitaine from 1137 to 1204, Queen of France from 1137 to 1152 as the wife of King Louis VII, and Queen of England from 1154 to 1189 as the wife of King Henry II. Wow! And she was my 22nd-great grandmother on the shortest ancestral line, and she was my 25th-great grandmother on the line going through William Conyers and John of Gaunt.

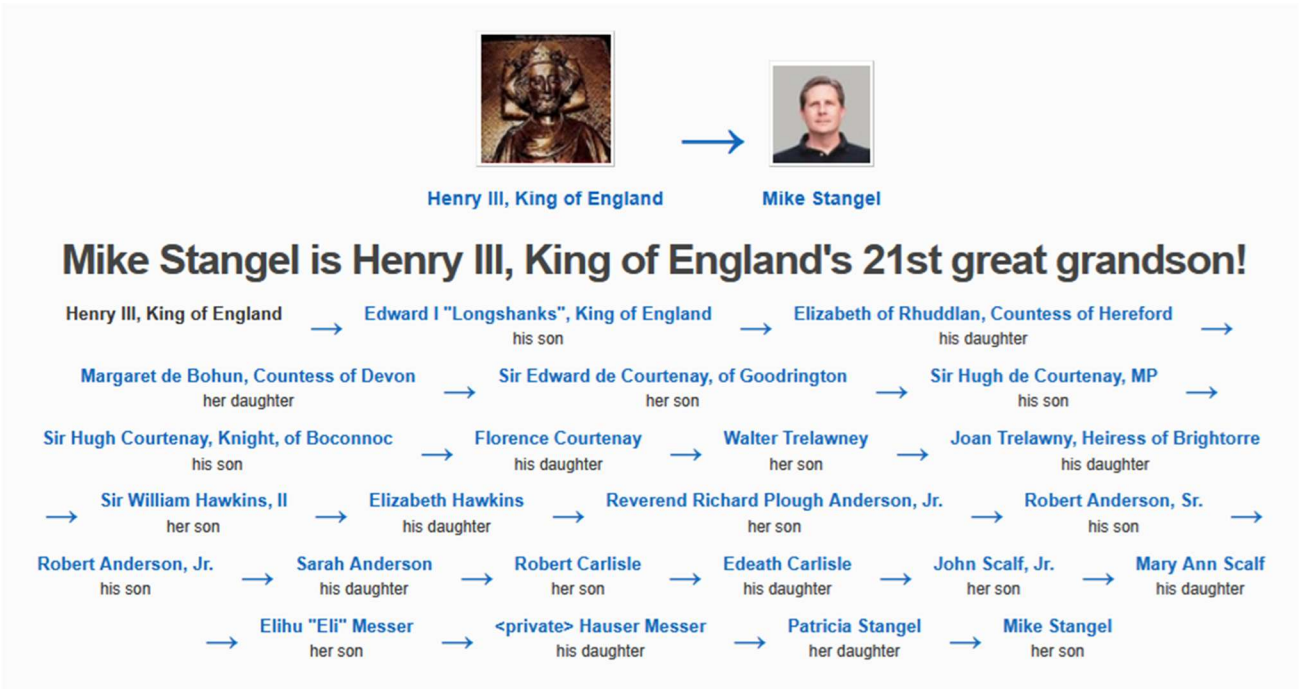
More about Eleanor of Aquitaine at:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/learn/histories/women-in-history/eleanor-aquitaine/>

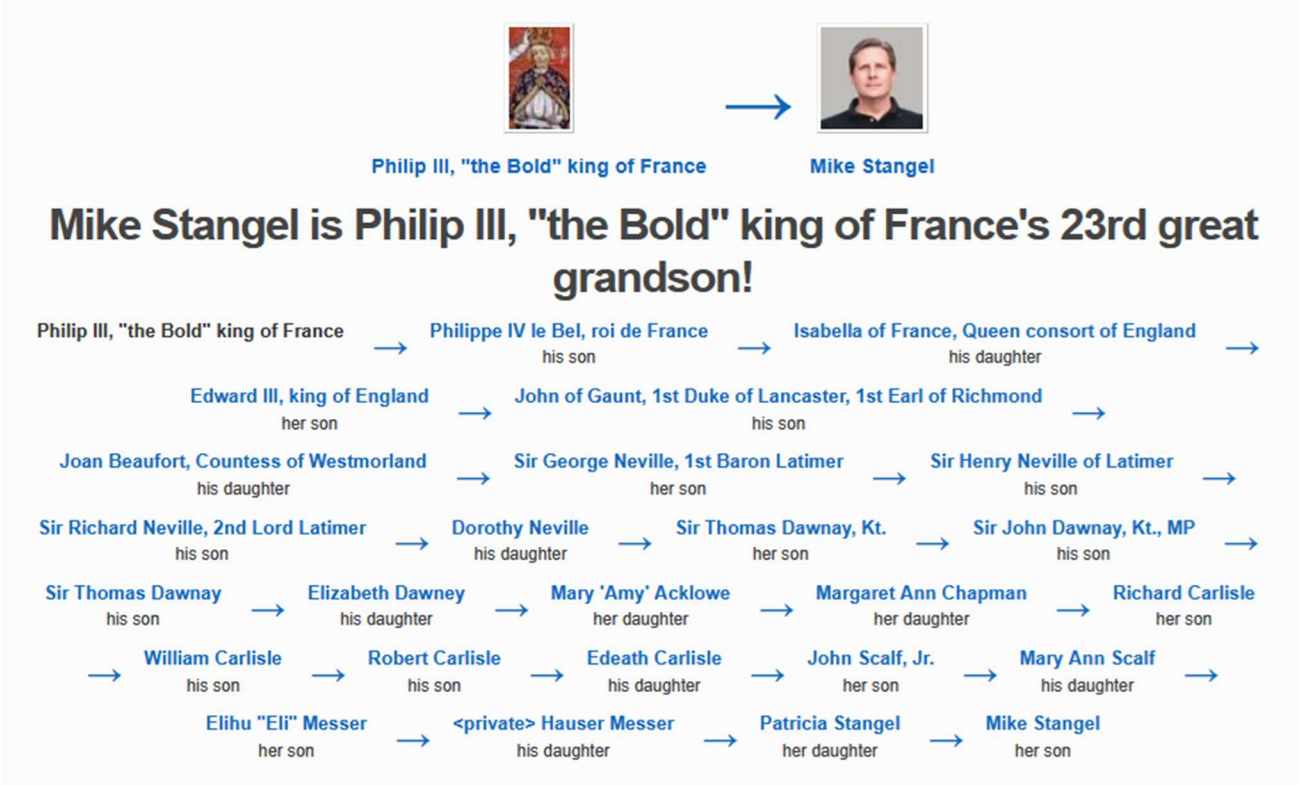
OK, now I'm ready to end this narrative. I began by looking at my ancestral lines on Geni.com going back to medieval England, hoping to find Earls and Barons. And it turns out that I found Kings and Queens!

Appendix:

As I reflect on all of this, being descended from an English king isn't such a rare occurrence. I looked at Mike Stangel (Remember him? He is the General Manager of geni.com). And I learned that he is King Henry III's 21st-great grandson:



And then I looked at King Philip III of France, and I learned that Mike is King Philip's 23rd-great grandson:



Amazing to see all of these connections to medieval times!

Appendix #2 – Additional Photos of Horby Castle

Hornby Castle in 1955:



The interior courtyard of Hornby Castle (notice the elaborate engraved stone over the arched entryway):



SOUTH SIDE IN QUADRANGLE.

A closeup of the engraved stone over the entryway:

