

Connecting Back to Anders Nilsson and Anna Andersdotter

By Burks Oakley II
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This narrative includes DNA connections with:

- Robin Rae Fordham

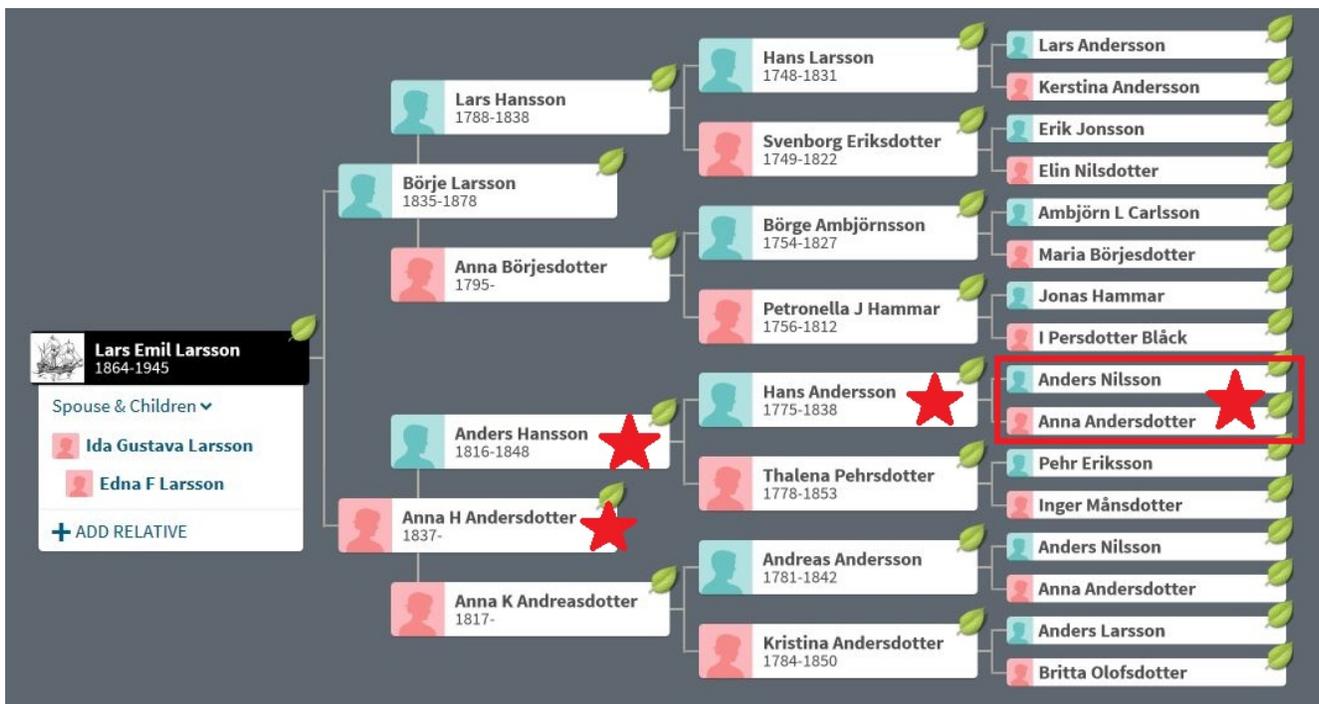
Introduction

I am using DNA testing to expand and to confirm my family tree. In the past few years, I have become quite interested in learning more about my Swedish ancestry. My mother was Grace Florence Brorström (1916-2000), and all four of her grandparents were Swedes who immigrated to America in the 1880's.

In February 2019, Ancestry.com released a beta version of its ThruLines™ software. This software first identifies my DNA matches (that is, the individuals with whom I have matching segments of DNA, indicating a common ancestor) and then examines my family tree and theirs, seeking to discover how we are related. An important feature of this software is that it also examines all of the family trees on Ancestry.com as it seeks to discover these connections. I have found that this software is incredibly helpful in expanding my family tree.

In addition to my own DNA matches, I also regularly examine the DNA matches that my Swedish-American first-cousins– Peter, Annmarie, Susan, and Stuart – have on the Ancestry.com website. These first-cousins have DNA matches with distant cousins that I don't have, due to the way that autosomal DNA is inherited.

This narrative addresses a new addition to our family tree that goes back to Anders Nilsson (1745-1819) and his wife Anna Andersdotter (1747-1815). This couple lived in Fjärås, Sweden, in the northernmost part of Halland County. They were the second-great grandparents of my great-grandfather Lars Emil Larsson (1864-1945), as shown in the following pedigree chart:



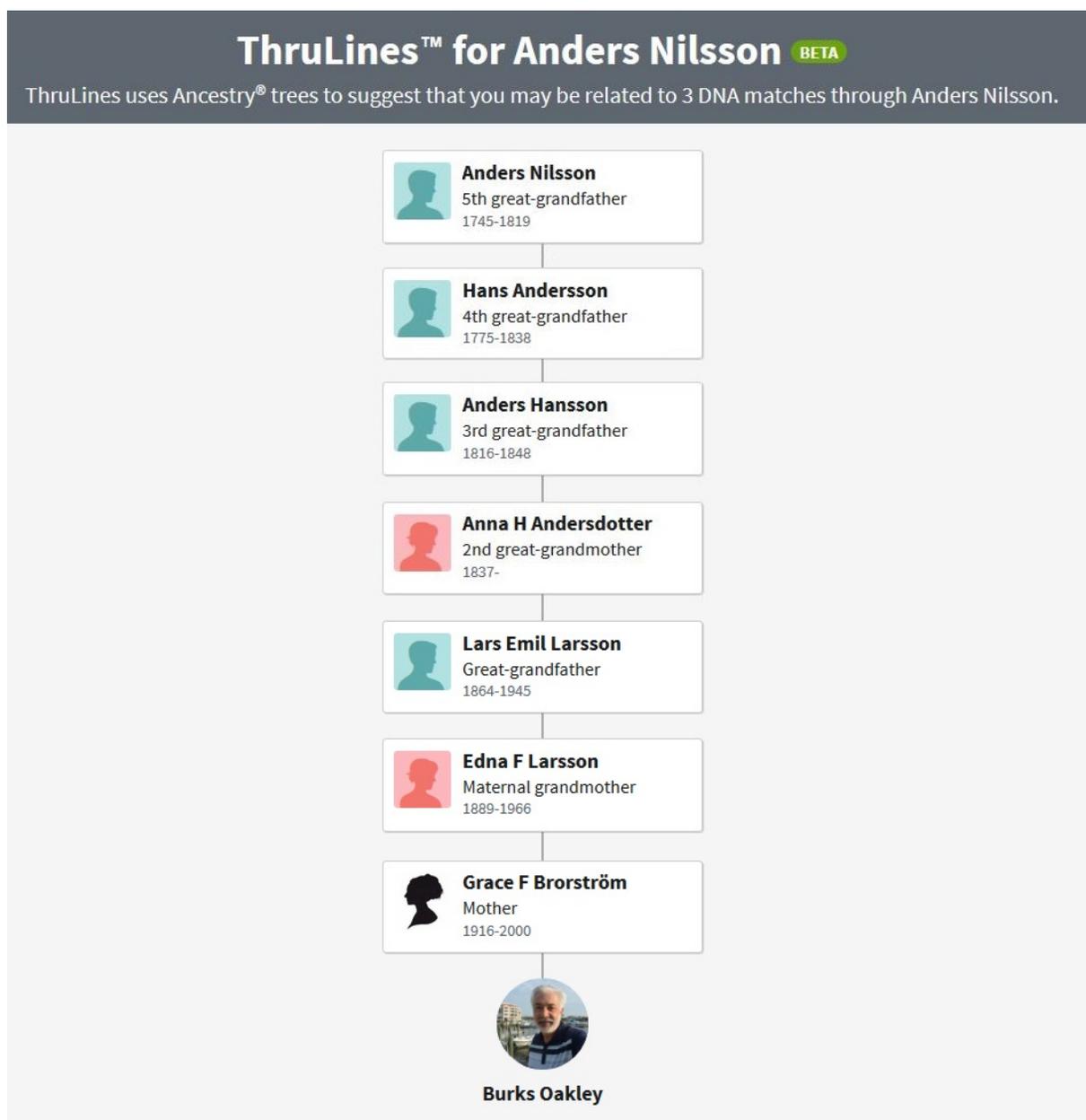
Lars Emil Larsson was my mother's maternal grandfather, and he immigrated to America in the 1880's. His line back to Anders Nilsson and Anna Andersdotter is highlighted with the red stars in the pedigree chart.

ThruLines™ for Anders Nilsson and his wife Anna Andersdotter

The ThruLines™ on Ancestry.com are organized in a hierarchical manner, starting with a person's two parents and going all the way to the person's one hundred twenty-eight 5th-great grandparents. I finally got to my fifth-great grandparents Anders Nilsson and Anna Andersdotter:



Here is my ThruLines™ for Anders Nilsson:



This ThruLines™ is unremarkable; it just shows my line back to Anders Nilsson, which goes back through my great-grandfather Lars Emil Larsson. I should add that my ThruLines™ for Anna Andersdotter shows this same exact line.

I next looked at my first-cousin Peter Thure Brorström's ThruLines™ for Anders Nilsson and Anna Andersdotter. Peter's father and my mother were siblings. [As an adult, Peter changed his name to Peter Larson.]

Here is Peter's ThruLines™ for Anders Nilsson:



Note that Peter's ThruLines™ is very different than mine; it shows that he has a DNA match with a person having the username of *joeandrobin1*, and that this person also is descended from Anders Nilsson. Peter is descended from Anders Nilsson through his son Hans Andersson, while *joeandrobin1* is descended from Anders Nilsson through a daughter marked "Private" in this ThruLines™.

I went through all of the ancestors in the line for *joeandrobin1* to get their names, and here is another version of the ThruLines™ with all these names added:

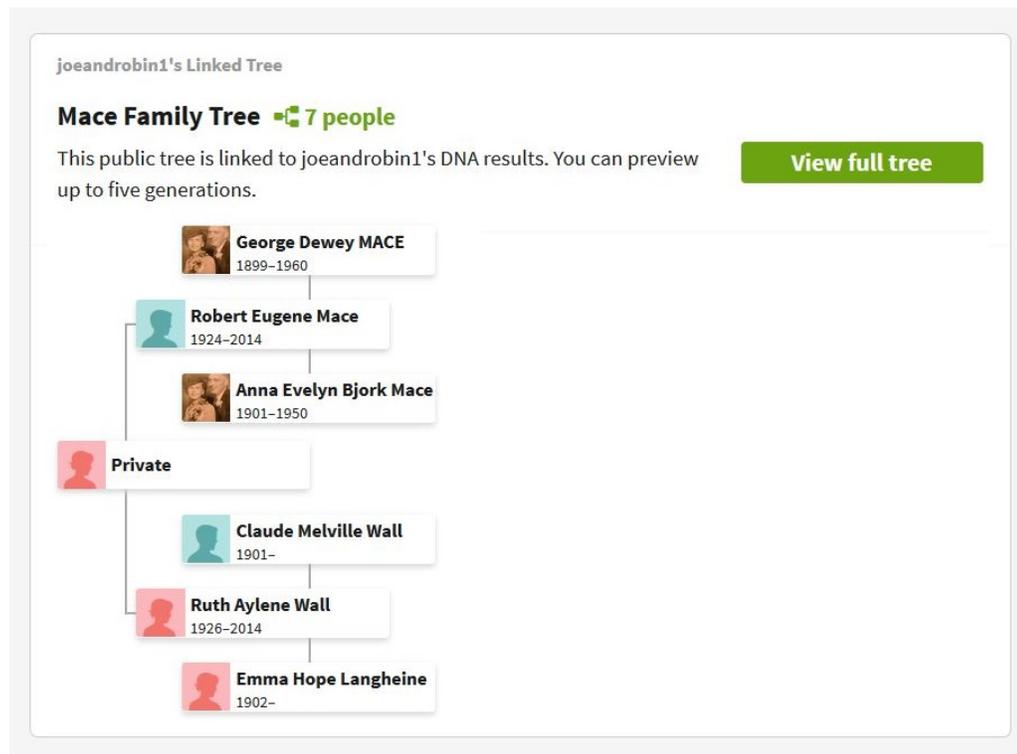


The noted genetic genealogist Arthur Sissman warns about using ThruLines™ as anything more than a starting point for research.¹ The genealogical connections shown in ThruLines™ definitely should not be taken as fact. Note that the line going back from *joeandrobin1* has ancestors taken from multiple family trees on

¹ Mr. Sissman is the Chair of the DNA SIG for the Collier County Genealogical Society in Florida.

the Ancestry.com website – and this type of information is notorious for having errors.

The starting point for the line back to Anders Nilsson was the pedigree that **joeandrob1** has on Ancestry.com, and this pedigree has just a few people. This tree shows that **joeandrob1** is a woman:



Nevertheless, the ThruLines™ software was able to go from her paternal grandmother (*farmor* in Swedish) Anna Evelyn Bjork (married name Mace) all the way back to Anders Nilsson and his wife Anna Andersdotter. I checked all of the ancestors in this line, and they appear in multiple family trees. So I am inclined to believe that the line shown in the ThruLines™ could indeed account for the DNA match that Peter has with **joeandrob1**.

I was able to find the online obituary for **joeandrob1**'s father Robert Eugene Mace; he died in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 2014:

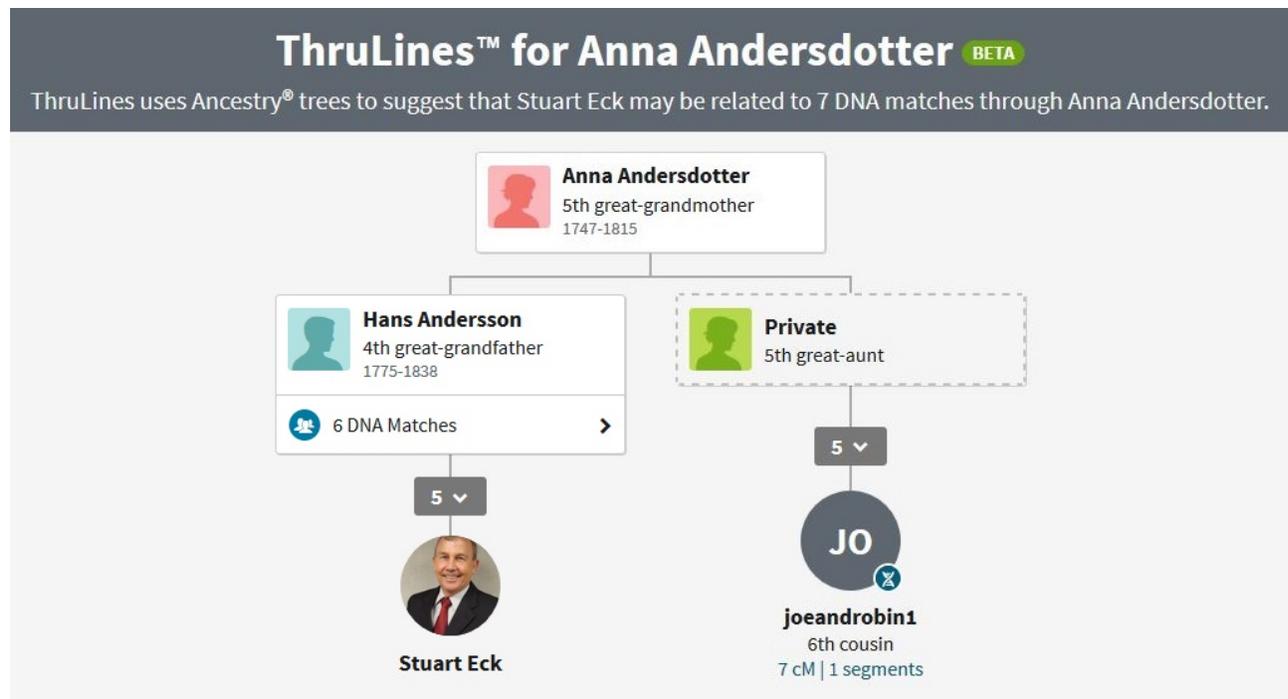
Jan. 8, 2014 – Robert Eugene Mace, 89, of Pauoa Valley, a retired gift shop owner in Kailua-Kona and a Navy officer, died in Leahi Hospital. He was born in San Francisco. He is survived by wife Ruth; son Robert Jr.; daughters Lani Tumaneng, Maile Davis and Robin Fordham; sister Shirley; seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

I conclude that the woman having the username of *joeandrobin1* is really Robin Fordham. With that last name, I found her on Facebook, and indeed she is from Hawaii.² Then a Google search gave me her full name of Robin Rae Fordham.

I also looked to see if any of my other Swedish-American first-cousins has a DNA match with Robin. While neither Annmarie or Susan have a match, Stuart does:

The image shows a DNA match profile for 'joeandrobin1' and a 'DNA Summary' card. The profile includes a purple circular avatar with 'JO', the name 'joeandrobin1', location 'Solomons Island, Calvert, Maryland, USA', and age '50-59'. A green 'Message' button is visible. The 'DNA Summary' card shows a photo of Stuart Eck, a 'Distant Cousin' relationship, and 'Shared DNA: 7 cM across 1 segments'.

Here is Stuart's ThruLines™ for Anna Andersdotter:



Of course, Stuart's ThruLines™ for Anders Nilsson is exactly the same, since Anders and Anna were husband and wife.

² <https://www.facebook.com/robin.fordham.9>

Conclusion

In this short narrative, I have shown how the ThruLines™ going back to Anders Nilsson (1745-1819) and his wife Anna Andersdotter (1747-1815) could indeed account for the DNA matches that my first-cousins Peter and Stuart have with Robin Rae Fordham. I find it amazing to have DNA matches that go back to our fifth-great grandparents, who lived in Fjärås, Sweden, in the mid-1700's. Once again, the genetics provide strong support for the genealogical record.

Appendix - More about the Fjärås Area

A very interesting geological feature in the Fjärås area is the Fjärås Bräcka, which is an end moraine from the glacier that covered that part of Sweden in the last ice age (14,500 years ago).³ The end moraine is four kilometers long and about 500 meters wide; its highest point is 76.4 meters above sea level. It is located between Lake Lygnern and the sea, and I was told that this is the only location in Sweden where one can view a lake and the sea at the same time.



³ https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fjärås_Bräcka



An interesting feature of the Fjärås Bräcka is the Li burial ground, which is located on the western slope of the moraine.⁴ This site has 127 resting stones from the Viking Age. Historians think that Fjärås may have had a permanent population since the Bronze Age.



My great-grandfather Lars Emil Larsson lived in Fjärås within several kilometers of the Li burial ground.

⁴ https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_gravfält

Here is a photo of my 6th-cousin Jenny Nielsen at the Li burial ground outside of Fjärås. I took this photo when we visited Fjärås on 11 May 2019.

