

Applying the New Cluster Tool on Ancestry.com To My Swedish-American Cousins' DNA Matches

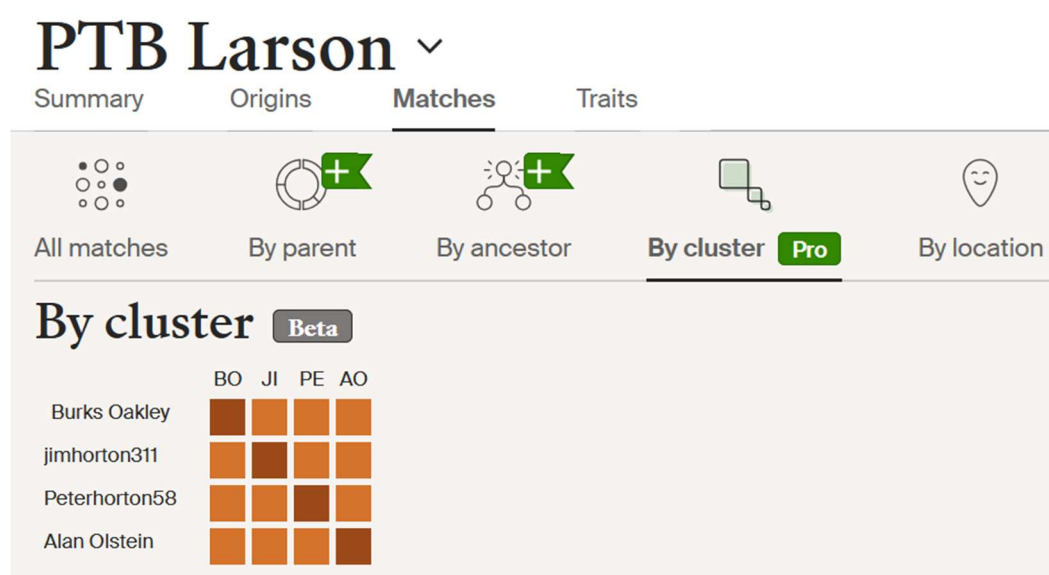
By Burks Oakley II
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Within the past month, Ancestry.com released a new software tool called “Matches by Cluster”. This tool automates the “Leeds Method” that is commonly used by genetic genealogists. I just wrote a narrative about using the Cluster Tool to examine my DNA clusters. See:

http://www.burksoakley.com/QuincyOakleyGenealogy/ClusterTool_10Jul25.pdf

In the present narrative, I'll examine the DNA Clusters for my five Swedish-American first-cousins: Peter Larson (born Brorström), the late Elizabeth “Beth” Brorström (married name Lynes), Annmarie Brorström, Susan Baker (née Brorström), and Stuart Eck. All five of these individuals were children of my mother's brother, Paul Thure Brorström Jr. (1913-2001).

I'll begin with Peter Larson (or **PTB Larson**, as he is called on Ancestry.com). Here is Peter's overall cluster map:



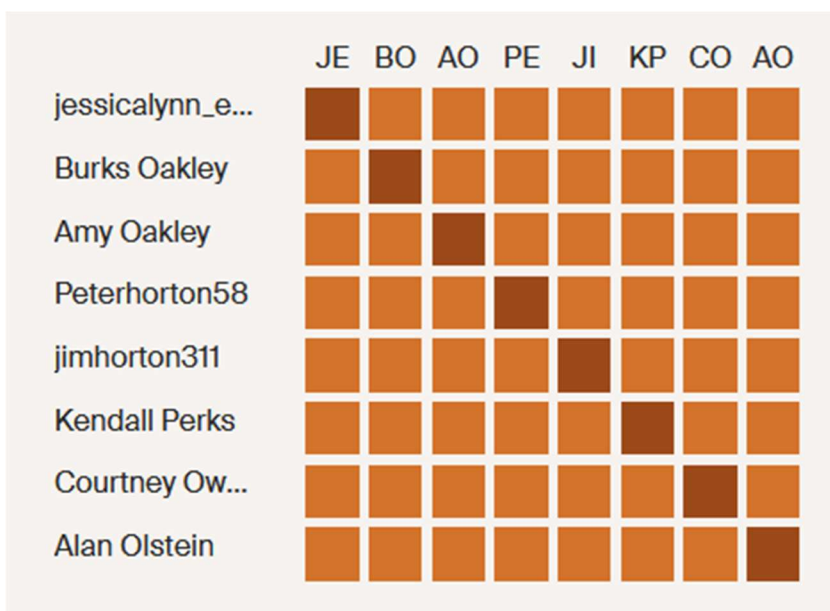
Oh my! Peter only has a single cluster containing four people: me, Jim Horton, Peter Horton, and Alan Olstein. These four people are descended from Peter's great-grandparents, Paulus Brorström (1859-1932) and his wife Bernhardine Wennström (1855-1932). Of course, these DNA matches are on Peter's paternal side of his family tree. He doesn't have any maternal clusters.

Peter's lack of maternal clusters is due to the fact that Peter only has 432 DNA matches on the maternal side of his family tree, and his largest DNA match in this group is 21 cM. Recall that the DNA matches that appear in the cluster maps have to be in the range of 65 cM to 1300 cM.

I'm surprised that Peter doesn't have more DNA matches in his one single cluster. He has DNA matches with seven more people who are descended from the

Brorström-Wennström couple: Jessica Lynn Eck (1190 cM), Amy Oakley (562 cM), Matthew Nathe (477 cM), Kendall Perks (221), Colleen Reynolds (154 cM), Christopher Olstein (114 cM), and Allan Olstein (109 cM). Why aren't these people in his cluster map?

I'll next look at my late cousin Beth's cluster map:



Remember that DNA matches must be smaller than 1300 cM to appear in the cluster map, so Beth's siblings (Peter, Annmarie, Susan) don't appear in this cluster, nor does her half-brother (Stuart). Nor do her two nieces (Lauren Meier, Leslie DeMattia) and her nephew (Robert Baker). Beth's DNA matches with all these individuals were too large to be included in the cluster analysis.

Again, Beth does not have any clusters from her maternal side, due to the lack of close DNA matches on that side of her family tree.

But Beth's cluster chart does add several people that I thought should be included in Peter's cluster – Amy Oakley, Jessica Lynn Eck, and Kendall Perks. Beth's cluster also includes Courtney Owens; Courtney is in my largest cluster, but I'm not sure of our exact relationship.

Overall, Beth's cluster is populated by descendants of her great-grandparents, Paulus Brorström (1859-1932) and his wife Bernhardine Wennström (1855-1932).

Compared with all that is going on in my overall cluster map, these first two cluster maps are pretty boring.

Let me continue on to Annmarie's cluster map. My guess was that it would be very similar to the one for Peter and the one for Beth. And what do you think I found?

Scroll down.....


Go on to the next page....

Annmarie Brorström

Summary Origins **Matches** Traits

All matches By parent By ancestor **By cluster Pro** By location

By cluster Beta



We're sorry, we couldn't cluster your matches.

This may be because you don't have enough matches yet. You can try again as more people take DNA tests and you get more matches.

Wow! This certainly came as a surprise. Annmarie's DNA matches on both sides of her family tree really aren't that different than Peter's and Beth's. I wonder why the software on Ancestry.com couldn't create a cluster map. Wow, another disappointment...

I guess there isn't much to do now except to go on to Susan's cluster map:

Susan Baker

Summary Origins **Matches** Traits

All matches By parent By ancestor **By cluster Pro** By location

By cluster Beta

	BO	AO	PE	CO	CR
Burks Oakley	■	■	■	■	■
Amy Oakley	■	■	■	■	■
Peterhorton58	■	■	■	■	■
Christopher ...	■	■	■	■	■
Colleen Reyn...	■	■	■	■	■

Susan has just a single cluster, and this cluster contains five individuals: me, my daughter Amy, Peter Horton, Christopher Olstein, and Colleen Reynolds.

I have never been able to figure out how we are related to Colleen Reynolds. She clearly is a **Brorström-Wennström** descendant, but she is the only one in her family tree. Heck – I'm not even sure of her maiden name.

The best I can do is state that the five individuals in Susan's burnt-orange cluster are descendants of Paulus Brorström (1859-1932) and his wife Bernhardine Wennström (1855-1932).

Susan only has 441 DNA matches on her mother's side of her family, and the largest of these DNA matches is just 29 cM in size. So the "cluster software" on Ancestry.com was unable to create any maternal-side clusters. That I understand.

I thought that Susan should have many more DNA matches on her father's side of the family. I filtered all of her DNA matches so I only saw those matches that were between 65 cM and 1300 cM in size. And I found that there were fifteen of them! They are:

1. Jessica Lynn Eck
2. Burks Oakley
3. Amy Oakley
4. Matthew Nathe
5. Jim Horton
6. Peter Horton
7. Christopher Olstein
8. Kendall Perks
9. Robert Lipot
10. Judy McCombs
11. Ann Lipot
12. Colleen Reynolds
13. Alan Olstein
14. Jessica Anderson
15. E.C. Alvdén

I know that most of these people are related to Susan on the **Brorström-Wennström** side of her family. So why aren't they included in her overall cluster map? I must be missing something – or else the Cluster Tool is still a beta version that contains a few bugs.

Peter, Beth, Annmarie, and Susan have a half-brother Stuart. So for completeness, I decided to look at Stuart's cluster map.

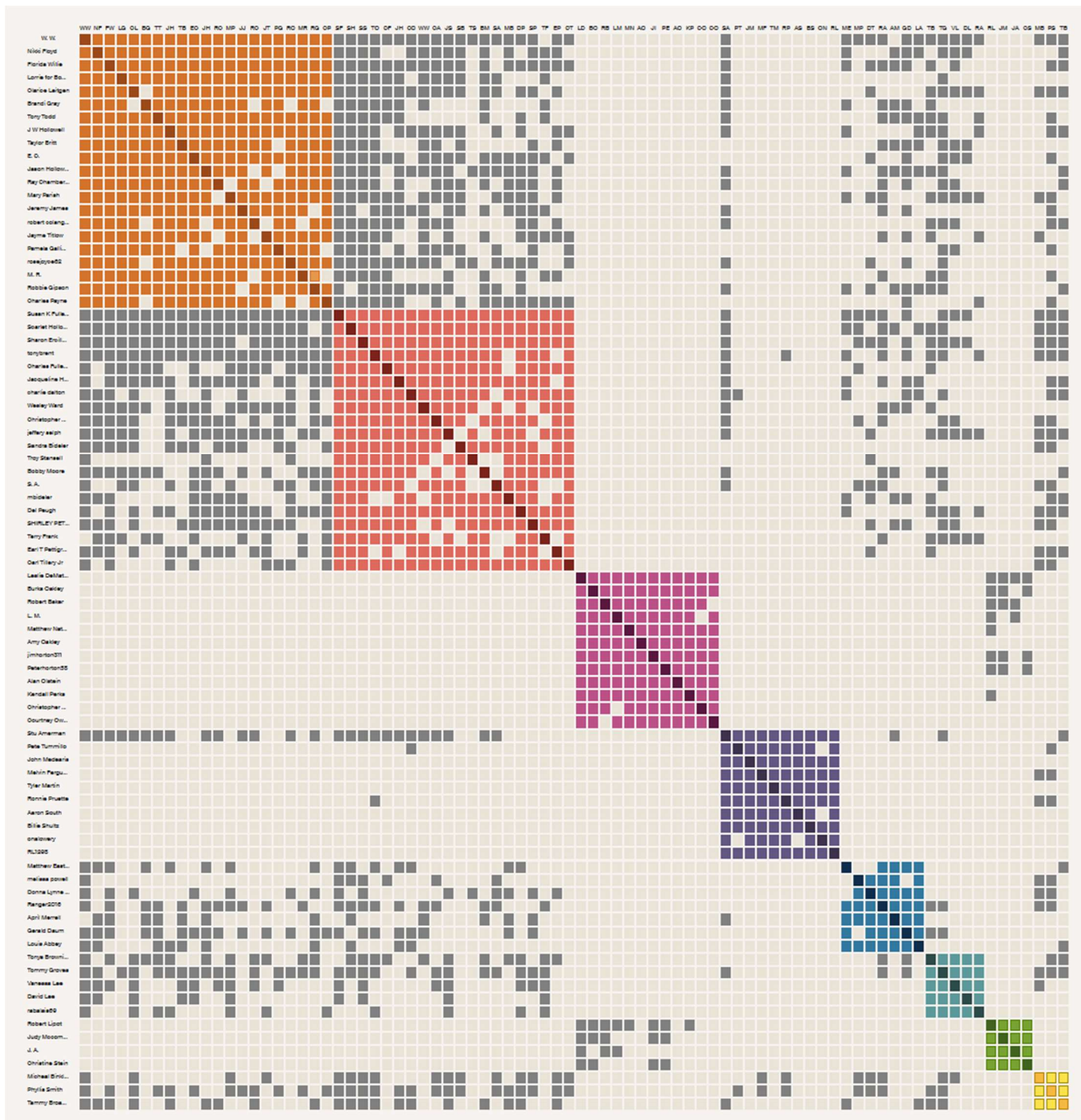
And what do you think I found?

Was it any different than the cluster maps I have seen so far in this branch of my family?

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Wow! OMG!! Double wow!! Stuart has eight distinct clusters – they are color-coded burnt-orange, coral, magenta, deep-purple, blue, turquoise, green, and yellow. These clusters contain:

- burnt-orange (21 matches)
- coral (20 matches)
- magenta (12 matches)
- deep-purple (10 matches)
- blue (7 matches)
- turquoise (5 matches)
- green (4 matches)
- yellow (3 matches)

This is a grand total of 82 matches! Amazing!! [The limit for a cluster map on Ancestry.com is currently 100 DNA matches.]

Given the complexity of Stuart’s cluster map, I’ll defer analyzing it for now – it certainly deserves its own narrative.

Summary:

In this short narrative, I applied the new Cluster Tool to examine the DNA matches for my Swedish-American first-cousins who have their DNA “tests” on Ancestry.com.

For all the hype about this new tool, I have to say that I am underwhelmed (and that is an understatement). I really didn’t learn anything new about my Swedish-American cousins’ family trees. The puzzles that I had before (who are Courtney Owens and Colleen Reynolds?) still remain.

The cluster software is still being beta tested, and it failed to create a cluster map for Annmarie, and it didn’t include a number of close relatives that I know should be in these clusters.

The only interesting finding in all this is that Stuart’s cluster map is incredibly complex – so complex that I’ll have to write another narrative just about it.

One last point – the cluster maps for Peter, Beth, Annmarie, and Susan emphasize the point that they do not have any close DNA matches on their mother’s side of the family – so none of them have “maternal” cluster maps.