

Nicole Hickey and Stephen Reed – Newly-Found Wennström Relatives in the USA

by Burks Oakley II
18 February 2019

Introduction

My mother was Grace Florence Brorström (1916-2000); all four of her grandparents were Swedes who immigrated to the USA in the 1880's. That makes me half-Swedish – and a proud Swedish American.

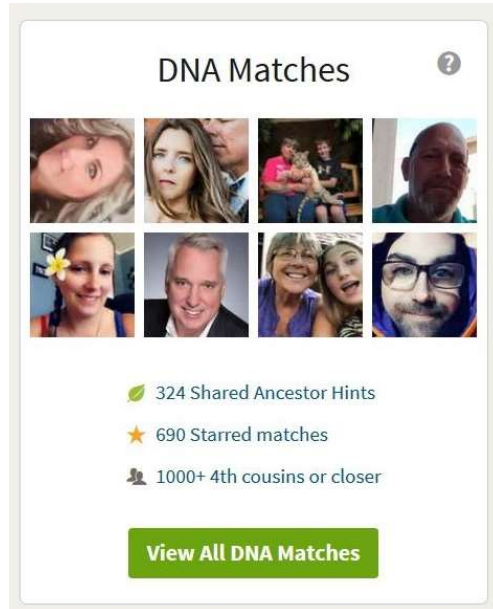


The Swedish Countryside in summertime

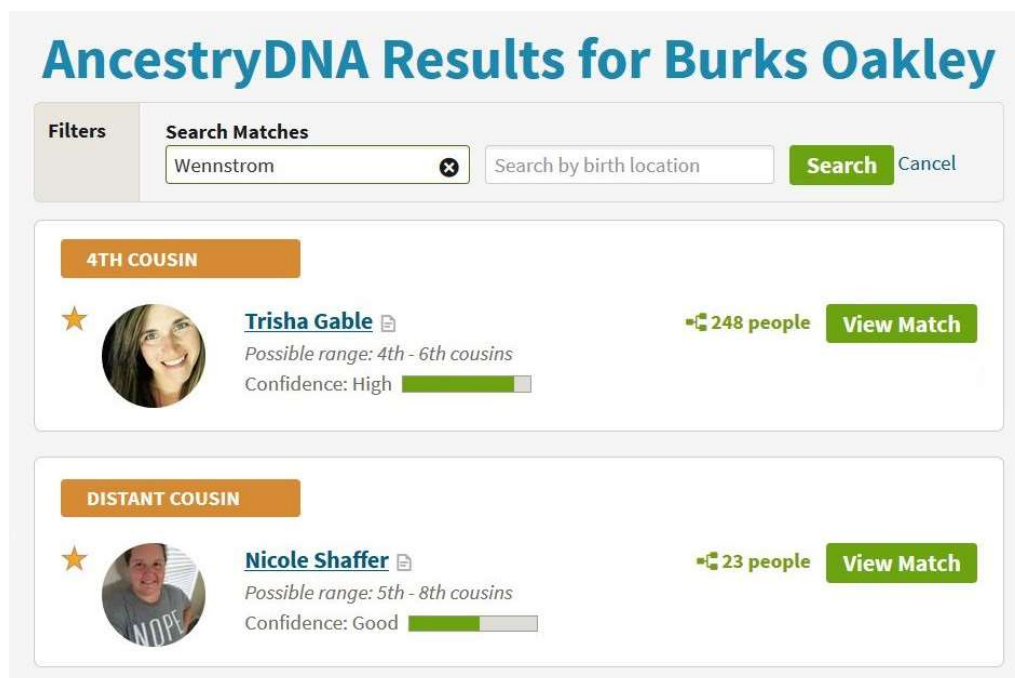
I am very interested in using DNA and the Ancestry.com website to learn more about my Swedish roots, and also to find new relatives in the USA and in Sweden. In this narrative, I will describe this approach recently allowed me to identify several new Swedish-American relatives.

Searching for Wennström DNA Matches on Ancestry.com

I have over 1000 DNA matches on the Ancestry.com website at the level of a fourth-cousin or closer:

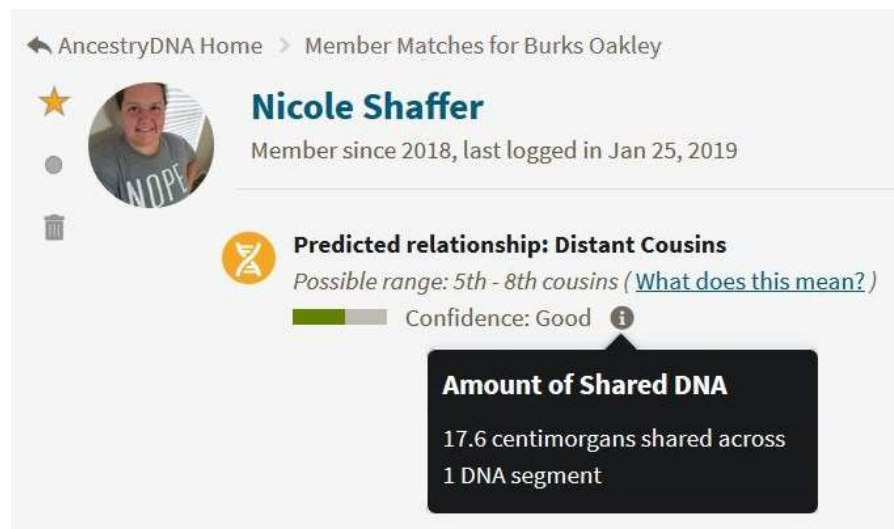


In the past, it has been fruitful to search my DNA matches for surnames that appear in my pedigree. So in early February 2019, I searched on the family name Wennstrom, since my great-grandmother was a Swedish woman named Bernhardina Wennström (1855-1932), who immigrated to America in 1882. This search turned up Trisha Gable (nee Lipot) and Nicole Shaffer (nee Hickey):

A screenshot of the AncestryDNA Results page for "Burks Oakley". The page title is "AncestryDNA Results for Burks Oakley". Below the title is a search bar with "Wennstrom" entered and a "Search" button. There are two match results displayed. The first is a "4TH COUSIN" match for "Trisha Gable", with a profile picture, a star icon, and a "View Match" button. The second is a "DISTANT COUSIN" match for "Nicole Shaffer", also with a profile picture, a star icon, and a "View Match" button. The page includes filters and search options like "Search Matches" and "Search by birth location".

I previously wrote about Trisha Gable (nee Lipot) and her father Robert Lipot – they are descended from my second-great grandfather, Nils Wennström (1815-1914).¹

But the name Nicole Hickey Shaffer was new to me. We indeed have a DNA match:



The screenshot shows the AncestryDNA interface for 'Member Matches for Burks Oakley'. It features a profile for Nicole Shaffer, a member since 2018, last logged in on Jan 25, 2019. The predicted relationship is 'Distant Cousins' with a possible range of 5th - 8th cousins. A confidence bar indicates 'Good' confidence. A tooltip box displays the 'Amount of Shared DNA' as 17.6 centimorgans shared across 1 DNA segment.

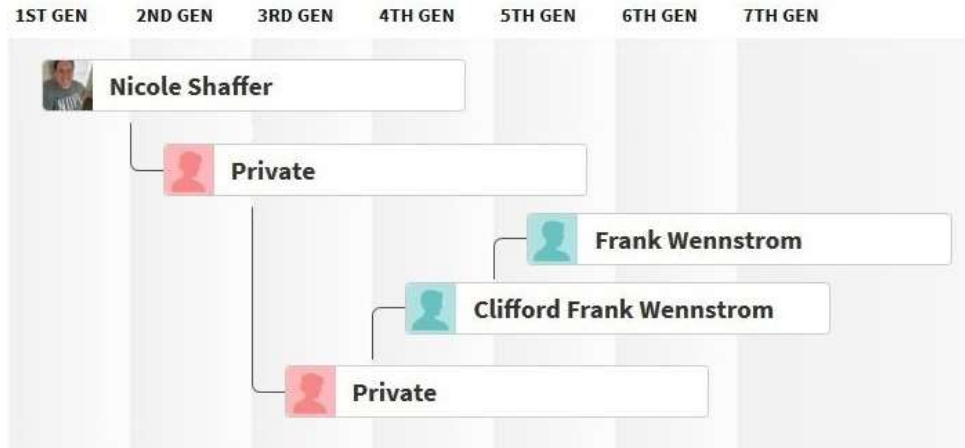
Nicole and I share 17.6 cM on a single DNA segment,² which means that we probably aren't any closer than fifth-cousins. Nicole also has DNA matches with my Swedish-American Brorström cousins:

Anmarie – 26.0 cM on 2 segments
Susan – 31.0 cM on 3 segments
Stuart – 43.0 cM on 2 segments

The size of Stuart's DNA match indicates that they could be as close as 4th cousins; my DNA match with Nicole is the smallest. So Nicole certainly is one of my distant Swedish relatives, and based on the size of Stuart's match with her, we could be as close as 4th cousins. Her family tree shows that she is descended from Frank Wennstrom (born 1890):

¹ <http://www.burksoakley.com/SwedishGenealogy/LipotWennströmConnection.pdf>

² Recall that a centiMorgan (abbreviated cM) is a measure of the size of a DNA match; roughly speaking, one centiMorgan is one-million base pairs in length. Any match above 7 cM is considered significant in genetic genealogy.





Unfortunately, Nicole’s family tree does not have any information about Frank Wennström, other than that he was born in 1890.


A search of all the family trees on Ancestry.com turned up Frank Wennstrom (born about 1890) in Stephen Reed’s family tree:

All Public Member Trees results for Frank Wennstrom

Member Tree	Name	Parents
Results 1–20 of 8,696 Stephen Reed Family Tree Public Member Tree 7 attached records, 8 sources	Frank Wennstrom Birth: abt 1890 - New York City (New York City (All Boroughs)), New York, USA Spouse: Ruth D Wennstrom	F: Johan Peter (John) Wennstrom M: Augusta Geraldine MCLAUGHLIN
Olofsson Släkträd Public Member Tree 2 attached records, 2 sources	Frank Wennstrom Birth: abt 1890 - New York City (New York City (All Boroughs)), New York, USA	F: Johan Peter (John) Wennstrom M: Augusta Geraldine MCLAUGHLIN

This tree shows that Frank’s father was Johan Peter (John) Wennström (1853-1939). In looking at the details about John Peter (John) Wennström, I learned that he was a son of Nils Wennström and his wife Christina (I have her name spelled Kristina in my family tree, and her gravestone in Hasslöv, Sweden, clearly has the Kristina spelling):

Stephen Reed Family T...   sreed_sr119





Johan Peter (John) Wennstrom

BIRTH 30 MAR 1853 • Våxtorp, Halland, Sverige


DEATH 30 JUN 1939 • Suffern, Rockland Co., Ny


Parents

 **Nils Wennström**
1815–1914

 **Christina Nilsson**
1821–1892

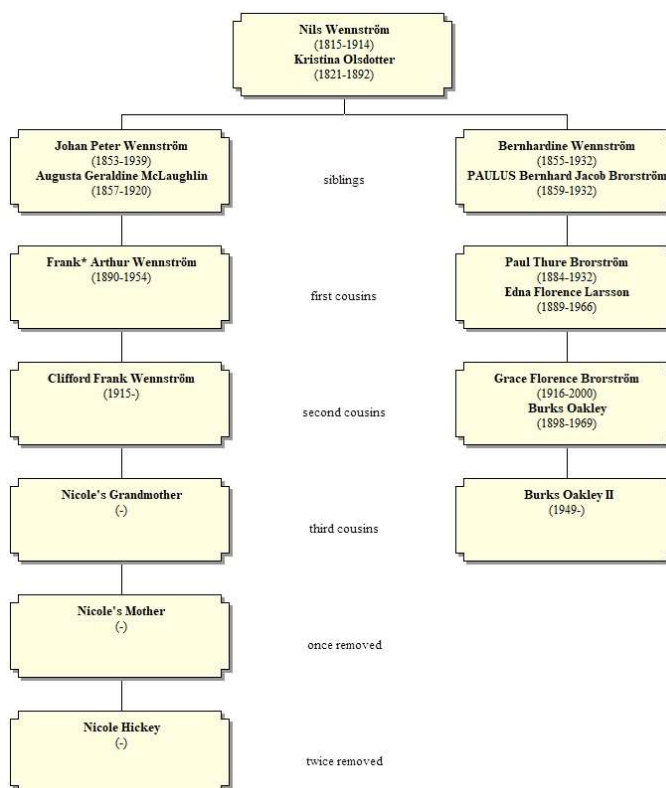
Siblings ^

 **Gunilla Cecilia* Bexell f Wennström**
1843–1929

 **Bernhardina Wennstrom**
1855–1932

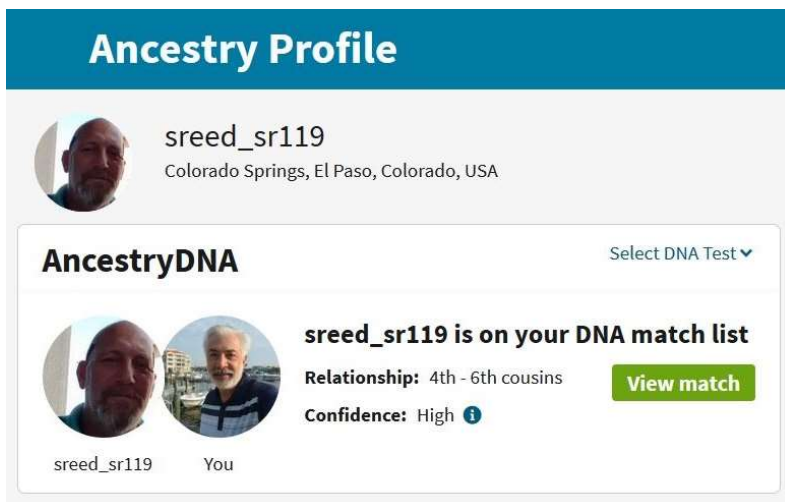
Stephen Reed's family tree also shows that Johan Peter (John) Wennström was an older brother of my great-grandmother, Bernhardina Wennström (1855-1932). My records show that Nils Wennström and his wife had 11 children, but just three are listed in Stephen's tree.

So now I know how Nicole and I are related – we are third-cousins, twice-removed. We both are descended from Nils Wennström and his wife, Kristina.




What about Stephen Reed?



Why does Stephen Reed have this branch of the Wennström family in his tree? To answer this question, I examined the material Stephen has on the Ancestry.com website. I first learned that Stephen and I have a DNA match.



Ancestry Profile

 **sreed_sr119**
Colorado Springs, El Paso, Colorado, USA

AncestryDNA Select DNA Test ▾

  **sreed_sr119 is on your DNA match list**

Relationship: 4th - 6th cousins **View match**

Confidence: High ⓘ


sreed_sr119 You


We share 37 cM across 2 DNA segments:



← AncestryDNA Home > Member Matches for Burks Oakley

  **sreed_sr119**
Member since 2013, last logged in today

 **Predicted relationship: 4th Cousins**
Possible range: 4th - 6th cousins ([What does this mean?](#))

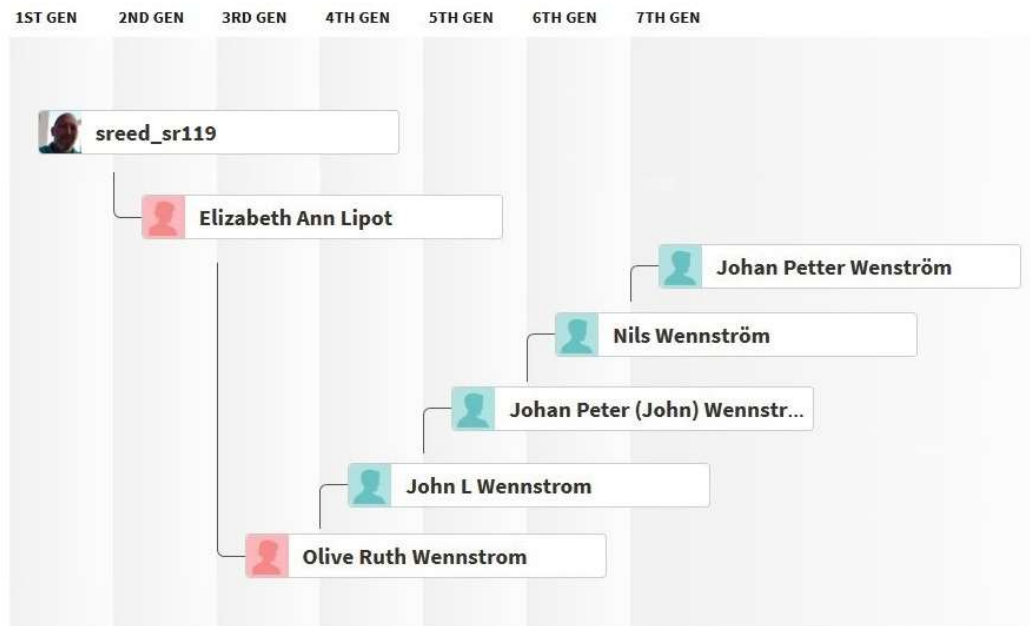
 Confidence: High ⓘ

Amount of Shared DNA
37 centimorgans shared across 2 DNA segments

I also learned that Stephen has DNA matches with my Swedish-American Brorström cousins:

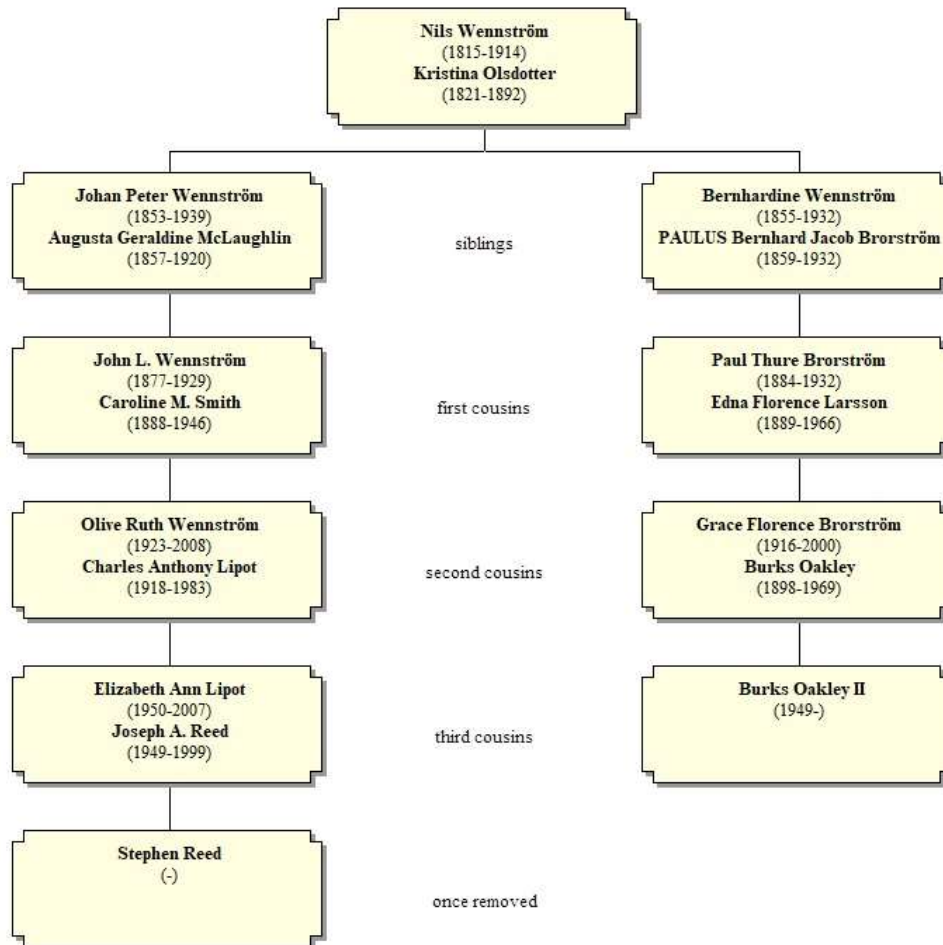
- Annmarie – 11.4 cM on a single segment
- Susan - 46 cM shared across 3 DNA segments
- Stuart - 43 cM shared across 2 DNA segments

The following image shows part of Stephen's family tree from the Ancestry.com website:



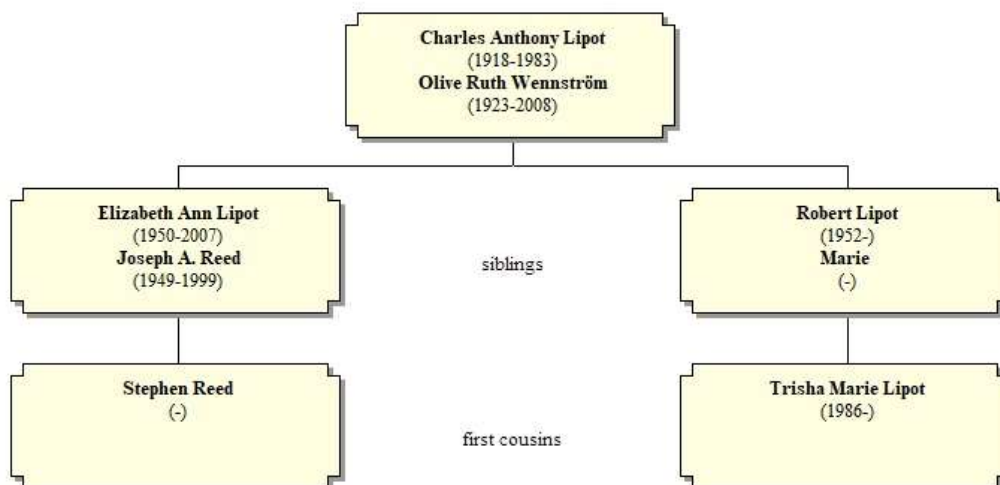
I learned that Stephen is descended from Nils Wennström through his son Johan Peter (John) Wennström – just like Nicole is.

Here is a chart showing how Stephen and I are related:

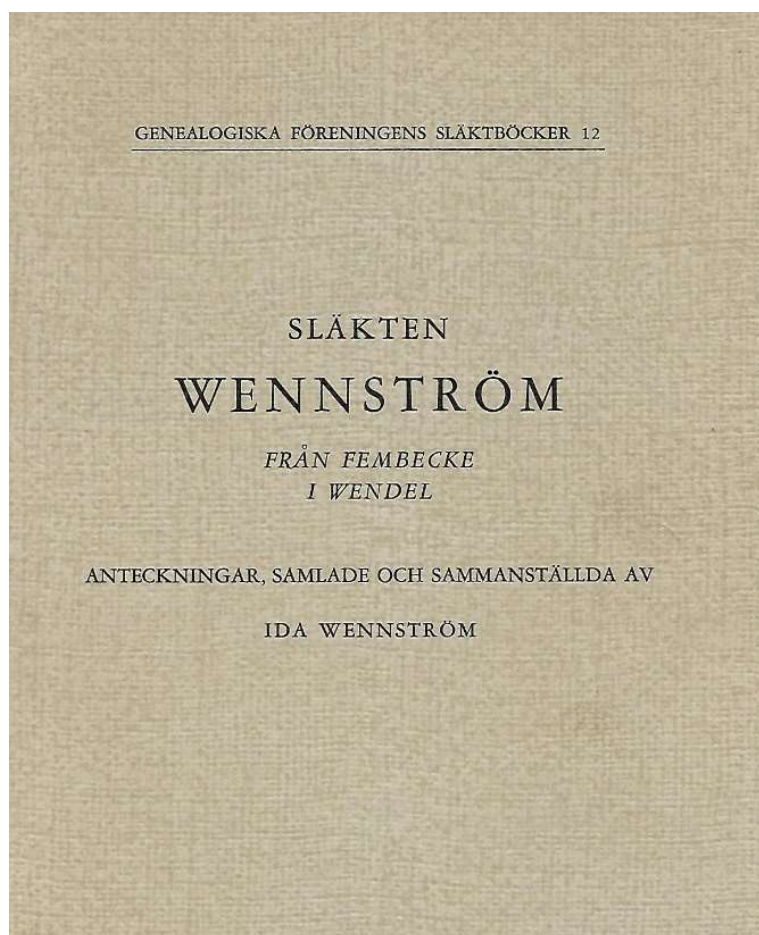


In looking at his tree, I realized that Stephen's mother was a Lipot, and I wrote about my relationship with the Lipot family in an earlier narrative (see footnote 1, above).

Here is a chart showing how Stephen and Trisha are related – they are first cousins:



Their line is shown in the Wennström Family Book



Tabell 26.

Johan Peter (J o h n) (son av Nils, f. 1815, tab. 20), f. 1853 30/3 i Växtorps sn, † 1930 30/6 i Suffern, U.S.A. Fl. från Markaryd till N. Amerika 1869 12/4. Innehavare av diamantsliperi. G. 1873 30/4 i Newark, N.J., m. *Augusta Geraldine McLaughlin*, † 1920 18/7.

Barn:

Victor J., f. 1874 17/8 i Waltham, Mass. Har arbetat hos fadern i dennes diamantsliperi. G. m. *Lena Schultz*.

John Lewis, f. 1876, †. Arbetade hos fadern i dennes diamantsliperi. Se tab. 27.

Geraldine Teresa, f. 1879 20/11 i Newark, N.J., † 1960 10/5. G. 1901 23/11 i Brooklyn, N.Y., m. private secretary *Arthur Hollis Bachman*, †, son av Hollis William Bachman och Caroline Molinda Sayles.

Helene, f. 1882 14/8 i Brooklyn, N.Y., †. G. 1:o 1902 i New York City m. interior decorator *Frank Arthur Clark*, son av John Clark och lady Janet Gildersville. G. 2:o 1918 i Suffern, N.Y., m. mason (murare) *Walter O. Wanamaker*, son av Winifield Wanamaker och Mary Kraft.

Clarisse, f. 1884 23/6 i Brooklyn, N.Y. G. m. *James Blawett*.

Bertram Roland, f. 1888 10/6, † son barn.

Gustav Frank (F r a n k A r t h u r), f. 1890, † 1954. Arbetade hos fadern i dennes diamantsliperi. Se tab. 28.

Tabell 27.

John Lewis [son av Johan Peter (*John*), f. 1853, tab. 26], f. 1876 9/6 i Newark, N.J., †. Arbetade hos fadern i dennes diamantsliperi.

G. m. *Carrie Walsh*.

Barn:

Ebba Gift

Olive Ruth, f. 1923 29/7. Yrke (före giftermålet): secretary. G. 1942 11/2 i Washington, D.C., m. *Charles Anthony Lipot*, Lt. Colonel United States Marine Corps, f. i Augusta, Georgia, son av köpmannen Sigel Lipot och Mary Rebholz.

This shows Johan Peter (John) Wennström, who immigrated to America in 1869, as well as his children John Lewis* (born 1876) and Frank* Arthur (born 1890). Recall that Stephen is descended from John Lewis, while Nicole is descended from Frank Arthur.

Table 27 in the Wennström Family book shows that John Lewis had a daughter Olive* Ruth (who was Stephen's grandmother).

Table 26 in the Wennström family book also shows that most all of the children of Johan Peter (John) Wennström immigrated to America, and settled on the east coast.

Conclusion

In this narrative, I have identified DNA matches with living Wennström relatives who live in the USA; both of them are descended from Johan Peter (John) Wennström, who was an older brother of my great-grandmother, Bernhardina Wennström.

My DNA matches with Nicole and Stephen are consistent with the genealogical record. Both of them also have DNA matches with my Swedish-American Brorström cousins.

Appendix: Photos Related to Nils Wennström



Burks standing in front of Nils Wennström's house in Menlösa, Sweden



The gravestone of Nils Wennström & his wife Kristina, in the church cemetery in Hasslöv, Sweden.