

My ThruLines™ for Sissa Jönsdotter

Going Back on the Nils Wennström Line

By Burks Oakley II
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This narrative includes a DNA connection with:

- Karen Lawson

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. Her ethnicity was 100% Swedish, making me 50% Swedish.

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. The software also uses other family trees on Ancestry.com, if necessary, as it looks to make the connection.



The countryside in southern Sweden.

This narrative addresses my ThruLines™ for Sissa Jönsdotter (1735-1810), who was one of my 4th-great grandparents. I should add that this is a different person than the Sissa Jönsdotter (1782-1853) who was one of my third-great grandmothers. Who knew that this would be such a popular name?

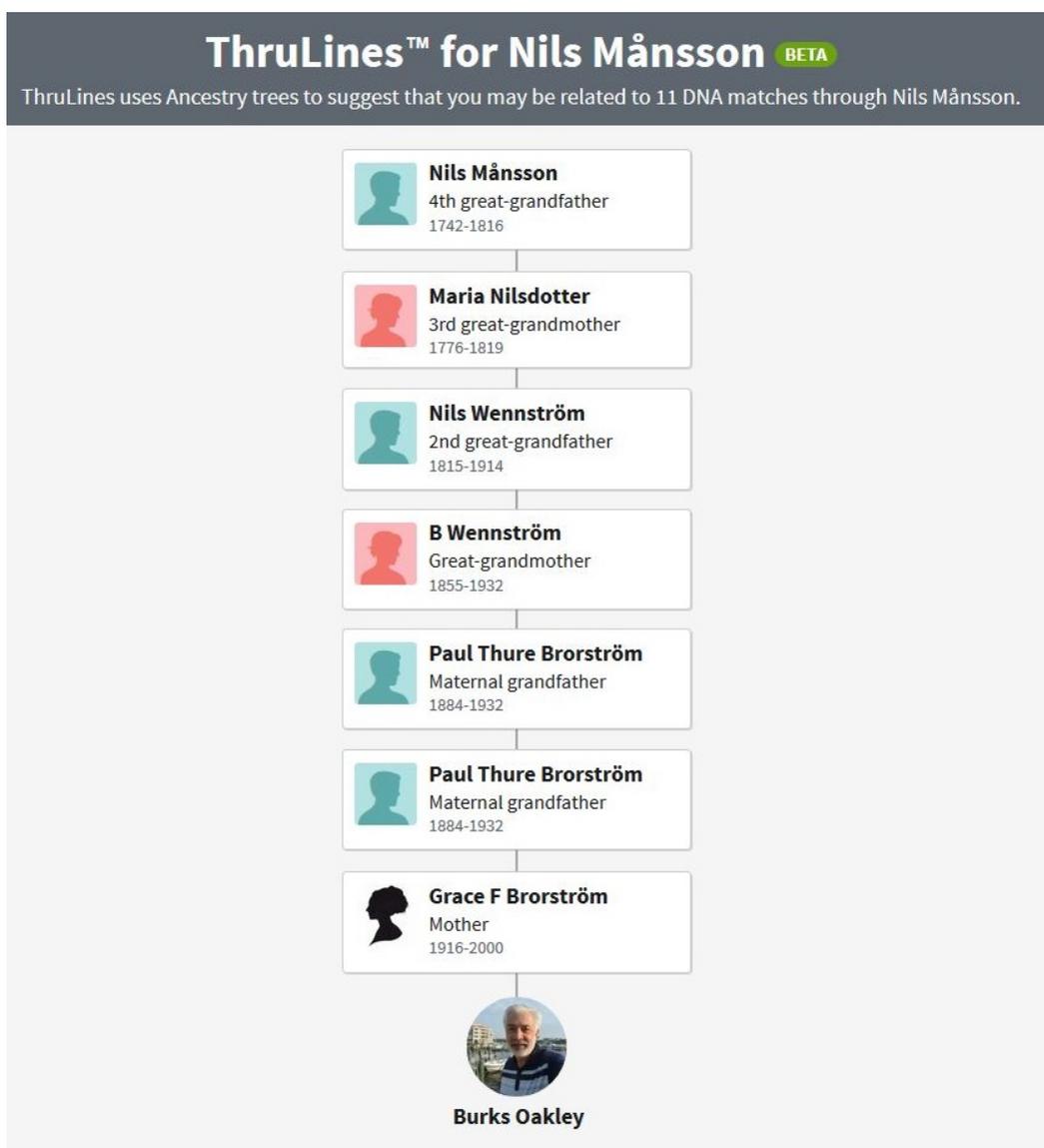
The Sissa Jönsdotter in this narrative was the maternal grandmother (*mormor* in Swedish) of Nils Wennström. The other Sissa Jönsdotter was Nils Wennström's mother-in-law (*svärmor* in Swedish).

My ThruLines™ for Nils Månsson and Sissa Jönsdotter

The ThruLines™ on Ancestry.com are organized in a hierarchical order, starting with a person's two parents and going all the way to his/her 128 5th-great grandparents. The section with my 4th-great grandparents includes Nils Månsson and his wife Sissa Jönsdotter:



I first looked at my ThruLines™ for Nils Månsson:



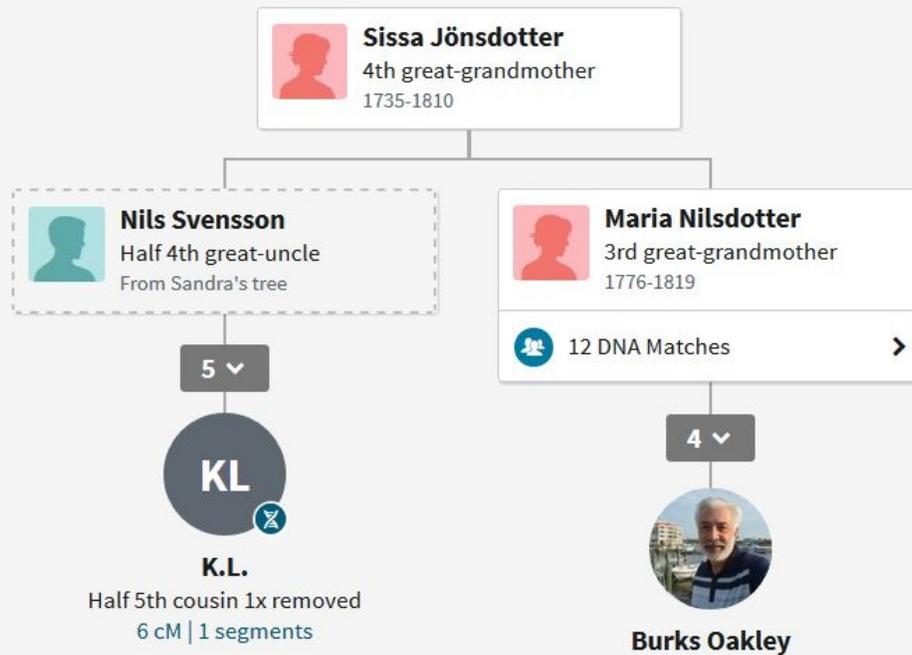
Unfortunately, this ThruLines™ just shows my line back to Nils Månsson, which goes through the immigrant Bernhardine Wennström and her father Nils Wennström. While I have DNA matches with eleven people who are descended from Nils Månsson, none of these matches have him as our Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA).

As an aside, I visited Bernhardine's grave in All Saints Cemetery in Great Neck, Long Island, New York, in July 2018. I also have visited Nils Wennström's house in Menlösa, Sweden, several times now.

For completeness, I also looked at my ThruLines™ for Sissa Jonsdotter, who was Nils Månsson's wife:

ThruLines™ for Sissa Jönsdotter BETA

ThruLines uses Ancestry trees to suggest that you may be related to 13 DNA matches through Sissa Jönsdotter.

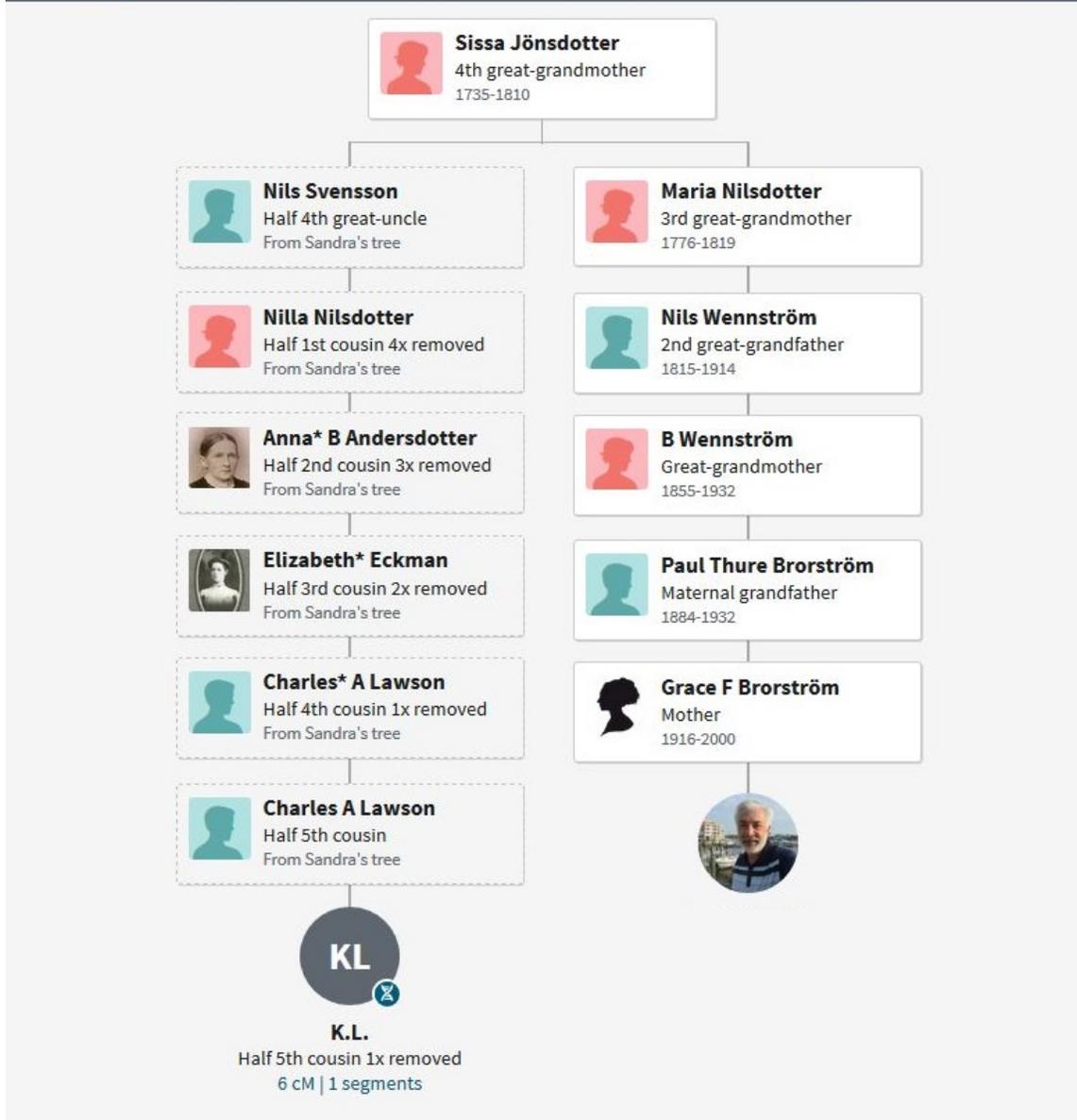


OMG! This ThruLines™ is different than the one for Nils Månsson. It suggests that my DNA match with an individual having the username of **K.L.** could come about because we both are descended from Sissa Jönsdotter. Several things stand out. First, **K.L.** is suggested to be my “half” fifth-cousin, once removed. Two of Sissa’s children are shown in this ThruLines™ – Nils Svensson (1769-1808) and Maria Nilsson (1776-1819). Given the patronymic naming convention that was common in Sweden in the 1700’s, the family names of Svensson and Nilsson would suggest that Sissa had two husbands – one named Sven and one named Nils. Hang on to that idea.

I next opened up the ThruLines™ to see both of the lines back to Sissa Jönsdotter.

ThruLines™ for Sissa Jönsdotter BETA

ThruLines uses Ancestry trees to suggest that you may be related to 13 DNA matches through Sissa Jönsdotter.



Again, this ThruLines™ suggests that **K.L.** and I have a DNA match because we both are descended from Sissa Jönsdotter. **K.L.** is descended from her son Nils Svensson, while I am descended from her daughter Maria Nilsdotter.

Here are some details about my DNA match with **K.L.**:

← AncestryDNA Home > Member Matches for Burks Oakley

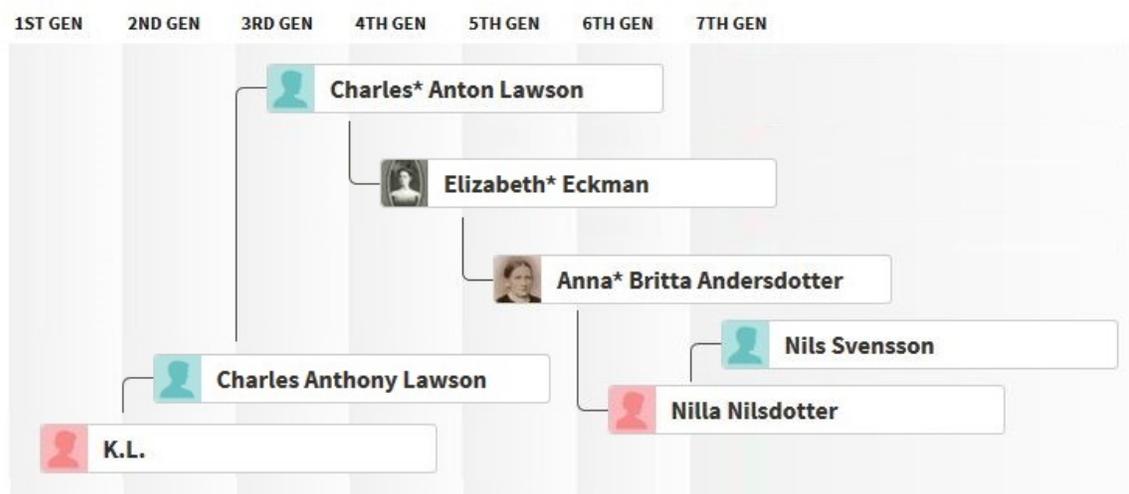
★ **K.L.**
 (managed by Sandra Lawson)
 Member since 2012, last logged in today

Predicted relationship: Distant Cousins
 Possible range: 5th - 8th cousins ([What does this mean?](#))
 Confidence: Moderate ⓘ

Amount of Shared DNA
 6.0 centimorgans shared across 1 DNA segment

We have a very small DNA match of 6.0 cM on a single DNA segment. Of course, if we really are “half” fifth-cousins once-removed, then a DNA match of this size is to be expected.

Here is **K.L.**'s pedigree back to Nils Svensson:



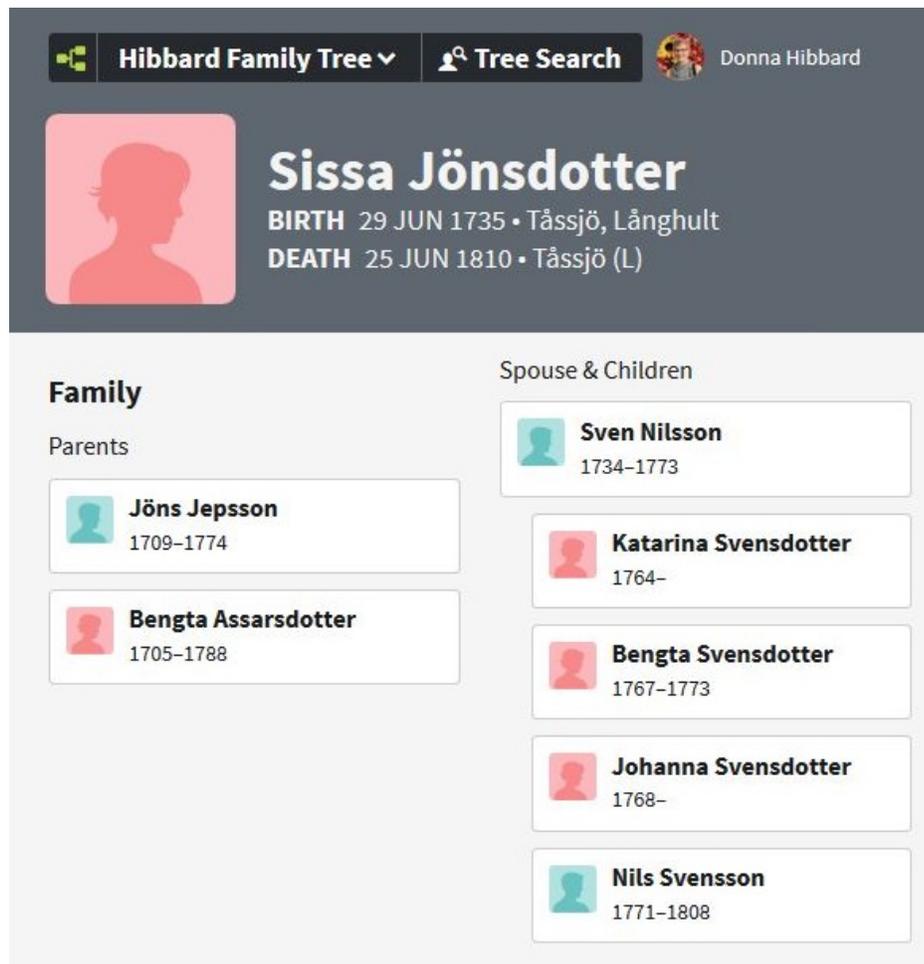
K.L.'s father was Charles Anthony Lawson, so her last name must be Lawson. And I note that her DNA profile on the Ancestry.com website is managed by Sandra Lawson. I subsequently corresponded with Sandra and learned that **K.L.** is Karen Lawson.

The noted genetic genealogist Arthur Sissman warns about using ThruLines™ as anything more than a starting point for research.¹ The genealogical connections

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

shown in ThruLines™ definitely should not be taken as fact. So the big questions here for me relate to Sissa Jönsdotter – did she have two husbands named Sven and Nils, and two children named Nils Svensson and Maria Nilsdotter?

Here is the entry for Sissa Jönsdotter in the Hibbard family tree on Ancestry.com:



Hibbard Family Tree Tree Search Donna Hibbard

Sissa Jönsdotter
BIRTH 29 JUN 1735 • Tåssjö, Långhult
DEATH 25 JUN 1810 • Tåssjö (L)

Family

Parents

- Jöns Jepsson** 1709–1774
- Bengta Assarsdotter** 1705–1788

Spouse & Children

- Sven Nilsson** 1734–1773
- Katarina Svensdotter** 1764–
- Bengta Svensdotter** 1767–1773
- Johanna Svensdotter** 1768–
- Nils Svensson** 1771–1808

This entry shows Sissa Jönsdotter’s husband Sven Nilsson (1734-1773) and her youngest son Nils Svensson (1771-1808). Based on these dates, her husband Sven died just two years after her son Nils was born. So far, so good. Did she then remarry a man named Nils?

Here is another entry for Sissa Jönsdotter – this one is from Svante Burge’s family tree on the Ancestry.com website:

Burge - släkträd ▾ Tree Search Svante Burge

Sissa Jönsdotter
 BIRTH JUL 1735 • Långhult, Tåssjö (L)
 DEATH 25 JUN 1810 • Tåssjö (L)

Family

Parents

- Jöns Jeppsson 1709-1774
- Bengta Assarsdotter 1705-1788

Spouse & Children

- Nils Månsson 1742-1816
- Maria (Maja) Nilsdotter 1776-1819

This entry shows Sissa Jönsdotter's husband Nils Månsson and their daughter Maria (Maja) Nilsdotter (1776-1819). Again, this fits. It would appear that her first husband Sven died in 1773 and she then married Nils Månsson, and then their daughter Maria was born in 1776.

According to the ThruLines™, Nils Svensson was the son of Sissa Jönsdotter and her first husband Sven Nilsson. This information had to have come from a family tree on the Ancestry.com website, since **K.L.**'s family tree doesn't go back to Sissa Jönsdotter. A search of this site found this information in the Hibbard Family Tree:

Hibbard Family Tree ▾ Tree Search Donna Hibbard

Nils Svensson
 BIRTH 10 SEP 1771 • Tåssjö, Hålshults hus
 DEATH 1808 • Sweden

Family

Parents

- Sven Nilsson 1734-1773
- Sissa Jönsdotter 1735-1810

Spouse & Children

- Susanna Bengtsdotter 1780-1840
- Nilla Nilsdotter 1807-1888

This tree also shows that Nils Svensson's wife was Susanna Bengtsdotter (1780-1840), and their daughter was Nilla Nilsdotter (1807-1888). Note that Nilla appears in **K.L.**'s line back to Sissa Jönsdotter.

Nils Svensson also appears in **K.L.**'s family tree (the Sandra Lawson family tree, owned by Sandra Lawson):

The screenshot shows a family tree profile for Nils Svensson. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "Sandra Lawson family ..." and "Tree Search". Below this is a profile card for Nils Svensson, born 1769 in Sweden and died 1808 in Rud Knutsgård, Grömmared Parish, Älvsborg, Sweden. Under the profile card, there are two sections: "Family" and "Spouse & Children". The "Family" section lists "Unknown Father" and "Unknown Mother". The "Spouse & Children" section lists "Susanna Bengtsdotter" (1780-1840) and "Nilla Nilsdotter" (1807-1864).

This tree also shows that Nils Svensson's wife was Susanna Bengtsdotter (1780-1840), and their daughter was Nilla Nilsdotter (1807-1864).

This is where it gets dicey. The Hibbard tree has Nils Svensson being born in 1771. The Lawson tree has him being born in 1769. Both trees have his death in 1808. The Hibbard tree has Nilla Nilsdotter's death in 1888, while the Lawson tree has her death in 1864. Both trees have her being born in 1807. Both trees have Nils Svensson's wife as Susanna Bengtsdotter (1780-1840).

So is this the same Nils Svensson? Was he a half-brother to my ancestor Maria Nilsdotter? My guess is that there is a 90-10 chance that this ThruLines™ is correct. But I'm not 100% sure.

Finally, I should note that none of my Swedish-American first-cousins have a DNA match with **K.L.**

Spreading out the Generations

The Sissa Jönsdotter who was the focus of this narrative was born in 1735 and died in 1810. She was the maternal grandmother (*mormor*) of Nils Wennström (1815-1914). So even though Sissa Jönsdotter lived to be 75 years old, she died five years before her grandson was born.

Sissa Jönsdotter had her daughter Maria Nilsson in 1776, when she was 41 years old. In turn, Maria had her son Nils Wennström in 1815, when she was 39 years old. So this really spread out the generations.

Sissa Jönsdotter died before Nils was born, and Nils' mother Maria died in 1819, when he was just four. So while I think of Sissa and Maria as close relatives of Nils Wennström, he never knew his grandmother Sissa and probably had little memory of his mother Maria.

Finally, Nils Wennström died in 1914, shortly after his 99th birthday. His *mormor* was born in 1735 and he died in 1914 – wow, those three generations covered a large span of time – 179 years!

Conclusion

In this short narrative, I have described my ThruLines™ for my fourth-great grandmother, Sissa Jönsdotter (1735-1810). This ThruLines™ shows how I am related to Karen Lawson (***K.L.***) on the Ancestry.com website. I am descended from Sissa Jönsdotter via her daughter Maria Nilsson, while Karen is descended from Sissa Jönsdotter via her son Nils Svensson. Based on this ThruLines™, ***K.L.*** and I are half fifth-cousins once-removed. This genealogical relationship could account for the small DNA match that I have with Karen.

I also described the process that I went through to determine if the Nils Svensson in Karen's family tree was really a son of Sissa Jönsdotter, and while I am 90% sure that he is, there still is some doubt in my mind.