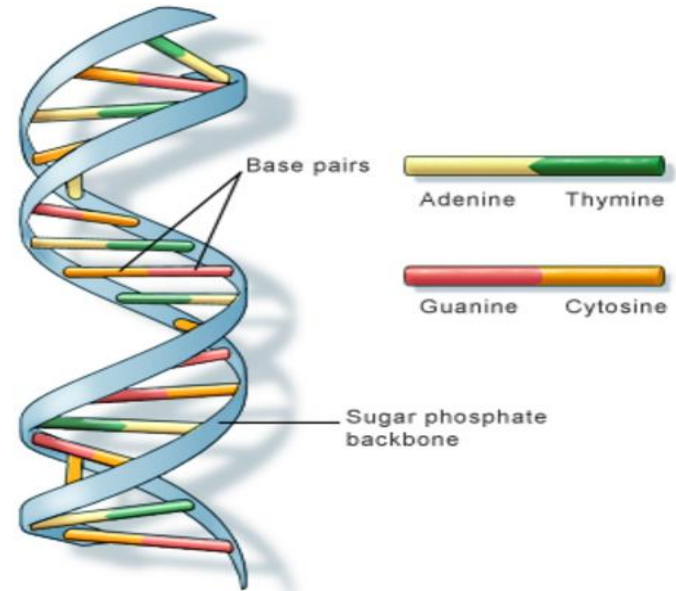


Family History Discussion Group

Class 3 — DNA & Family History

Matt Tolman | matttolman.com • Start Small, Think Big • August 13, 2026



U.S. National Library of Medicine

How Did It Go?

Quick check-in on Class 2's assignment tiers:

- Level 1: Set up your FamilySearch account
- Level 2: Add people to your tree
- Level 3: Link a free Ancestry account via FamilySearch

No wrong answers here — whatever you got done is progress. Tonight we're picking up new ground: DNA.

Let's Talk DNA

1. Has anyone here taken a DNA test — Ancestry, MyHeritage, 23andMe, other? What did the results actually tell you?
2. Name one brick wall in your line — just the name and generation, not the whole story.
3. What's the one thing that would make you hesitate to test?

One of the tools we can use to help us find and prepare names is DNA.

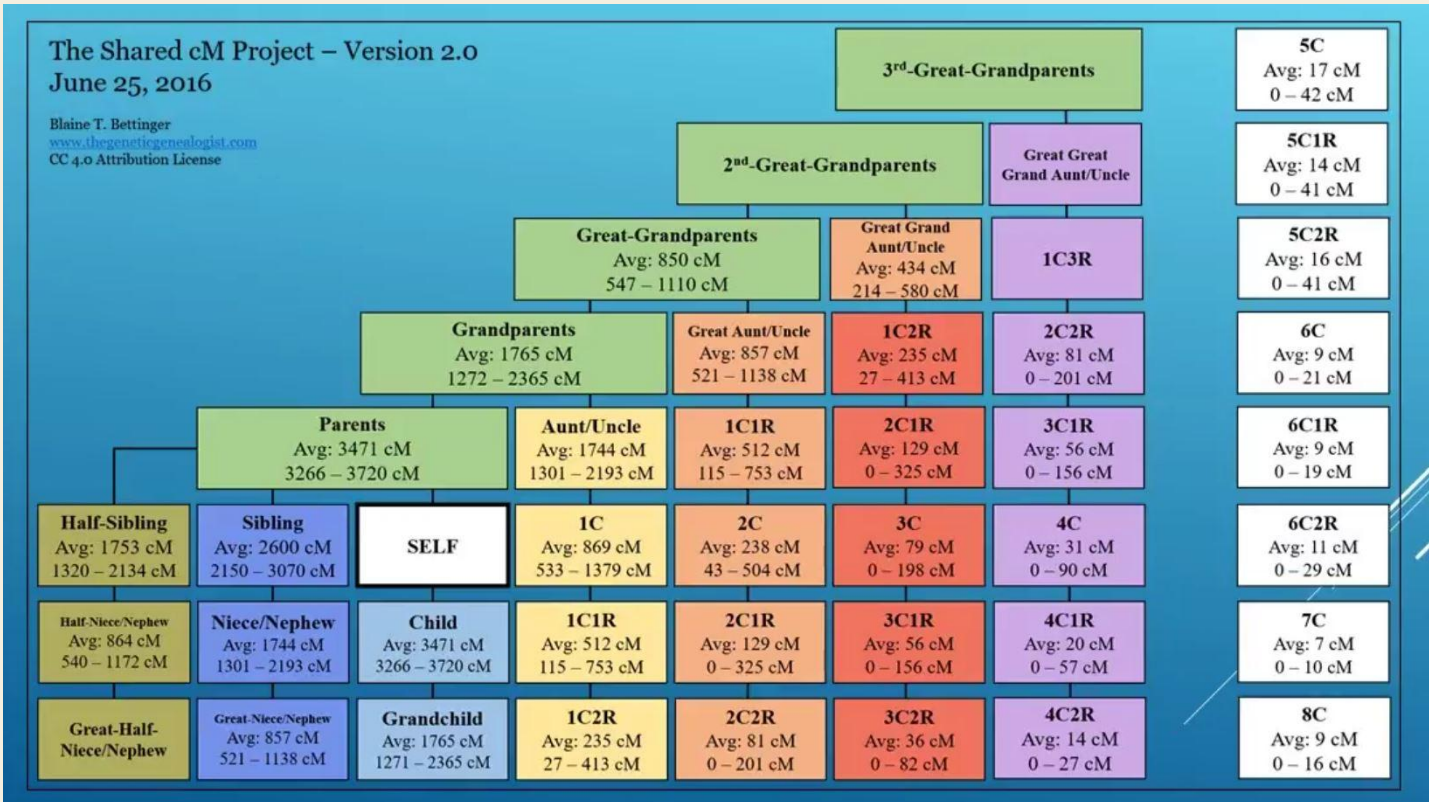
So what is DNA - it is the hereditary material we receive for each of our parents that is found in every cell in our bodies. It is passed down from generation to generation.



The break down of DNA as it is passed down.

- 100% - Dad has 100% and Mom has 100 %
- 50% - Us, we get 50% from each parent
- 25% - Our kids (1st cousin)
- 12.5% - Great grand kids (2nd cousin)
- 6.25% - 2x great grand kids (3rd cousin)
- 3.15% - 3x great grand kids (4th cousin)
- 1.58% - 4x great grand Kids (5th cousin)

DNA is measured in Centimorgan (cM) not a %



What can DNA be used for?

1. Solving Crimes
2. Clear a person of a crime
3. Help to diagnose inherited disorders and human diseases
4. Studies in population genetics
5. Solving Paternity question
6. Solving Adoption, unknown parentage
7. Solving Brick Walls in family histories
8. And More



FamilySearch Facts



Searchable Names in Historical Records	16.93 Billion
Digital Images Published	5.73 Billion
Digital Books Online	652,865
Number of FamilySearch Centers	6,450
Monthly Visits	23.57 Million
Sources in the Family Tree	3.92 Billion
People in the Family Tree	1.81 Billion

**** The one thing they don't have is DNA!**

FamilySearch 3rd Party Partnerships.

 Ancestry • Main research focus: United States. • Offers DNA testing option* • Sync your FamilySearch Tree info JOIN FOR FREE	 MyHeritage • Main research focus: Global. • DNA test for ethnicity and genealogy* • Sync your FamilySearch Tree JOIN FOR FREE	 Storied • Explore exclusive newspapers, records, and stories. • Print StoriedBooks of memories and stories. • Import FamilySearch tree and memories JOIN FOR FREE	 Geneanet • Main research focus: French records. • Offers DNA data upload and matching. • Community forum to ask research questions. JOIN FOR FREE	 Find My Past • Main research focus: British and Irish records. • Exclusive newspaper archives. • Easy-to-use family tree builder. JOIN FOR FREE	 American Ancestors By New England Historical Genealogical Society • Main research focus: Early American records and genealogy. • Exclusive learning resources and expert help. JOIN FOR FREE	 Filae • Main research focus: French records. • Offers a research guide and video tutorials on specific areas of French research. JOIN FOR FREE
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Ancestry, My Heritage, Geneanet, Find My Past & Storied allow you to import Gedcom file or build a tree. Some of these will also sync with FamilySearch.

Only two have DNA testing.



Ancestry

- Main research focus: United States.
- Offers DNA testing option*
- Sync your FamilySearch Tree info

[JOIN FOR FREE](#)

Cost:

Ancestry - \$99 (sale \$35)

MyHeritage - \$89 (sale \$29)



MyHeritage

- Main research focus: Global.
- DNA test for ethnicity and genealogy*
- Sync your FamilySearch Tree

[JOIN FOR FREE](#)

How do you get a free account & what do you need?

Once you select your DNA test kit, you will need to link your account to the test. In Ancestry you will need a separate email for each test. One person can manage multiple accounts.



Ways to get a free Ancestry Account.

Free Ancestry Guest Account

Anyone can register for a free guest account on Ancestry.com. While this does not give access to paid historical record collections, it allows you to:

- Build and edit your personal family tree.
- View free record collections (such as selected public indexes and un-copyrighted records).
- Search message boards and public family tree summaries.

Ancestry Library Edition (In-Person Access)

Can access the full Ancestry database for free by visiting participating locations:

- Public Libraries: Many public library systems offer free access to Ancestry Library Edition on their computers or Wi-Fi networks.
- FamilySearch Centers: The Church opens its local FamilySearch Centers (and the main FamilySearch Library in Salt Lake City) to the public for free. Visitors can use the center's computers to access premium sites like Ancestry.com, Findmypast, and MyHeritage at no cost.

Ancestry - Home Page

Hi, Matt John Tolman Family Working Tree

Who's next? Go to tree

John Tolman Family Working Tree Tree checker PRO 22,162 people 4588 photos

Paternal line Last updated Recommended Maternal line Tree hot spot

 Marintha A Bates
1854 - 1917
2nd great-grandmother

 Amanda Elison
1877 - 1944
Great-grandmother

 Sophia Anderson
1854 - 1942
2nd great-grandmother

 Rodney W Tolman
1942 -
Father

Hints from U.S. Censuses

 Arlin Henry Tolman
1895 - 1949
Great-granduncle
1920 United States Federal Census

 Mary Ann Willis
1856 - 1929
Wife of 2nd great-grandfather
1920 United States Federal Census

School lists and yearbooks

 Bettie June Arbaugh
1927 -
U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-2016

 Franklin Wayne Harrelson
1946 -
2nd cousin 2x removed of husband of 4th cousin 1x removed
U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-2016

Matt Tolman
22162 people · View hints
Networks BETA

DNA View your DNA results

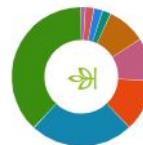
Membership Upgrade

Pro Tools shortcuts

Tree checker

Matt's DNA Origins

[View full results](#)



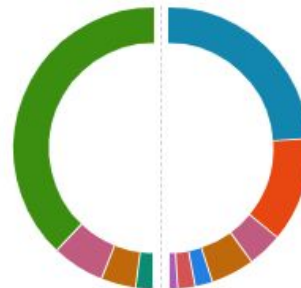
38%	Southeastern England & Northwestern...	9%	Central Scotland & Northern Ireland
24%	Sweden	2%	Northwestern Germany
12%	West Midlands	2%	East Midlands
10%	Northern Wales & North West England	+2 more	

My tree has 22,162 people in it.

My tree has 4588 photos.



Maternal Paternal



Ancestry - Ancestor Profile Page

On this profile page you see a timeline of events, a list of source and family.

You can add notes, comments and tags.

Charles Wesley Edmondson ✓ ☆

BIRTH 11 MAY 1874 • Palmyra Township, Halifax, North Carolina, USA
DEATH 1 FEB 1918 • Burley, Cassia, Idaho, USA
great-grandfather

Common DNA Ancestor DNA Connection Verified

Notes/comments Merge with duplicate Print Member connect Check for errors PRO Charts & reports PRO

Facts Hints 3 Gallery LifeStory Explore

Timeline Filter Add

Name
Charles Wesley Edmondson ✓
12 sources

Name (Alternate)
Edmondson Charles W
10 sources Edit

Gender
Male
12 sources

Birth
11 May 1874 • Palmyra Township, Halifax, North Carolina, USA
This information was obtained from the birth certificate of Ruth Marie Edmondson. At the time of Charles's birth, the town of Palmyra wasn't inc until 1883 and prior to that it was a township in Halifax County, NC
12 sources Explore

Birth of sister Alma C Edmondson ✓ (1877-1921)
Abt 1877 • North Carolina, United States

Birth of sister Ader M Edmonson (1879-)
June 1879 • Palmyra Township, Halifax, North Carolina, United States

Sources Add

Ancestry Sources

- 1880 United States Federal Census
- 1900 United States Federal Census
- 1910 United States Federal Census
- Ancestry Family Trees
- Geneanet Community Trees Index
- Idaho, U.S., Death Index, 1890-1964
- Idaho, U.S., Death Records, 1890-1969

Relationships Add

Parents

- Joseph J Edmondson 1840-1905
- Margarete Hodges 1842-1888

Siblings

Spouse and children

- Martha Clementine Puckett 1876-1964
- Thomas Witten Edmondson 1899-1980
- Vera Texanna Edmondson 1901-1981
- Era May Edmondson 1903-1963
- Ivy Margaret Edmondson 1905-1972
- Emma Christine

You can also link and individual with FamilySearch

Ancestry - Family Search

 Charles Wesley Edmondson from FamilySearch Tree
[Change History](#)

▼ Select below

☐

Name ▼
Charles Wesley Edmondson LZ2L-XC6
[Compare 14 sources & reason](#) ▼

☐

Gender ▼
Male
[Compare 13 sources & reason](#) ▼

☐

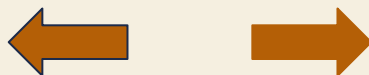
Birth ▼
Date: 11 May 1874
Place: Palmyra, Martin, North Carolina, United States
[Compare 4 sources & reason](#) ▼

☐

Death ▼
Date: 1 February 1918
Place: Burley, Cassia, Idaho, United States
[Compare source & reason](#) ▼

Charles Wesley Edmondson ✓

You can compare
and import and
export sources



 Charles Wesley Edmondson ✓ in your Ancestry
John Tolman Family Working Tree

▼ Select below

☐

Name
Charles Wesley Edmondson ✓
[Compare 22 sources & reason](#) ▼

☐

Gender
Male
[Compare 12 sources & reason](#) ▼

☐

Birth ▼
Date: 11 May 1874
Place: Palmyra Township, Halifax, North Carolina, USA
[Compare 12 sources & reason](#) ▼

☐

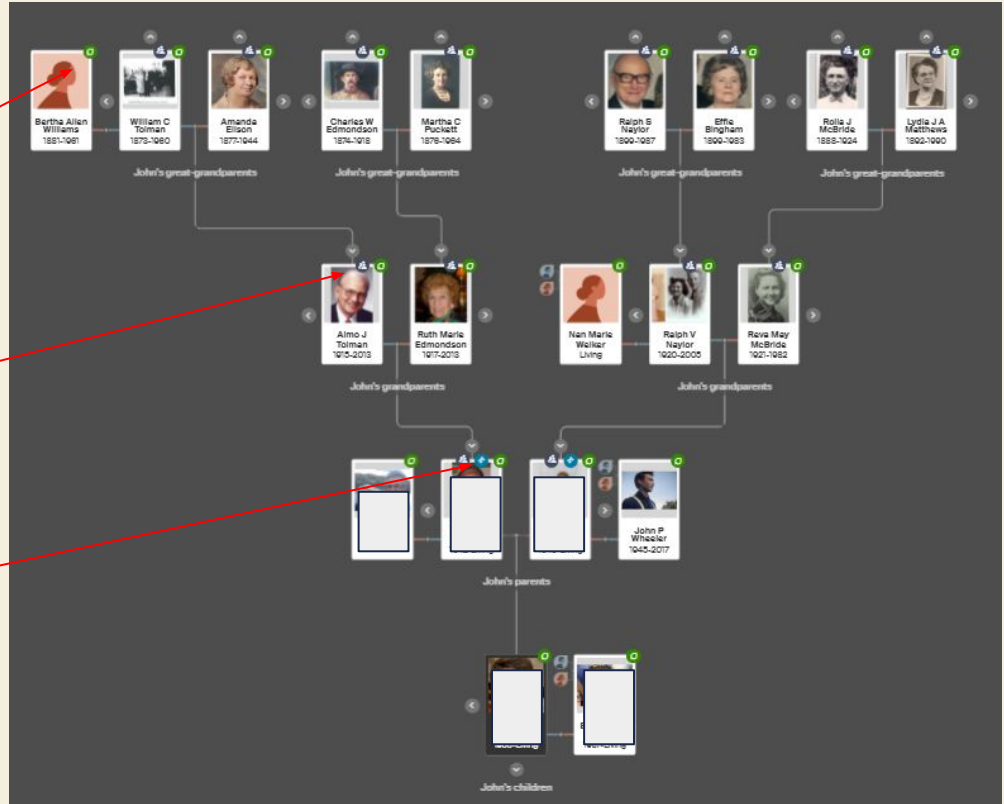
Death ▼
Date: 1 Feb 1918
Place: Burley, Cassia, Idaho, USA
[Compare 3 sources & reason](#) ▼

Ancestry - Family Tree

The Green Leaf is a hint from Ancestry telling me they have found what they think is information about my relative

The dark Blue symbol with people in it indicates I have common DNA matches through this direct Ancestor.

The lighter blue symbol with the DNA helix indicates I've connected them with a DNA profile match.



Ancestry - DNA

Matches

Matt Tolman ▾

Summary Origins **Matches** Traits

Compare

Invite

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

View tree linked to your matches

Filter + Create group Search Sort

Parent/Child

		Daughter Both sides 3,488 cM 50% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 106 people  Common ancestor	+ Add ...
3 A C E G I S B				
		Father Paternal side 3,485 cM 50% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 361 people  Common ancestor	+ Add ...
A C E G				
		Daughter Both sides 3,483 cM 50% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 76 people  Common ancestor	+ Add ...
3 A C E G I S B				
		Mother Maternal side 3,439 cM 50% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 41,911 people  Common ancestor	+ Add ...
3 I S B				

From this page you can choose to view all matches, by parent, ancestor, cluster or by location.

You can see the number of cM you have in common with each match and the predicted relationship You have with them.

Ancestry - ThruLines

ThruLines is a hint feature based on your tree and the tree of others. It tells you how you and a DNA match(s) might be related to a common ancestor who is direct ancestor and the number of DNA matches.

4th Great Grandparents		4th Great Grandmothers	
Levi Edmondson 4th great-grandfather 1794-1845		Sarah Farr 4th great-grandmother 1792-1855	
42 DNA Matches		63 DNA Matches	
James Hodges 4th great-grandfather 1764-		Margaret _____ 4th great-grandmother 1774-	
Sven Jonsson Mars 4th great-grandfather 1772-1840 POTENTIAL ANCESTOR		Maria Persson 4th great-grandmother 1774-1850 POTENTIAL ANCESTOR	
Elias Price 4th great-grandfather 1787-1847 POTENTIAL ANCESTOR		Delilah Narron 4th great-grandmother POTENTIAL ANCESTOR	
James Bryan 4th great-grandfather 1773-1833		Martha Weeks 4th great-grandmother 1776-1860	

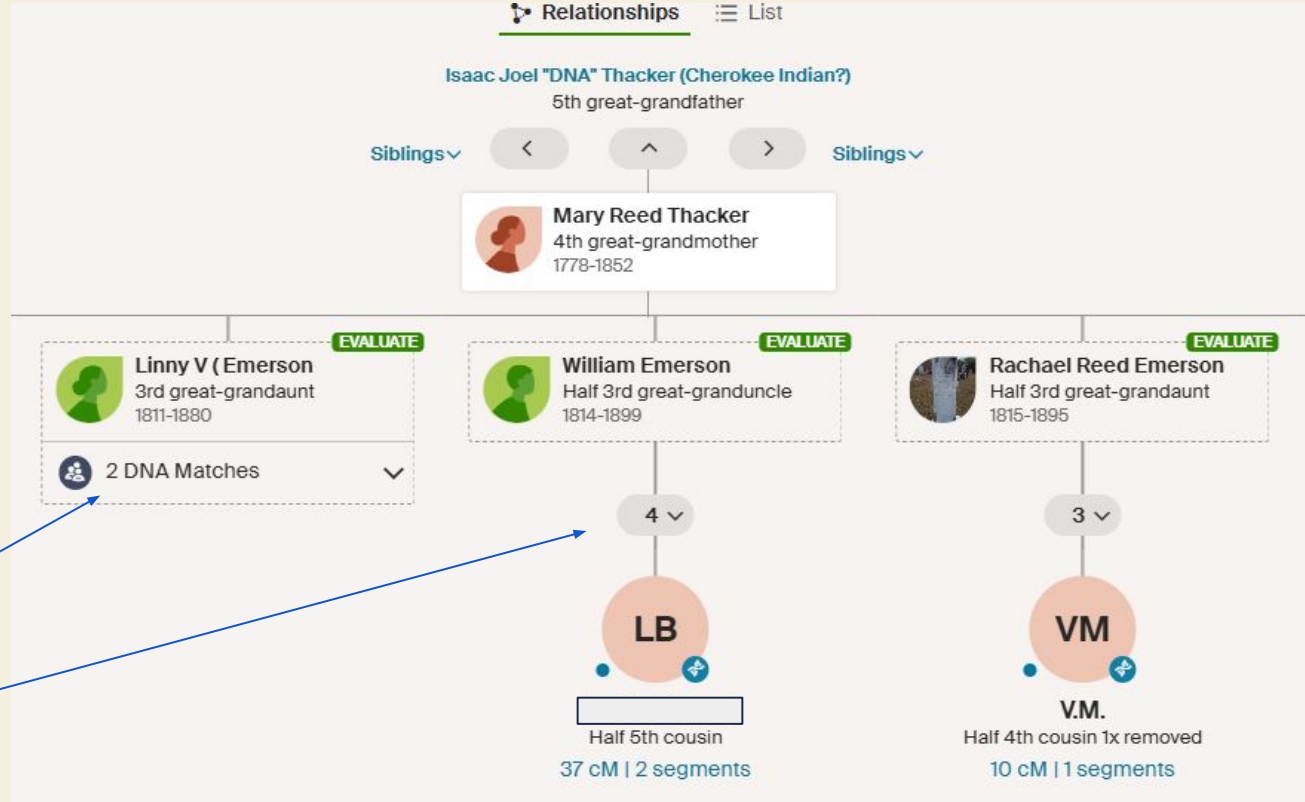
One of my ancestors has 910 DNA Matches

Ancestry - ThruLines Relationship

ThruLines can also provide you with a descent view of you and your DNA matches to the common grand or great grandparent.

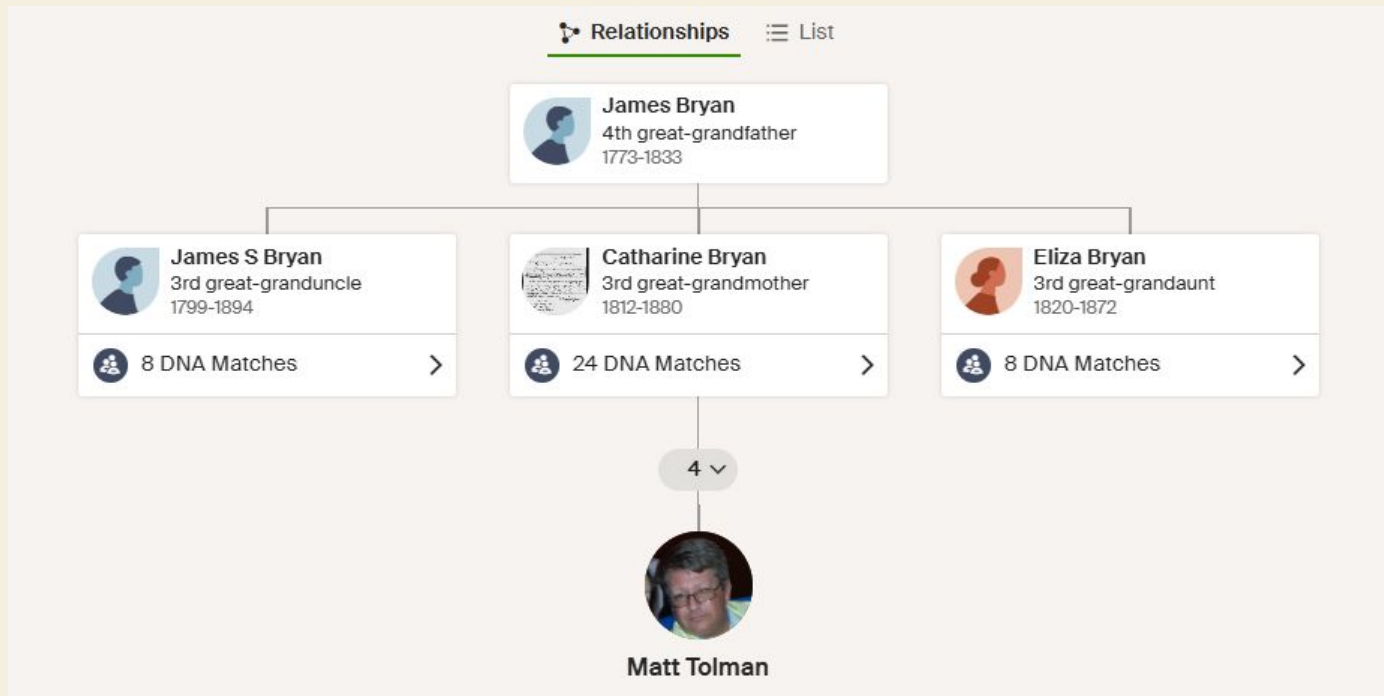
The number of DNA matches to thru this child.

The No. of Generations in between



Catharine Bryan - 3rd great grandmother

Catharine Bryan was a Brick Wall that no one had broken. With the use of DNA and traditional genealogy research, I was able to identify her parent's and confirm the relationship with DNA. This then allowed me to connect additional family members to the tree.



Brenda's Biological mother & DNA

Using Brenda's DNA matches and comparing the No. of cM, I was able to identify her father. Once I knew who her father was, I sorted the matches. Every DNA match that wasn't related to her father was related to her mother.

 Medellina Yee	Daughter Both sides 3,488 cM 50% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 106 people  Common ancestor
 	Father Paternal side 3,456 cM 50% shared DNA	 Unlinked tree
 John BINGHAM is the paternal father of Brenda Lee Bowles, who was adopted. This has be...		
Close Family		
 cepiece47	Aunt Maternal side 1,889 cM 27% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 2 people
 Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo Middaugh - William F Middaugh & Gladys Bannister / Her...		
 type2ac	1st cousin Maternal side 928 cM 13% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 3 people
 Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo Middaugh - William F Middaugh & Gladys Bannister / are ...		
 	1st cousin 1x removed Paternal side 355 cM 5% shared DNA	 No trees

Brenda's Biological mother & DNA

Close Family

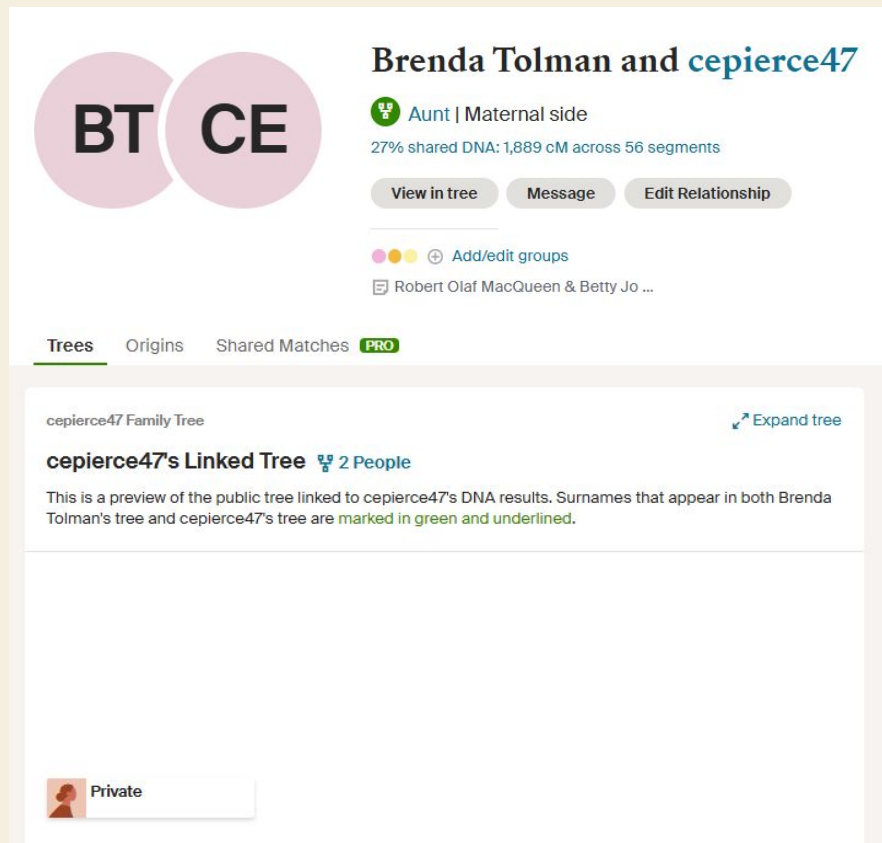
 cepierce47	Aunt Maternal side 1,889 cM 27% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 2 people
 Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo Middaugh - William F Middaugh & Gladys Bannister / Her...		
 type2ac	1st cousin Maternal side 928 cM 13% shared DNA	 Public linked tree 3 people
 Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo Middaugh - William F Middaugh & Gladys Bannister / are ...		

After sorting the matches I was able to identify that these two matches based on the number of cM where very close matches.

Brenda's Biological mother & DNA

I didn't have much to work with. There was only one person in this close matches tree and that was cepierce47.

I had a theory that "ce" was initials, "pierce" was a surname and "47" was the year of their birth.



The screenshot shows a DNA match profile for 'Brenda Tolman and cepierce47'. On the left, there are two overlapping pink circles containing the letters 'BT' and 'CE'. To the right, the name 'Brenda Tolman and cepierce47' is displayed, with 'cepierce47' in blue. Below the name, it says 'Aunt | Maternal side' with a green icon. Further down, it states '27% shared DNA: 1,889 cM across 56 segments'. There are three buttons: 'View in tree', 'Message', and 'Edit Relationship'. Below these are options to 'Add/edit groups' and a link to 'Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo ...'. At the bottom, there are tabs for 'Trees', 'Origins', 'Shared Matches', and 'PRO'. The 'Trees' tab is selected, showing 'cepierce47 Family Tree' with an 'Expand tree' link. Below this is 'cepierce47's Linked Tree' with '2 People'. A note explains that surnames appearing in both trees are marked in green and underlined. At the very bottom, there is a 'Private' label next to a small profile icon.

Brenda Tolman and cepierce47

Aunt | Maternal side

27% shared DNA: 1,889 cM across 56 segments

[View in tree](#) [Message](#) [Edit Relationship](#)

[Add/edit groups](#)

[Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo ...](#)

Trees Origins Shared Matches **PRO**

cepierce47 Family Tree [Expand tree](#)

cepierce47's Linked Tree [2 People](#)

This is a preview of the public tree linked to cepierce47's DNA results. Surnames that appear in both Brenda Tolman's tree and cepierce47's tree are marked in green and underlined.

 Private

Brenda's Biological mother & DNA

Using the share match tool in Ancestry's Pro Tools (paid \$10 month), I was able to sort the DNA matches that cepierce47 had in common with Brenda. I sorted the matches by the relationship to cepierce47. The sort, told me that cepierce47 and type2ac were related as mother and son.

I started my research with SanDee [redacted], she had a tree that I could work with and build upon.

I spent 3 months building SanDee Middaugh [redacted] pre I was able to connect the Middaugh family to Brenda and her bio grand parents Betty Joe MacQueen and Robert Olaf Middaugh and their daughter cepierce47.

Filter shared matches		+ Create group		Q Search	Sort
Shared match:		Brenda Tolman's:	cepierce47's:		
 type2ac	 +	Brenda Tolman's: 1st cousin 928 cM Maternal side	cepierce47's: Son 3,478 cM		
Robert Olaf MacQueen & Betty Jo Middaugh - William F Middaugh & Glad...					
	 +	Brenda Tolman's: 2nd cousin 1x removed 118 cM Maternal side	cepierce47's: 1st cousin 1x removed 366 cM		
Robyn Johnson aka RobynMaria WHEELER's mother is Hildur Maria Wheel...					
	 +	Brenda Tolman's: Half 2nd cousin 1x removed 102 cM Maternal side	cepierce47's: 2nd cousin or half 1st cousin 1x removed 285 cM		
	 +	Brenda Tolman's: 2nd cousin 1x removed 66 cM Maternal side	cepierce47's: 2nd cousin or half 1st cousin 1x removed 237 cM		
Gail Farrand mother is Esther P Schmidt whose sister is Hildur Maria Erics...					
 SanDee	 +	Brenda Tolman's: 2nd cousin 1x removed 114 cM Maternal side	cepierce47's: 2nd cousin or half 1st cousin 1x removed 232 cM		
Benjamin F Middaugh & Ellen A Johnson / John Edgar Middaugh & Dawn ...					

Brenda's Biological mother & DNA

From this research I was able to obtain this photo of Betty Joe Middaugh & Robert Olaf MacQueen with Brenda's mother at 8 years of age on a train in Japan.

Since we have made these discoveries, we have been able to add these family member to Brenda's FamilySearch tree.

This would not have been possible without DNA.



Where do you go from here?

Here is where I would start:

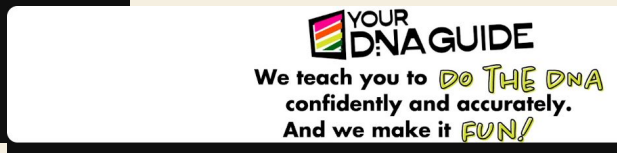
1. Buy a DNA test or two. If you can only test one person the oldest person in the line you are wanting to research. *(I wish I had tested my grandparents when they were alive, this have taken me back to my 7th great grandparents.)*
2. While waiting, open an account using your FamilySearch account and membership number.
3. Register your DNA test and connect it to your account and tree. *(Make sure to save the box your test came in, it will have codes you will need to tie your DNA to your account.)*
4. While your test is processing, start building you tree, either sync it with FamilySearch, uploading a Gedcom file or manually building your tree. As you do,, both Ancestry and MyHeritage will start to feed you hints.
5. Watch some YouTube videos. Learn what you can about DNA and how to work with your DNA matches.
6. Once you get your results, don't do anything immediately, just look around, see who you recognize and don't recognize.

Your Next Step

Pick the level that fits where you are right now.

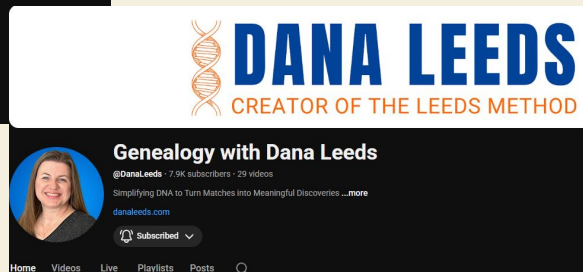
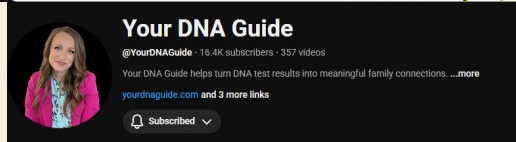
- **Level 1 — Everyone:** Decide if you want to use DNA to help discover your family
- **Level 2 — Device Ready:** Decide which family members to test (oldest generation available is usually best)
- **Level 3 — Stretch:** Order a test and register it once it arrives
- **Level 4 — Big Picture:** Start building/syncing your tree so hints are ready when results come in

Additional Resources



BYU Library has weekly live seminars on Sundays

RootsTech has passed presentation online. Fee to sign up.



Use YouTube (University) and Website & Blogs.

Class 2 recap now live on matttolman.com

See You Next Time

Same cadence — bi-weekly, Thursdays, 6:00 PM, same link

A recording of tonight's class will be available

Got a topic you'd like covered? Let me know before next class.

Start Small, Think Big.

Matt Tolman | matttolman.com