

January 9, 2019

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DNA Ancestry Mysteries Part I

During the past four quarters of this Memoir class I have listened to several my classmates present their family histories, especially Lucia who presented a very detailed account of her life and family going back to her ancestor's arrival in the United States around the early part of the twentieth century. Over Sunday dinner with my children last winter, I admitted that I only knew what I had been told by my mother and father. I was told that I was Irish, Scottish, French, and German. My maternal line was from Dublin, Ireland; and Edinburgh, Scotland; and my paternal line was from Paris, France; Montreal, Canada; and Brenden, Germany.

My daughter, Cristine, gave me as a Christmas present the gift of a 23 and Me DNA ancestry kit. So, I spit into the tube and sent it off. Eleven weeks later the results came back. I was 78% British and Irish, 8% German and French, 9% Northwestern European, etc. And it gave the approximate century upon their arrival. The French and German did not match up with my paternal or maternal family's arrival. It did provide a list of people numbering 1000 individuals who had a DNA match going back to seventh cousins. Only one, a third cousin, had the last name of Hoopfer and that was her married name, and of her four provided surnames, three were Irish or English.

I presented a memoir to this class last year that I celebrated that I was not German. Yet, I was perplexed to this outcome. I therefore did an Ancestry.com DNA spit sample and sent it off. Four weeks latter I received the results. I am 61% Irish and 39% British and Scottish, and less than 1% Other! Where is the French and German? Both DNA reports demonstrated no German haplogroups. 23 and Me demonstrated some French. Ancestry.com demonstrated some French-Canadian DNA going back to the late seventeenth century to early eighteenth century. I also learned that my Irish roots were not from Dublin but from Galway on the west coast of Ireland. But both my paternal and maternal great grand parents did not come to North America until the late nineteenth century. With only four generations of relatives and the related offspring to examine, it would be almost impossible for me not to have significant DNA haplogroups from all eight great grandparents other than 1% Other. My loving wife advised me to let it go and that

you may not be pleased of what you will find. You are who you are through the grace of God. I never listen to my wife.

I, therefore, began a quest of who am I. I invested another \$99.95 with Ancestry.com. for the ability to access legal records; marriage, birth, death, divorce, common relatives, draft records, immigration steamship manifests, employee records, telephone contacts, addresses, previous family surnames, arrest records, etc. I have spent countless hours and days during the past four months, attempting to solve the questions of my family history and the mystery that surrounds it. I continue to lay at bed at night asking myself, what have I missed. My quest and the investigation must continue.

What I have learned:

- My mother had been married not twice, but four times! Twice to my father and once to my stepfather. I recovered the marriage licenses of the two marriages to my father that took place in Henry County, Ohio. One dated May 5, 1943 and another dated September 25, 1943. On the September license my mother listed a previous marriage to a Fitzsimmons guy, but was annulled. Why would they get married twice? I went back to his first marriage divorce decree on the reason of spousal desertion in Wayne County, Michigan in 1942 (I learned that under Michigan law at the time, if a man left the domicile for 30 days it was grounds for spousal desertion, but if the wife left the domicile for 3 days it was grounds for spousal desertion. My father filed for divorce on the fourth day.) and learned that the divorce was not final until June of 1943. My father was a bigamist. My parents were divorced November, 1945. She received \$500 and \$10 a week in child support. I have the original court documentation.
- My father remarried in June, 1946 to Josephina Salinas in Henry County, Ohio. This was seven months after the divorce from my mother. My father never lived in Ohio. What was with him and Henry County, Ohio? An interesting note on this marriage license, my father listed his age as 23. He was actually 30 years old, born April 3, 1916. There were two other marriages, one in 1964, which lasted for about a cup of coffee and another in 1963 which lasted twenty some years. My father died at the age of 73. I gave the good-bye speech and said, "If he were in either Heaven or Hell it is now under new management."

- My father had a B.A degree in Education, one or two Masters Degrees, and his PH. D dissertation was available on Amazon.com. He had an IQ of 147. He was also the principle of Flat Rock High School, in Michigan; this was in 1937 where he was paid \$100 a month. But if you went to his home while I was in school you would never find a book anywhere, the only reading material in the house was "The Racing Form." If his horses were winning, I got my tuition check, if not I had to get another part time job.
- I recovered a partial police report from Peoria, Arizona dated 1978 for the arrest of my father for assault and battery due to a fist fight in a parking lot at a golf course between him and another golfer. He was 71 years old. His opponent was 73. The police officers on scene stated that my father won the fight on points. I'm glad that he was fighting some seventy-three-year-old guy with a pacemaker rather than some young buck seventy-year-old with a walker or he may have gotten his butt kicked. They were both released without charges. My father was Golden Gloves heavy weight boxer who was the runner-up in the Championship finals in Chicago in 1937.
- I also have an original copy of his marriage license to an Alice Smith from Kansas City, Missouri issued in Cook County, Illinois, dated in 1937. I have three pictures of Alice. I was unable to trace if he married Alice since he used his professional wrestling name of Larry Larson on the marriage license.
- My father died on January 2, 1980 at the age of 73. If he went to either Heaven or Hell, I know either location is under new management.

In summary, with the two DNA testing results that gave me over 2,500 possible DNA relatives going back seven generations of Hoopfer of possible cousins, etc.; I have found only two Hoopfer names, both female. Both of their Haplogroups are not on my paternal side but rather on my maternal side! Hoopfer is their married lineage and not their blood lineage to the German or French DNA. They are both cousins on my mother's side. Both of their offered eight surnames were both Irish and English.

Either I was switched at birth, or my father was switched at birth, or I was adopted, or my father was adopted, or my mother had a one-night stand or a series multiple stands, or my paternal grandmother was perhaps playing the field...A frightening thought. The good news is that I am Irish not German. I can sleep well tonight.