

# The Rotarian Genealogist

MAY 2026 | THIRD QUARTER 2025-2026

## GOVERNING BOARD

**President (2024-2026)**

[Luanne Newman](#)  
Seabrook, Texas USA

**Director A**

[Bruce Richardson](#)  
Mississauga, Ontario CANADA  
*Queries/Research*

**Director B**

[Lawrence "Tris" Tristram](#)  
Bordon, Hampshire, UK  
*Webmaster*

**Director C**

[Martha Stuckey](#)  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

**Immediate Past President**

[Sue Weber](#)  
Arnold, Maryland, USA

**Secretary**

[Susan Beety](#)  
League City, Texas, USA

**Treasurer**

[Michael Fekete](#)  
Menomonie, Wisconsin, USA

**Program Chair**

[Bill Harvey](#)  
Omaha, Nebraska USA

**Newsletter Editor**

[Luanne Newman](#)



## FROM OUR PRESIDENT LUANNE NEWMAN

Dear Members,

We look forward to our next FORG Family Reunion, featuring our presenter, Bryan Schneider who will talk about Italian genealogy. As I near my 300th day in a row of studying Italian on the Duolingo app, I cherish my memories of eight trips to Italy, staying with cousins in Piemonte. We also welcomed six 'waves' of cousins coming to the US over the past 39 years that I have been researching my tree. What a blessing!

The next amazing Rotary International convention will be held this June in Taipei, Taiwan! YOUR Fellowship of Rotarian Genealogists will have a booth there and are in need of some people just like you to share the passion and/or answer a question or two at the table in the House of Friendship. I met many of you right at that table last June in Calgary Canada. Bill Harvey will be representing us there and he would love to hear from you if you can assist. His email address is [paulharrisrocks@gmail.com](mailto:paulharrisrocks@gmail.com). Thank you!

Did you miss a Family Reunion meeting and a speaker's presentation? Don't worry, you can find many of those presentations on our website. [Take a look!](#)

As you read over this newsletter, think of what YOU can share about your journey, experiences, and family. Yes, I would love your stories!



## FORG CALENDAR

01 May

Newsletter Published

09 May

FORG Family Reunion/Zoom

Italian Genealogy, Bryan Schneider

13-17 June

**International Convention, Taipei Taiwan**

**VISIT FORG booth in the House of Friendship**

01 August

Newsletter Published

08 August

FORG Family Reunion/Zoom

Speaker TBA

# FORG FAMILY REUNION MEETING

## "ITALIAN GENEALOGY INSIGHTS"

Bryan Schneider is a professional genealogist and a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists, based in Italy, with a specialization in Italian genealogy. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree from The Ohio State University and accumulating nearly 20 years of experience as a property insurance investigator, he redirected his investigative and analytical skills toward family history research. He possesses extensive experience in assisting hundreds of clients in uncovering their Italian ancestry, as well as exploring his own Germanic heritage

Bryan has delivered numerous lectures on Italian genealogy, in the United States and London for RootsTech and other genealogy groups. Based on the firsthand experiences of he and his wife in helping their clients to visit their ancestral towns he authored a book titled *Italian Ancestral Journeys – A DIY Guide to Visiting Your Ancestors' Towns*, published in 2025.



## JOIN OUR ZOOM MEETING

**FORG Family Reunion—BRYAN SCHNEIDER: Italian Genealogy Insights**

**May 9, 2026 19:30 London  
1:30 PM Central Daylight Time/US**

**ZOOM LINK [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89003662188?  
pwd=gawbhxPTHrNgOnf9a37GoHm6NBGZUN.1](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89003662188?pwd=gawbhxPTHrNgOnf9a37GoHm6NBGZUN.1)**

**Meeting ID: 890 0366 2188 Passcode: 722965**

**View meeting insights with Zoom AI Companion**

**<https://us02web.zoom.us/launch/edl?muid=655ba90f-1a54-469d-b498-af53f34a5669>**

**One tap mobile—+15074734847,,89003662188#,,,,\*722965# US  
+15642172000,,89003662188#,,,,\*722965# US Join by SIP • 89003662188@zoomcrc.com**

**Join instructions—[https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/89003662188/invitations?  
signature=gUfbbdQbAmcMGjA4I9B7zC ciGdVQxpjZWvVHEJnV2g](https://us02web.zoom.us/meetings/89003662188/invitations?signature=gUfbbdQbAmcMGjA4I9B7zC ciGdVQxpjZWvVHEJnV2g)**



WILL YOU BE ATTENDING THE  
13-17TH JUNE 2026 RI CONVENTION?

HELP WORK THE FORG BOOTH IN THE  
HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP — IT'S AMAZING!

- ➔ TELL FORG'S BILL HARVEY YOU'LL HELP
- ➔ "NOT-TO-BE-MISSED SPEAKERS
- ➔ PROGRAMS & EVENTS AT THE CONVENTION
- ➔ GENERAL CONVENTION INFO

*If you will be at the 2026 RI Convention and would be willing to help once or twice at our FORG booth, [email Bill Harvey](#). It will be an experience you will never forget!*

*(photo on right)  
FORG Co-founder, Sue Beety and Madhumita Bishnu enjoy meeting and greeting other fellowship members and others interested in genealogy at the FORG booth in the House of Friendship at the 2017 convention in Atlanta, Georgia/USA.*



# WHY PEOPLE CLIMB THEIR FAMILY TREE

Most family historians are motivated by **identity, curiosity, connection, and legacy**. Research shows that motivations fall into several broad categories. **Self-understanding & identity** — A major driver. A 2021 study of 775 genealogists identified the search for *self-understanding* as a core psychosocial motive.

**Curiosity & intellectual challenge** — Many describe genealogy as an “all-consuming passion” driven by the thrill of solving puzzles.

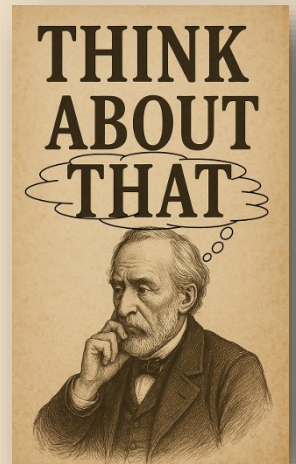
**Altruism & giving something of value to others** — Researchers often feel responsible for preserving stories for future generations.

**Life transitions** — New genealogists often begin after major events such as the birth of a child or the loss of a loved one.

**Desire for belonging in a rootless world** — Interest in genealogy has risen from 29% to 87% over 30 years, partly due to globalization and digital life creating a longing for roots.

**Desire for belonging in a rootless world** — Interest in genealogy has risen from 29% to 87% over 30 years, partly due to globalization and digital life creating a longing for roots.

-Courtesy of Microsoft Copilot

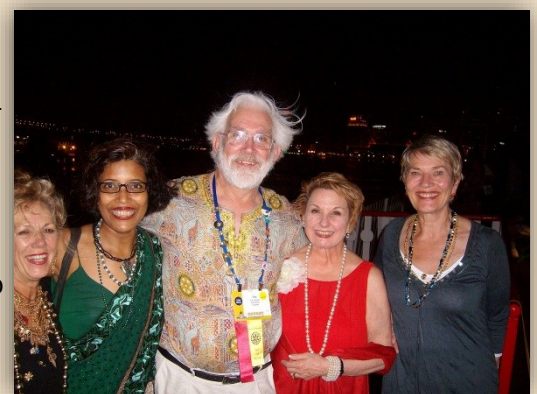
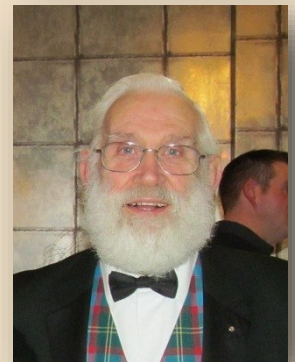


## Meet TRIS — Lawrence Tristram/Alton Club in Hampshire England

On 9th April 2026 , Tris held his Rotary 40th birthday! In those 40 years he has been a member of four clubs serving as President in two of them, holding almost every position in the club structure.

Filling six positions in District including District Governor 2019-20, he's served as COL Council on Legislature rep for his District. In Rotary in Great Britain/Ireland (RIBI) he was an Asst Regional Rotary Foundation Co-Ordinator and member of the RIBI Foundation team. Other Rotary involvement includes attended 11 RI Conventions in person, have been on two National Immunisation Days in India.

Tris is one of our co-founders, along with Sue Beety, and started in Fellowships back in the late 1990s —he has been a member of six! (two of which he was a Charter member) making many friends around the world. He says, "I must be doing something right and I enjoy doing it."



Lawrence Tristram Facebook photos

# THE LATIMERS

Submitted by Martha Stuckey, Louisiana USA

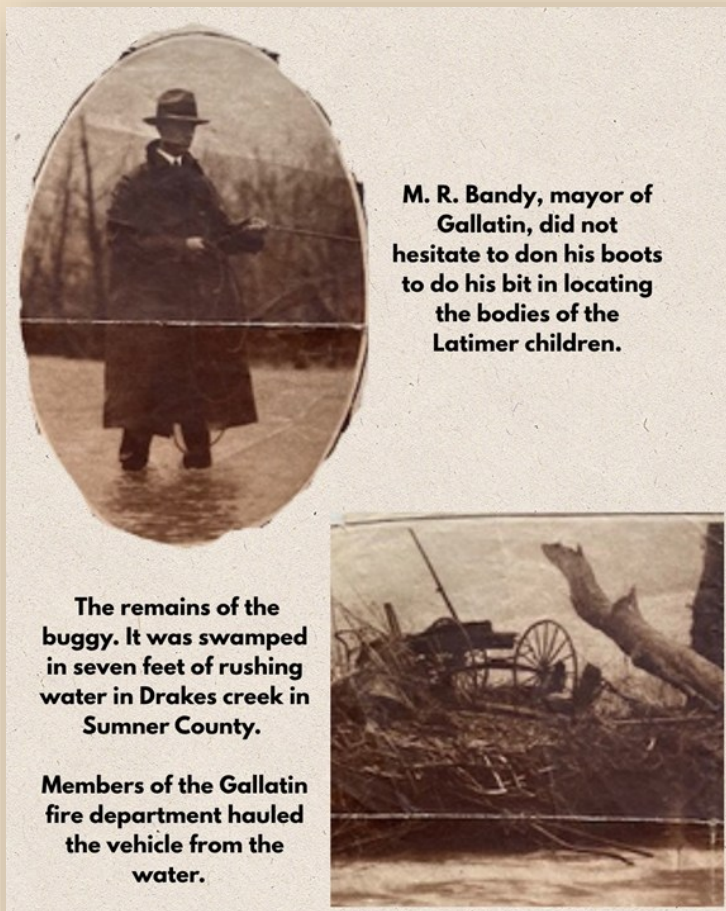
*This story is really from my cousins Robin Woodson and Lucie Thornton. They went on an adventure in Gallatin, Tennessee looking for "dead relatives". Specifically they wanted to find the gravesite of our relative Col. Jonathan Latimer, Sr., Revolutionary War hero and close friend of George Washington. Shortly after arriving in town, and in search of lunch, they stopped on a whim at the Sumner County Historical Museum. Within a minute or two of them entering this place, an employee asked us about why they were here. After answering her, she got SOOOO excited! She just posted a video yesterday all about our ancestor!!! And in the museum was his sword on display!! Later they went to the cemetery and FOUND HIM!! (And a few other relatives).*

*They visited so much more than this, including a 1790 house built by another relative, but how lovely to find this cemetery, with many Latimer graves, that is now in the backyard of a family who discovered it years after moving in. They fenced it and lovingly care for it. Definitely resting in peace! They also found interesting info on Facebook on children of the Latimers. It was definitely an interesting trip and has inspired me to take more genealogy trips. Just sorry I couldn't make this trip with them.*

"As tragic as the loss of the four Latimer children was, it brought the community together in an unprecedented way. News of the tragedy spread quickly through newspapers, as seen in the clippings displayed here, and more than 100 volunteers came out to search for the missing children.

The eldest, Louise, showed remarkable bravery. At just 14 years old, she attempted to go back into the water to save her three younger siblings, ages 12, 10, and 8.

Melissa Fischer, the great-granddaughter of Harvey and Bessie Latimer, generously shared these newspaper clippings with us. The Latimers had seven children in total. Their second youngest, Ada, was Melissa's grandmother. In her later years, Bessie moved into Ava's home, where she often recounted memories of this tragic event to her family.



Source: Sumner County Museum Historical Museum, Tennessee

CONTINUED PAGE 6

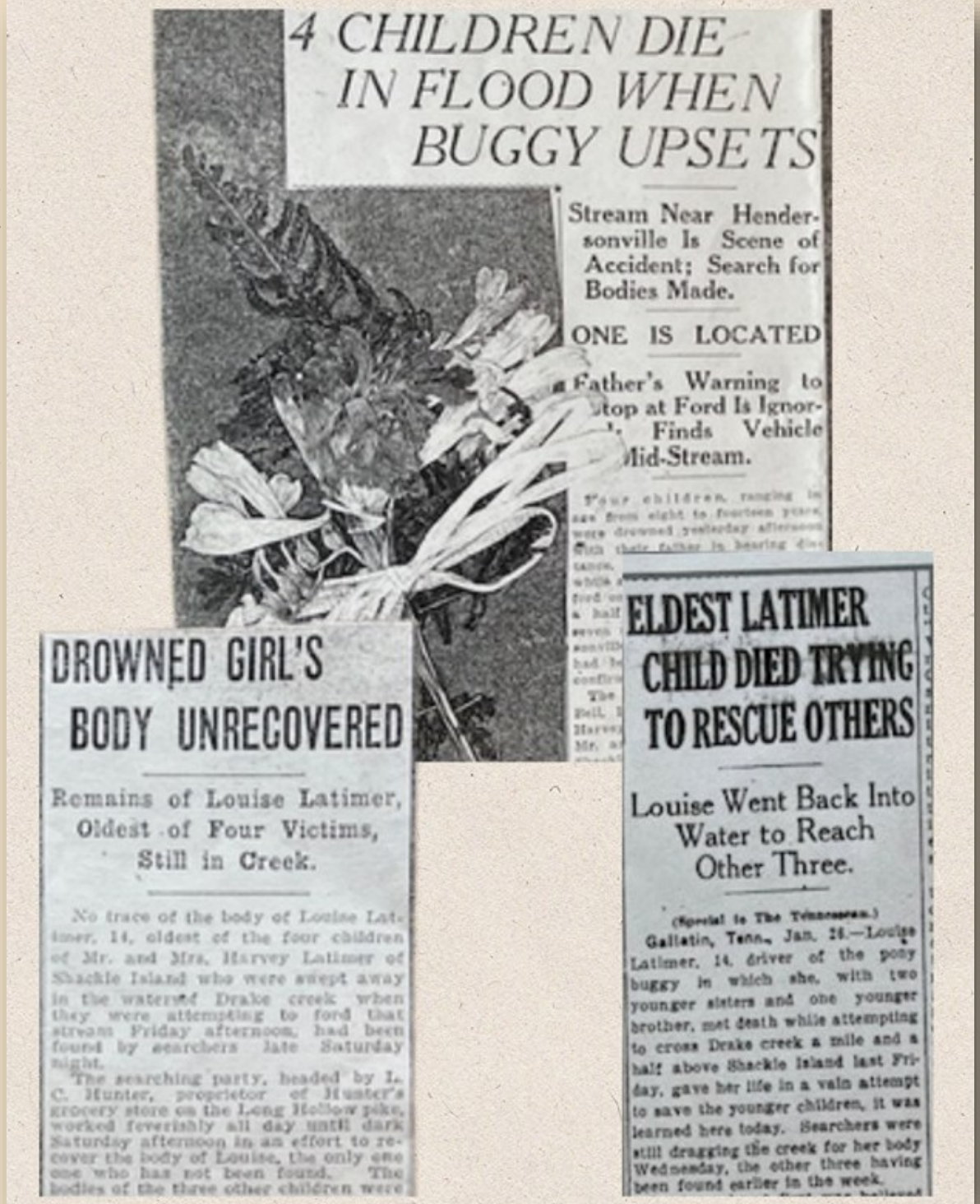
## THE LATIMERS (CONT.)

"On the day of the tragedy, three of the Latimer children did not attend school. The eldest daughter, Blanche, was away at nursing school, and the youngest, Mildred, was too young to attend. Melissa shared that she never learned why her grandmother Ada, who would have been seven at the time, was kept home that day.

Melissa also recalls her aunt Mildred describing how she spent the day rocking in a chair while people hurried in and out of the house, not speaking to her. At the time, she did not understand what was happening.

The cemetery plot for the children at the Historic Beech Cemetery was generously donated by a Mr. King.

Though decades have passed, the story of the Latimer children remains a powerful reminder of both heartbreaking loss and the strength of our community that came together in a time of grief."<sup>1</sup>



Photos Source: Sumner County Museum Historical Museum, Tennessee 1 Facebook – Sumner County Museum



## WHAT IS YOUR "WHY"?

By Scotney Hayter  
Rotary Club of Horsham East, Victoria  
AUSTRALIA



"MY fascination with family history began early, sparked by stories shared at family gatherings and nurtured by the dedication of my grandmother - who turns 100 this month - and two aunts who were avid researchers. That curiosity blossomed into a lifelong passion.

For 11 years, I served as president of my local Family History Group, dedicating countless hours to unearthing not only my own ancestry but also that of my wife. Genealogy, for me, became more than a hobby - it was a meaningful connection to the past and a way to honour those who came before us.

When I joined the Rotary Club of Stawell, Vic, in 2018, I was introduced to Rotary fellowships and immediately gravitated toward the Fellowship of Rotarian Genealogists. Though new to Rotary, I was no stranger to its values. My daughter had been a Rotary Exchange Student, joined Rotary at the age of 18, and made history as our club's youngest president at just 18 years and 10 months. I was also fortunate to receive early mentorship from my aunt, Jenny Coburn, a past district governor.

Genealogy strengthened family bonds in unexpected ways. My aunt, Di Dowsett, in Adelaide, had spent years researching our lineage. I introduced her to digital tools like ancestry.com and other resources through the Genealogy Group. Together, through shared documents, calls and visits, we traced one family line back to the 12th century - an incredible achievement completed shortly before her passing.

Today, I'm a proud member of the Rotary Club of Horsham East, Vic, and will serve as district secretary for District 9780 in 2025-26. Although time is now scarcer, my passion for genealogy remains unwavering. This journey isn't just about discovering names and dates, it's about preserving stories and forging connections across generations."

## FORG "GATHERED & SHARED"

Something new in 2026 is our FORG "Gathered & Shared" newsletter column. This section will feel: curated, not promotional, scholarly but welcoming, shared knowledge among peers worldwide. [Send us](#) any suggestions. (graphic courtesy ChatGPT)

### ➔ LIBRARY OF CONGRESS—FREE RESOURCE

*Founded on April 24, 1800, the Library of Congress turned 226 years old — and most genealogists have barely scratched the surface of what it offers, completely free.*

We're talking about the largest library on Earth. Over 173 million items. Newspapers. Maps. Photographs. Manuscripts. Sound recordings. And a surprisingly large chunk of it is digitized, searchable, and waiting for you online right now — no subscription required.

Let that sink in for a moment. [50+ Free Library of Congress Genealogy Resources Online](#)

### ➔ FIND A GRAVE

Find the graves of ancestors, create virtual memorials or add photos, virtual flowers and a note to a loved one's memorial. [Search](#) or [browse cemeteries](#) and [grave records](#) for everyday and [famous people](#) from around the world. [Find a Grave - Millions of Cemetery Records](#)

### ➔ RANDOM ACTS OF GENEALOGICAL KINDNESS-USA

(FACEBOOK GROUP) [Random Acts of Genealogical Kindness USA](#)

#### **SOME STATISTICS**

**Demographics: 65% of active researchers are over age 45, but younger generations are rapidly joining.**

**Primary reason for DNA testing: 80% want to understand ancestral origins.**

**Gender: Women make up 62–72% of full-time genealogists.**

# HOW MANY DNA TESTS DO YOU NEED?



*By Les Cargile, Seabrook, Texas USA  
New member, not in Rotary*

Of course, the minimum number of tests needed is one (yourself). Then, if you want to research your spouse’s family, you need another test. But let’s stay with just your family. I had tests for myself, my brother (JFC) and a maternal cousin (MES). Therefore, if all 3 of us share a match, it has to be from my mother’s side. If the cousin doesn’t match, it’s probably my father’s side.

PERSON	LLC	JFC (brother)	MES (cousin)
MEMBER	17	None	16
BROTHER 1	35	9	11
SISTER	26	8	23
BROTHER 2	23	None	9
SON	17	None	18
DAUGHTER 1	15	None	None
DAUGHTER 2	15	None	None
NEPHEW 1	34	None	None
NEPHEW 2	21	None	15
NEPHEW 3	None	10	19
GRANDSON	13	None	None

One family that we matched had a total of 11 family members tested. They were the Member, 2 brothers, 1 sister, 2 daughters, 3 nephews and 1 grandson. The following table shows our matches with the family:

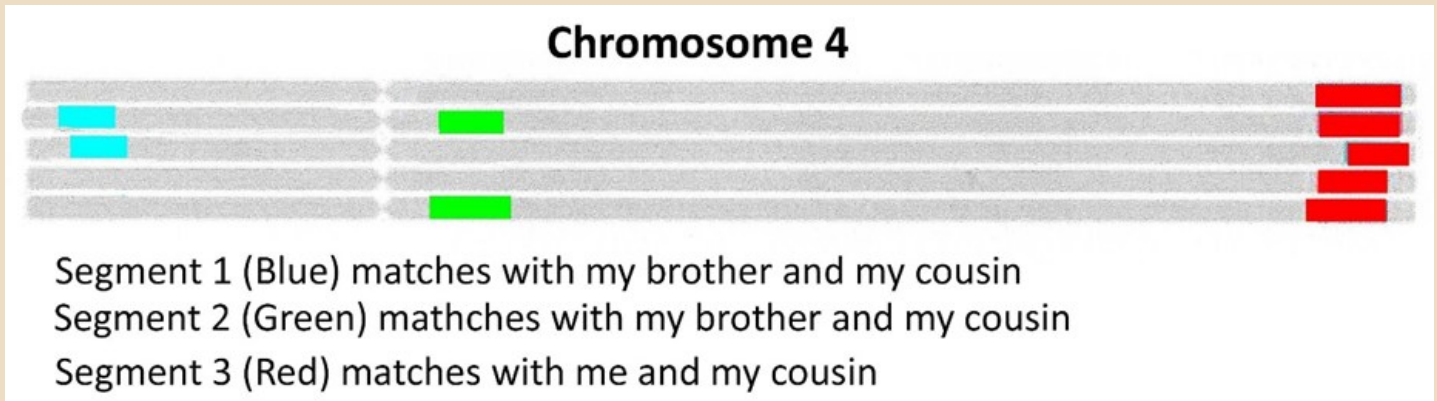
The matches are measured in centiMorgans (cM).

Note that my brother only matches 3 of the 11 and at pretty low levels (8-10 cM). What if his test was the only one I had and the other family only tested the Member? I would not see the DNA connection to this family.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

## HOW MANY DNA TESTS DO YOU NEED? (CONTINUED)

At Ancestry you do not have the ability to look at the individual chromosomes, but there are other websites that you can use. I uploaded our DNA data to FTDNA.com. I found 5 of the 11 matches on that site as shown below:

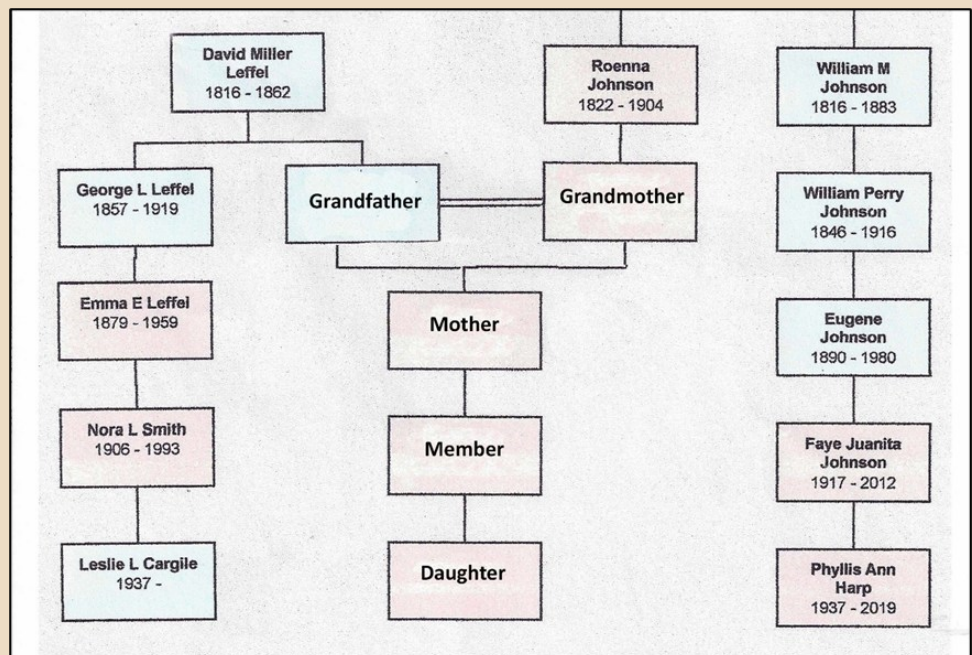


This illustrates how different segments are passed down differently to different people. I only inherited Segment 3 from my mother. My brother inherited segments 1 and 2, but not 3. My cousin inherited all three segments.

Another interesting thing happened while doing this research. I accidentally entered my wife's (Phyllis Ann Harp) kit number instead of mine one time and found she matched 3 of my 5 matches! However, all of her matches were on Chromosome 1:



Since neither my brother, cousin nor I had any matches on this segment of Chromosome 1, it probably came from a different ancestor. When 2 unrelated people have a DNA match with the same person, they are probably distant in-laws, as shown here:



## HOW MANY DNA TESTS DO YOU NEED? (CONTINUED)

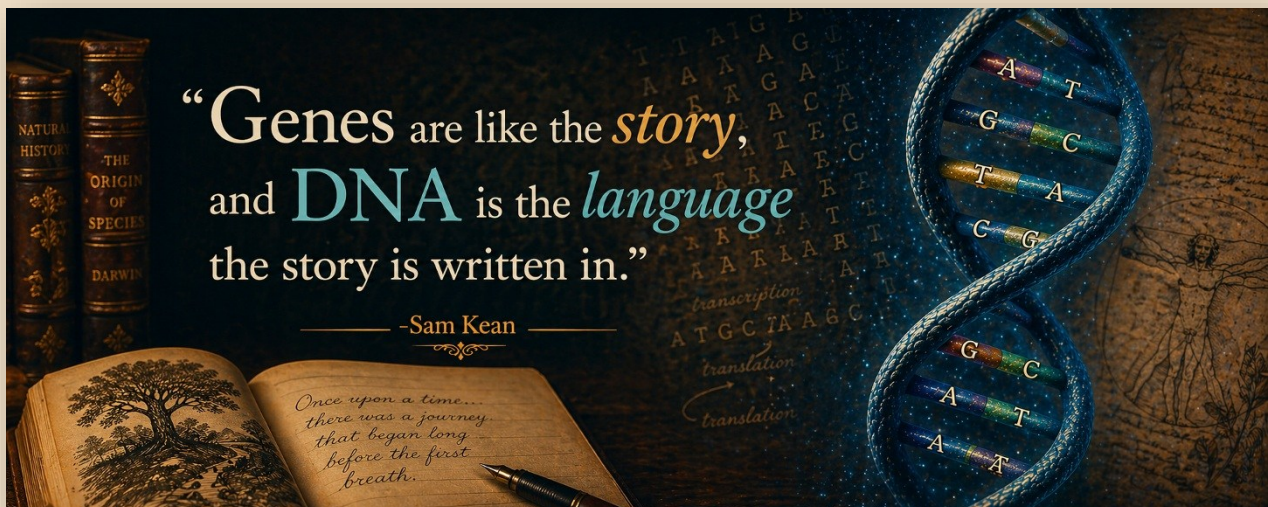
While I have not found the Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA), it is probably my wife's 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Great-Grandparent on her Johnson line. The 3 segments on Chromosome 4 were inherited by the other family through their Grandfather. The Chromosome 1 segment came through their Grandmother. Thus, both my wife and I match this family, but do not match each other.

Another reason to get multiple family members tested is to identify "False Positives". The probability of a false positive increases significantly as the amount of match decreases. A study conducted by Blaine Bettinger ([thegeneticgenealogist.com](http://thegeneticgenealogist.com)) has shown:

<u>SIZE</u>	<u>PROBABILITY OF FALSE POSITIVE</u>
Greater than 15 cM	0.7%
10 – 15 cM	8%
7 – 10 cM	35%
6 - 7 cM	60%

This study was based on the matches he had that neither of his parents shared. Obviously, since you inherit all your DNA from your parents, they must share all your real matches. If you have a match that neither parent shares, it is a false positive.

It is not always possible to get your parents tested (already deceased). Any match you have in common with other family members is probably not a false positive. If possible, you should try to get your parents, a maternal and paternal aunt or uncle, one or more of your siblings, and a maternal and paternal cousin.



# RESEARCHING AND CELEBRATING FAMILY.. IN BRAZIL

I am João Castro from the Rotary Club of Jundiaí Vila Arens, district 4590, State of São Paulo, Brazil. In the photo I am with my wife Vânia Castro.



I am a lover of family gatherings. Encouraged by a cousin of my mother, Luiz Berro, who in 2001 threw a birthday party he called the BERRO FAMILY MEETING (my mother's family originally from Italy). He had another one in 2011 and encouraged me to continue the meetings.

Using MyHeritage I made our family trees, both for the Berro family (mother), today with 547 individuals, and for the Castro family (father), today with 1,576 individuals. With the data from family members, I started organizing the gatherings and there have already been more than 10. The last one took place in the city of Bocaina, in the interior of the state of São Paulo, with the participation of 31 relatives. We visited the church of São João Batista where many ancestors were baptized and got married.

We also went to the house built by Luigi Berro, married to Clélia Mantovani, both coming from Italy in the 1880s. In this house, they lived with their 10 children.



Participants of the 8th Berro family meeting in the city of Bocaina/SP (Brazil).

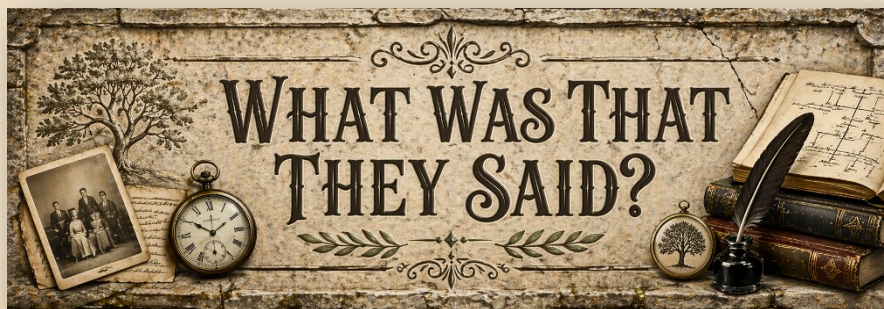
CONTINUED PAGE 13

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

RESEARCHING AND CELEBRATING FAMILY...IN BRAZIL/JOÃO CASTRO



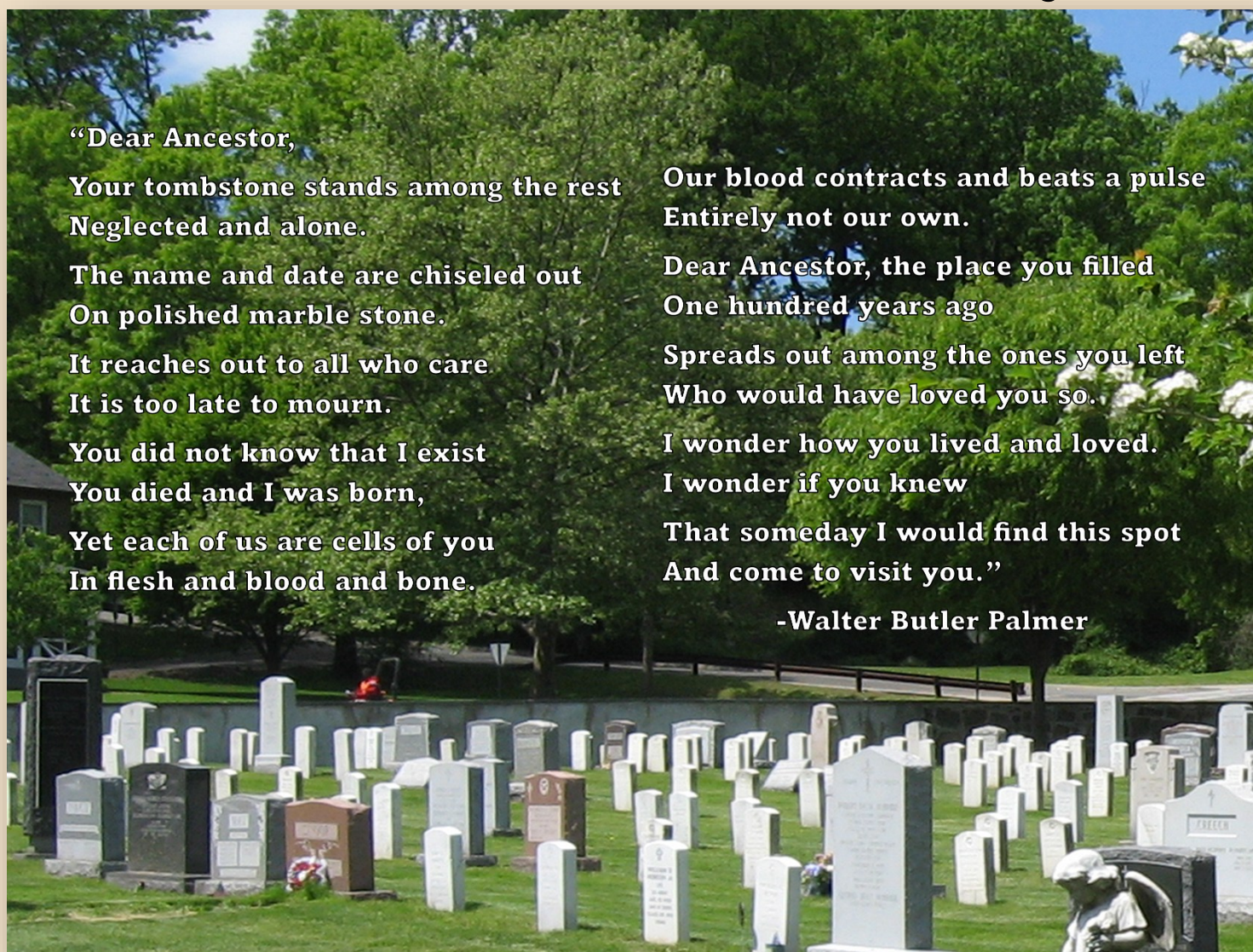
Photos (top left to right): The Church of São João Batista in Bocaina, São Paulo, Brazil. Some participants of the meeting visited the Church of São João Batista in Bocaina/SP where many of the descendants of the Berro family were baptized and married. Gravestone of Luigi and Clélia Berro, Italian immigrants who chose Bocaina/SP as their new home in Brazil.



**“If you are lucky enough to be a genealogist, you are lucky enough.”**  
**-Ruth Padilla**

**“Friends come and go, but relatives tend to accumulate.”**  
**-Unknown**

**“You are the fairy tale told by your ancestors.”**  
**-Toby Beta**



“Dear Ancestor,

Your tombstone stands among the rest  
Neglected and alone.

The name and date are chiseled out  
On polished marble stone.

It reaches out to all who care  
It is too late to mourn.

You did not know that I exist  
You died and I was born,  
Yet each of us are cells of you  
In flesh and blood and bone.

Our blood contracts and beats a pulse  
Entirely not our own.

Dear Ancestor, the place you filled  
One hundred years ago

Spreads out among the ones you left  
Who would have loved you so.

I wonder how you lived and loved.  
I wonder if you knew

That someday I would find this spot  
And come to visit you.”

**-Walter Butler Palmer**

Photo of West Point Cemetery, located on the ground of the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, USA, taken by Luanne Newman.