

Chapter 1 – INTRODUCTION TO MY FAMILY HISTORY

Like many Americans living today, my ancestors immigrated from Europe. While immigration to the United States has occurred steadily since the first settlers ventured to the New World, historians have identified three main waves as follows:

FIRST WAVE - Settlers in the 1600s and 1700s were often fleeing religious persecution and/or seeking new opportunities in a new land. Most immigrants from this wave were German, English, Welsh, or Dutch.

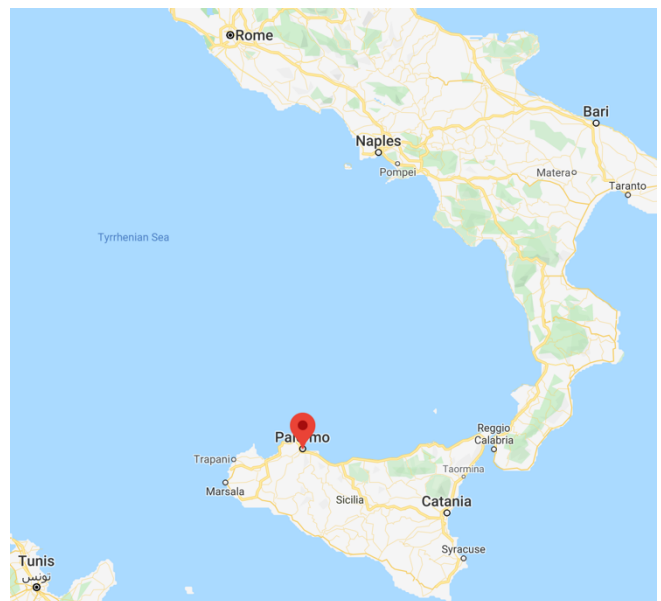
SECOND WAVE - Crop failures, political turmoil, and poor living conditions brought on by the Industrial Revolution all led to people leaving their homelands for America in the 1800s. Additional migration motivation came for people seeking religious freedom. While immigrants arrived from around the world, the greatest numbers came from places such as Scandinavia, Ireland, Scotland, England, Turkey, Armenia, and China.

THIRD WAVE - Political turmoil and, ultimately, wars in Europe in the early to mid-1900s brought more immigrants to the U.S. Other immigrants sought relief from religious persecution or were seeking political asylum. Well represented ethnicities in this immigration wave include German, Russian, and Polish Jews, and Italians, Greeks, and Austro-Hungarians.

Like most settlers of the first wave, my mother's ancestors worked on and eventually owned farms. In her case, these farms were in the northern part of Hunterdon County NJ, mostly in Lebanon Township from the 1700s until 1937 when the last farm was sold. On the other hand, my father's ancestors came in the third wave in the early 1900s from Palermo, Sicily. In 1861 Sicily was joined with other kingdoms to form the Republic of Italy. At that time, like most Sicilians, my ancestors were peasant farmers working the farms of large landowners. After unification, the economy of Southern Italy, including Sicily, worsened greatly which started a period of emigration of Sicilians to other countries, notably US and Argentina. See Maps #1 and #2 below.



Map #1 (above). My mother's ancestors lived for many generations in Northern New Jersey, as far back as the 1700s. **Map #2** (right). My father's ancestors lived for many generations in Palermo, Sicily.



One of my family research goals is to identify my ancestors' countries of origin and reconcile them with results from my DNA testing. As explained below this was easy for my father and all his Sicilian ancestors but has turned out to be difficult for my mother's ancestors. Figure #1 is a version of a family tree called a pedigree chart. It shows my direct maternal and paternal ancestors back to my 3rd great grandparents denoted as 3GG. I have 32 3GG, 16 on my father's side (paternal) and 16 on my mother's side (maternal), most of which have been identified.

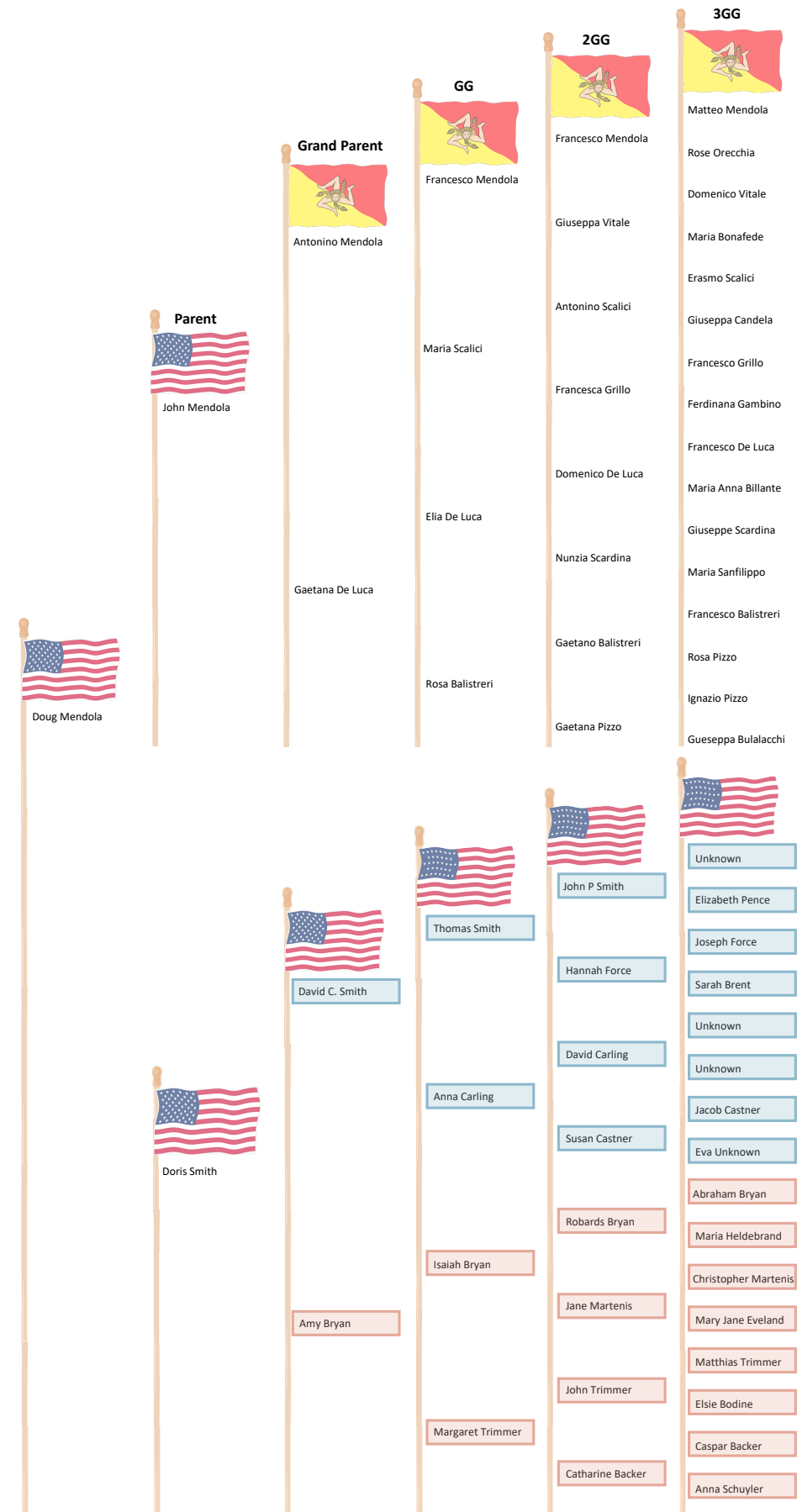


Figure #1. Pedigree Chart for Doug Mendola

On my father's side (top half of Figure #1), my grandparents were Antonino (Anthony) Mendola and Gaetana (Ida) De Luca. They emigrated to this country from Palermo, Sicily, Italy in the early 1900s and settled in Brooklyn, NY. Anthony's older sister, Giuseppa (Josephine) was already living in Brooklyn with her husband Giuseppe (Joseph) Isandrio. Anthony first worked in his brother-in law's grocery store. I have traced Antonino's ancestors back to the 1700s and they all come from his hometown of Palermo, Sicily. I have traced his wife Gaetana's ancestors back, in some cases, to the 1600s and they all come from just outside Palermo, Sicily. Figure #1 shows Antonino and Gaetana with their ancestors under the flag of Sicily. Although the island of Sicily is a part of Italy as of 1861, it has been a melting pot of cultures for thousands of years. Therefore, I consider my heritage on my father's side as Sicilian rather than Italian. (See separate section on Sicilian history.)

On my mother's side (bottom half of Figure #1), her ancestors came with the first wave of mostly English, German, and Dutch immigrants. They have been here at least since the 1700s. At first, I identified my mother's ancestors back several generations in western New Jersey. Figure #1 shows all my maternal ancestors back to my 3GG. They were all born in New Jersey, mostly in western Hunterdon County. They all are shown under the flag of the USA in Figure #1.

Ideally, I would be able to build on my mother's section of my pedigree chart by adding relatives from preceding generations until I found the ones that immigrated to the USA and note their country of origin. Easier said than done. As noted, my mother's ancestors lived in western New Jersey for almost 300 years which results in many possible family lines the farther back you go. I had to go back in most cases to my **6 GG** to find evidence of ancestors coming from another country! Note that one must also avoid the hazard of making nationality assumptions simply from surnames. The custom of the bride taking her husband's surname can be very misleading. My mother is a good example of this. My mother was Doris Smith and her parents were David C Smith and Amy Bryan. Both names sound "waspy" and maybe even English. However, Smith could also be an "Americanized" version of Schmidt or another ethnic name. Therefore, I had to identify my mother's ancestors farther back to their country of origin to have any clear answers.

This was complicated because, on my mother's side, I have 128 maternal 6GG! To keep this manageable, I decided to create 2 pedigree charts, one for my maternal grandmother, Amy Bryan, and one for her husband David C Smith, my maternal grandfather. To get to my maternal **6GG** I had to identify ancestors out to the **4GG** for Amy and David. They each have 64 maternal 4GG which combines to get to my 128 maternal 6GG. To differentiate between Amy's and David's ancestors, Amy's are shaded pink and David's are shaded blue in Figure #1. Figure #2 shows the results of adding 3 more generations to the pink-shaded ancestors of Figure #1 to get to Amy's 64 4GG. In like manner Figure #3 shows David's 64 4GG.

Consider first Amy's expanded pedigree chart (Figure #2). It starts with the pink shaded ancestors of Figure #1 (my 3GG or her 1GG, or simply her Great Grandparents). She lived her entire life in Lebanon Township, New Jersey. She had 8 great grandparents and they were all born in New Jersey between 1764 and 1791 and are shown under the pink-shaded GG column of Figure # 2. Next, I identified the 16 parents of her great grandparents. That should produce 8 more surnames from the maternal maiden names. In Amy's case, I only found 7. Figure #2 shows only 14 surnames in the 2GG column (first unshaded column) because I have not identified either of Abraham Bryan's parents. Still, no direct links to Europe were found. Instead, of the 14 surnames, 13 were born in the New Jersey and one (Christopher Martenis Sr.) place of birth is unknown. These 14 of Amy's 2GG were all born between 1744 and 1767. Incidentally, this is the so-called "patriot generation" meaning that they were of an age to serve in the Revolutionary War of Independence. In fact, I am a direct descendant of Christopher Martinis Sr. who fought in the war, which makes me a Son of the Revolution (SAR). Later, I will identify another patriot on my grandfather David's side.

Because there is still no evidence of immigration to this country of any of Amy's 2GG, I had to go back more generations. In fact, I had to add a 2 more generations to Amy's chart (also not shaded) to start identifying the countries of origin. At the far right of Figure #2 there are 64 possible surnames that make up Amy's **4GG** (my **6GG**.)

Fortunately, at this point in the process I was able to ID about 85% of Amy's 3GG and 75% of her 4GG ancestors. They are shown in the last two columns of Figure #2. All ancestors that came from another country have a letter after their name indicating country of origin. In some cases where the 4GG was still born in the USA, I was able to go even further back to 5GG and beyond to find an ancestor from another country and assigned that country's letter to the 4GG surname. In those cases, there is a number indicating which GG came from that country. For example, in the last column, although Abraham Van Horn was born in the USA his parents were born in the Netherlands and hence the number 5 after his name for 5GG. In a few cases it was as far back as 7GG that came from another country in the early 1600s! In a few cases, I could not identify any names with country of origin, and they have the letter (U) for unknown.

The breakdown of Amy's 4th great grandparents by country of origin is:

Germany (G)	24
Netherlands (N)	12
England (E)	10
France (F)	3
Switzerland (S)	2
Norway (Nor)	1
Unknown (U)	<u>12 *</u>
Total	64

*Although these 12 4GG are unknown and lack a confirmed country of origin, more recent generations had the surnames of Bryan (8), and Martenis (4). Bryan is an English/Scottish surname and Martenis might be associated with Martin Luther. If known, they might suggest that the England number shown above could be as high as 18 and the Germany number could be as high as 28.

My conclusion from this information is that my maternal grandmother, Amy (Bryan) Smith, was mostly of German/Dutch and then English descent and probably more of German/Dutch than English. This, in spite of her English-sounding surname!

In like manner, I next looked at Amy's husband, my maternal grandfather, David C Smith. However, his ancestors are much more unknown and conclusions much more difficult to come by. His pedigree chart to his 4GG is shown on Figure #3. He also lived his entire life in Lebanon Township, NJ. Of his 8 great grandparents (blue-shade GG column), only 4 are known. In David's case these 4 known great grandparents lead to only 4 known 2GG (first unshaded column). This compares to 14 known 2GG for Amy. Also, like Amy, all of David's known 2GG were all born in the USA and between 1730-1743. As mentioned above this is the "patriot generation" and Thomas Force (1743-1829) also fought in the Revolutionary War as a Captain in the Hunterdon County Militia.

Because only 4 of David's 8 great grandparents are known – Force/Coxe and Castner/Larenson it follows that, at best, only 8 of the 32 (versus 27 of the 32 for Amy) and 16 of the 64 (versus 45 of the 64 for Amy) could have identified surnames. In the end, I was able to identify only 12 of the 64 surnames and their country of origin.

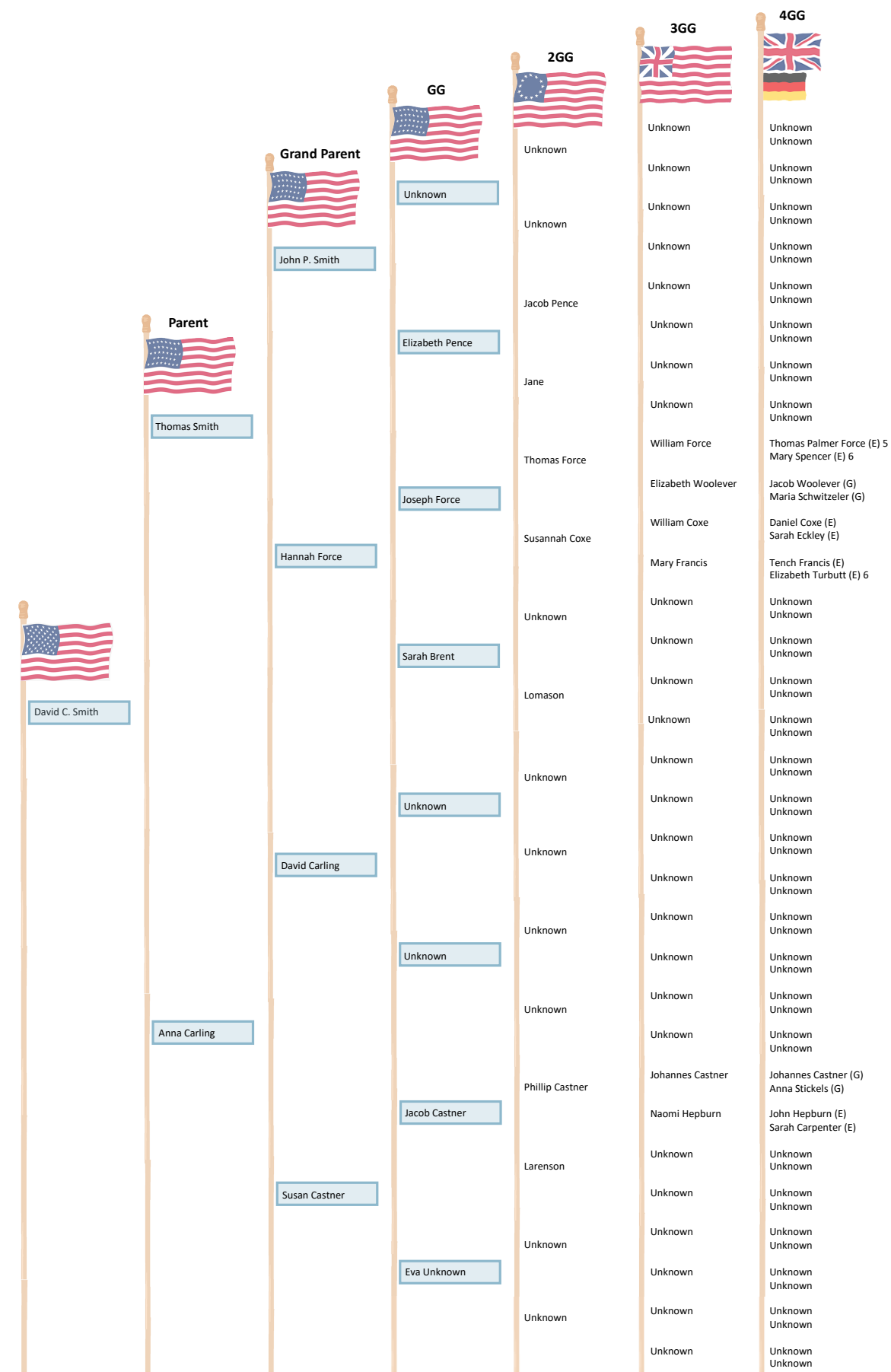


Figure #3. Pedigree Chart for David C. Smith

Of course, this makes an overall ethnicity estimate and country of origin much less certain for David Smith's ancestors than for that of Amy Bryan's. This is evident from the following breakdown by country of original of the 64:

England/Scotland (E)	8
Germany (G)	4
Unknown (U)	<u>52*</u>
Total	64

*Although these 4GG are unknown, more recent generations had English-sounding surnames like Smith, Pence, Brent, and Carling which might add to the English total. The fact remains that many of the spouses and maiden names of those marriages are unknown. Based on much less information, I can barely conclude that my grandfather, David C Smith might be mostly English.

A final interesting perspective on my maternal lineage comes from the fact that David Smith and Amy Bryan are 5th cousins! This was not uncommon in those early days when people were less mobile, and farms were passed on to future generations. My grandparents are 5th cousins because they share a pair of 4th great grandparents as shown on Figure #4. Their 4GG are Jacob Woolever and Maria Schwitzeler, both born in Germany. Amy and David each descend from a different daughter of Jacob and Maria. Those sisters are shown as Anna and Elizabeth Woolever, respectively. Figure #4 shows the descendant path from the 2 sisters, through cousins to 2nd cousins, 3rd cousins, etc., until 5th cousins, (Amy and David, who married). Note that the spouses of Amy's cousins have German or Dutch surnames (Eveland, Van Buskirk, and Martenis) before becoming Bryan, the only real English/Scottish surname. On the other hand, David's cousins' spouses have English surnames (Force, Coxe, Brent, and Carling). Once again, making judgments based on surnames alone is admittedly problematic, but Amy's ancestors appear more German/Dutch while David's more English.

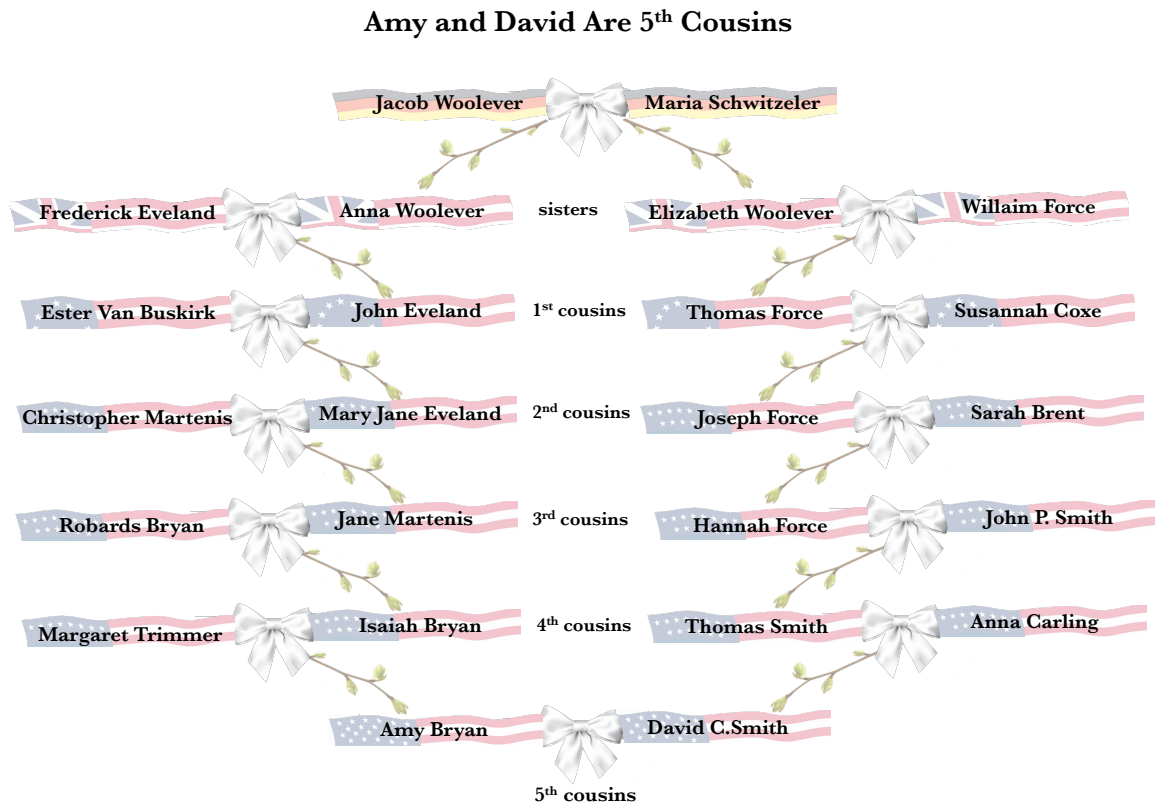


Figure #4. Relationship Chart for Amy Bryan and David C. Smith

The last source of information is my DNA profile. Both my brother, Craig, and I have had an autosomal DNA test. It estimates that we are mostly Sicilian (theoretically near 50%) and then much more English than German, with minor amounts of other nationalities. Currently, the DNA estimate shows less German than my family history would suggest but the estimates are updated every year as more people take the test. There are also very wide uncertainty ranges for some of the estimates which leaves a lot of room for future revision. I will be watching my DNA profile as it gets updated. Below are the current ethnicity estimates in percent with accuracy ranges from DNA tests run at Ancestry.com:

	<u>Doug</u>	<u>Craig</u>
Italy (Sicily)	42 (41-52)	49 (43-52)
England, Wales, N/W Europe	37 (0-37)	40 (2-40)
Germanic Europe	6 (0-32)	0 (0-15)
France	9 (0-11)	9 (0-15)
Sweden	2 (0-3)	0
Norway	0	1 (0-3)
Spain	2 (0-2)	0
Ireland & Scotland	0	1 (0-1)
Greece & Balkans	<u>2</u> (0-2)	<u>0</u>
Total	100%	100%

Realistically, my effort to determine my mother's heritage may never get more accurate than to say her parents, Amy and David, were mostly of English and German descent. My mother, the youngest child of Amy and David, was born and spent her childhood on the last farm owned by her ancestors. The next chapter describes what I know about the lives of Amy and David and their farm.