

Lake Family Phone Call 23 Jan 2013

by Wesley Johnston

Context

On 22 Jan 2013, I discovered that Ancestry.com's autosomal DNA matching had discovered that, with 95% confidence, Diana Black Ballard and I are in the range of 4th to 6th cousins. After reviewing Diana's tree on Ancestry, I realized that the most likely connection was on our Lake ancestors. Diana's ancestor James Lake (trees.ancestry.com/tree/47568986/person/6798602201) could have been the father or uncle of Mary Lake (trees.ancestry.com/tree/12001386/person/12976781480), my 4th great grandmother (from whom on average, I have inherited 1/64th of my autosomal DNA).

I contacted Diana via Ancestry's messaging. And she responded later in the day, recommending that I call Janet Jeffrey in Utah (801-731-2329). So this document is the record of what I recollect from our phone call on the morning of 23 Jan 2013.

On the evening of 22 Jan 2013, I did some research on the Internet and on Ancestry.com, which resulted in the relatively easy recognition that a whole lot of Ancestry trees and a whole lot of websites with Lake family information repeat a very obvious error about a Mary Lake born in Ernestown, Ontario in 1802 – which matches very closely with my Mary Lake's 1861 Canada census record, showing her age 60 and born in Canada and knowing that the family originated from Ernestown – a central community of the United Empire Loyalists who fled the United States after the Revolution. They show this 1802 Margaret Mary Lake marrying Nathan Fellows, but I discovered that she could not have been the Mary Lake who he married, since the marriage was in 1812. I posted a note on this error, including two key URLs (the 1802 birth and the 1812 marriage): <http://boards.ancestry.com/surnames.lake/1464/mb.ashx>

I want to share the following web page, which has a number of errors but which appears to have the childhood family members and their dates and mothers correct. So do not use this for any more than that, since it has some really obvious errors (including showing the 1802 Mary as the wife of Nathan Fellows). But it is the best family overview that I have found of all of James Lake Jr's wives and children: <http://awt.ancestrylibrary.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=dickdutton&id=I22082&ti=5542>

Phone Call

The telephone call lasted 50 minutes. I will capture the items as bullets, since I cannot reconstruct the entire call from memory. These will be in roughly the order that we discussed them.

- Nathan Fellows' wife: I told Janet about what I had found last night, that the 1802 Mary Lake could not have been the Mary Lake who married Nathan Fellows at Ernestown in 1812. It seemed much more likely to me that his wife was the Aunt of the 1802 Mary – her father James Lake Jr's sister who was born in 1794. Janet told me that the James Lake Jr had adopted the

Mormon faith and moved first to Ohio and then Illinois and then Utah. And his youngest son George had gone back to Canada in the 1870's and visited the relatives living at Odessa, Ontario (which is where Diana Black Ballard's branch of the Lake family had moved) and gathered family information, which he recorded in his diary. (I have since found that the diary is in the collection of the library of Brigham Young University, and his 1894 autobiography is in the LDS church archives.) Janet looked in her copy of the diary, and George Lake had written that the Mary Lake who was the wife of Nathan Fellows was the "sister of my father" – the one born in 1794. So that definitively identified which Mary Lake married Nathan Fellows in 1812.

- Janet also warned me that there are a lot of other errors out there, many of which originated from a 1950's book "My People and Yours" by a Methodist minister descendant of the Lake family. While it was a noble effort for that time, it has many errors. One of them is that James Lake's middle name was Madison, which simply was not true: he had no known middle name. Another frequently-repeated error is that the children born in Illinois were born at Geneva, Illinois, which is not true. The family settled west of Springfield, Illinois, in Scott County.
- Janet has written her own book, with extensive documentation, on the Lake family. I will send her a check for the book.
- A Lake-line cousin of Janet lives in Kingston, Ontario. Carla Trete's husband teaches history at a local university. When Janet visited, Carla showed her the family sites at Odessa. I will pass this information on to my own Lake-line cousin in Kingston, Muriel Kuhn.
- Since I lived for 16 years in Springfield, Illinois, I was very surprised to learn that the man who might have been my 5th great grandfather (James Lake, Jr.) had lived near there in the 1830's and 1840's. Since he also had early Dutch ancestors in New York, it would also mean yet another Dutch ancestral line for me – my third distinct (i.e. not married to other Dutch) Dutch line. And in doing a bit more digging on James Lake, Jr., I found that he is buried in Idaho (<http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=12086947>) – which is where my niece now lives at Boise.
- I raised the fact that some of my Mark Lake's Harrison children were born at Camden, Ontario. (I could not recall who it was who was born there, but it was Mary's son James Harrison (who I now realize may have been named for her father) who was born at Camden according to his 1871 marriage record. Other records give his birthdate 22 Nov 1838. Janet found that one of the children from James Lake Jr's third marriage, Lydia Ann Lake, who was born at Camden in 1832. This was really interesting, since it is further evidence that my Mary was potentially the 1802 Mary, who was born of James Lake Jr's first wife Mary (whose surname was Lake) and who Janet said had died in childbirth.
- Yet another bit of evidence is a date that Janet has for the 1802 Mary's death in 1869. She has no other information on this Mary. But my Mary is in Ops Township of Victoria County, Ontario, in the 1861 Canada census and cannot be found in any subsequent census, although we do not have a documented date of death for her. So her death in 1869 would be in line with what we have on my Mary Lake.
- Janet is going to try to find the address and phone number in California of Annette Truesdell, whose e-mail Diana had discovered (aTRUE@garlic.com). It has been several years since Janet

spoke with Annette. Annette has done extensive research on the Ontario Lake family members and is a true expert. (In searching for Annette, I found her most recent Ancestry board post was in 2009 – about Garrett Son of Jacobus Lake & Areantie Hubbard. This really sets the bells ringing, since my “other” New York-Ontario-Illinois problem family were Hubbards.)

- Janet thinks the most like source of the erroneous Madison middle name for James Lake Jr may be his son James. After James Lake Jr’s second wife died, in childbirth as his first had done, he gave two of his youngest children to his sister and her husband, and these children remained in Ontario and were raised by their Aunt. One of those children was James Madden Lake, so that Janet’s guess is that someone somewhere along the line read the name Madden as Madison AND then attributed it to the boy’s father and grandfather, neither of whom actually have any known middle name.

So where does this leave us?

Diana and I have a high-confidence autosomal DNA match as 4th to 6th cousins, and it appears to be on our Lake lines. If the 1802 Mary is my Mary and thus a half-sister of Diana’s ancestor Jane Lake, then if James Lake Jr is also Diana’s 5th Great Grandfather, then Diana and I would be half-6th cousins, if I have done the calculation correctly.

The evidence for the 1802 Mary being my Mary is thus far as follows:

1. The 1802 Mary’s birth date and place conform with my Mary’s 1861 census information.
2. The 1802 Mary’s half-sister Lydia’s birth in 1832 at Camden indicates fits with my Mary’s son James born at Camden in 1838. By 1838, Mary and Lydia’s father James had moved his family first to Ohio (by 1834) and then to Illinois (by 1838).
3. The 1802 Mary is known to have died in 1869, which conforms with the partial information that we have to narrow the date of my Mary’s death.

Unfortunately, the records for this period are spotty. While the 1812 marriage record exists, there is actually a gap of marriages between 1822 and 1831, which would include both my Mary Lake’s first marriage to Mr. Ward and her second marriage to Robert Harrison. (See <http://books.google.com/books?id=2HkOAAAAYAAJ&q=over+20+blank#v=snippet&q=over%2020%20blank&f=false>). And the births are even harder to find. And there were no censuses. So we may never have definitive proof or refutation of this possible connection of my Mary Lake with the 1802 daughter of James and Mary (Lake) Lake.