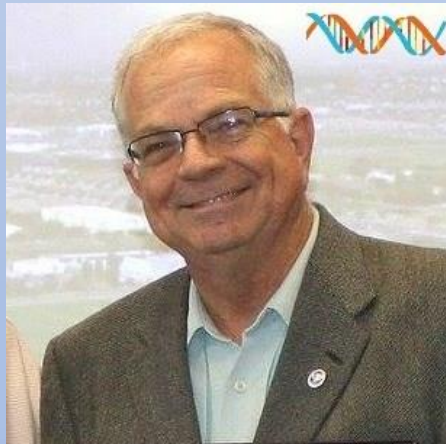


# Working With Matches in Ancestry



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<http://familytreeaz.com/presentations>



February 2023

All slides and handouts can be found at:  
<http://www.familytreeaz.com/Presentations/>



QR Code: take photo to  
open to presentations

# 5 Steps: Goals Working With Matches

- STEP 1: Identify common ancestral line
- STEP 2: Identify the match
- STEP 3: [OPTIONAL] Build a tree for the match
- STEP 4: Add the match to your primary DNA tree
- STEP 5: [OPTIONAL] Contact the match

# Before We Start

- What is a “DNA match”?
  - Someone who has taken a DNA test and has been identified by the testing company (Ancestry, in this case) to share DNA with the test taker
- Only DNA kits sold by Ancestry are allowed in their database
  - Uploads from other companies are not accepted (unlike some other companies)

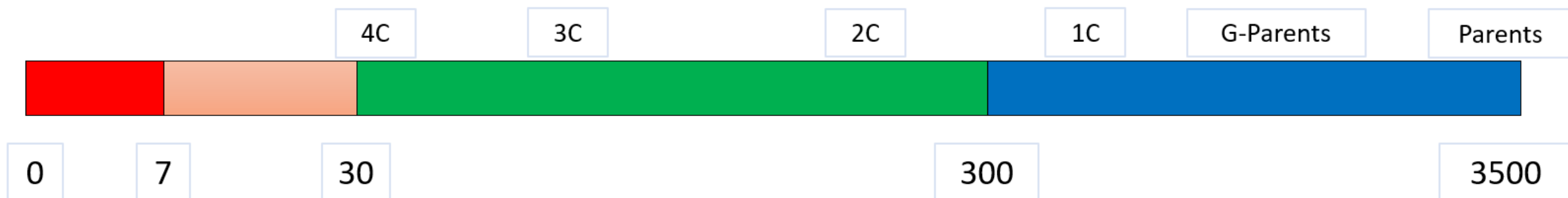
# Before We Start

- Can I be sure that I am related to a match?
- Generally....yes
- BUT: be wary of low-end matches below about 10 centiMorgans ---  
Many of these could be false matches

I normally recommend focusing only on matches of at least 20 centiMorgans

# Before We Start

- Match strength can be anything from 0 centiMorgans up to 3500
- Best range for working your tree is 30 to 300 cMs
- Below 30 might be more distant and may be more likely to be possible multiple cousin (related in 2+ ways)
- Above 300 should be in your “already known” list of close relatives
  - Of course----that is not ALWAYS the case!



# Before We Start

- What sort of information is provided about a match?
  - Name, initials, or identifying alias
  - Strength (closeness) of the match measured in centiMorgans
  - Estimated relationship
- In some cases:
  - Family tree (linked or unlinked)
  - User-provided metadata for the test-taker (city/state, age range)

The screenshot shows a DNA match interface. On the left is a profile for 'Joan Anita Craddock' with a photo. In the center, a match is identified as 'Mother' with '3,474 cM | 50% shared DNA' and 'Maternal side'. On the right, a 'Public linked tree' is shown with '2,687 People' and 'Common ancestor'. A 'View match' button is on the far right. Yellow arrows point to the name, relationship, and tree information. A yellow box highlights the relationship and shared DNA text. A yellow arrow points to the tree information. At the bottom left, a small text box says 'Mother, 3474/46.' and at the bottom right, there are star and edit icons.

Step 1: Identify Common Ancestral Line

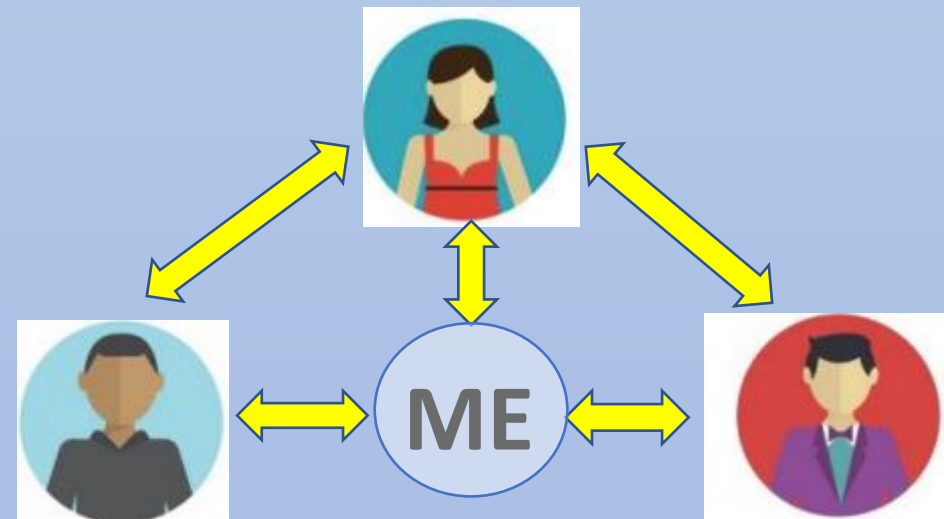


# Step 1: Identify Common Ancestral Line

- One invaluable tool: SHARED MATCHES

Trees Ethnicity Shared Matches

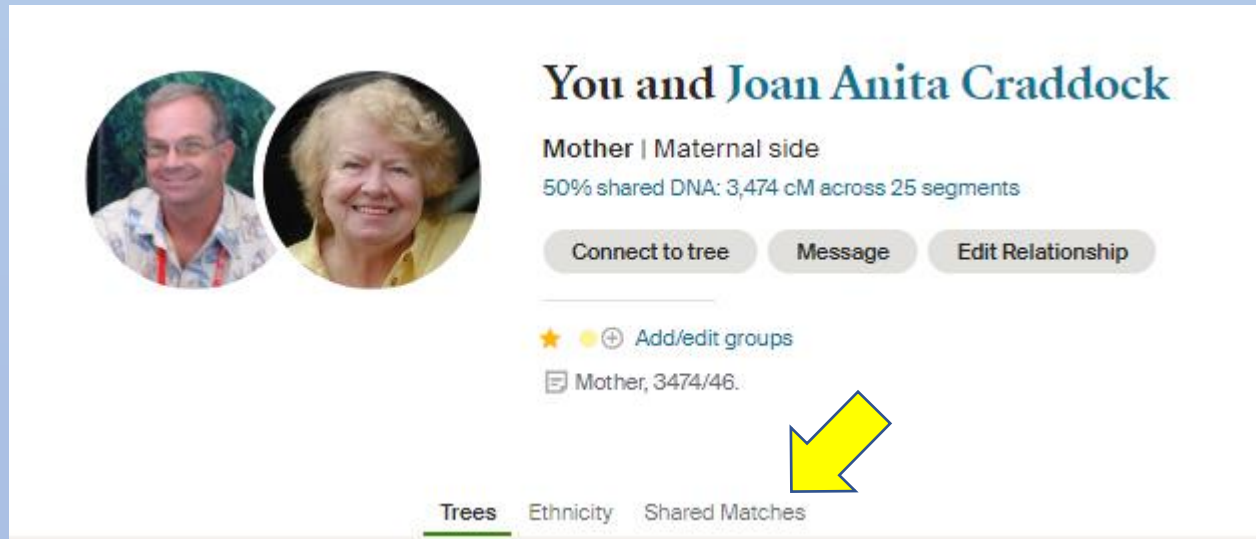
- These are other matches who match both you and the other match
- Often these can be used to hypothesize a common ancestral line



**CAUTION:** there can be times when the shared DNA is not common to all (this is mainly a concern with smaller matches)

# Step 1: Identify Common Ancestral Line

- To see shared matches click on the Shared Matches tab



The screenshot shows a DNA match profile for a user and Joan Anita Craddock. On the left, there are two circular profile pictures: a man with glasses and a woman with blonde hair. To the right of the photos, the text reads "You and Joan Anita Craddock" in a large, dark blue font. Below this, it says "Mother | Maternal side" and "50% shared DNA: 3,474 cM across 25 segments". There are three buttons: "Connect to tree", "Message", and "Edit Relationship". Below the buttons, there is a section for "Add/edit groups" with a star icon and a plus sign, and a list item "Mother, 3474/46.". At the bottom, there are three tabs: "Trees", "Ethnicity", and "Shared Matches". A yellow arrow points to the "Shared Matches" tab.

**You and Joan Anita Craddock**  
Mother | Maternal side  
50% shared DNA: 3,474 cM across 25 segments

Connect to tree Message Edit Relationship

★ ● ⊕ Add/edit groups

📄 Mother, 3474/46.

Trees Ethnicity Shared Matches

# Step 1: Identify Common Ancestral Line

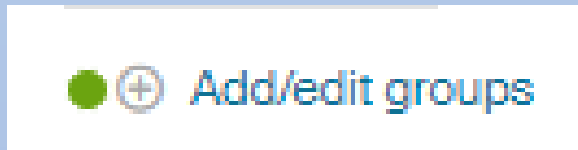
- This will yield a list of other matches who share with you as well as the other test taker
- Sorted by strength level

**KEY:** Look for shared matches that you know how you are related to. For instance, a 1<sup>st</sup> cousin match would help identify a set of grandparents; a 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin could identify a great-grandparent couple. A 3<sup>rd</sup> cousin could identify a common great-great grandparent couple

The screenshot shows a DNA match profile for 'You and Joan Anita Craddock'. The match is identified as a 'Mother | Maternal side' with 50% shared DNA (3,474 cM across 25 segments). The profile includes options to 'Connect to tree', 'Message', and 'Edit Relationship'. Below this, there are filters for 'Trees', 'Ethnicity', and 'Shared Matches'. The 'Shared Matches' section is filtered by 'Unviewed' and shows a list of matches. The matches are categorized into 'Parent/Child', 'Full Sibling', and 'Close Family'. Each match entry includes a profile picture, relationship type, shared DNA amount, percentage of shared DNA, and a 'View match' button. The matches listed are: a daughter (3,470 cM, 50% shared DNA, both sides), a son (3,466 cM, 50% shared DNA, both sides), a brother (2,491 cM, 44% - 51% shared DNA, both sides), a 1st cousin 1x removed (369 cM, 5% shared DNA, maternal side), a 2nd cousin (309 cM, 14% shared DNA, maternal side), and another 2nd cousin (226 cM, 3% shared DNA, maternal side). The match with the 2nd cousin (309 cM) includes a note: 'k my great aunt. 309/15. Sent message 8/26/2018 and 9/8/2018.'

# Step 1: Identify Common Ancestral Line

- Highly Recommended:
  - Use Ancestry's Tag Groups to identify ancestral lines
- This greatly simplifies the process of identifying common ancestral lines



<input type="checkbox"/>	1 - Waters/Unknown (8)
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 - Berkley/Wheeler (38)
<input type="checkbox"/>	3 - Sylvia/Correia (74)
<input type="checkbox"/>	4 - Lemos/San Jose (141)
<input type="checkbox"/>	5 - Craddock/Spivey (163)
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 - Wood/Thurman (221)
<input type="checkbox"/>	7 - Unknown/Unknown MYSTERY
<input type="checkbox"/>	8 - Spencer/Cummings (183)

See my presentations on using tag groups (Dec 2021 and Mar 2023)

# Step 1: Identify Common Ancestral Line

- Once you've built up enough matches using tag groups it becomes incredibly easy to quickly sort the match into the correct ancestral line
- I just opened up this unviewed 20 cMs match and can quickly identify which ancestral line by looking at the color dots

The screenshot shows a 23andMe match page for a user named 'You and E'. The match is 20 cM shared DNA across 1 segment, identified as a 5th-8th cousin on the maternal side. The match is currently unviewed. The page lists several other matches, each with a colored dot indicating the ancestral line: a blue dot for the paternal side and a red dot for the maternal side. A yellow arrow points to the match with the red dot, and a red box highlights the red dot in the match list on the right side of the page.

Relationship	Shared DNA	Shared DNA across	Public linked tree	Do you recognize them?
Mother	3,476 cM	50% shared DNA Maternal side	Public linked tree 2,687 People Common ancestor	Yes Learn more
Daughter	3,470 cM	50% shared DNA Both sides	Public linked tree 2,687 People Common ancestor	Yes Learn more
4th - 8th Cousin	34 cM	< 1% shared DNA Maternal side	Public linked tree 589 People	Yes Learn more
4th - 8th Cousin	33 cM	< 1% shared DNA Maternal side	Public linked tree 1,765 People	Yes Learn more
4th - 8th Cousin	29 cM	< 1% shared DNA Maternal side	Public linked tree 1,765 People	Yes Learn more
4th - 8th Cousin	28 cM	< 1% shared DNA Maternal side	Public linked tree 5 People	Yes Learn more
4th - 8th Cousin	28 cM	< 1% shared DNA Maternal side	No Trees	Yes Learn more
4th - 8th Cousin	28 cM	< 1% shared DNA Maternal side	Unlinked Tree	Yes Learn more

Step 2: Identify the Match

## Step 2: Identify the Match

- The process of identifying exactly how you are related to the DNA match often requires [Identifying the Match](#)
- This is needed in order to build a tree for the person as well as knowing where to place the person in your DNA tree
- Many matches can be identified but some may be difficult or impossible

# Step 2: Identify the Match

- A variety of techniques can be used such as people-finding sites, Google searches, public records searches in Ancestry, Facebook, etc.
- In particular try to obtain:
  - Full name including middle initial/name
  - Birth date including the date

TIP: Once I have fully ID'ed a match I like to put that information into the Notes field for future use

For much more on this please see my Jan 2023 presentation on identifying matches



Step 3: Build a Tree for the Match  
[OPTIONAL]

## Step 3: Build a Tree for the Match [OPTIONAL]

- You can only do this if you have successfully identified the match (Step 2)
- Why do this?
  - Build the tree back in time looking for common ancestral line
- You'll need full name, DOB, and a few sources for this living person such as public records, state birth records (e.g., CABI)
- As always with quick-and-dirty research trees, keep these trees **PRIVATE** and **UNSEARCHABLE**

See my presentation Building a Research Tree, Jun 2021

# Step 3: Build a Tree for the Match [OPTIONAL]

- But why can't you just use the tree that the match might already have linked to the DNA kit??
- **“Trust but Verify”**
- Existing tree may have errors in it
- Existing tree might not be sourced with quality records in it (e.g., census, public records, birth records)
- Existing tree might not go far back enough in time



Public linked tree  
4,201 People

TIP: By building your own tree you have full control to select sources to use

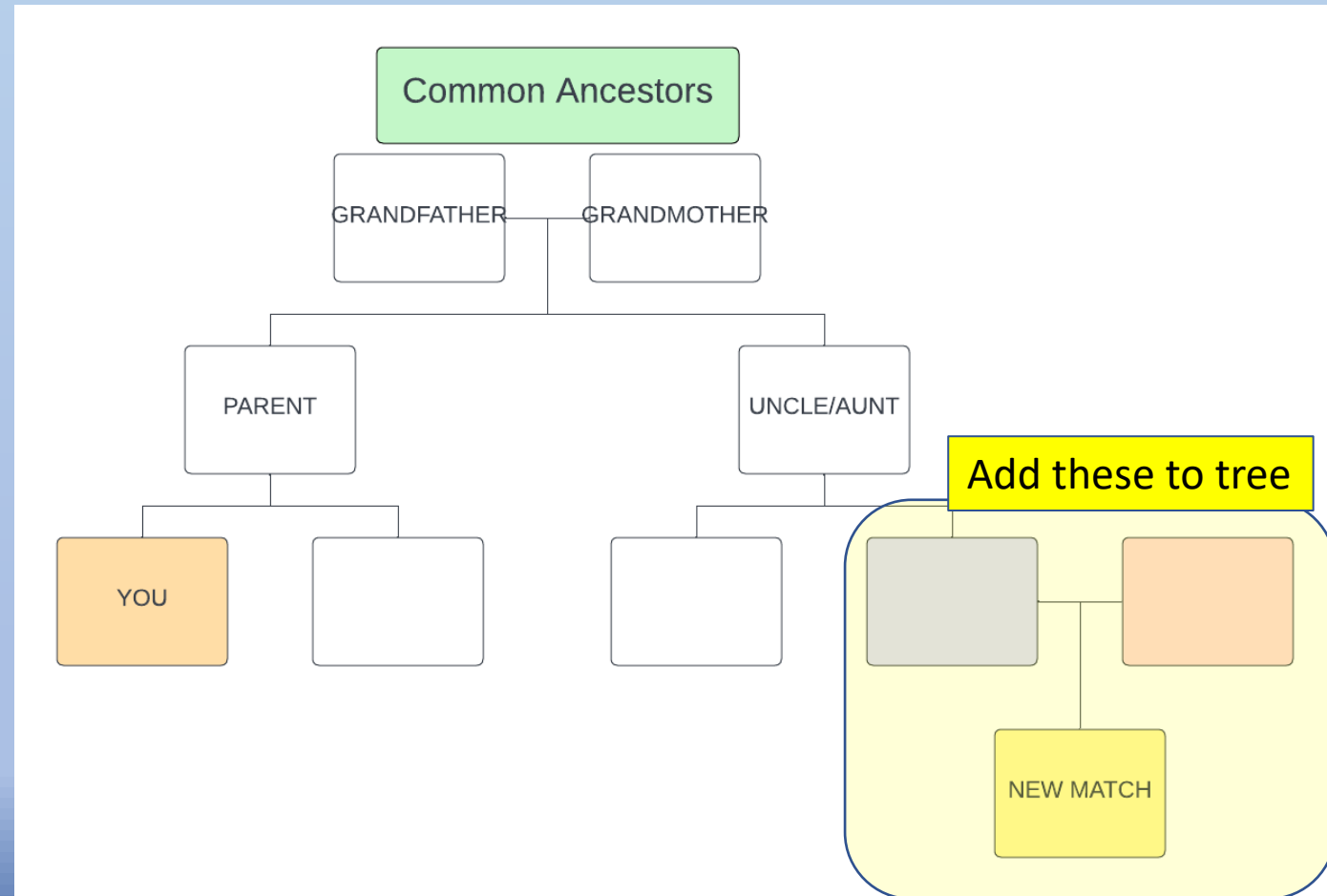
Step 4: Add Match to Your Tree

# Step 4: Add Match to Your Tree

- Once you know exactly how you are related to the match:
  - Add the person to your DNA tree

What is a DNA tree? A tree that is linked to a DNA kit and is kept at a reasonable size

- Adding that new match into your tree will help Ancestry's Shared Match Hints to identify possible common ancestor for other matches



# Step 4: Add Match to Family Tree

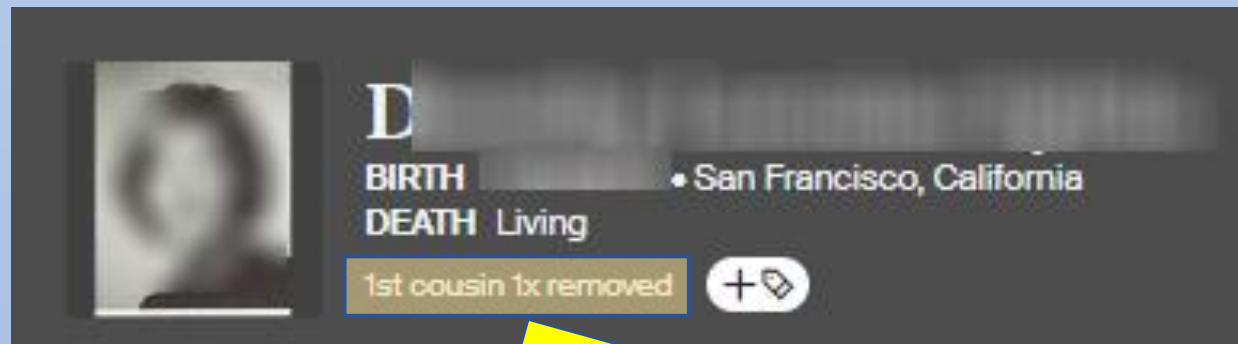
- Start at the identified common ancestor level and continue down until you've added the match to the tree

The image illustrates the process of adding a match to a family tree in three stages:

- Initial Family Tree:** A family tree snippet showing John E. Craddock (1834-1871) and Malinda Spivey (1839-1909) as parents. Below them are their children: Mary Ellen Wood (1870-1930), John E. Craddock (1888-1936), Stella Mae Mayme Craddock (1890-1961), Edward J Craddock (1899-), Laverne Craddock (1903-1991), Charles Noble Craddock (1905-1983), and Walter James Craddock (1910-2002). A spouse Hattie M Craddock (1873-) is also listed.
- Adding a Family Member:** A dropdown menu is shown over Charles Noble Craddock's profile. The menu options are: Add family member, Spouse, Son, Daughter, Brother, and Sister. An "Add family" button is visible at the bottom of the menu.
- Add a sister for Charles Noble Craddock:** A form is shown for adding a new person. The form includes fields for: First and middle name, Last name (Craddock), Suffix, Gender (Female selected), Status (Deceased selected), Birthdate (DD MMM YYYY), Birthplace (City, County, State, Country), Death date (DD MMM YYYY), and Death place (City, County, State, Country). The "Parents" section is pre-filled with John E. Craddock and Malinda Spivey. "Save" and "Cancel" buttons are at the bottom.

# Step 4: Add Match to Family Tree

- If added correctly Ancestry should show the exact relationship relative the “Home” person in the tree



Step 5: Contact the Match [OPTIONAL]



# Step 5: [OPTIONAL] Contact the Match

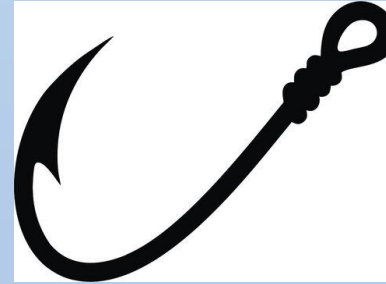
- I “generally” do not attempt to contact matches
- ONLY if there’s a strong reason (close cousin, asking for specific information, etc.)
- BECAUSE very low response rates are common with Ancestry messages
  - People not interested?
  - People don’t see the message indicator?
  - People changed emails or may even be deceased
  - Flaky Ancestry messaging system



Do as much research on the match as possible before attempting contact!

# Step 5: [OPTIONAL] Contact the Match

- If you do try to contact one:
  - Try to include a “hook” --- you’re fishing here and want to hook the line
  - You want to get the person interested in your message
  - Keep details to a minimum (no mentioning of triangulation, centiMorgans, etc.)
  - Try to mention a few relevant surnames that you think may be familiar to the person from their own family heritage
  - Short, succinct request is best



Expect the Expected --- no response.  
Getting a response is a nice surprise!

Hello Doris, my name is Ken Waters and it looks like we may be cousins. I believe we may be related on the GIBSON or MATHEWS family lines. Do you recognize these names as possible relatives? Thanks so much for taking the time to respond.

# Step 5: [OPTIONAL] Contact the Match

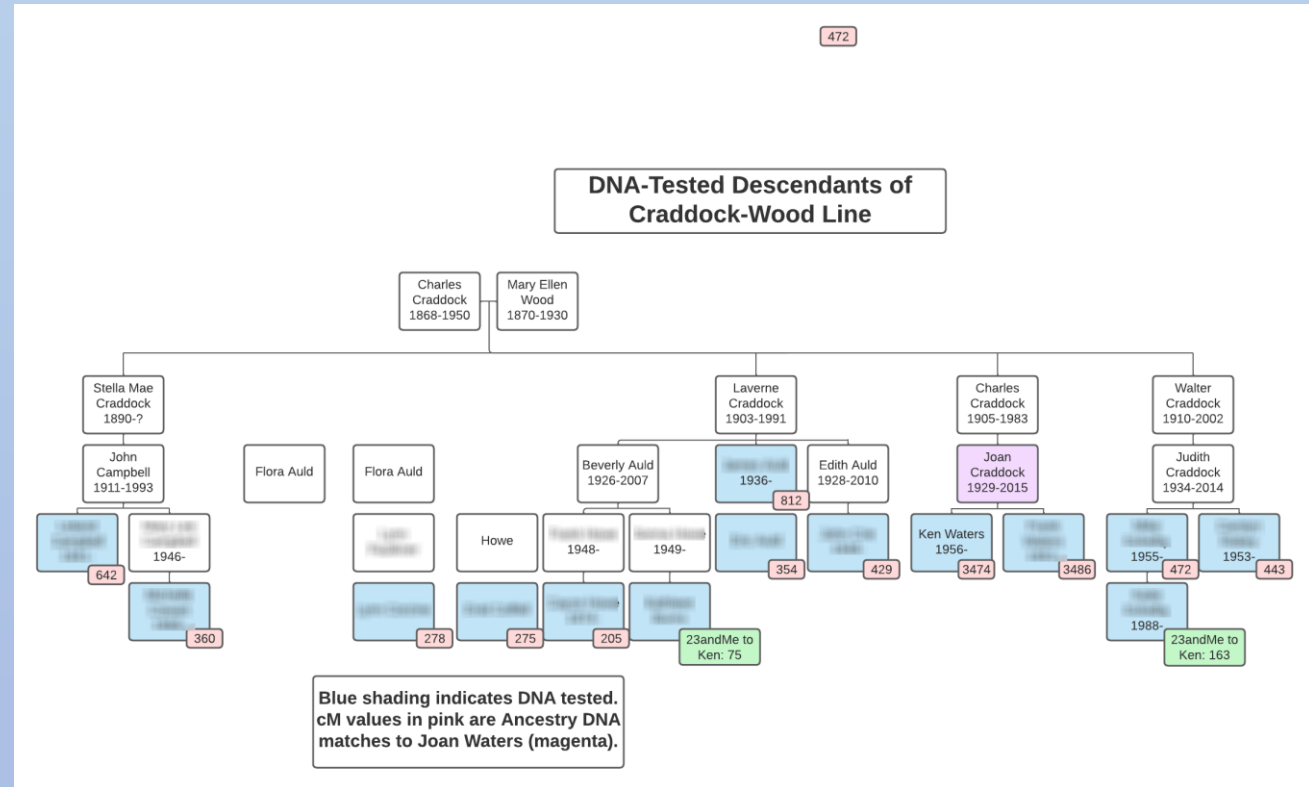
- Not just Ancestry messaging!
- Think out of the box as you might find the person on another platform that they might be more active on and so more responsive; maybe you can find the match's children who might be more communicative
- Several times I have elected to contact the person on Facebook rather than Ancestry --- my success rate doing this is much greater than Ancestry messaging



Other Suggestions

# Other Suggestions

- Consider building a DNA relational diagram (aka, descendancy diagram) when you have several matches related to each other



See my Nov 2022 presentation on building these

# Other Suggestions

- Keep checking for new matches
  - When you find them always try to “tag” them into the appropriate ancestral line
- Use the “Unviewed” filter to quickly see your newest matches



# Other Suggestions

- Make use of the Notes field!



- I often enter relevant information in the Notes field for each match to include:
  - Full name, DOB (if identified)
  - If known, exact relationship (e.g., 1C2R for 1<sup>st</sup> cousin twice removed)
  - Surname list from tree, if included

A screenshot of a DNA match card from a website. The card has a white background and a thin grey border. On the left is a circular profile picture of a person. To the right of the picture is the name "John Si". Below the name is the text "4th - 6th Cousin", "47 cM | < 1% shared DNA", and "Maternal side". To the right of this text is a small icon of a tree and the text "Unlinked Tree". On the far right is the question "Do you recognize them?" with two buttons: "Yes" and "Learn more". At the bottom of the card, there is a line of text: "Jo Si, Jun 1997, daughter of DNA match P; B Garrison, Sep 1975. Grandfather was Richard Butler, 1923-1978." On the far right of this line are three small colored circles (yellow, blue, and grey) and a pencil icon.

# Upcoming Classes/Presentations

**Thu, Feb 2, 7 pm – East Valley DNA Group, Mesa FHC**

**Sat, Feb 4, 2 pm – 3:30 pm**

Topic: Solve Your DNA Mysteries

Description: This will be an open session where you can bring your DNA mysteries in to solve together. If you have questions or need help analyzing your DNA matches then please bring them in for today's session. Let's solve them together!

**Thu, Feb 9, 7:00 pm (Private Group—contact Ken for information)**

**Sat, Apr 1, 3 pm**

Topic: Sorting DNA Matches with Ancestry Tag Groups



All library classes (highlighted blue) are free to attend and require no registration. Classes are held at the Red Mountain Mesa Public Library at 635 N Power Rd in Mesa (unless otherwise noted above).



# Remember---all presentations online

- Presentations: <http://familytreeaz.com/Presentations>



## **Genealogy Presentations**

**2023**

**[Identifying Your DNA Matches \(Jan 2023\)](#)**

**2022**

**[A Unified Process for DNA Matches \(Dec 2022\)](#)**

**[Intro to DNA \(Dec 2022\)](#)**

**[DNA Painter Dec 2022](#)**

**[GEDMatch \(Trilogy\)](#)**

**[DNA Relational Diagrams](#)**

**[First Look at Ancestry SideView Matching](#)**

**[Deep Dive into MyHeritage DNA Oct 2022](#)**

**[What Can DNA Do For You Sep 2022](#)**

**[New Match Methodology 2022](#)**

**[GEDMatch Apr 2022 Handout](#)**

**[DNA Tips & Tricks](#)**

**[Intro to DNA \(Mar 2022\)](#)**



Presentations:

<http://familytreeaz.com/Presentations>



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Google Voice Phone: (480) 331-5889

Paternal haplogroup (Big-Y700): R-FTB79747

Maternal haplogroup (Full series): H1c1

GEDMatch: A979857

