

# The Role of Evidence

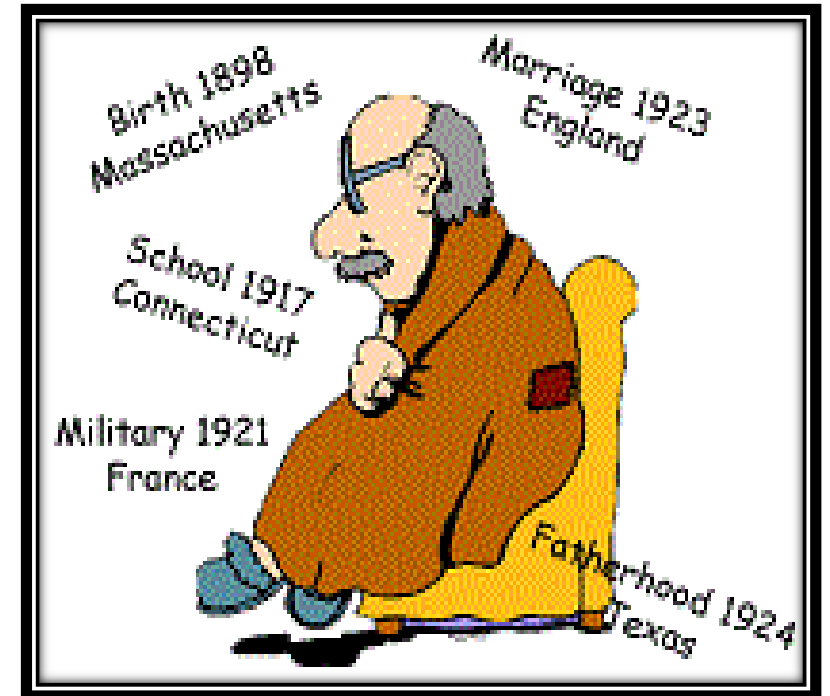


- Before starting research, it is essential to understand evidence.
- Evidence depends on what you want to prove, or your goal.
- Is your existing evidence an assertion or a fact?
- What is genealogy evidence?
- What is Proof? Three types of evidence leading to proof.
- *FamilySearch Family Tree (FSFT)* tools build proof .

# GOAL: To verify that a person is your relative

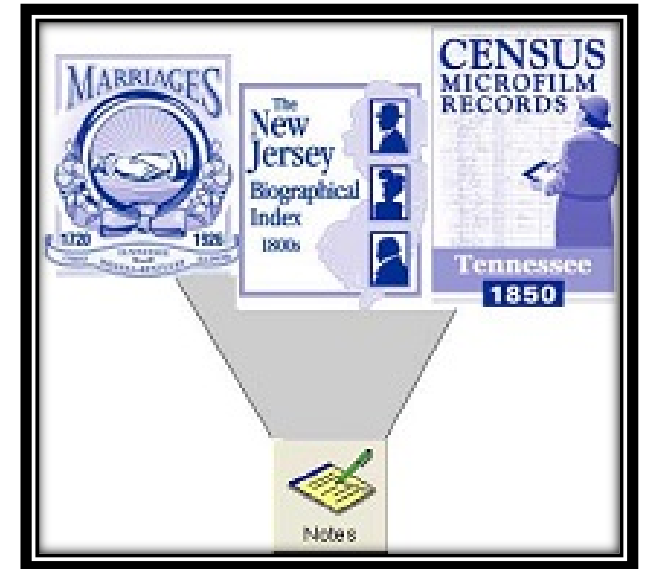
**PROBLEM:** Often information found in online pedigrees are assertions.

A **genealogy assertion** is defined as names, dates, locations, and relationships posted online or in print ***without sufficient evidence to prove that those names, dates, locations, and relationships are accurate.***



# What is **genealogy evidence**?

- It is made up of **facts** (pieces of information) that prove an event in someone's life.
- When the person's name is coupled with the place and date of that event, a fact is formed.
- It is something presented as proof of an assertion so when all facts are studied, it proves the existence of someone.



- Basically, it is an educated **guess**. Unlike direct observation, an inference involves logical judgment on the bases of circumstantial evidence and prior conclusions. If you make an inference, you're reading between the lines or using limited data to arrive at a conclusion. If you continue down this inference path, you will eventually, hit a "brick wall" and your research will be stymied.
- NOTE: If you see the words "likely," "probably," "usually," "about," or "before," you are dealing with inferences.

## What is Inference?

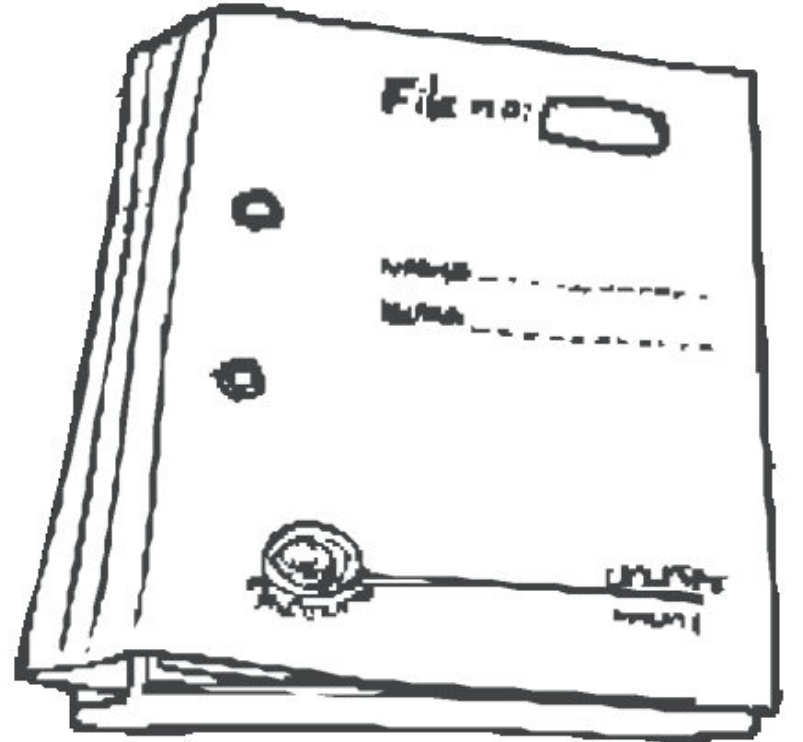


*Proof* is the accumulation of acceptable evidence --- **one fact is seldom enough.**

- Genealogists compile evidence from records, and they convince others of their findings by recording “proof statements.”
- These statements answer the question “What did this record reveal or prove about this person.”
- **There are three categories of evidence.**

# Direct Evidence

- The strongest type of evidence is that which explicitly answers the question at hand.
- It provides direct proof of a **fact** posted about a person. It is called **direct evidence**.
- **Example:** A record kept by a cemetery sexton of all the burials in his cemetery, could be direct evidence of the burial of someone.



**Indirect evidence**—is not obvious. You combine it with other evidence to reach a conclusion.

**Example:** When you seek a birth date and find an age on a military enlistment, you need to find another record, like a tombstone, with the full date and place of birth. Problem is, a birth date on a tombstone is direct but still a secondary source because people often forget things over time. This means you need another source.

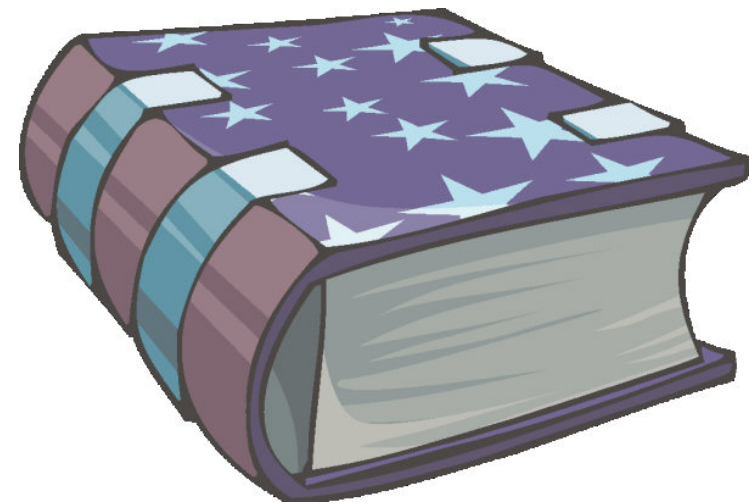


**Indirect  
Evidence**



**Negative evidence** does not refer to not finding a source, but refers to the fact that the source cannot prove that the person in the record is your ancestor. There are many people with the same name, who are about the same age, who live in the same state, and maybe the same town.

## Negative Evidence



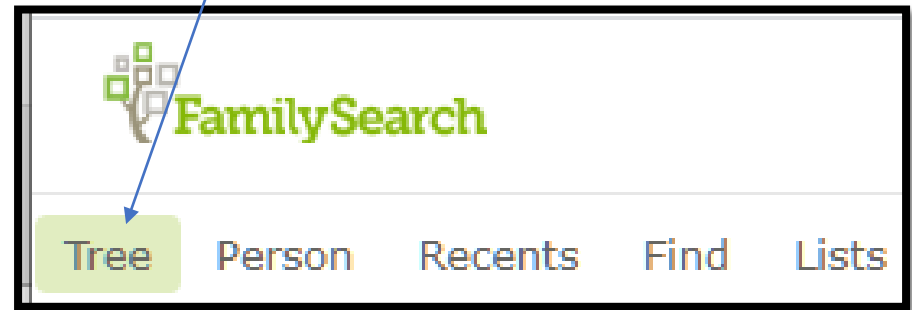
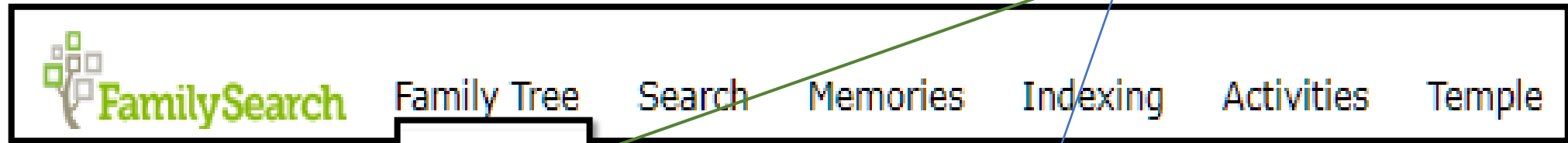


Goal: *Using the tools properly* at *FamilySearch Family Tree (FSFT)* helps to build proof.

Since every “piece of information” has the potential to prove the existence of something, we need to become acquainted with how to manage evidence at *FamilySearch Family Tree (FSFT)*. This is best done by constant application on individual persons to apply your new evaluative skills.






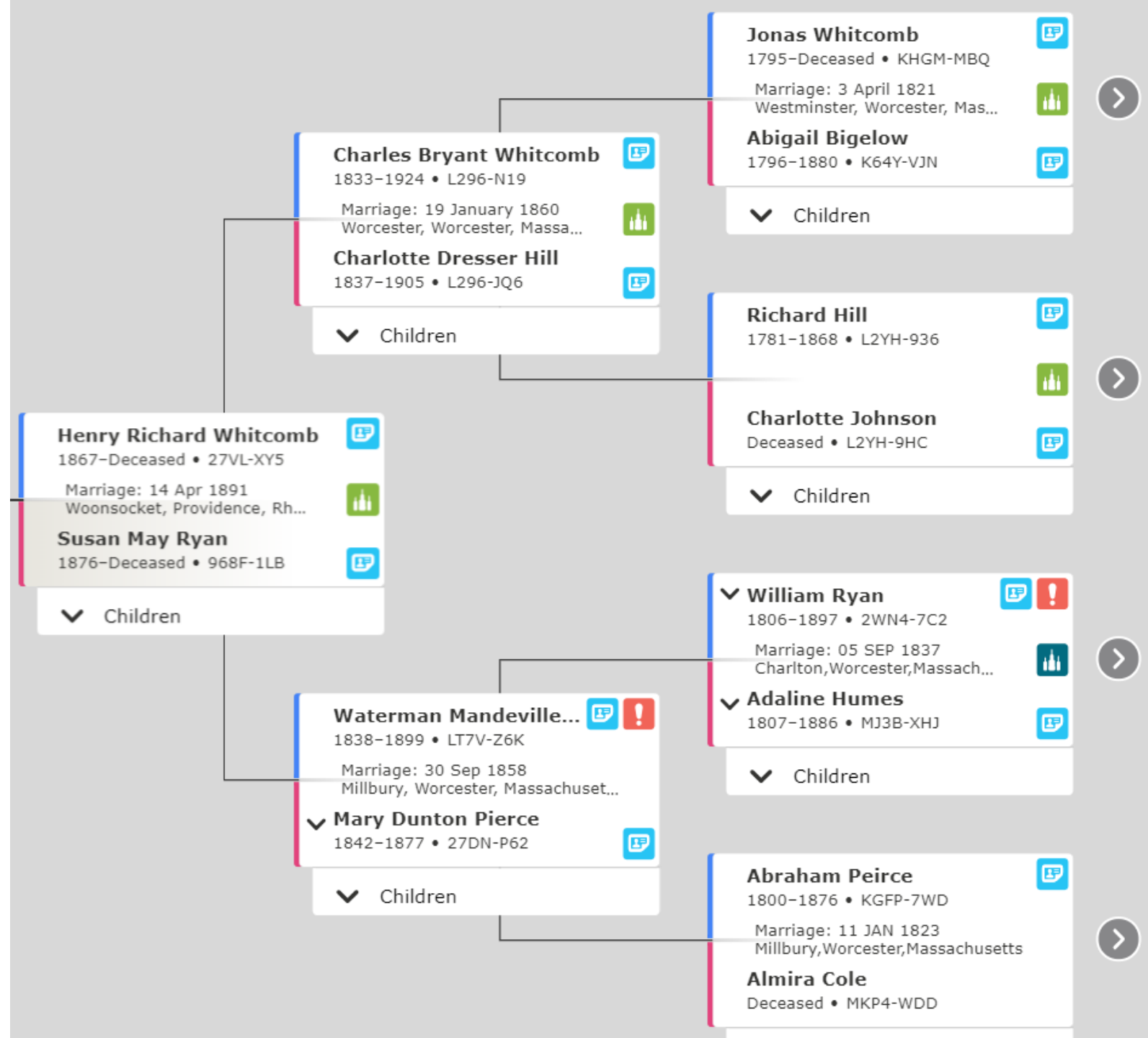
Evidence can be found on various  
*FamilySearch Family Tree* Views



Such as the  
**Tree views**

This is the **Landscape View** of Charles Bryant Whitcomb, who had a son Henry who married Susan Ryan. It illustrates their combined pedigrees.

This view shows 3 generations at a time. It contains icons such as this  indicating a temple opportunity, or this  a source **Hint** (or evidence not linked to the individual as yet), or  data problems.



This is the same person's **Portrait View**

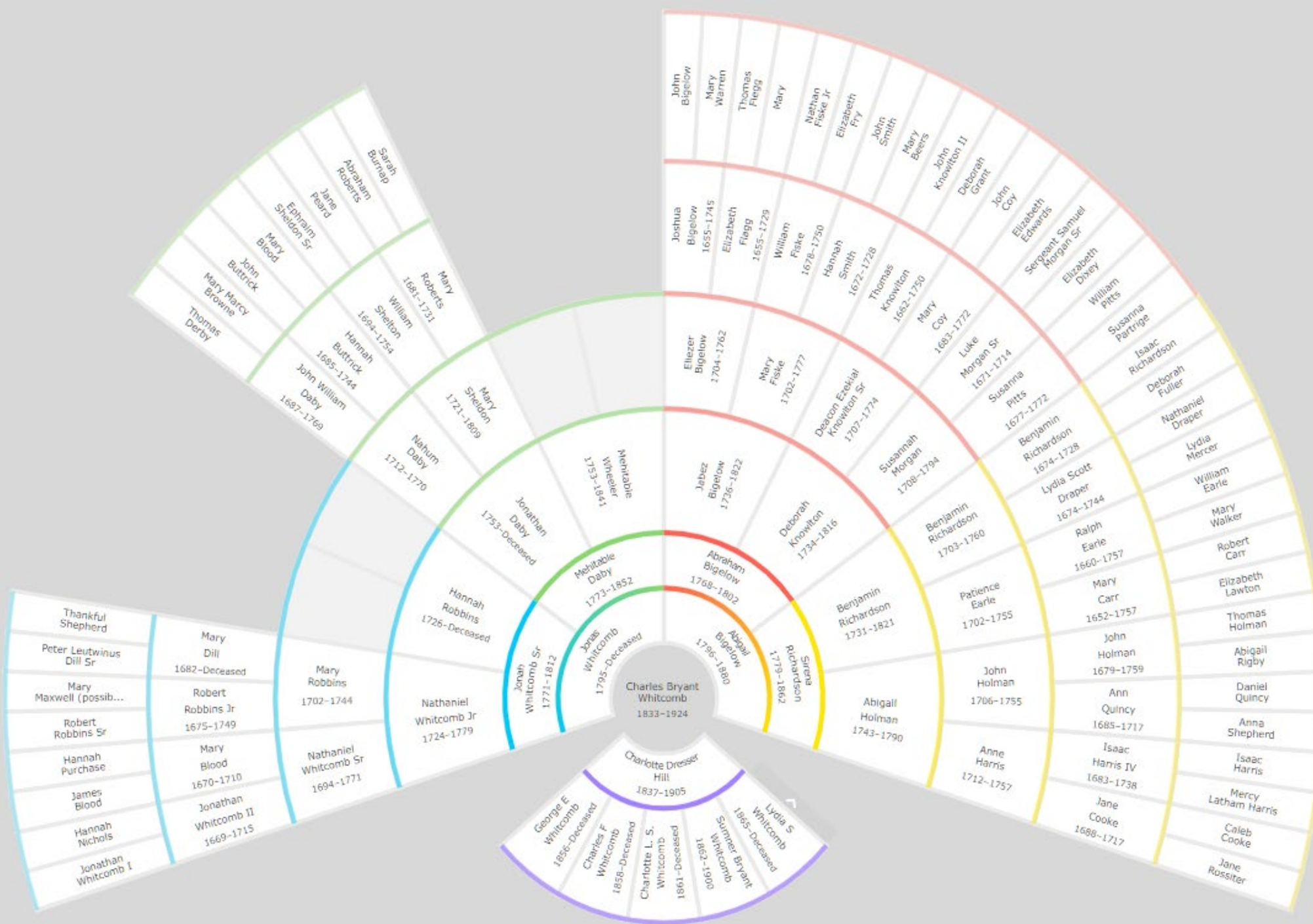
Also shows icons with research clues.



Starting with person in the center, this is a 7-generation **Fan Chart** in *Family Lines* mode.

Where gray or blank spots are shown, is a research opportunity.

It is also viewed in five other modes:

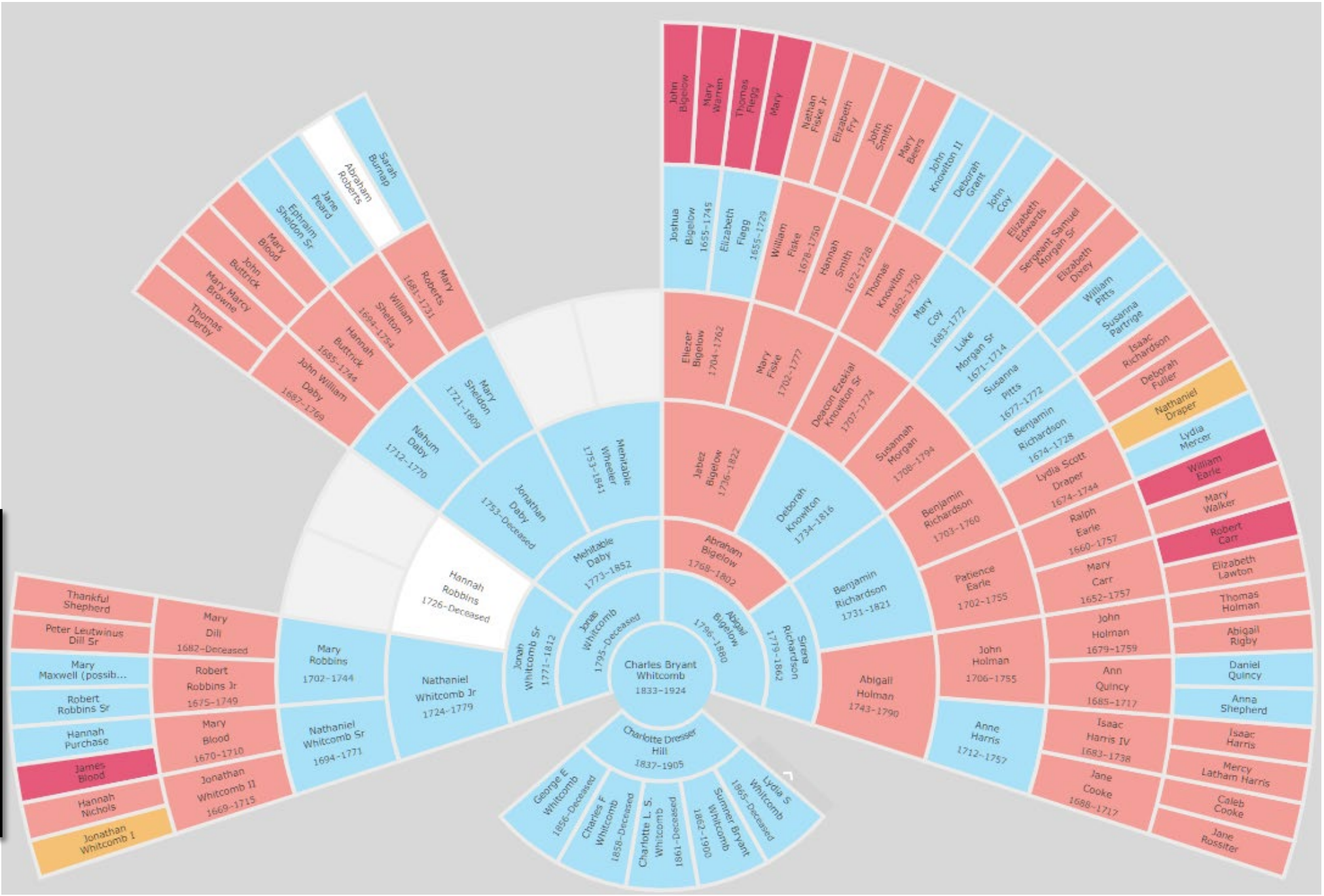




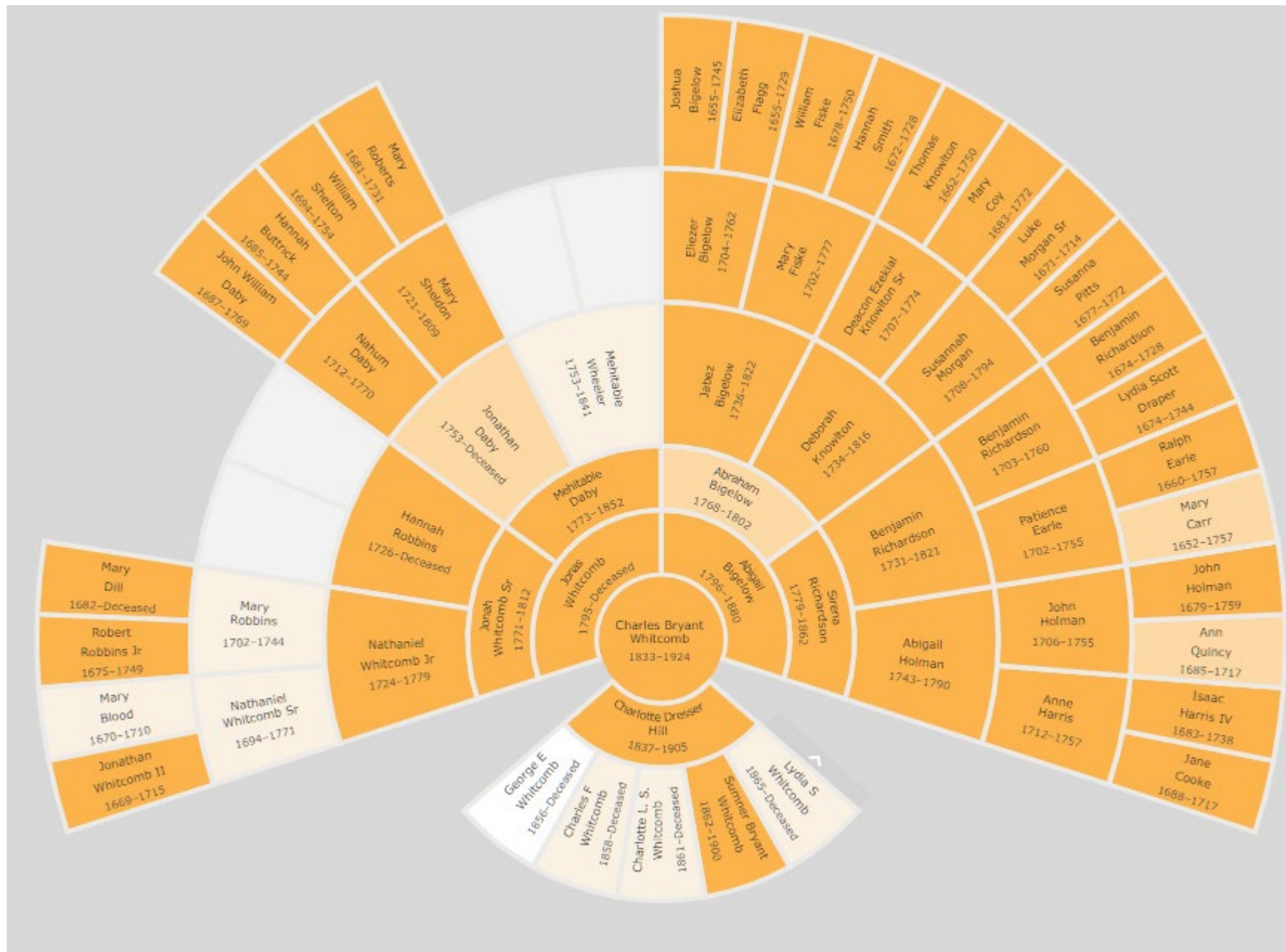
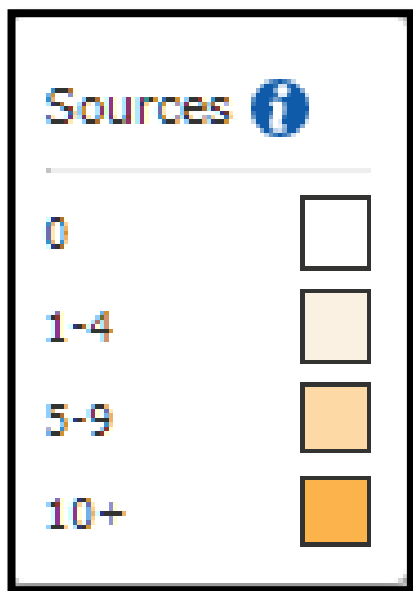
Same **Fan Chart** in *birth country mode* has this key:

**Birth Country** ⓘ

- British Colonial America
- United States
- England
- United Kingdom
- Unknown



This is **Fan Chart**  
in *Sources*  
mode adjusted  
to 6 instead of  
7 generations  
with this key:













Same person  
**Fan Chart** in  
*Photos* mode.


**Photos** 

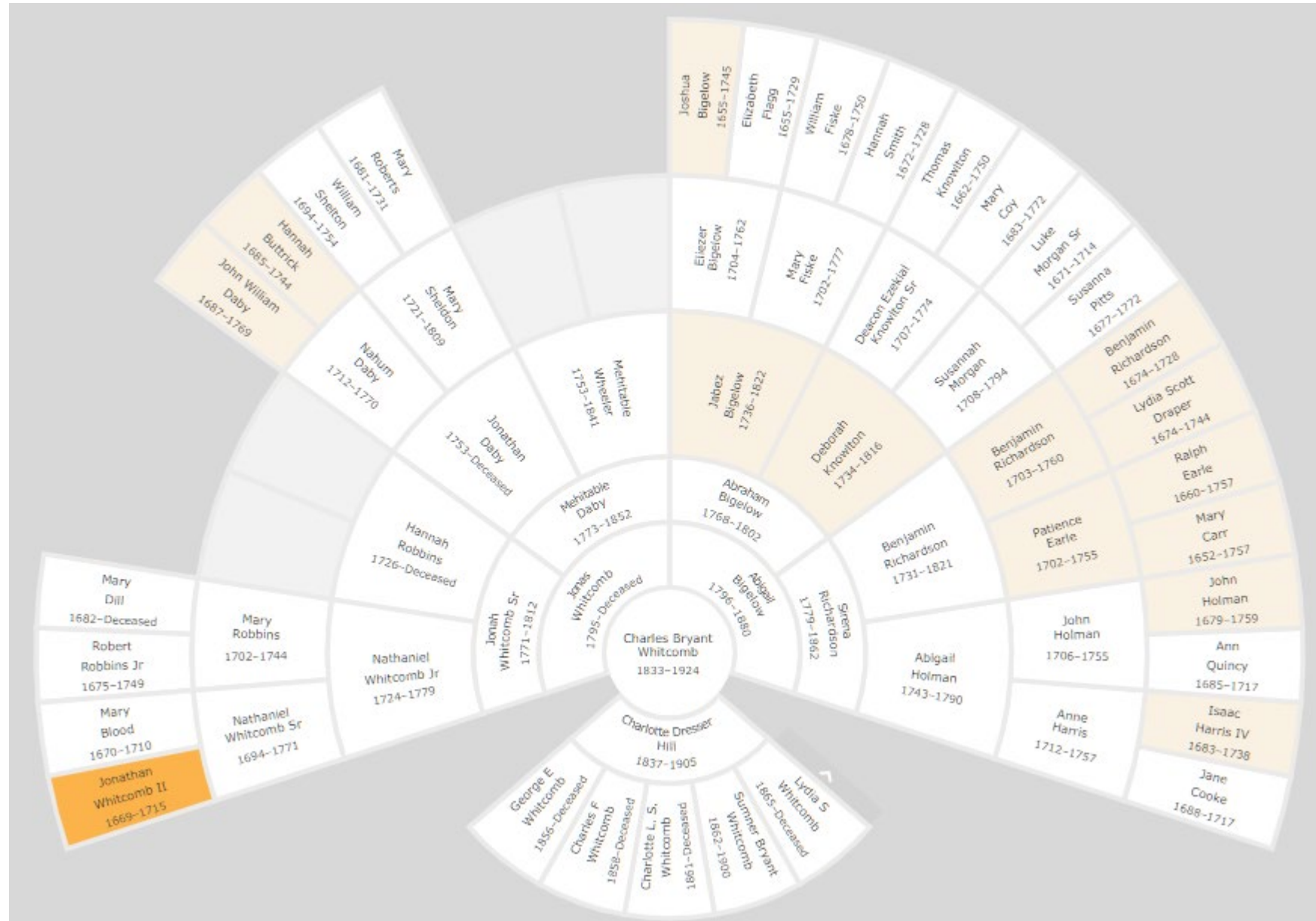
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**0** 

**1-4** 


**5-9** 

**10+** 








Same person  
**Fan Chart** in  
*Ordinances*  
 mode.

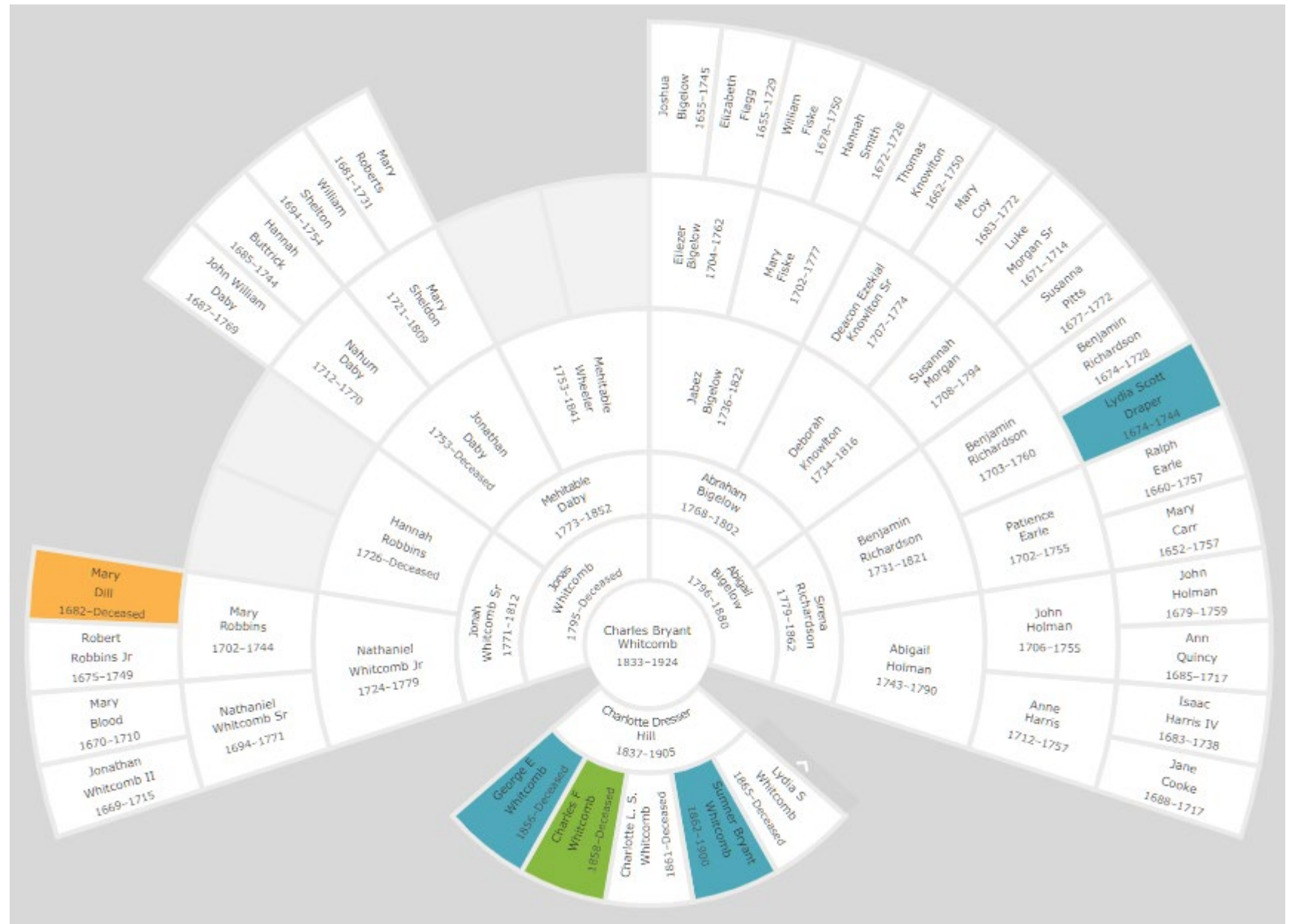
**Ordinances** 

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**Available** 

**Needs Information** 

**In Progress** 



Same Person in **Descendancy** View shows one type of research icon called a **Hint**. Further down on the page data problems and research suggestions are found. Those with icons could be selected for a genealogy project.

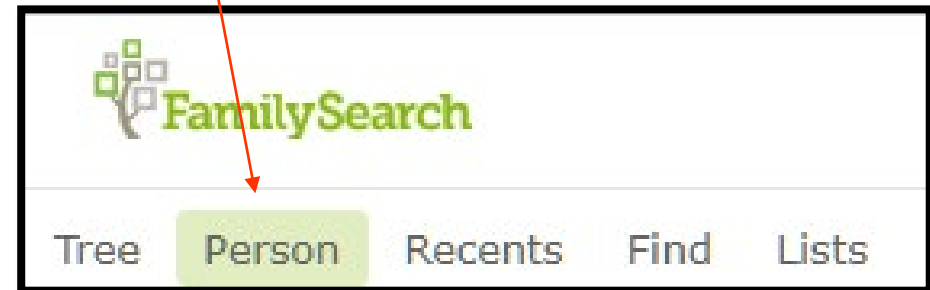
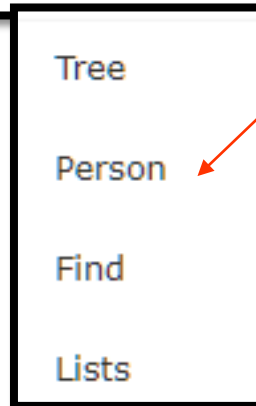
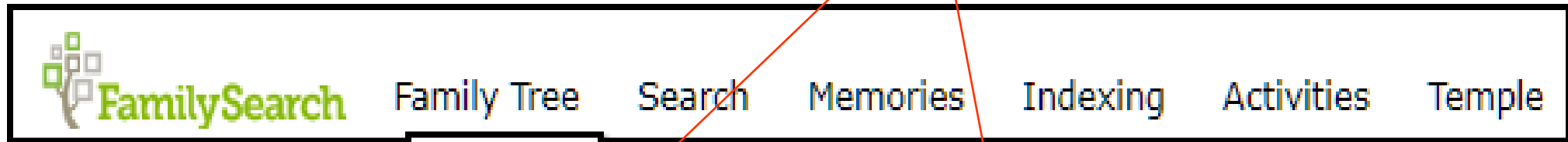
Descendancy Generations: 1 2 3 4 Options

Expand

Charles Bryant Whitcomb	1833-1924 • L296-N19	
Charlotte Dresser Hill	1837-1905 • L296-JQ6	
George E Whitcomb	1856-Deceased • L29X-Q5K	
Charles F Whitcomb	1858-Deceased • L29X-76X	
Charlotte L. S. Whitcomb	1861-Deceased • 27MN-J49	
Sumner Bryant Whitcomb	1862-1900 • 9J9T-TRZ	
Rose N. Williams	1869-Deceased • 9J9T-TR2	
Clarence Linwood Whitcomb	1886-Deceased • 9J9T-T58	
Mary Christina Macphee	1899-Deceased • LY9D-FS9	
Mary R Whitcomb	1923-Deceased • LBGK-YGF	
Florence Whitcomb	1924-Deceased • LBG2-QCM	
Joseph S Whitcomb	1926-Deceased • LBG2-4TS	
Robert Whitcomb	1930-Deceased • LBG2-QCQ	
Phyllis Therese Whitcomb	1930-2003 • LBGK-CRT	



Evidence is also found on the **PERSON** page at *FamilySearch Family Tree*




# The **Family** is the ❤️ of *FamilySearch Family Tree*.

Every person who has ever lived is to have one Person Page.

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch interface for a person's page. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Tree', 'Person' (highlighted), 'Recents', 'Find', and 'Lists'. A 'Help Others' button is in the top right. Below the navigation is a profile section for 'Charles Bryant Whitcomb', with a blue silhouette icon, birth/death dates 'about 1833 - 7 June 1924', and a family ID 'L296-N19'. Action buttons include 'View Tree', 'Watch', and 'View My Relationship'. A secondary navigation bar contains 'Details' (underlined), 'Time Line', 'Sources' (with a count of 15), 'Collaborate' (with a count of 0), 'Memories' (with a count of 0), and 'Ordinances' (with a church icon). The main content area is divided into two columns of expandable sections, each with a right-pointing arrowhead. The left column includes 'Life Sketch', 'Vitals', 'Other Information', and 'Family Members'. The right column includes 'Research Help', 'Search Records', 'Latest Changes', 'Tools', and 'Print'.

As shown here with its individual components in an “off” position, a PERSON PAGE is compact.

Arrow heads  down turn on headers.

Depending on how many children are in your family, or how many marriages a person had, the PERSON PAGE can expand (next slide).

Here is a miniature image of a **PERSON** page expanded.

The screenshot shows a person's profile page for Thomas Stanley. At the top, there is a profile picture and the name "Thomas Stanley" with dates "5 January 1576 - 21 November 1605" and a unique ID "LTC9-VV7". Below this are navigation tabs: "Details", "Time Line", "Sources", "Collaborate", "Memories", and "Ordinances". A "View Tree" link is highlighted with a blue arrow pointing to a larger icon on the right. The main content area is divided into sections: "Life Sketch", "Vitals" (with sub-sections for Name, Sex, Birth, Christening, Death, and Burial), "Other Information", and "Family Members". The "Family Members" section is expanded, showing "Spouses and Children" and "Parents and Siblings". The "Spouses and Children" list includes Elizabeth Warburton and seven children: Frances Stanley, Thomas Stanley, Margaret Stanley, Margaret Stanley, Frances Stanley, Alice Stanley, and Abigail Stanley. The "Parents and Siblings" list includes Randle Stanley and Margaret Maisterston, with four children: Randle Stanley, Mary Stanley, Thomas Stanley, and Randolph Stanley. On the right side, there are sections for "Research Help" (with links for "Birth after Father's Death", "Birth after Mother's Death", and "Possible Missing Child"), "Search Records" (with logos for FamilySearch, ancestry, findmypast, MyHeritage, and Geneanet), "Latest Changes" (listing several deleted relationships), and "Tools" (including "Edit Labels", "Possible Duplicates", "Find Similar People", "Merge By ID", "Report Abuse", and "Delete Person Unavailable"). At the bottom right, there is a "Print" section with options for "Pedigree", "Portrait Pedigree", "Fan Chart", "Family", and "Family with Sources".




Click the above **View Tree** link to open the:

- Landscape
- Portrait
- *Fan Chart* or
- Descendancy Views (covered previously), when you are on a **Person** page.

Let's open this closed **Person Page** and identify everything we know about this person from this page.

The screenshot shows a user interface for a person's profile. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "Tree", "Person" (highlighted), "Recents", "Find", and "Lists". On the right, there is a "Help Others" button. Below the navigation is a profile card for "Charles Bryant Whitcomb", with a blue silhouette icon, birth and death information "about 1833 - 7 June 1924", and a reference number "L296-N19". Action buttons include "View Tree", "Watch", and "View My Relationship". A secondary navigation bar contains "Details" (underlined), "Time Line", "Sources" (with a count of 15), "Collaborate" (with a count of 0), "Memories" (with a count of 0), and "Ordinances" (with a church icon). The main content area is divided into two columns of expandable sections. The left column includes "Life Sketch", "Vitals", "Other Information", and "Family Members". The right column includes "Research Help", "Search Records", "Latest Changes", "Tools", and "Print".

Tree Person Recents Find Lists Help Others

 Charles Bryant Whitcomb  
about 1833 - 7 June 1924 • L296-N19

View Tree Watch View My Relationship

Details Time Line Sources 15 Collaborate 0 Memories 0 Ordinances

▶ Life Sketch

▶ Vitals

▶ Other Information

▶ Family Members

▶ Research Help

▶ Search Records

▶ Latest Changes

▶ Tools

▶ Print





■ Charles Bryant Whitcomb

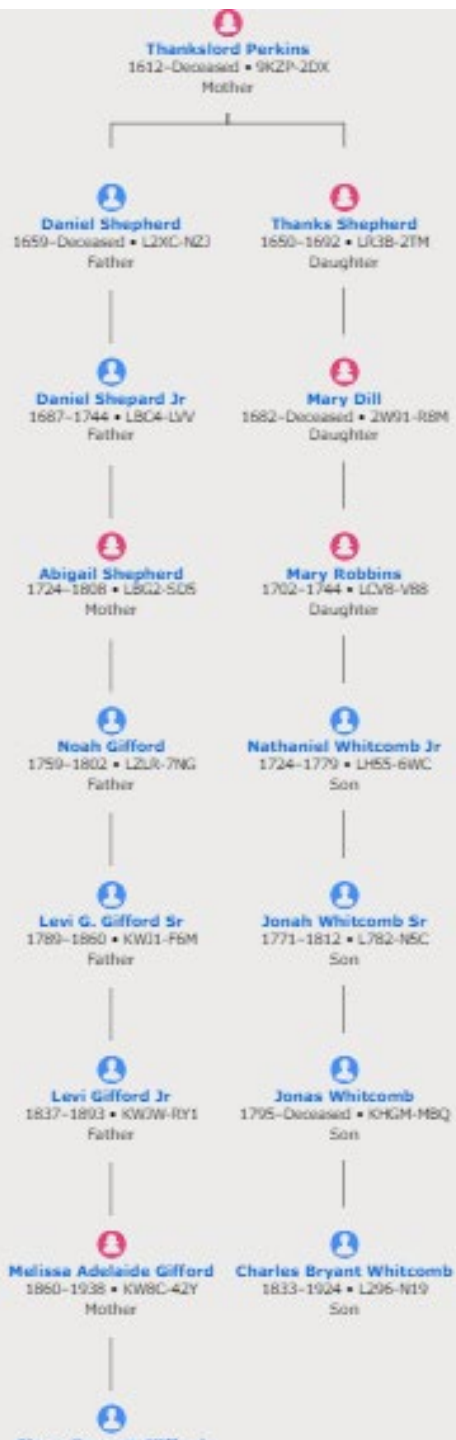
about 1833 – 7 June 1924 • L296-N19

At the top you have his full name, his approximate birth year and complete death date. You also have his FSFT ID#.

 View Tree  Watch  View My Relationship

From the top you can **view the person's ancestors, or descendants, and view your relationship**

Determine  
your  
relationship  
to the  
person



Below the individual's name, is a tool bar. Click:

Details

Time Line

Sources 15

Collaborate 0

Memories 0

Ordinances



**Details** to view Life Sketch, Vitals, Other Info and Family members.

**Time Line** to view vital events in order.

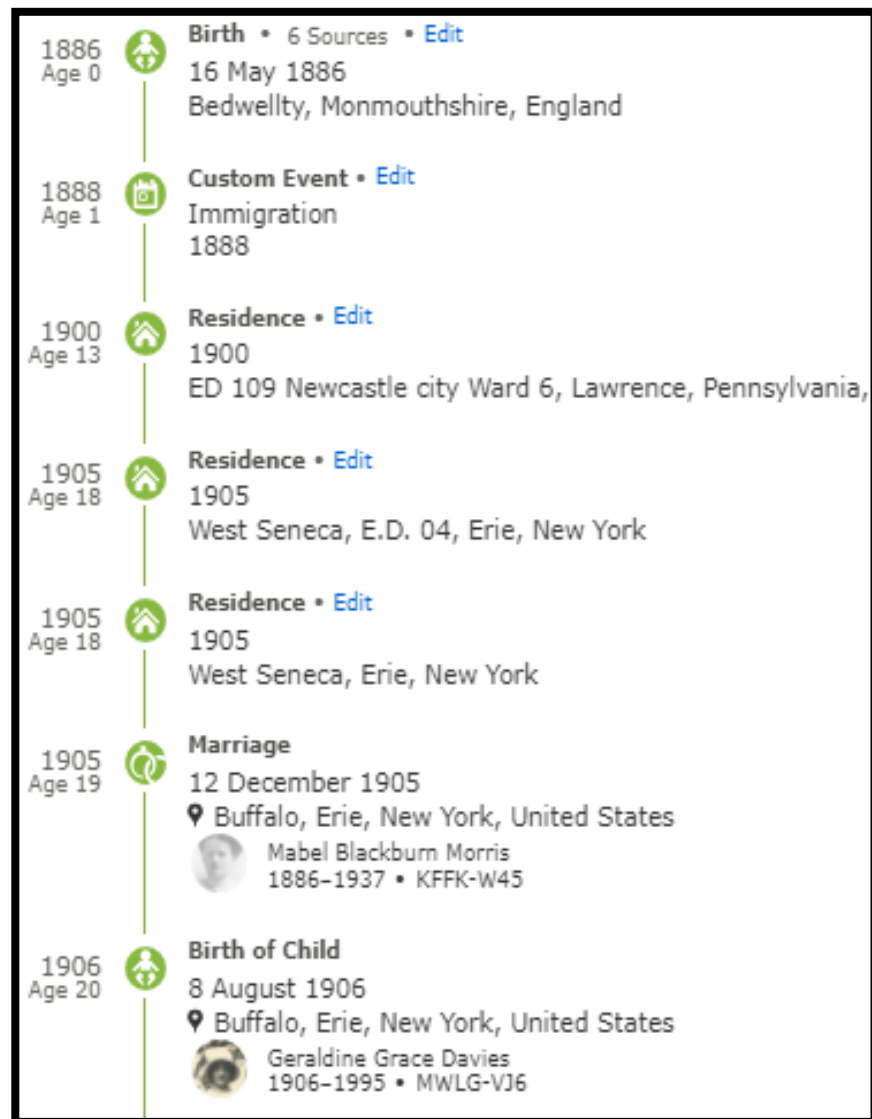
**Sources** to view sources entered so far.

**Collaborate** to communicate with relatives.

**Memories** to see images, auto files, or stories.

**Ordinances** to see status of ordinances.

# Sample of part of this man's Time Line












Sample  
of 15  
sources  
posted  
so far

## Sources

[Open Details](#) • [+ Add Source](#) • [☰ Attach from Source Box](#)

-  [Chas. B. Whitcomb in entry for Eugene Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Chas. in entry for Edward W. Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B. Whitcomb in entry for Charlotte D. Hill Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B. Ehitcomb in entry for Charlotte D. Hill Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B Whitcomb in entry for Phebe Jane Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B. in entry for Edgar A. Whitcomb and Edith J. Ruggles, "Massachusetts Marriages, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B Whitcomb in entry for Sumner B Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Deaths, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B Whitcomb in entry for Edgar A Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B. in entry for Sumner B. Whitcomb and Rose N. Williams, "Massachusetts Marriages, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B Whitcomb in entry for Edward W Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles Whitcomb in entry for Sumner Bryant Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B. Whitcomb in entry for Charlotte L. S. Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Births, 1841-1915"](#)
-  [Charles B Whitcomb in entry for Henry R Whitcomb and Susan M Ryan, "Rhode Island, Town Clerk, Vital and Town Records, 1630-1945"](#)
-  [Charles Whitcomb, "United States Census, 1900"](#)
-  [Charles B. Whitcomb, "Massachusetts Marriages, 1841-1915"](#)

# Effective Ordinances Page

Effective Ordinances		LE
Ordinance	Status	Sealing
 <b>B</b> Baptism	Completed 20 January 2017 Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple	
 <b>C</b> Confirmation	Completed 18 February 2017 Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple	
 <b>I</b> Initiatory	Completed 1 March 2017 Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple	
 <b>E</b> Endowment	Request	
 <b>SP</b> Sealing to Parents	Request	 <b>Jonas Whitcomb</b> 1795–Deceased • KHGM-MBQ
		 <b>Abigail Bigelow</b> 1796–1880 • K64Y-VJN
 <b>SS</b> Sealing to Spouse	Completed 19 December 2017 Mount Timpanogos Utah Temple	 <b>Charlotte Dresser Hill</b> 1837–1905 • L296-JQ6

# When is research most effective?

1. Once all the Standardization of names, dates, and places has been completed.
2. Once all the Abstracts have been made regarding sources for the family.
3. Once all the Duplicates have been merged together.
4. Once all the Hints have been linked to the family you selected.
5. Once you have added any new children, or added their marriage and death dates in your selected *Affiliate program*.

# Evidence is Proof.

- Evidence should not be a fancy word for "something that supports what I want to believe."
- We must show that a piece of information is relevant and must interpret what that specific information actually means.
- We also need to convince others that we have sufficient evidence to confirm that the person is part of our family.



# Test your new skills.

- **TASK 1:** Experiment with Family Tree by viewing different things on a family you know well such as a parent, aunts, uncles or cousins, or grandparents who have passed on. Everything else might not be open to you due to Right of Privacy laws.
- Click on “Activity Worksheet” on the bottom menu bar of this site.
- Click to open “NEW TEMPLE AND FAMILY HISTORY TOOLS AROUND YOU.” Print or download the form and see if you work your way through the Activity Worksheet.