

UPDATE – DNA FOR AGS



By Lark M. Robart, Guest Columnist

How to Build a “Quick & Dirty Tree” for Ancestry DNA Matches

We’ve all had those DNA matches. You know the ones I mean. There’s no tree attached. Or maybe there’s a tree, but it only contains two or three individuals. Not very helpful, right? Well, here’s a technique that might be of some assistance.

STEP 1

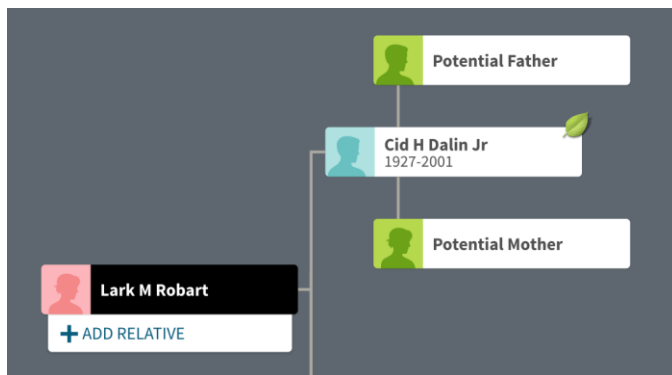
For the match to be a good candidate, one of two situations must exist: (1) a tree with at least a few names (dates and locations are also helpful); or (2) no tree but the match’s name is unique. In the case of situation #1, move on to STEP 2. In the case of situation #2, try a Google search on the match name and add the words “genealogy” or “obituary”. Oddly enough, some people have their trees in other locations but don’t always have them at Ancestry. Go figure. And on the other hand, I have located several obituaries where the match name is referenced.

STEP 2

Create a tree (*private and non-searchable!*) at Ancestry.com, using the match as the “home” person. Then add the parents from the tree created by the match, or from the information you obtained from a Google search.

STEP 3

Within a few minutes, the tree should begin to automatically populate with POTENTIAL FATHER and POTENTIAL MOTHER suggestions (see image). Add the names, and repeat the process with the next generation and the next, etc. (NOTE: Assuming you are eventually successful in identifying possible common ancestors, you will want to go back later to confirm.)



If you don't run into familiar surnames or locations after four or five generations, it's probably time to move on. Because don't forget, the point of building a "quick & dirty" tree is to *quickly* ascertain how you might be related to a DNA match.

So give it a try. You might be surprised to find how often it works!

For more information, I recommend a YouTube video by Blaine Bettinger entitled "Building Quick & Dirty Trees to Identify Genetic Matches." And in my AGS presentation on Wednesday, October 9, 2019, I will expand on this article with additional ideas on how to organize and analyze your DNA matches. That presentation will also be videotaped and available on our AGS Facebook page.