

Biological Father of Mary Ella Parker

DNA Research Report

Report to: Sutton Family
8 June 2021

Researcher: Allison Kotter

Objective

The objective of this research project is to use DNA and genealogical records to determine the biological father of Mary Ella Parker born on 22 August 1877 in Baldwin County, Alabama. Mary Ella died on 28 December 1950 in Columbus, Muscogee, Georgia. The test taker is 3 generations from the research subject and autosomal DNA (atDNA) will be applicable, however, 3rd-4th cousins may not share very much DNA which could make verifying the exact relationship difficult. The community of the research subject also experienced endogamy, so there may be multiple most recent common ancestors (MRCAs) with the test taker. Mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) is not useful in this case as it is not an unbroken maternal line and Y-DNA is not useful in this case as it is not an unbroken paternal line.

Results Summary

- Reviewed traditional genealogy research showing Mary Ella Parker as the daughter of William Edward Parker and Zilla Beck.
- Conducted multiple Leed's Method Analyses for Lesley Kotter, Phillip Sutton, and Mark County to identify genetic networks pertaining to this project.
- Calculated average cM shared between each test-taker and the descendants of Parkers versus the descendants of Barnes.
- Identified a group of matches between Phillip Sutton and Mark County that indicated a paternal link between the two test-takers.
- Explored the likelihood that Mary Ella Parker is the biological daughter of Sarah Barnes, an unwed 17-year-old girl at the time of Mary's birth.

Background

Through traditional genealogy research, it appears that the biological parents of Mary Ella Parker were William Edward Parker and Zilla Beck. However, after communicating with a DNA match, this cousin claimed the family story is that Mary was actually named Mary Ella Barnes and she adopted the name of Parker because William Parker was who raised her.¹ This may be possible as the dates between Mary Ella's birth and William and Zilla's marriage are only a few

¹ Private message to Allison Kotter, *Ancestry* messaging system, 5 January 2021; privately held by Allison Kotter, Ringgold, Georgia.

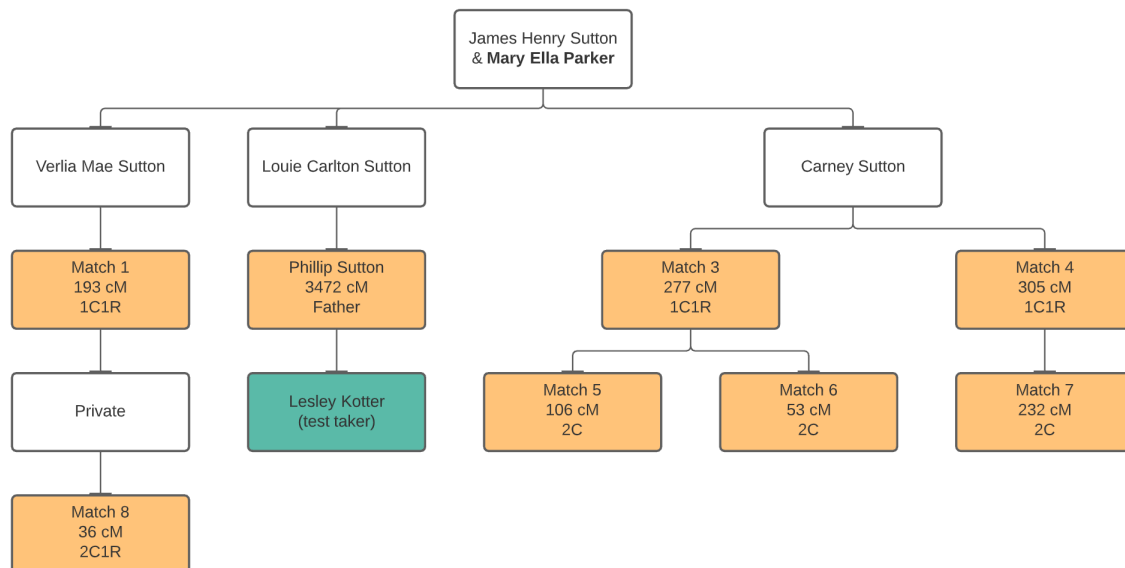
years off and inconsistent enough to raise questions.² The current sources available for the family seem to point to Mary Ella being born in Baldwin County, Alabama in 1877 and William and Zilla being married in 1875. While there is no direct evidence for the specifics around Mary Ella's birth, it seems most likely based on multiple pieces of indirect evidence. There is also evidence of Zilla Beck, Mary Ella's mother, being married to a Mr. Barnes prior to her marriage to William Edward Parker. Therefore, the candidates for Mary Ella Parker's biological father are William Edward Parker and Mr. Barnes.

Mary Ella Parker's great-granddaughter, Lesley Kotter, has taken an autosomal DNA test at *Ancestry* and transferred it to *MyHeritage*, *FTDNA*, *Living DNA*, and *GEDmatch*. Many of Lesley's DNA matches who descend from Mary Ella's maternal line, the Beck family, have been located, but rarely any matches from Mary Ella's paternal line have been found. Below is the evidence that Lesley is the biological great-granddaughter of Mary Ella Parker:

1. *Louie Carlton Sutton is Lesley's biological grandfather*
None of Lesley's first cousins have tested, but her father has put his DNA on *Ancestry*, confirming the father-daughter relationships between Lesley and her father. His father was Louie Carlton Sutton.

2. *Mary Ella Parker is Lesley's biological great-grandmother (see Figure 1)*
The relationship of Lesley to her great-grandmother, Mary Ella Parker, is confirmed through DNA matches with first cousins once removed, second cousins, and second cousins once removed. Documentary evidence for this connection is also strong.

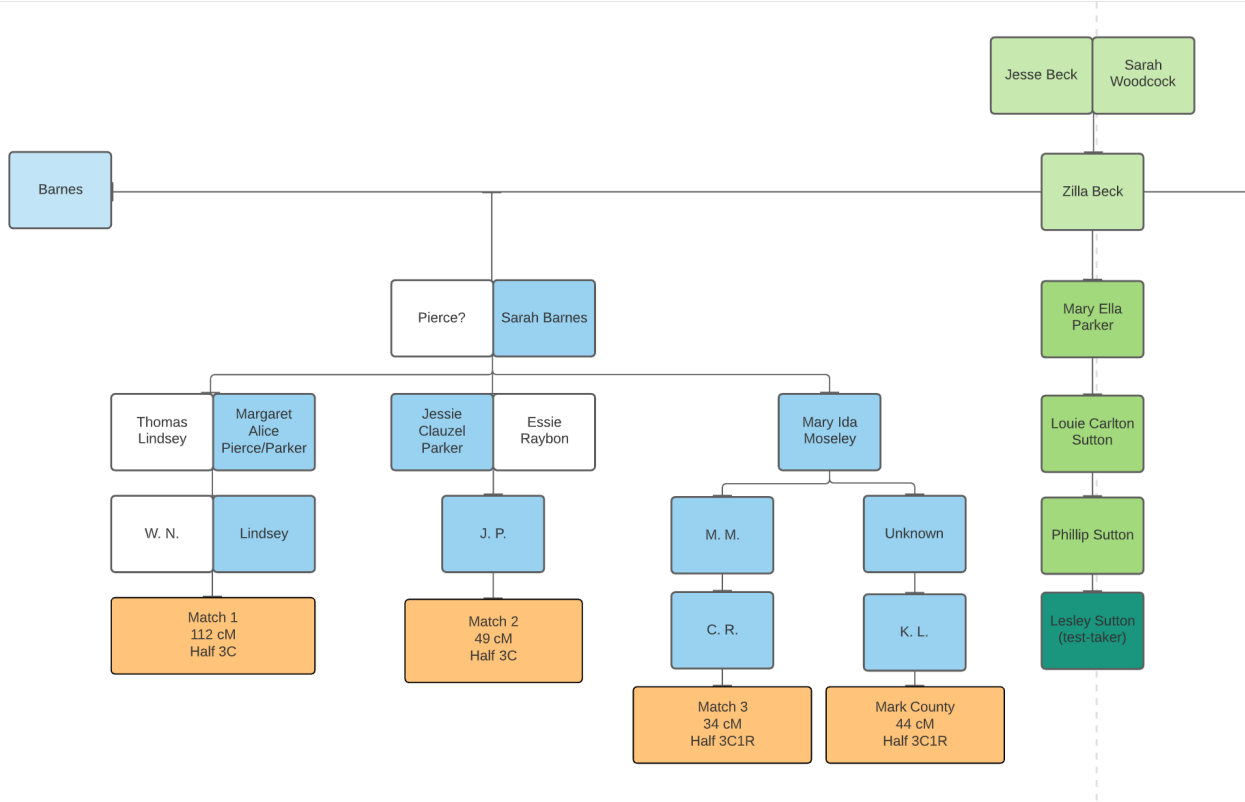
Figure 1: Mary Ella Parker is Lesley's Biological Great-Grandmother



² Allison Kotter, "Level 1 Research Report," p. 9-14; report to ICAPGen, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2021; photocopy held by Allison Kotter, Ringgold, Georgia.

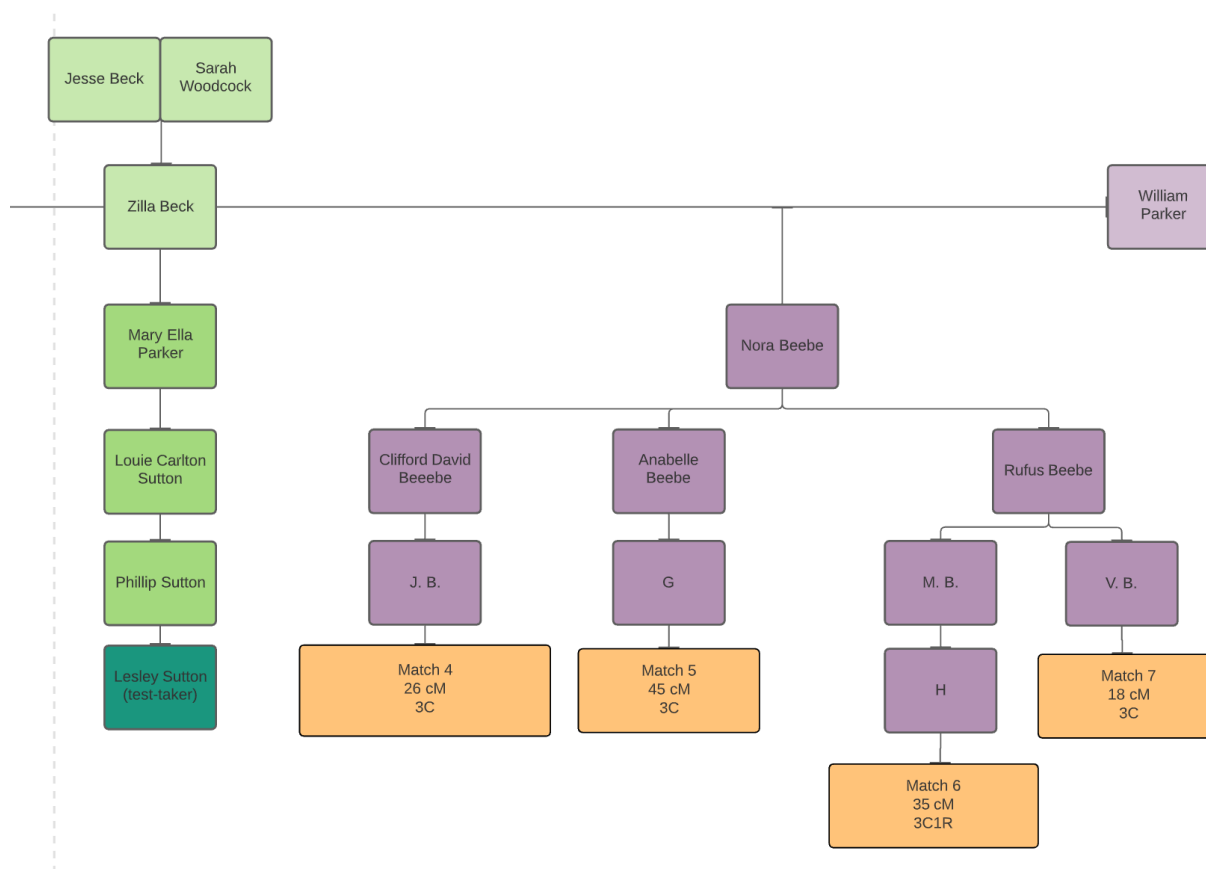
3. *Zilla Beck is Lesley's biological 2nd great-grandmother (see Figures 2 & 3)*
 Lesley is related to descendants of Zilla Beck from both of Zilla's husbands: Mr. Barnes (see Figure 2) and William Edward Parker (see Figure 3). This confirms that she is a biological descendant of Zilla, but does not confirm her biological 2nd great-grandfather.

Figure 2: Lesley's Relationship to Mr. Barnes & Zilla Beck Descendants



Note: Names in green boxes are direct ancestors of Lesley Sutton (the test-taker), and names in blue boxes are descendants of Mr. Barnes and Zilla Beck. Orange boxes indicate a DNA match.

Figure 3: Lesley's Relationship to William Parker & Zilla Beck Descendants



Note: Names in green boxes are direct ancestors of Lesley Sutton (the test-taker), and names in purple boxes are descendants of William Parker and Zilla Beck. Orange boxes indicate a DNA match.

Reviewing this information shows the reasoning behind the research question for this project: Who is Mary Ella Parker's biological father?

Limitations & Methodology

Autosomal DNA can only help identify ancestors up to 6-8 generations back. When reviewing a DNA match, the testing website will report the amount of DNA shared with a match, but the specific relationship can only be discovered through analyzing pedigrees. Placing matches in genetic networks and tracking the surnames and locations that appear in different pedigrees can help pinpoint a common ancestor between a test taker and a DNA match. This process can help prove family relationships and lead to hypotheses for missing ancestors.

Genealogical Evidence for Mary Ella Parker's Family

Before analyzing the DNA evidence provided through Lesley Kotter's autosomal DNA, an in-depth review of the genealogical evidence for Mary Ella Parker's father should be conducted. In the 1880 and 1900 census, Mary Ella Parker is enumerated as the daughter of William and

Zillie Parker. Unfortunately, the information for the family from the 1890 census is missing due to a catastrophic fire that destroyed the vast majority of the 1890 census.³ Table 1 shows the information about the Parker family gained from the 1880 and 1900 U.S. Census.

Table 1: Parker Family in 1880 & 1900 U.S. Census					
1880 Census Helton's, Baldwin, Alabama ⁴			1900 Census Wallace, Santa Rosa, Florida ⁵		
William Parker	Head	27	William E. Parker	Head	45
Zella Parker	Wife	30	Zillie Parker	Wife	48
Sarah Barns	Dau	20	-----	-----	----
William Barns	Son	14	William W Parker	Son	24
Joseph Parker	Son	6	Joe C Parker	Son	22
-----	-----	----	Jackson C Parker	Son	19
Mary Parker	Dau	3	Mary E Parker	Dau	17
-----	-----	----	Nora C Parker	Dau	15
-----	-----	----	Mandy M Parker	Dau	12
-----	-----	----	Jessie C Parker	Grandson	21
Edward Barnes	Grandson	2	Edward Parker	Grandson	11

[-----] denotes that child was not on record

According to these records, the children of William and Zilla would be Sarah Barns (b. 1860), William W Barns/Parker (b. 1866), Joseph "Joe" C Parker (b. 1874), Mary Ella Parker (b. 1877), Jackson C Parker (b. 1881), Nora C Parker (b. 1885), and Mandy M Parker (b. 1888). It is important to identify the siblings of Mary Ella Parker - half and full - in order to perform an efficient DNA analysis of the family. Being able to track DNA matches back through multiple

³ Kellee Blake, "First in the Path of the Firemen: The Fate of the 1890 Population Census, Part 1" (www.archives.gov : NARA, 1996, accessed 25 October 2016), volume 28.

⁴ 1880 U.S. Census, Heltons, Baldwin County, Alabama, population schedule, Beat 3, Enumeration District 10, sheet 228C, dwelling 54, family 54, entry for William Parker household; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 22 November 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 0001.

⁵ 1900 U.S. Census, Wallace, Santa Rosa County, Florida, population schedule, Beat 1, Enumeration District 104, sheet 1B, dwelling 17, family 17, entry for William E. Parker household; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 20 November 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication T623.

siblings can help prove Mary Ella's relationship to her siblings and parents. From the current information, it appears that there are five biological Parker siblings: Joseph, Jackson, Mary Ella, Nora, and Mandy; and two biological Barnes siblings: Sarah and William. However, as these are seven identified children of Zilla - through either husband - the 1910 census claims that Zilla is the mother of 12 children, with only 11 living.⁶ This would indicate that there are 5 missing children from these census records.

Extensive research for these missing children has found a child of William and Zilla that was born in 1881, therefore missing the 1880 census enumeration, and had moved out of the house by 1900, therefore missing the 1900 census enumeration. This child was named Charles Lee Parker and has been linked to the family in multiple cases but most directly through his death certificate which lists his parents as William Edward Parker and Lizzie Barnes and where the informant is his sister, Mary Ella Sutton.⁷

As for the other four children attributed to Zilla, it is believed that these four children are her biological grandchildren that she raised. Their names are Edward Barnes/Parker (b. 1878), Jessie Clauzel Pierce/Parker (b. 1889), Margaret Alice Pierce/Parker (b. 1888), and Mary Ida Pierce/Parker (b. 1892). There is no direct evidence of the parents of these grandchildren, but based on their birthdates, the only possible child of Zilla that could be their biological mother is Sarah Barnes, born in 1860. The family story is that their father was a seaman with the surname of Pierce who left the family one day and never returned.⁸

Combining these children and grandchildren brings the total of "children" of Zilla to 12 children. 10 of these children have been found living past 1910, with the exceptions being Edward Barnes/Parker and Sarah Barnes. The 1910 census had reported that one of the children had died by that point. If Sarah Barnes is the one child that had died, it would explain why Zilla was raising the grandchildren as her own. The full list of the "children" of Zilla Beck is shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Zilla (Beck) Parker's Children		
Name of Child	Birthday of Child	Notes on Child
<i>Children between Zilla Beck and Mr. Barnes</i>		
Sarah Barnes	1860 ^a	The only source that has been found on Sarah Barnes

⁶ 1910 U.S. Census, Wallace, Santa Rosa County, Florida, population schedule, Beat 3, Enumeration District 98, sheet 2A, dwelling 19, family 19, entry for William E Parker household; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 18 December 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 167.

⁷ "Alabama Deaths, 1908-1974", database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 21 September 2020), Chas S Parker, (26 September 1933), Stockton, Baldwin, Alabama; citing GS film 1908512.

⁸ Private message to Allison Kotter, *Ancestry* messaging system, 9 June 2021; privately held by Allison Kotter, Ringgold, Georgia.

		is the 1880 U.S. Census.
William Washington Barnes	8 November 1865 ^b	William was single throughout the censuses of his life and does not appear to have had any children. ^c
<i>Children between Zilla Beck and William Edward Parker</i>		
Joseph Columbus Parker	28 October 1874 ^d	Well Documented (see Research Log)
Mary Ella Parker	27 August 1877 ^e	Well Documented (see Research Log)
Jackson Seaborn Parker	2 August 1880 ^f	Well Documented (see Research Log)
Charles Lee Parker	19 August 1881 ^g	Well Documented (see Research Log)
Nora Plinabell Parker	6 September 1884 ^h	Well Documented (see Research Log)
Amanda Mahala Parker	11 September 1889 ⁱ	Well Documented (see Research Log)
<i>Grandchildren of Zilla Beck through Sarah Barnes</i>		
Edward Barnes/Parker	October 1878 ^j	Only found in the 1880 census, 1900 census, and witnessing a deed for Joseph Parker in 1902. ^k See note on the 1900 census for the Parker family in the next section of the report.
Margaret Alice Pierce/Parker	14 January 1888 ^l	Connected to the family through a death certificate and myriad of indirect evidence (see Research Log)
Jessie Clauzel Pierce/Parker	28 October 1888 ^m	See note on the 1900 census for the Parker family in the next section of the report.
Mary Ida Pierce/Parker	1892 ⁿ	Connected to the family through land records and authored sources (see Research Log)

- a. 1880 U.S. Census, Heltons, Baldwin County, Alabama, population schedule, Beat 3, Enumeration District 10, sheet 228C, dwelling 54, family 54, entry for William Parker household; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 22 November 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 0001.
- b. "United States, Veterans Administration Master Index, 1917-1940", William Washington Barnes; database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 1 August 2020), image 4401 & 4407, citing NARA microfilm publication 76193916.
- c. "Former Santa Rosa Man Dies in Jackson (Marianna)", *Pensacola News Journal (Pensacola, Florida)*, 31 March 1937, page 5, column 5; digital images, *Newspapers.com* (www.newspapers.com : accessed 1 August 2020).
- d. Joseph Columbus Parker, SS no. (263-09-7606), (11 January 1937), Application for Account Number (form SS-5), Social Security Administration, Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service.
- e. Death Certificate for Mary Ella Sutton, Muscogee County, Georgia, 28 December 1950; citing Georgia Department of Health, certificate #28415.
- f. "U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918", database with images, *Ancestry.com* (www.ancestry.com : accessed 30 July 2020), entry for Seaburn Jackson Parker, 12 September 1918, Milton, Santa Rosa County, Florida, image 99; citing United States, Selective Service System.
- g. "Alabama Deaths, 1908-1974", database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 21 September 2020), Chas S Parker, (26 September 1933), Stockton, Baldwin, Alabama; citing GS film 1908512.
- h. *Find A Grave*, database with images (www.findagrave.com/memorial/29235048: accessed 31 July 2020), memorial page for Nora P Beebe (6 September 1884 - 27 October 1969), Find A Grave Memorial #29235048; citing Strickland Cemetery, Pace, Santa Rosa County, Florida; photo included.
- i. *Find A Grave*, database with images (www.findagrave.com/memorial/24681886: accessed 31 July 2020), memorial page for Amanda Parker Penton (11 September 1889 - 24 July 1970), Find A Grave Memorial #24681886; citing Milton Cemetery, Milton, Santa Rosa County, Florida; photo included.
- j. 1900 U.S. Census, Wallace, Santa Rosa County, Florida, population schedule, Beat 1, Enumeration District 104, sheet 1B, dwelling 17, family 17, entry for William E. Parker household; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 20 November 2017); citing NARA microfilm publication T623.
- k. Santa Rosa County, Florida, Warranty Deed, vol. O, pg. 411, entry for Joseph C. Parker & Maggie M. Parker, 8 April 1902; citing Santa Rosa County Clerk.
- l. "Alabama Deaths, 1908-1974", database, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 24 November 2020), Margaret Alice Alford, (14 January 1887-19 July 1967), Opp, Covington County, Alabama; citing FHL microfilm #1909104.
- m. "United States World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918", database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 1 August 2020), entry for Jesse Claugel Parker, 5 June 1917, Walton County, Florida, image 1744; citing World War I Selective Service System Draft Registration Cards.
- n. "Florida Deaths, 1877-1939", database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 27 November 2020), Ida Mosley, (1892 - 28 October 1917), Paxton, Walton, Florida; citing FHL microfilm #004026952.

A Note on the 1900 U.S. Census Record for the Parker Family

Comparing the information from the 1900 U.S. Census record for the Parker family and the other information from other sources for the Parker family show some inconsistencies:

- William and Zilla are listed as being married in 1875, where their oldest child together - Joseph Columbus Parker - was born in 1874.
- It is listed that Zilla is the mother of 9 children with only 6 children living in the 1900 census as compared to the 12 children with 11 living in the 1910 census.
- William Washington Barnes is enumerated as William W. Parker with a birthdate of 1876, instead of the expected 1865 as found through other sources.
- Jessie C. Parker is enumerated as being born in 1879 instead of the expected 1888 as found through other sources.
- Edward Parker is enumerated as being born in 1889 instead of the expected 1878 as found in the 1880 U.S. Census.
- Margaret Alice Parker and Mary Ida Parker are not enumerated with the family in this census although they would have been 12 and 8 years old respectively.

Going through each of these inconsistencies, it is important to remember one of the drawbacks of census records is that the person giving the information to the enumerator is unknown. The informant could have been the head of the household, another family member in the household, or even a neighbor if the family was not present when the census enumerator came by. If a young child of the family or a neighbor to the family was giving the information for the census, then it would be expected that there would be incorrect information given to the census enumerator. That seems to be the case here. From the wide differences in dates and information given about the family, it can be assumed that a neighbor or someone who did not have a complete understanding of the make-up of the family was providing the information for the 1900 census enumeration of the Parker family. Explanations for these inconsistencies could be:

- The marriage year of William and Zilla could be a rounding error.
- The vast difference of 9 children born and 6 children living in the 1900 census compared to the report from the 1910 census of 12 children born and 11 children living seems to simply be wrong information. Just counting biological children of Zilla, only 8 have been identified, and all but Sarah Barnes had been found living past this point. No evidence of other deceased children has been found for the family.
- The person giving this information must have not known that William W. Parker was a step-child to William Edward Parker and went by William W. Barnes. They also must have guessed William W.'s age and were off by 10 years, only knowing he was the oldest child.
- It is thought that the enumerator or the informant switched the years of Edward and Jessie as Edward is enumerated as being born in 1889 where other records indicate he was born in 1878 and Jessie is enumerated as being born in 1879 where other records indicate he was born in 1888. Switching the birthdates for the two would make much more sense with the other records gathered for the family.
- It is unknown if Margaret Alice Parker and Mary Ida Parker were residing with the family in 1900, but they have not been found elsewhere in the 1900 census. It would seem likely that they were with the family as they claim the family's name instead of their biological surname of Pierce, indicating they were raised with the Parker family. The

informant may not have remembered to include them with the family when speaking with the enumerator of the census.

DNA Evidence of Mary Ella Parker's Father

After reviewing the evidence of the Parker family, with the indication that Mary Ella Parker is the daughter of William Edward Parker, Lesley Kotter's DNA was analyzed with the hope to prove this hypothesis. With over 50,000 DNA matches in Lesley Kotter's list, much time was spent reviewing DNA matches on Lesley's paternal side and identifying matches pertinent to this project.⁹ The matches that descended from William Edward Parker and Zilla Beck or Mr. Barnes and Zilla Beck were identified, with a total of 31 matches that look to be confirmed descendants of Zilla Beck and one of her husbands.¹⁰

A Leeds Method analysis of a person's DNA matches is often used to identify the four sets of great-grandparents a person has.¹¹ While Lesley's four sets of great-grandparents were already known, this analysis was completed for her DNA in order to isolate the matches that shared DNA with Mary Ella Parker - Lesley's great-grandmother. When this analysis was completed for Lesley Kotter's match list, five genetic networks were shown instead of the expected four.¹² When more than the four expected groups result from a Leeds Method analysis it is an indication that the test-taker's pedigree seems to be experiencing endogamy, which is described by Paul Woodbury: "Endogamy is the custom of marrying only within the limits of a local community, clan, or tribe over the course of many generations...Members of endogamous populations may descend from a limited pool of 'founder' ancestors who represented the initial genetic makeup of their population".¹³

⁹ "AncestryDNA Results for Lesley Kotter," database report, *Ancestry DNA* (<https://ancestry.com> : accessed 1 January 2021), 58,596 total DNA matches, 4,176 4th cousin or closer, and 54,420 distant matches.

¹⁰ "RLP with DNA Multiple Testers", compiled by Allison Kotter, 10 June 2021; *Airtable* research log tracking DNA matches for Lesley Kotter.

¹¹ Dana Leeds, "DNA Color Clustering: The Leeds Method for Easily Visualizing Matches", *Dana Leeds* (<http://www.danaleeds.com> : accessed 10 June 2021).

¹² Leeds Method Analysis for Lesley Kotter, completed by Allison Kotter, 8 February 2021, privately held by Allison Kotter (Macon, Georgia); *Ancestry* data showing 5 clusters with matches ranging from 90 cM – 400 cM.

¹³ Paul Woodbury, "Dealing with Endogamy, Part 1: Exploring Amounts of Shared DNA", *Legacy Tree* (<http://www.legacytree.com> : accessed 10 June 2021), paragraph 3.

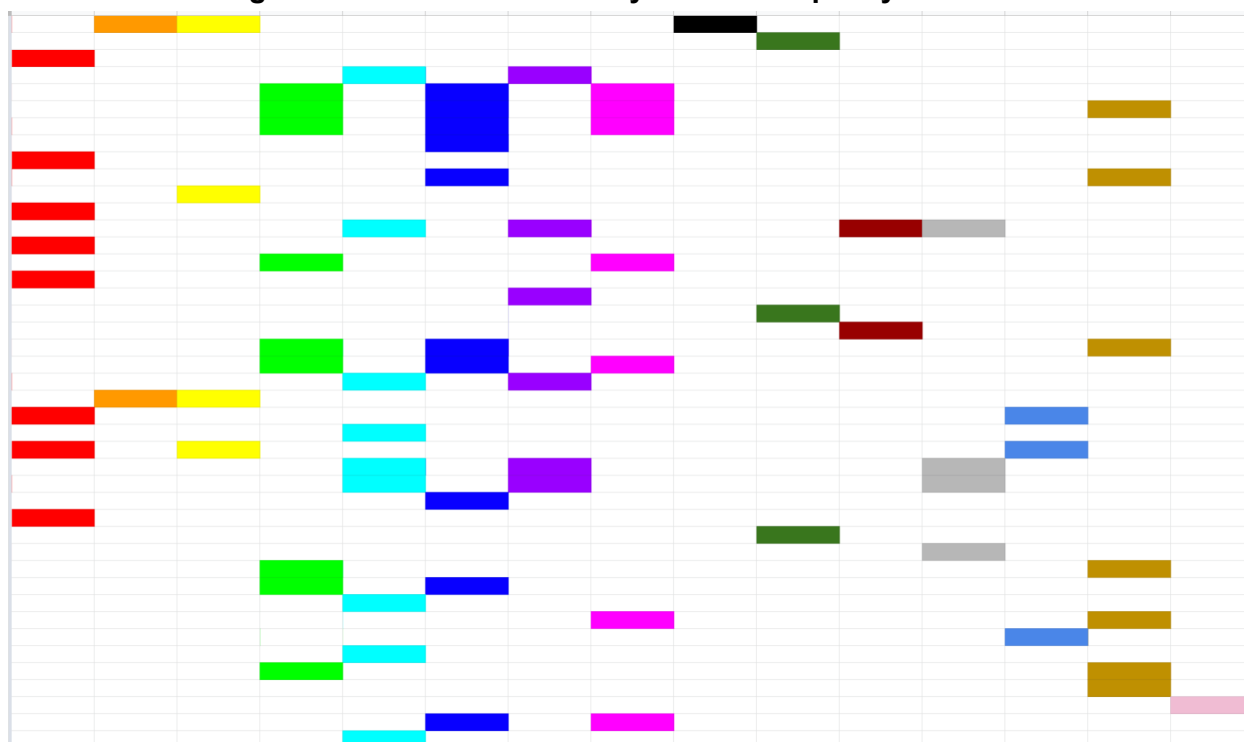
Figure 3: Leed's Method Analysis for Lesley Kotter



Endogamy can cause significant issues when analyzing DNA results for a test taker. Many matches will share multiple common ancestors with a test-taker causing the shared DNA with these matches to appear larger than the actual relationship. In order to overcome this challenge, the DNA of Phillip Wayne Sutton, Lesley's father was obtained with the hope that this could focus on the matches that only descended from Zilla Beck and not any other common ancestors. The results of the Leed's Method analysis for Phillip showed fifteen genetic networks instead of the expected four.¹⁴ This indicated that the endogamy in this family was severe making it very difficult to identify the common ancestor of a match.

¹⁴ Leeds Method Analysis for Phillip Wayne Sutton, completed by Allison Kotter, 10 June 2021, privately held by Allison Kotter (Macon, Georgia); *Ancestry* data showing 15 clusters with matches ranging from 90 cM – 400 cM.

Figure 4: Leed's Method Analysis for Phillip Wayne Sutton

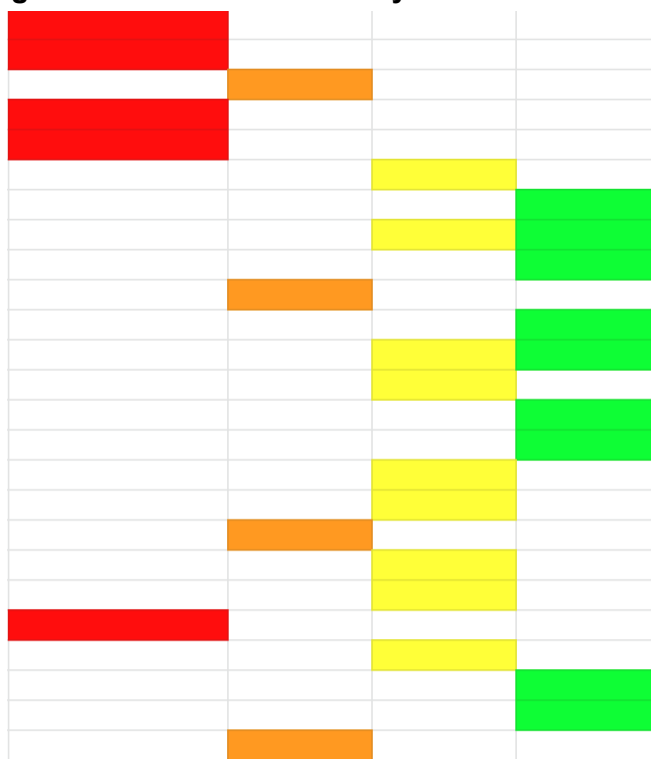


Each of these genetic networks for Phillip Sutton's DNA were then examined to find the common ancestor that was being represented in each network. There was overlap between many, but four of the groups seemed to represent descendants from Zilla Beck - each of these four groups representing descendants from both William Parker and Mr. Barnes. The matches in these groups were then analyzed to find any match that was only showing up in one genetic network, with no overlap at all. There were only a few matches that met these criteria and they were contacted.

One of the matches that responded provided access to his DNA results along with his permission to use his DNA and name, Mark County, in this project. The Leed's Method analysis for Mark's DNA resulted in the expected four genetic networks showing that approaching the research objective with Mark's DNA would take out the complication added with the endogamy found in Lesley and Phillip's DNA.¹⁵

¹⁵ Leeds Method Analysis for Mark County, completed by Allison Kotter, 10 June 2021, privately held by Allison Kotter (Macon, Georgia); *Ancestry* data showing 4 clusters with matches ranging from 90 cM – 400 cM.

Figure 5: Leed's Method Analysis for Mark County



Mark was a descendant of Zilla through Zilla's granddaughter Mary Ida Pierce/Parker.¹⁶ Previous research has discovered that Mary Ida was born Mary Ida Pierce, but adopted the name Mary Ida Parker as she was raised by her grandparents, William Edward Parker and Zilla Beck.¹⁷ The only child that would have been old enough to have children at this point was Sarah Barnes, Zilla's daughter through her first marriage to Mr. Barnes.¹⁸ This would make Mark County biologically a descendant of the Barnes family based on traditional research and understanding of the family.

Not including Mary Ella Parker, as her biological father is in question, Mark's DNA was compared to the descendants of the other Parker children found in the traditional genealogy research explained earlier in the report. The average amount of DNA Mark was sharing with the

¹⁶ "AncestryDNA Results for Mark County," predicting 2nd-3rd Cousin relationship with Private match, sharing 151 cM across 8 segments. Documented relationship: second cousin through Virgil Eugene Moseley and Mary Ida Pierce/Parker.

"AncestryDNA Results for Mark County," predicting 2nd-3rd Cousin relationship with Private match, sharing 150 cM across 5 segments. Documented relationship: third cousin through William Jordan Moseley and Cynthis Lindsey Tillis.

¹⁷ "Florida Marriages, 1830-1993", database with images, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 27 November 2020), Virgil Mosely & Ida Pierce Parker, 21 December 1905, Santa Rosa County, Florida; citing Family History Library microfilm #00929767.

¹⁸ 1880 U.S. Census, Heltons, Baldwin County, Alabama, population schedule, Beat 3, Enumeration District 10, sheet 228C, dwelling 54, family 54, entry for William Parker household; digital image, *FamilySearch.org* (www.familysearch.org : accessed 22 November 2018); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 0001.

biological Parker descendants was 33 cM whereas the average amount of DNA Mark was sharing with the Barnes descendants was 109 cM. This analysis would indicate that Mark is more closely related to the Barnes descendants than the Parker descendants indicating that the traditional research of Mary Ida Pierce/Parker's biological tracings is correct.

When this exercise was done for Phillip Sutton, the grandson of Mary Ella Parker, he was found sharing an average of 75 cM with the biological Parker descendants and an average of 164 cM with the Barnes descendants. This would indicate that Phillip is more related to the Barnes descendants than the Parker descendants - meaning Mary Ella Parker is possibly a Mary Ella Barnes biologically. When this exercise was done for Lesley Kotter, a generation further from Mary Ella Parker, it was found that Lesley was sharing an average of 24 cM with Parker descendants and an average of 55 cM with Barnes descendants, once again showing a stronger relationship to the Barnes descendants. This information is also shown in Table 3 along with the sample size and range of each statistic.

Table 3: Average Amount of DNA Between Testers and Parker/Barnes Descendants			
	Average cM	Sample Size	Range of cM
Mark County - Parker Descendants	33 cM	12	(12 cM - 71 cM)
Mark County - Barnes Descendants	109 cM	5	(64 cM - 151 cM)
Phillip Sutton - Parker Descendants	75 cM	16	(10 cM - 144 cM)
Phillip Sutton - Barnes Descendants	164 cM	6	(64 cM - 251 cM)
Lesley Kotter - Parker Descendants	24 cM	15	(8 cM - 45 cM)
Lesley Kotter - Barnes Descendants	55 cM	6	(34 cM - 112 cM)

*Note: This analysis shows that there were significantly more Parker descendants than Barnes descendants, but looking at the range of cM shared, there is a significantly higher range with the Barnes descendants than the Parker descendants. More descendants should be tested to make the statistics as reliable as possible.

If Mary Ella Parker was biologically a Parker, her descendants would only share DNA with Barnes descendants through Zilla Beck and Zilla's ancestors. There would be no matches between Mary Ella's descendants and Barnes descendants that did not share DNA with the Beck family. To see if Phillip and Mark shared DNA that was not inherited through Zilla Beck (therefore identifying a paternal line), an attempt was made to separate all matches from Zilla's siblings from the shared matches between Phillip and Mark. This was successful in that there

was a group of matches who shared DNA with Phillip and Mark and other descendants of Mr. Barnes but did not share DNA with the Beck descendants. This would suggest that Phillip and Lesley are descendants of Mr. Barnes instead of William Edward Parker as the traditional research had suggested.

Mary Ella Parker's Exact Relationship to the Barnes Family

Based on the information from the DNA match that disputed Mary Ella as a Parker, the family story that has been passed down is that Mary Ella Parker was the biological daughter of Zilla Beck and her first husband Mr. Barnes.¹⁹ However, the first two children of Mr. Barnes and Zilla were born in 1860 and 1865. Mary Ella's birthdate does not appear to be until 1877. Even adjusting for the conflicting dates found throughout records for Mary Ella, it appears that Mary Ella is 10 years younger than the youngest known Barnes sibling. It seems unlikely that Zilla would have two children with Mr. Barnes, then not anymore for 10 years. It is possible, but an odd gap in the family.

Another possibility of Mary Ella's biological relationship to the family could be that she is the daughter of Sarah Barnes - the oldest daughter of Mr. Barnes and Zilla Beck. Sarah would have been around 17 at the time Mary Ella was born and it is possible that to cover up the daughter of an unwed child, William Parker and Zilla Beck raised Mary as their daughter. This hypothesis can be examined further by looking at the expected relationships for each possible relationship and using the shared cM project to decide the likelihood of each relationship.

For this analysis shown in Table 4, the average amount of DNA between Phillip Sutton and Parker/Barnes descendants was compared to the average amount of DNA shown in the shared cM project for the expected relationship. Four possible relationships were explored - Mary Ella as the biological daughter of William Parker, Mary Ella as the biological daughter of Mr. Barnes, Mary Ella as the biological daughter of Sarah Barnes with the same father as the Pierce children (full siblings), and Mary Ella as the biological daughter of Sarah Barnes with a different father than the Pierce children (half siblings).

Table 4: Likelihood of Different Possible Relationships for Mary Ella Parker			
	Expected Relationship between Phillip Sutton and DNA matches	Expected cM based on shared cM for expected relationship	Actual cM between test-takers and descendants of focus group (with relationship probabilities)
Mary Ella Parker is the biological	2nd cousin 1x removed	122 cM	75 cM (21%)

¹⁹ Private message to Allison Kotter, *Ancestry* messaging system, 5 January 2021; privately held by Allison Kotter, Ringgold, Georgia.

daughter of William Parker			
Mary Ella Parker is the biological daughter of Mr. Barnes	2nd cousin 1x removed	122 cM	164 cM (52%)
Mary Ella Parker is the biological daughter of Sarah Barnes (with same father as Pierce children)	2nd cousin	229 cM	164 cM (29%)
Mary Ella Parker is the biological daughter of Sarah Barnes (with a different father than Pierce Children)	Half 2nd cousin	120 cM	164 cM (52%)

This analysis showed that there is a 21% chance that Phillip Sutton is a second cousin once removed to Parker descendants, a 52% chance that Phillip Sutton is a second cousin once removed to Barnes descendants, a 29% chance that Phillip Sutton is a full second cousin with Barnes/Pierce descendants and a 52% chance that Phillip Sutton is a half-second cousin with the Barnes/Pierce descendants. This exercise seems to suggest that the most likely relationship of Mary Ella Parker to the family is that she is either the daughter of Mr. Barnes and Zilla Beck or the daughter of Sarah Barnes and an unknown father.

Conclusion

Overall, it appears that Mary Ella Parker may biologically be a Barnes who adopted the surname Parker. The DNA evidence shows the descendants of Mary Ella sharing more DNA with other Barnes descendants than the Parker descendants. However, it is important to remember that DNA evidence is indirect evidence, and more research and evidence should be found to strengthen this conclusion. Whether Mary Ella Parker is the daughter of Zilla and her first husband, or the daughter of Sarah Barnes, and therefore the granddaughter of Zilla Beck, is unclear, and more DNA should be collected to sort out the exact relationships.

Future Research Suggestions

- Collecting Y-DNA from an unbroken male descendant of the Parker family could help with this research project as it would show further generations back from William Edward Parker. These descendants could also be compared to the DNA matches of Mary Ella Parker's descendants to see if they share DNA past William Edward Parker. This finding

could strengthen the conclusion of whether or not Mary Ella Parker's biological father was William Edward Parker or Mr. Barnes. Unfortunately, there is not a known unbroken male descendant of Mr. Barnes as his only confirmed children are Sarah Barnes, a daughter, and William Washington Barnes, a son who had no children of his own.

- A focused research project of the descendants of Mr. Pierce and Sarah Barnes would help identify Mr. Pierce, and also would give more information of the Barnes family. Traditional research should also be included in this project trying to find seamen with the surname of Pierce in the area of the panhandle of Florida in the late 1800s based on the family story.
- A traditional research project should be conducted to confirm the death date of Sarah Barnes and Edward Barnes/Parker to discover which child had died by 1910 as discussed in the census record. Hopefully, this project would find more records of these two individuals to help identify where they were and how they interacted with the family.
- The DNA for other descendants of Mary Ella Parker should be gathered to verify Mary as the biological daughter of Sarah Barnes and the biological granddaughter of Zilla Beck. This could also help locate Mary Ella's biological father.
- The shared matches between Mark County and Phillip Sutton should be analyzed in-depth to discover the common ancestor of this genetic network. A brief overview of the matches found multiple descendants of the couple Frank G. Ward and Mary Brooks (see Research Log), but this couple has not been tied into the family yet. A research project focusing on this issue could help uncover questions about the paternal line of Mary Ella Parker.