

Elizabeth Hepler (1785–1859)

Including: What can we learn from DNA analysis?

By Michael L. Wilson (mwilson@swcp.com), fourth-great grandson of Elizabeth

Introduction

I have been very interested in Elizabeth Hepler because there are some important outstanding questions about her and her families. I believe that Elizabeth Hepler had children with three different husbands, and there are descendants in Faus, Kanouse, Whitenight, Fought, and Snyder lines who are related through her – and most don't even know it. It's difficult because there are a lot of name variations (e.g., Kepler and Hefler), plus Elizabeth moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio to Michigan, so families and records are dispersed. I have been collecting family trees and looking for connections. It is difficult to be certain about some of the connections, but I have been working to find supporting evidence. I am also very interested in the potential for using DNA evidence, so I have been scouring my Ancestry DNA match data looking for connections. Elizabeth Hepler is six or seven generations back from most of us, so this is stretching the current capabilities of DNA matching because of very low levels of shared DNA. And because of the randomness of DNA inheritance, I am not even a match for many descendants of Elizabeth. In this write-up I want to discuss seven big questions and the evidence for them that I have managed to collect so far. I would love to hear from anyone who has additional evidence on these issues, either confirming or contradicting my answers.

1. It is pretty well established that Elizabeth Hepler was married to John Adam Snyder and had a son named Josiah Snyder. For example, there is a birth certificate, which I obtained from George Snyder, for Josia Schneider [Josiah Snyder]. His parents are listed as Johann Adam Schneider [John Adam Snyder] and Elisabeth Hepler. The birth certificate can be seen at <https://archive.org/details/JosiahSnyderBirth>. On the other hand, there are many family trees that start with Henry Faus and his wife Elizabeth Kepler (or Keppler). The first question is, **were Elizabeth Hepler and Elizabeth Kepler the same person?**

2, 3. A number of family trees go back to Jacob Fought and his wife Julia Kricher. On the other hand, a number of Faus family trees list a daughter of Henry Faus and Elizabeth Kepler named Julia, and say that she married Jacob Fought. The second question is, **were Julia Kricher and Julia Faus the same person?** and the third question is, **who were Julia's parents?**

4, 5. Henry Faus and Elizabeth Kepler/Hepler had daughters Elizabeth (Eliza) and Mary (Polly). The fourth question is, **what was the name of Elizabeth's husband?** And the fifth question is, **what was the name of Mary's husband?**

6, 7. Some time later, William Kanouse and Elizabeth Snyder were married. Some family trees say that Elizabeth Snyder was a daughter of John A. Snyder and Elizabeth Hefler, while others say that she was a daughter of Josiah Snyder and granddaughter of John A. Snyder and Elizabeth Hepler. The sixth question is, **were Elizabeth Hepler and Elizabeth Hefler the same person?** and the seventh question is, **was Elizabeth Snyder a daughter or granddaughter of John A. Snyder and Elizabeth Hepler/Hefler?**

As I will discuss below, I think the answers are (1) yes, (2) yes, (3) Elizabeth Hepler and her second husband by the name of Kricher or Kreisler, (4) Abraham Kanouse, (5) Peter Whitenight, (6) yes, and (7) granddaughter.

Question 1: Were Elizabeth Hepler and Elizabeth Kepler the same person?

I think the best starting point is a biography of Frank Faus (one of Henry Faus's grandsons, a son of Thomas Faus) in *Historical and Biographical Annals of Columbia and Montour Counties, Pennsylvania* (J. H. Beers & Co., 1915, Volume II p. 849), which says:

Henry Faus was born in Lehigh county, Pa., where he lived and died, having been a farmer all his life. He married Elizabeth Hepler, who after his death came with her children to Columbia county, and still later moved to Michigan, where she died. For her second husband she married a Mr. Krisher, and after his death she took as her third husband Joseph Snyder. Henry Faus and his wife had the following children: Thomas; Henry; Polly, who married Peter Whitney; and Eliza, who married Abraham Krauss.

I'm not sure where the spelling of Kepler originated, but this account, unlike most Faus family trees, gives Henry's wife's name as Elizabeth Hepler, and it also says that she later married a Snyder, though his first name is given as Joseph rather than John. Thus, from this account it is entirely plausible that the Elizabeth Kepler who married Henry Faus was the same as the Elizabeth Hepler who married John Adam Snyder. There is also evidence here for Questions 2 & 3, as it says that Elizabeth's second husband was a man named Krisher, which could easily be a variant of Kricher. And for Questions 4 & 5, as it says that the daughters married Abraham Krauss and Peter Whitney.

Before going on, I should say that Marilyn Riehl (a descendant of Henry Faus Jr.) and Garry Heagy (a descendant of Thomas Faus) have done extensive research on the Faus and Hepler families and it is from them that I learned of the Hepler-Faus-Kreisler-Snyder connections. Garry Heagy was the one who first suggested to me that Elizabeth Hepler was the mother of both Elizabeth Kanouse (Eliza in the above biography) and Josiah Snyder, and told me about the Frank Faus biography.

In addition to the above-quoted biography, there are a few other pieces of evidence that Elizabeth Kepler's family name should, or at least could, be Hepler (though, of course, even in primary records there are spelling variations). The most important is the probate records for Henry Faas in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, which I mostly obtained from Marilyn Riehl and which can be seen at <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~mlwilson/HenryFausProbate.pdf>. The last name is spelled Faas in the index of the county records, but there are several spellings in the records themselves, including Foas, Foass, Foase, Fahs, and Faus. The spelling of Faus is in the final accounting report, dated in 1814. It seems likely that various spellings were going around, and Henry's descendants decided on Faus at some point. The key evidence is that the administrator of the estate was George Hepler, and it is explicitly stated that he was the father of Henry's widow, Elizabeth. Another item of interest is that, according to Marilyn Riehl, there are deeds that mention H. Fouse and George Hepler as having neighboring land. Lastly, it is worth noting that DNA match data should be able to provide further confirmation. If descendants of Henry Faus are DNA matches to descendants of John A. Snyder, that provides some evidence that they were both married to the same woman. Unfortunately, my DNA matches do not help because I am a descendant of William Kanouse, a grandson of Henry Faus, who

married Elizabeth Snyder, a descendant of John A. Snyder. This intermarriage could explain my DNA matches with Fausés and Snyders even if Elizabeth Kepler and Elizabeth Hepler were different. I do have information that two descendants of Thomas Faus are matches with two descendants of Josiah Snyder; I would very much like to hear of other matches like that. Because the connection is so far back, most of these DNA matches will be quite weak.

Question 2: Were Julia Kricher and Julia Faus the same person?

Question 3: Who were Julia's parents?

A number of Faus family trees list Julia as a daughter of Henry Faus and Elizabeth Kepler, and say that she married Jacob Fought. However, the probate records mentioned above for Henry Faas/Faus show that he died sometime before 18 Apr 1812 (the earliest date in the probate papers). I have not seen the primary records, but family trees show that Julia Fought was born on 4 Sep 1814, so she could not have been Henry's daughter. This brings us back to the family trees that show her maiden name to have been Kricher, and the Frank Faus biography excerpted above, which shows Elizabeth Hepler's second husband to have been a Mr. Krisher. A death certificate for daughter Hannah Eckman lists her parents as Jacob Fought and Julia Krasher, and a biography of Samuel Eckman (in *History of Columbia and Montour Counties, Pennsylvania*, A. Warner & Co., Chicago, 1887, pp. 527–28) says that he married "Hannah Fought, daughter of Jacob and Julia (Kricher) Fought." Marilyn Riehl thinks that the name should be Kreischer. I am not sure of the basis for that spelling, but I have been using it because it looks more like a German name than the others. Thus, I believe that Julia was a daughter of Elizabeth Hepler and her second husband, Mr. Kreischer. Additional evidence for this is that I have several descendants of Jacob and Julia Fought among my Ancestry DNA matches. I also know that Marilyn Riehl (a Henry Faus Jr. descendant) is a match to at least one of the Fought descendants. Once again, they are weak matches because we are such distant relatives, but I think they are still meaningful.

Question 4: What was the name of Elizabeth Faus's husband?

The Frank Faus biography said that Elizabeth Faus married Abraham Krauss. It seems to be fairly well accepted that his name was really Abraham Knauss, and that branch of the family changed the spelling to Kanouse. Death certificates for children John, Phoebe, Josiah, and Aaron (available from Ancestry.com) all list their parents as Abraham Kanouse and Elizabeth Fauss. In addition, I am definitely a descendant of Abraham Kanouse and I have many DNA matches with descendants of Thomas Faus and Henry Faus Jr. There is more discussion of my DNA matches below.

Question 5: What was the name of Mary Faus's husband?

The Frank Faus biography said that Polly Faus married Peter Whitney. I have seen in several places that his name was really Peter Whitenight. This seems to suggest that Whitenight might have been pronounced like Whitney. One bit of supporting evidence is that there is a death certificate for Amzie Whitenight (available on Ancestry.com), which lists his parents as Peter Whitenight and Sarah Faus. The Sarah is rather mysterious, as cemetery records (Find A Grave) show that Peter Whitenight's wife was named Mary, but it does show the surname as Faus. And once again, I also have evidence in the form of DNA matches with a few descendants of Peter and Mary Whitenight.

Elizabeth's Life

Before going on to Questions 6 & 7, I would like to present a summary of Elizabeth's life as I think I understand it.

- Elizabeth Hepler was born on 23 May 1785 in Pennsylvania to George Hepler and Catharine Kreiling (there are many variant spellings of Hepler and Kreiling in various records). Some family trees have a different birth date (usually just a year) for Elizabeth, but I go with the bible record discussed below. The original spelling of her first name was likely Elisabeth, as in the birth certificate discussed earlier.
- She married Henry (Heinrich) Faus in 1803 or before (their first child was born in November 1803). She was probably about 17 when they married. Elizabeth and Henry had four children:
 - Thomas W. Faus, born 14 Nov 1803 in Whitehall Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania.
 - Elizabeth (Eliza) Faus, born 2 May 1808 in Whitehall Township, Northampton County, Pennsylvania.
 - Henry Faus Jr., born on 11 Oct 1809 in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania.
 - Mary (Polly) Faus, born on 13 Aug 1812 in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania.

First, note that the biography quoted previously stated that Henry Faus was born, lived, and died in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. However, Lehigh County was not formed until 1812, so he and his family presumably lived in the part of Northampton County that became Lehigh County. Second, Henry's probate records show that he died in Northumberland County, so he did not just stay in the same county his whole life. Some family trees indicate that Henry Faus Jr. was born in Columbia County. But, again, Columbia County wasn't formed until 1813, so I presume that Henry Sr. and his family moved in 1808 or 1809 from Northampton County to the part of Northumberland County that later became Columbia County. The probate records indicate that Henry was living in Bloom Township, Northumberland County, at the time of his death. That might mean that Henry Jr. and Polly were born in Bloom Township, but it's also possible that there were other moves so that they were born in some other part of Northumberland County.

- Husband Henry Faus died sometime before 18 Apr 1812. Elizabeth was probably 26 years old when Henry died. Note that daughter Mary (Polly) was born after he died.
- Elizabeth married her second husband, Kreisler, by 1814 (daughter Julia was born in September 1814). She was probably about 28 when they married. Elizabeth and Kreisler had just one child that I know of:
 - Julia Ann Kreisler, born on 4 Sep 1814. Some family trees say she was born in Northampton/Lehigh County, but it seems more likely that she was born in Columbia County.
- Husband Kreisler presumably died sometime in the next couple of years.
- Elizabeth married her third husband, John Adam Snyder (Johann Adam Schneider) sometime before 1817 (son Josiah was born in February 1817). She was probably about 30 or 31 when they married. Elizabeth and John had just one child that I know of (but the question of whether Elizabeth Snyder could also have been their child is discussed below):
 - Josiah Snyder, born on 3 Feb 1817 in Bloom Township, Columbia County, Pennsylvania.
- At some point they moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio. They are definitely listed in the 1850 census in Adams Township, Seneca County, Ohio (Elizabeth 64 years old). The family consisted of Adam and Elizabeth Snyder and another Elizabeth Snyder, 10 years old. The family of son Josiah Snyder

was living nearby. This will be discussed more later, but it is likely that the young Elizabeth was Josiah's daughter. The bible pages mentioned previously indicate that the younger Elizabeth Snyder was born in Adams Township, Seneca County, Ohio, in 1841, and censuses indicate that Josiah's oldest daughter Rachel was born in Ohio in 1838. It's not known whether Adam and the older Elizabeth were also there at that time, but they may well have gone to Ohio together with Josiah and his wife. There is a listing for Adam Snyder in Bloom Township, Seneca County, Ohio, in the 1840 census, which could be them, but that family includes a boy aged 5–10 years old and I don't know who that would have been. The choices for the 1820 and 1830 censuses are even less clear.

- Husband Adam Snyder died on 13 May 1859 in Seneca County, Ohio. According to the 1860 census mortality schedule, he was sick for two years and died of cancer. He is listed in the census mortality schedule for Branch County, Michigan, but probably just because that's where his family was at the time of the census.
- Elizabeth Hepler Faus Kreischer Snyder died just a few months later on 1 Sep 1859 in Branch County, Michigan. According to the 1860 census mortality schedule, she was sick for two years and died of dropsy. It appears that she moved from Ohio to Michigan after her husband died. Josiah Snyder's family was listed in Branch County in the 1860 census, so she might have moved there with them. Daughter Elizabeth Faus Kanouse and family were in Branch County, Michigan, for the 1860 census as well. (The Kanouses were still back in Columbia County, Pennsylvania, in 1850.)
- Elizabeth Snyder is buried in Card Cemetery, Branch County, Michigan, and so are her daughter Elizabeth Kanouse and son-in-law Abraham Kanouse. It should be noted that Elizabeth's gravestone has 1784 – 1859 on it, though as stated before I prefer to go by the bible record.
- There was a short death notice for Adam and Elizabeth in the *Evangelical Messenger*, a weekly publication of the Evangelical Association, on 12 Jan 1860, p. 8 (obtained from the Allen County Public Library; there is an index of *Evangelical Messenger* obituaries at http://www.genealogycenter.info/search_evanmessenger.php):

SNYDER. Adam Snyder died May 17th, 1859, in Seneca co., Ohio, aged 63 years. He was a faithful servant of God, having been a member of the Evangelical Association a for [sic] number of years. Funeral discourse by the Rev. Williams. [Note that the date given is different from the date in the bible record, which is May 13.]

Also, Elizabeth, consort of the above Adam Snyder, died in Branch co., Michigan, Sept. 1, 1859, aged 74 years. She lived and died a Christian. Funeral discourse by Rev. Martin.

H. LONGBRAER [sp.?].

Note that the dates from the bible record give an age of 74 years for Elizabeth, which agrees with this death notice. The Evangelical Association, according to Wikipedia, was founded in 1800 and was a "body of American Christians chiefly of German descent". It has undergone various splits and mergers since then, with the United Methodist Church and the Evangelical Church of North America being the main present-day descendants.

More about Elizabeth's Children

Thomas W. Faus had two wives, Rachel Robbins and Susan Bacon. Family trees list a total of 20 (or possibly 21) children between the two wives.(!) Unlike most of his siblings, Thomas stayed in Pennsylvania and died on 5 Jul 1875 in Pine Township, Columbia County. I have so far found 24 descendants of Thomas among my matches on Ancestry DNA, with an average match strength of

18.5 cM. (cM, for centimorgans, is the measure of how much DNA is shared between two people.) It probably doesn't make much sense to simply average the match strengths like that since they are not all the same relationship to me, but I don't know what else to do as a simple summary. The relationships to me vary from third cousin twice removed to fifth cousin once removed—all rather distant, which is why the match strengths are so low.

Elizabeth (Eliza) Faus married Abraham Kanouse and had 12 children that I know of. As was already mentioned, Elizabeth and her family moved to Michigan sometime after 1850. She died on 7 Jan 1871 in Bethel Township, Branch County. This is my line, through their son William, so I have many close relatives who are descendants of Elizabeth. The closer relatives will be discussed later, but I have found 10 Ancestry DNA matches who descend from their children other than William, with an average match strength of 20.5 cM. The relationships to me vary from third cousin once removed to fourth cousin once removed.

Henry Faus Jr. married Mary DeLong and had 11 children that I know of. Henry was in Ohio by 1860, and died on 6 Feb 1883 in Ashland, Ohio (some family trees say February 5). I have so far found Ancestry DNA matches with six descendants of Henry, with an average match strength of 22.0 cM. The relationships vary from fourth cousin once removed to fifth cousin once removed.

Mary (Polly) Faus married Peter Whitenight and had nine children that I know of. Sometime after the death of her husband in 1862 she moved to Michigan, and died on 17 Nov 1886 in Bethel Township, Branch County (some sources say November 16). I have so far found Ancestry DNA matches with four descendants of Mary, with an average match strength of 16.9 cM. The relationships vary from fifth cousin to fifth cousin once removed.

Julia Ann Kreischer married Jacob D. Fought and had six children that I know of. She remained in Pennsylvania and died on 29 Feb 1892 in Lycoming County. I have so far found Ancestry DNA matches with seven descendants of Julia, with an average match strength of 11.7 cM. The relationships vary from half-fourth cousin once removed to half-fifth cousin once removed.

Josiah Snyder married Elizabeth Smith and had 12 or 13 children that I know of (depending on whether Elizabeth Snyder was their daughter or not). Josiah was in Ohio by 1838 and then moved to Michigan sometime after 1850. He died on 9 Jun 1900 in Gilead Township, Branch County. I have found 14 Ancestry DNA matches who descend from children other than Elizabeth, with an average match strength of 19.6 cM. The relationships to me depend on the relationship of Elizabeth Snyder to Josiah Snyder, which will be discussed below, but if she was his daughter (and she probably was) they vary from third cousin once removed to fourth cousin once removed.

Note that these matches are all far down on my list of DNA matches because they are such distant relationships. Ancestry's ThruLines is a powerful tool for finding distant matches like this. (I should warn, though, that you have to be careful when using ThruLines. It is based on people's entered family trees, which are sometimes wrong. You have to be especially careful in a situation like this where there are so many variations of Elizabeth Hepler/Hefler/Kepler, and different versions of the parentage of Elizabeth Snyder.) I have also recently been exploring clustering tools; more about that in the next section. There are undoubtedly other matches that I haven't found yet, and other descendants who are not matches to me because of the randomness of DNA inheritance (for example, Garry Heagy and Marilyn Riehl both are not DNA matches to me). I think the fact that I have matches from all three of

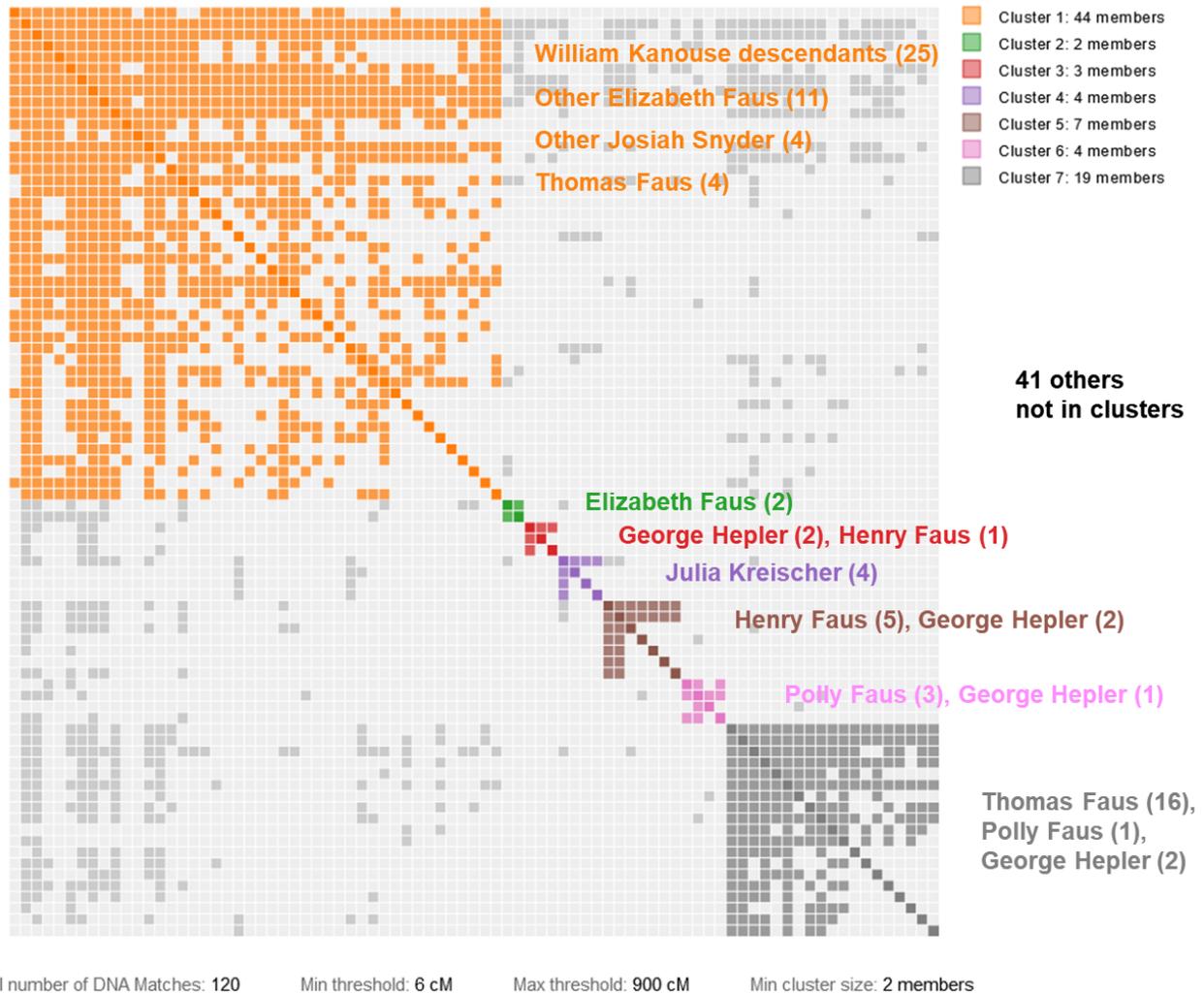
Elizabeth's husbands and all six of her children is important evidence that the husbands and families described above are correct. The evidence could be even stronger if other Faus, Kreisler/Kricher, and Snyder descendants would let me know if they have matches in the other groups. An appendix to this report, available by request, gives details of the Elizabeth Hepler descendants I have found among my Ancestry DNA matches.

Cluster Analysis of DNA Matches

I recently learned of tools for automatically grouping DNA matches into related clusters. The two tools I have tried so far are the AutoCluster tool on the Genetic Affairs website (<http://geneticaffairs.com/>) and the Shared Clustering tool (<https://github.com/jonathanbrecher/sharedclustering/wiki>). I don't really know very much about using these, but the charts made by Genetic Affairs are interesting, so I am including one on the following page. To generate it, I created a group of my Ancestry DNA matches with all of the descendants of Elizabeth Hepler I know of, plus the few descendants of her siblings that I know of, plus several matches who fit in the clusters but who do not have trees on Ancestry, or very limited trees, so I do not know for sure where they fit within the family tree. Where they fit in the clusters can give some hints about that, though. This Ancestry group includes most of my relatively close matches, including several for whom I do not have trees, plus quite a few weak matches. There are undoubtedly many additional weak matches that could be included here, but for whom I do not yet have sufficient information. Many of the weak matches end up not being placed in clusters anyway, though.

The clustering in the diagram is generated by an algorithm that looks at all the shared matches between me and each of my matches, and groups together ones that have shares in common. You can see that the clustering reflects the children of Elizabeth Hepler Faus Kreisler Snyder as discussed above. The algorithm defined a cluster for each of Elizabeth's children, except that there is not a separate cluster for Josiah Snyder. Most of the descendants of Elizabeth Faus and Josiah Snyder are in the big Cluster 1, though two Elizabeth Faus descendants did get placed in a separate cluster. There appear to be some mistakes with the clustering; for example, Cluster 7 is mostly descendants of Thomas Faus, but one descendant of Polly Faus Whitenight and two descendants of Elizabeth Hepler's siblings were placed with them. These "mistakes" probably are statistical artifacts resulting from the weakness of many of the matches in the analysis. It is also possible that some of the "mistakes" result from errors in matches' family trees. Working with weak matches is hampered because Ancestry only lists as shared matches ones that have at least 20 cM shared DNA. The fact that shared matches with less than 20 cM are not included in Ancestry's listings is also responsible for the interesting winged shape of some of the clusters (it looks like the clusters are flying northwest!).

Note that there is a small cluster that can be identified with descendants of George Hepler's children other than Elizabeth, though some of them ended up in other clusters as well, and one of Henry Faus's descendants ended up in the George Hepler cluster. Once again, these "mistakes" likely result from using many weak matches in the analysis. As noted in the figure, 41 of the DNA matches got left out of the clusters entirely. They are mostly quite weak matches except for one of them; I'm not sure why that one doesn't fit in a cluster.



It would be interesting to see similar diagrams generated with other people’s DNA matches. Unfortunately, Genetic Affairs lost its ability to work directly with Ancestry DNA as of June 2020.¹ I hope they are able to come to an agreement to restore the connection.

Question 6: Were Elizabeth Hepler and Elizabeth Hefler the same person?

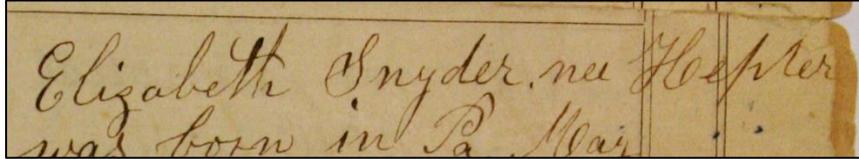
As mentioned before, I have a copy of pages from a bible belonging to William Kanouse and Elizabeth Snyder, my great-great grandparents. One page has these entries:

¹ It is still possible to perform an analysis with Ancestry DNA matches by entering the information on matches and shared matches by hand, which is how I created the updated figure on this page. As you might imagine, that’s a fairly time-consuming process, especially compared to the previous process, which allowed you to easily perform an analysis on any group of matches that you had defined within Ancestry DNA.

John A. Snyder
was born in Pa May
the 17, 1795
Died May 13, 1859

Elizabeth Snyder nee Hepler
was born in Pa, May
the 23, 1785
Died Sept 1, 1859

Several family trees of descendants of William Kanouse and Elizabeth Snyder show John A. Snyder married to Elizabeth Hefler. I believe that this arose from a misreading of the bible record:



This seems clearly Hepler to me, but I can see how someone could think it says Hefler. The entire bible record can be seen at <https://archive.org/details/WilliamKanouseBible>. The Hepler–Snyder connection is also supported by Josiah Snyder’s birth certificate, discussed previously.

Question 7: Was Elizabeth Snyder a daughter or granddaughter of John A. Snyder and Elizabeth Hepler/Hefler?

William Kanouse (son of Elizabeth Faus and Abraham Kanouse) and Elizabeth Snyder were married in 1861 and I have copies of pages from their bible, as just mentioned. The fact that there are entries for John A. Snyder and Elizabeth Hepler in the bible, plus that the younger Elizabeth is listed with them in the 1850 census, has led many people to believe that they were Elizabeth Snyder’s parents. (These family trees often have the Hefler spelling, by the way.) I also started out thinking that John and Elizabeth were Elizabeth Snyder’s parents, but I have come to believe that she was probably a daughter of Josiah Snyder, so that they were her grandparents. This would mean that she and William Kanouse were half-first cousins.

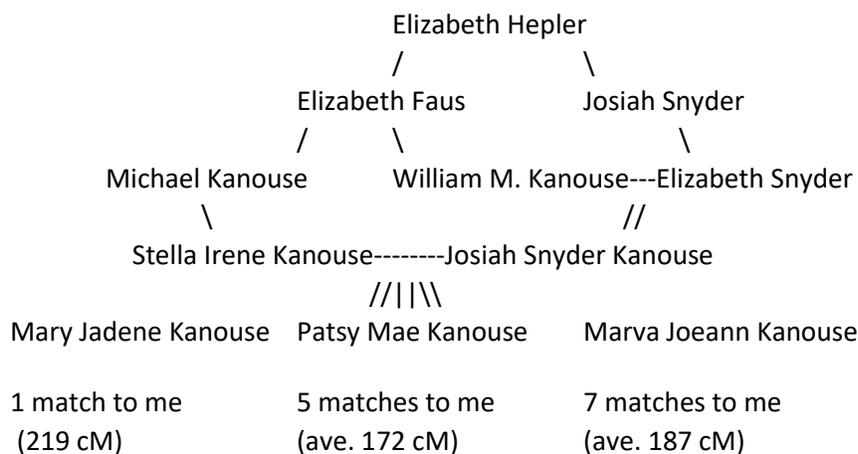
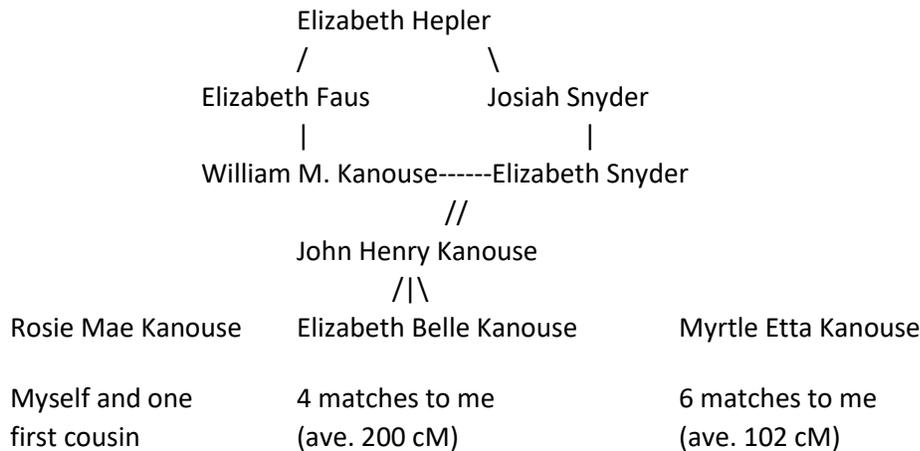
A big reason for thinking that Adam Snyder and Elizabeth Hepler were not Elizabeth Snyder’s parents is that Elizabeth Hepler would have been 55 years old at the time of Elizabeth Snyder’s birth, which is probably too old to be having a child. It’s also unlikely that Elizabeth Hepler Snyder would have named a daughter Elizabeth, since she already had a daughter named Elizabeth with Henry Faus. There are other family trees (for example, the Snyder/Soules Ancestry World Tree web site, which is no longer online unfortunately) that have Elizabeth Snyder as a daughter of Josiah Snyder and his wife Elizabeth Smith. This seems more plausible, especially given that one of Elizabeth Snyder’s children was named Josiah Snyder Kanouse. As to why those entries in the Kanouse/Snyder bible—Possibly because Elizabeth Hepler was a grandmother to both Elizabeth and William? Possibly because they were the younger Elizabeth’s step-parents? Possibly because they were particularly special to the younger Elizabeth, given that she lived with them (at least for a while in 1850)? Possibly because Adam and Elizabeth had died just a couple of years before William and the younger Elizabeth married? It’s too bad they didn’t name their parents in their bible! (Or maybe they did, and I’m missing some pages?)

Another little tantalizing bit of information is that, in an interview transcript at <http://www.snydersinfo.com/LeonaSnyder.pdf>, Leona D. Snyder, then 88 years old, talked about her aunts and uncles, the children of Josiah and Elizabeth Snyder. She said there were seven girls in the

family, and she named six of them: Rachel, Catherine, Hanna, Angaline (Angeline), Jane (Sarah Jane), and Becky (Rebecca). She couldn't remember the name of the other one: "it was the one that was in the South, I can't remember." Was this Elizabeth? I don't know for sure, but Elizabeth, with her husband William Kanouse, did move south. In the 1880 census, they were in Adams County, Iowa, and later they moved to Kansas and then Oklahoma. To complicate this story, George Snyder, in the Snyder/Soules Ancestry World Tree web site, listed eight daughters—the seven just mentioned, plus Julia Ann. Perhaps Leona didn't think of Julia Ann because she died way back in 1863 and didn't have any children (as far as I know).

Another small piece of evidence is that a short obituary for Elizabeth Smith Snyder in the *Evangelical Messenger* (11 Dec 1894, p. 795) says that she had 13 children, six of whom survived her, which would fit with Elizabeth Snyder Kanouse being one of her children.

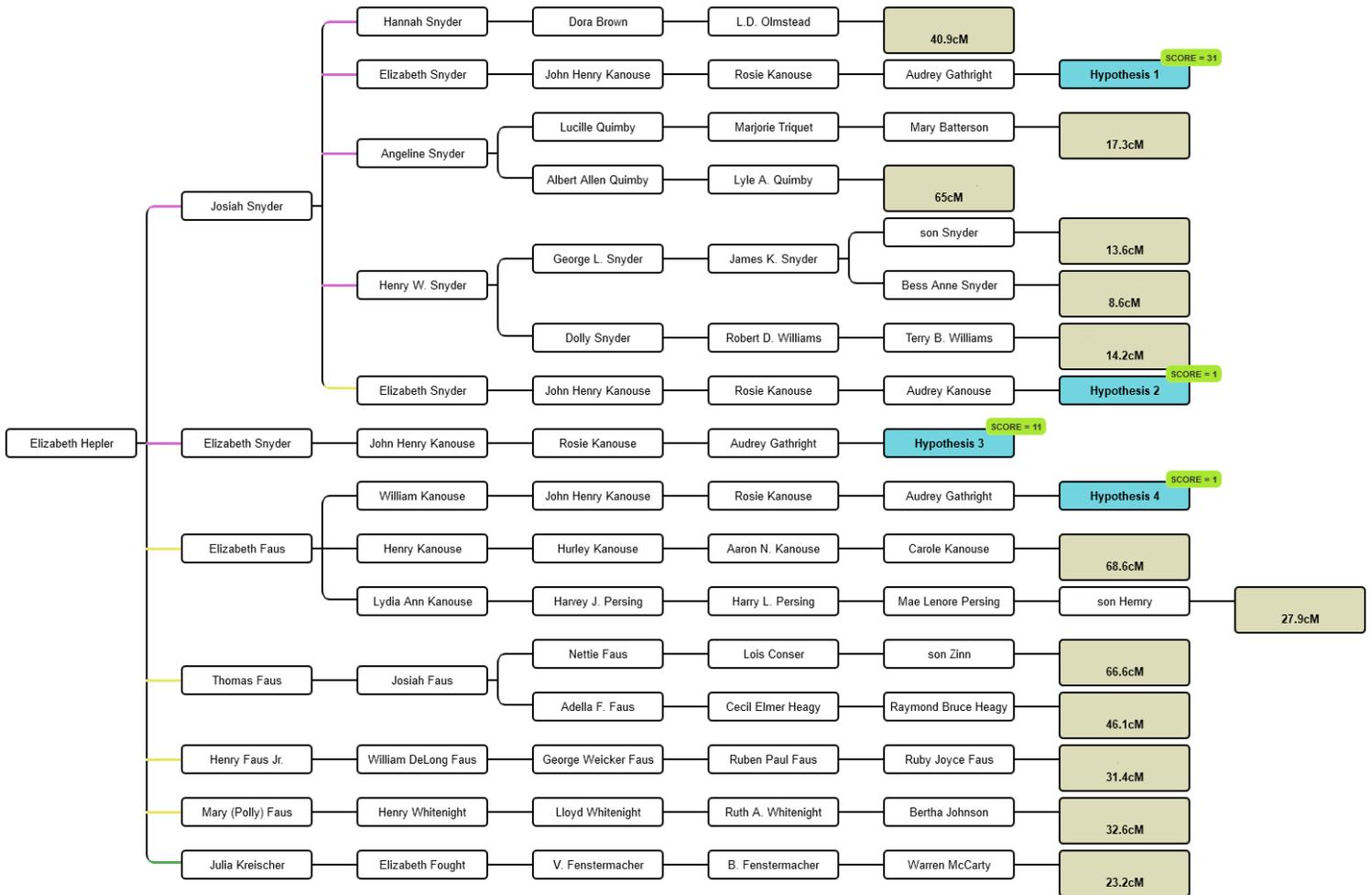
The following two charts show information about my Ancestry DNA matches who are descendants of William Kanouse and Elizabeth Snyder:



The shared DNA here is particularly high because of the multiple connections.

The WATO Tool for DNA Analysis

So, we have stories that Elizabeth Hepler was a mother or grandmother to Elizabeth Snyder. Another possibility is that Elizabeth Snyder could have been an orphan who was raised by the Snyders. This possibility first occurred to me because the average DNA match strength for descendants of Josiah Snyder was closer to that for descendants of Julia Ann Kreischer than for descendants of the Faus children, but since then some additional stronger matches to descendants of Josiah have made that no longer the case. There is a tool at dnainter.com called "What are the Odds?", or WATO, which can test competing hypotheses like this. The results of an analysis with these hypotheses are shown in this figure:



The figure shows four hypotheses for my placement relative to the Snyder family tree. Hypothesis 1 is that Elizabeth Snyder was a daughter of Josiah Snyder and Elizabeth Smith, and granddaughter of Elizabeth Hepler and John Adam Snyder. Hypothesis 2 is that Elizabeth was a daughter of Josiah Snyder but to a different wife, so that she was a half-sibling to his other children. Hypothesis 3 is that Elizabeth Snyder was a daughter of Elizabeth Hepler and John A. Snyder, and sister of Josiah Snyder. Hypothesis 4 is that Elizabeth Snyder was not related to the other Snyders (this is the orphan hypothesis), so that I am only related to the Snyders through Josiah being a half-brother to Elizabeth Faus Kanouse. There are

other possibilities, such as that she was some sort of cousin to Josiah Snyder, which I will touch on in a moment. A caution is that WATO cannot properly handle “pedigree collapse” caused by intermarriages like we have in some of these lines, and that could possibly be affecting the results. With that said, the results favor Hypothesis 1: Elizabeth Snyder was a daughter of Josiah Snyder and Elizabeth Smith. The figure might be difficult to read, so I will repeat here that Hypothesis 1 has a score of 31, Hypothesis 3 has a score of 11, and Hypotheses 2 and 4 have scores of 1. This means that Hypothesis 3 is 11 times more likely than Hypotheses 2 and 4, and Hypothesis 1 is about 3 times more likely than Hypothesis 3. However, these results have to be taken with a large helping of salt. To begin with, a score of 31 isn’t really very significant. The WATO results include a statement that says: “This is the most likely hypothesis. It’s possible but is not significantly more likely than any other hypothesis.” Secondly, these results were generated with a beta version of WATO version 2, and the results for WATO version 1 were very different and favored Hypothesis 4! Version 2 is supposed to take better account of the probabilities for matches with shared DNA less than 40 cM, so it should be better for this situation, but neither version is designed to work with “pedigree collapse”. I also ran a WATO 2 analysis including only the Snyder lines, representing the case that Elizabeth Kepler was not the same as Elizabeth Hepler, so the Fausés and Julia Kreisler were not half-siblings of Josiah Snyder. This assumption had little effect on the results – Hypothesis 1 was still the most likely, with a score of 27; not too different from the score of 31 pictured above.

In conclusion, WATO is not really much help at this point, but perhaps in the future additional match data or an advance in WATO capabilities will allow for more confidence in the conclusions. Keep in mind, however, that Hypothesis 3 is unlikely because Elizabeth Hepler was 55 years old when Elizabeth Snyder was born, and that other evidence presented previously also favors Hypothesis 1.

I also tried another analysis with WATO 2, testing whether Elizabeth Snyder could have been a daughter of a first cousin of Josiah Snyder or could have herself been a first cousin of Josiah Snyder. Both of those hypotheses were indicated to be far less likely than Elizabeth being a daughter of Josiah (thousands of times less likely). These results are much more meaningful than the previous results because of the very low probabilities and also because there is no “pedigree collapse” in this case; so we can probably rule out Elizabeth being a cousin of Josiah.

Additional Details

I have listed the first few generations of Elizabeth Hepler’s descendants in a separate document:

http://sites.rootsweb.com/~mlwilson/EH_3gen.pdf

(assuming the husbands and families as discussed above). I have tried to make this listing as complete as I can. I would appreciate being notified of any errors or omissions. There are several very large families, so Elizabeth had a LOT of grandchildren and great-grandchildren.... It seems striking to me that a few distinctive names occur across the different branches of the family. For example: Julia Ann Kreisler (b. 1814), Julia Ann Faus (b. 1840), Julia Ann Snyder (b. 1842), Julia Ann Fenstermacher (b. 1867), maybe Juliana Whitenight (b. abt. 1840). Also: Lydia Ann Kanouse (b. 1831), Lydia Ann Fought (b. 1848), Lydia M. Whitenight (b. 1853);. Maybe these are just coincidences, but those names weren’t all that common in the general population so it seems like it could be meaningful.