

The Search for Ebenezer Luther's Ancestral Lines

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Since the initial work on my Luther genealogy, which culminated in the publication of a web-published summary, a privately printed genealogy, and the memoir *Cottonwood Roots*, I have taken several runs at the task of connecting Ebenezer Luther to his parents and to the genealogical lines that descend from the Puritan immigrant, Captain John Luther. So far, the attempts have not succeeded. This document describes the state of the search.

The search for Ebenezer Luther's ancestral line has made use of three types of tools:

- (1) Family stories.
- (2) Searches through records and genealogical data.
- (3) Genetic evidence.

Let's look at these three tools and what I have learned from them.

Family stories. The official records about Ebenezer and his family singularly fail to note the names of Ebenezer's mother or father. They also omit any mention of brothers or sisters, though I was able to identify one brother (John) through historical records, as discussed in the main genealogy. Three tantalizing bits of oral history passed down within the Ebenezer Luther family, however, may provide clues.

Clue 1. Most people who cite the names of Ebenezer's parents in their family trees (on the extensive collection of Ancestry.com family trees, for example) believe that his father was named Hezekiah. A cousin of mine also told me that this was the case. However, this interesting datum was never recorded in the family's written records. It may be a real piece of data, or it may be a late-emerging story derived from someone's over-ambitious guessing.

The primary argument against the name "Hezekiah" for Ebenezer's father is the naming tradition in Captain John's line. John had two sons, Hezekiah and Samuel, and the name "Hezekiah" occurs almost exclusively among the descendants of the son Hezekiah. In the genealogical lines documented in the *Luther Family in America (LFIA)*, for example, the first exception to this rule occurs only after 150 years of child-naming, by a descendant in the Samuel line who named his son Hezekiah in 1814 (p. 368, *LFIA* II).¹ The name "Ebenezer," in contrast, occurs frequently and exclusively within the lines descending from John's son Samuel. Since the name "Ebenezer" was a feature of the Samuel line, that would mean that, for a man named "Hezekiah Luther" to have called a son "Ebenezer Luther" in 1797, then this Hezekiah would have been born within a Samuel line in 1780 or earlier. This assumption distorts the envelope of probability.

¹ There are later exceptions as well. In *LFIA* II, p. 628, a Job Luther in the Samuel line names his son Hezekiah about 1820.

Clue 2. As noted in my genealogy, Ebenezer's son James Luther had a daughter Virginia (b. ca 1870) who married another Luther, Henry B., who was twenty years older than her. This Henry B., the descendants say, was a cousin of Virginia's.

Unlike Ebenezer, this Henry B. Luther DOES show up in the *LFIA*. He is almost certainly the Henry B. Luther discussed on p. 856 of *LFIA II*, the son of David Easterbrook Luther (b. 1817) and Abby Easterbrook (b. 1828).² At first glance, this would appear to be a great clue who Ebenezer's parents might have been. But the significance fades when the clue is traced. David Easterbrook belongs to the branch of the Luthers descending from Samuel's bother Hezekiah. He is the son of a Job Luther who was in turn the son of one of the many Hezekiah Luthers in this branch. If this particular Hezekiah was Ebenezer and John Luther's father, this would make Henry B. Luther a second cousin of Virginia's, fitting in nicely with the story about Henry B. and Virginia being cousins and also with the bit of oral history about Hezekiah being Ebenezer's father. This Hezekiah, however, is not a good candidate to be Ebenezer's father. According to the *LFIA*, this Hezekiah married Mercy McKoon³ and they had only the son Job (b. 1791) before Hezekiah died at sea in 1796. The 1800 US census shows the widowed Mercy with only one boy under 10 in her household, presumably the son Job.⁴ There seems to be little justification for inserting two more Luther-bred boys into this family.

If there is no place for Ebenezer in Hezekiah and Mercy McKoon's family, then we must search further back in the tree for the cousin relationship. But now the notion of Henry B. and Virginia being "cousins" becomes stretched to third cousins and beyond. What we may be looking at in this family tradition is not so much an exact knowledge of an ancestral connection between Henry B. and Virginia but simply the vague awareness that both Ebenezer and Henry B. Luther descended from the long and interrelated lines of Captain John's New England progeny. More than one family has explained a coincidence of last names by some claim of ultimate cousin relationships.

Clue 3. Older members of the family recalled that Ebenezer was a Freewill Baptist. This denomination is an offshoot of the Baptists who were in New England from the earliest European immigrations. The minority Baptists set themselves apart from the majority Puritan Congregationalists in two main ways. First, they did not agree that infants should be baptized. Second, they did not believe that the church should join with the state to exercise political authority. The relationship between Puritans and Baptists took a new turn a hundred years after the first Puritan migrations to North America, when a form of mass evangelism was introduced into the colonies by ministers such as Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield. People who identified with this evangelistic movement were known as "New Lights." Those who rejected it became the "Old Lights." At first, there were Puritans and Baptists on both sides of the new/old divide. Baptists, however, were more likely to become New Lights,

² The fact that Henry B. and Virginia named a son "Henry Olen" is further indication that this is the right Henry Luther. David Easterbrook had a brother William Olin.

³ Mercy is a woman with multiple lines back to Captain John—the cousin claim of Henry B. and Virginia, if we wanted to make it reach that far, pass equally well through her lines.

⁴ There are also two under-10 girls not mentioned in the *LFIA*—these may be Job's undocumented sisters, or they may be result of what the *LFIA* genealogists document as a "mésalliance" (Mercy McKoon is documented on p. 407, *LFIA II*. The term is used in *LFIA I*, p. 308) between the widow Mercy Luther and one of her male boarders.

and in time a large number of Puritans who had formed New Light congregations united with the Baptists. Up to this point, the Baptists had, for the most part, followed the Puritans in being broadly Calvinistic. They held tightly to their Baptist distinctives but also believed in predestination and other Calvinistic talking points. Under the influence of traveling ministers who were conducting revivals that emphasized the responsibility of people over the foreordained plans of God, however, many Baptist churches began to form denomination-like associations around non-Calvinistic talking points. Prominent among these new denominations were the Freewill Baptists. The New England branch of the Freewill Baptists got started in New Hampshire about the time of the American Revolution. As settlement lands opened up in upstate New York in the late 1790s and the early decades of the 1800s, Freewill evangelists proclaimed their message in the areas around the Erie Canal. This region became known as the “burned-over” district.⁵

Some of these revivals, particularly ones conducted by the evangelist David Marks,⁶ happened in the region of upstate New York where we know that Ebenezer and Aurilla spent some of their formative years. Marks was evangelizing there for the Freewill Baptists in the late 1810s. In 1823, revival meetings took place in West Bloomfield, New York, the place where Ebenezer and Aurilla lived. It is not a great leap to think that, even if the couple had Baptist sympathies before these revivals, the mass meetings might have solidified their allegiance to the Freewill Baptist Church.

How this religious connection will play out in the search for Ebenezer’s ancestral line remains to be seen, but it does cue us in to a possible source of records (Freewill Baptist publications and documents) and a possible source of motivation for why Ebenezer and Aurilla may have chosen some of the locations associated with them.

Records and Genealogical Data. The line descending from Captain John Luther has been massively documented in the *Luther Family in America* genealogy. In addition to the records published in the genealogy itself, I have exchanged letters and emails with the most recent author/compiler, George Luther (now deceased) in order to obtain the notes behind certain entries in the genealogy. It has become clear to me, after living with the 50,000 names in *LFIA* for almost 30 years, that Ebenezer’s immediate family is not described in the book.⁷

I have not been able to turn up any other genealogy that deals with this transition from the Puritan Luthers to Ebenezer. Thousands of family tree listings on Ancestry.com cover this period, but all of them (as many as I have been able to check, at least) ultimately draw their information about members of the Ebenezer Luther line from the data I published in the 1990s and their information about the overall Captain John Luther line from *LFIA*. Many, as noted above, go on to connect Ebenezer to a

⁵ See the “Revival” chapter of *Cottonwood Roots* (<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08D3FD16P/>) for further information on the burned-over district.

⁶ See his published journals, *Memoirs of the Life of David Marks, Minister of the Gospel* (Hardpress publishing, 2019), for details about Marks’s travels and revivals.

⁷ Except in the introduction and in an appendix of the second edition of the book, where George Luther mentions my Ebenezer Luther (p. 1219) as head of one of the lines with an unproven connection to Captain John Luther.

Hezekiah Luther, but three different Hezekiahs are called on to play this role, and none of these genealogical speculations provide a scrap of documentation to prove the connection. The explanation for these misconstrued connections, I suspect, lies in the way that Ancestry.com encourages users to expand their trees by offering candidates for missing tree slots taken from other users' family trees. When one person makes a bad call and tries to squeeze Ebenezer into an existing *LFIA* family, others are encouraged to follow suit. One good check on these attempts is Ebenezer's statement on an 1859 Warren County, Illinois deed that he was "the only brother and heir at law" of John Luther. This claim would exclude *LFIA* source families that already have sons. This statement would be true, I suspect, even if there were other brothers and they had died by 1859—if they had children, the heirs could still have staked a claim on a share of John's property.⁸

Nor has the raw data, the preserved records of names and events, provided more insight into Ebenezer's ancestral family. A broad-based search for records of an Ebenezer and a John Luther who were born in the 1790s and lived in the right places turns up nothing. There is, however, one piece of evidence that may give some direction to future record searches. As noted in my genealogy's discussion of Ebenezer Luther's brother, John's pension records mention Norwich in Chenango County, New York, as the place where he enlisted.⁹ And records from Chenango County do indeed indicate that Luthers lived there. In the first couple of decades of the 19th century, two Luther families show up in Chenango.¹⁰ These two families seem to have arrived in Chenango County on or after 1806-1815, which makes them a little too late to be a source family for Ebenezer and John. There were, however, Luthers who arrived earlier. A Reuben Luther was assessed for Chenango taxes in 1799 and 1800.¹¹ A Pauline Luther, who was born in 1805, died in 1821, and buried in the North Norwich Cemetery, was listed as the daughter of a James and Polly Luther. I can find no further relevant information about Reuben and James Luther and their families in online searches—perhaps only a trip to Chenango County to consult local records could fill out the picture. But even a look at local records may be fruitless—in 2016 the Chenango County Historian did a search on my request of the available Chenango records and could find no evidence of John Luther's presence there.

Genetic evidence. I have taken two genetic tests to help me zero in on Ebenezer's parentage.

Family Tree DNA test. In 2007, I joined a Y-chromosome project for Luthers at Family Tree DNA. The male DNA in Ebenezer's line (mine) matches with male DNA sequences in Captain John Luther's line.

⁸ Note that Ebenezer does not raise the issue of sisters. However, Ebenezer's claim may also rule out sisters in the family, since they would also be possible inheritors. The ambiguity lies in whether "only brother" and "heir at law" are two unrelated facts. Ebenezer might be, that is, John's heir through a will or some other legal procedure. But no will for John appears to exist. The easiest assumption is that being the only sibling makes Ebenezer the legal heir.

⁹ Pension records for John mention Massachusetts as the place of his birth.

¹⁰ The two are: William Pitt Luther and his wife Eliza Kingsley (discussed in *LFIA* II, p. 553), who lived in Pharsalia; and Martin Luther and his wife Hannah Pratt (discussed in *LFIA* II, p. 290), who lived in Bainbridge.

¹¹ This taxable asset could also be located in modern Madison County, New York, since Madison was not sliced out of the northern part of Chenango County until 1806.

This was my first real proof that Ebenezer was one of Captain John's descendants. Before this test, this connection was only an assumption based on Ebenezer's Christian name and his New York provenance.

Determining more than this basic fact from the Y-chromosome data, however, involves some guessing. It appears that the Y-chromosome genetic signature within Captain John Luther's line diverged at an early point, probably in the first generation, with his sons Samuel and Hezekiah.¹² Accepting this early dichotomy puts Ebenezer (me) on the *Samuel side of the line*. The next choice is between two of Samuel's sons, Theophilus and Samuel II. Ebenezer's Y-chromosome seems to have more in common with the Theophilus side of the line, the closest match (only 1 marker difference out of about 40 markers) being to a male Luther descendant with the line Captain John->Samuel->Theophilus->Theophilus->Theophilus.

Ancestry DNA test. In 2019, I ordered an Ancestry DNA test. This test, which was not confined to the Y-chromosome, male-line matches, connected me to thousands of cousins. I could see the strength of my genetic connection (measured in cMs, centimorgans) with each cousin. Many of these cousins had a Luther ancestry. The strongest matches among the Luther-line cousins were, of course, with cousins who were also descended from Ebenezer. There were over 50 of these. About 35 of these 50 were also descended from Ebenezer's son Henry, my great-grandfather. More interesting, however, at least from the point of view of my search for Ebenezer's ancestral line, were the DNA matches with people who claimed descent from one of the Luthers in the Captain John line but who were not descendants of Ebenezer. These matches had the potential of pointing me at Ebenezer's natal family, since the strength of the cousin connections placed our earliest common ancestors nearer to Ebenezer than to Captain John. I have listed most of these cousin connections, in the order of descending cousin strength, at the end of this document.

Even though the Y-chromosome data cited above seems to place Ebenezer in the John->Samuel->Theophilus line, most of the DNA matches from my Ancestry genetic test seem to be with people who fall within the John->Samuel->Samuel II line. This could simply reflect the fact that the John->Samuel->Samuel II had more descendants and/or that the line is better documented and the tests are picking up my connection to John->Samuel. But it is worth exploring the possibility that John->Samuel->Samuel II is in fact Ebenezer's line. Let's look more closely at this line.

Samuel II (1663-1714, p. 90 in *LFIA II*) had seven sons. The reported Ancestry lines of my DNA cousins fall into the lines of four of Samuel II's seven sons:

Consider (1698-1719, p. 132 of *LFIA II*, from Swansea in Massachusetts, a Baptist, sons Consider, Benjamin, wife Margaret Jewett)

¹² The marker known as "458" in the Family Tree Y-chromosome DNA test shows a value of 16 in all people who claim descent from Samuel's line and a value of 17 for those in Hezekiah's line.

Caleb (1696-1748, p. 129 of *LFIA II*, from Swansea in Massachusetts, a Baptist but cited for inviting people to speak at his house who were not approved by the church, sons Jabez and Frederick, wife Mary Cole)

James (1693-1777, p. 123 of *LFIA II*, from Swansea in Massachusetts, a Quaker, sons James, William, Jonathan, and David, wife Martha Slade)

Eleazar (1704-1769, p. 152 of *LFIA II*, from Swansea in Massachusetts, a Baptist, sons Giles, Eleazer, Eli, Harlow, and Barnaby, wife Hannah Easterbrooks)

There is no indication in the Ancestry DNA data that the other three sons of Samuel II—*Samuel III* (b. 1689, *LFIA II* p. 123, wife Sarah Chaffee), *Benjamin* (b. 1689, *LFIA II* p. 152, wife Mary Beckwith), and *Jabez* (b. 1700-1710, *LFIA II* p. 153, wife and children unknown, but it is assumed that he had a son Jabez)—are in the genetics of any Ancestry user. These missing lines could be an artifact, however, from the descendants of these sons not being on Ancestry or not having taken an Ancestry DNA test, so the other sons can't be ruled out. And, in fact, there are, as we will see below, non-Luther cousin connections that point us to two of these three other sons.

So, which of the Ancestry DNA lines is the most probable connection to Ebenezer? I am a third cousin with Ebenezer's descendants in my generation, so it is likely that I am no further away than fourth or fifth cousin with the non-Ebenezer-ancestral-line testers that have the strongest cousin numbers. The numbers are high enough that these connections point to someone in the second generation¹³ just above Ebenezer—someone born in the mid 1700s—as the common ancestor. But this calculation can easily be thrown off by having multiple lines of descent going back to Captain John, so the genetic data may point to common ancestors between me and the matches that go further back.

Here are some possible lines suggested by the Ancestry DNA connections.

(1) Someone in the line of Samuel II's son *Caleb*. Because of his Baptist defections (Ebenezer, a Freewill Baptist, was also a defector from the NE Calvinist Baptists), *Caleb's* line is attractive.

This *Caleb Luther* is cited in the trees of at least five Ancestry DNA cousins, notably that of *R.C.* (account maintained by *Eileen_Mellon41*), with whom I share 21 centiMorgans (cM)¹⁴ in 2 segs. *R.C.'s* line is traced through *Caleb's* son *Jabez* (1725-1815, p. 221 in *LFIA II*). I also have a strong

¹³ I say "second generation above Ebenezer" rather than "first and second generation above Ebenezer" because of Ebenezer's claim on the 1859 Warren County, Illinois deed that he was "the only brother and heir at law" of his deceased brother, suggesting that he and John were the only sons (and probably the only children) of their father. If so, then no one could be descended from Ebenezer's father who was not a descendant of Ebenezer, since John never married and had no children. Any common ancestors with a Luther cousin must thus begin with Ebenezer's grandfather. Unless, of course, Ebenezer's statement was not true.

¹⁴ The "centiMorgan" is a unit used by genetic genealogists to represent how much DNA signatures overlap and therefore how closely related people are. A first cousin and I might expect to have 500 cM of overlap. With only 10 cM, it is not likely that we are any closer than fifth or sixth cousins.

cousin connection (21 cM in 1 seg) with another Jabez descendant, *Rita Luther*.¹⁵ I show up as a more distant cousin with several other Caleb descendants. One problem in putting much weight on these higher cousin ratings in Caleb's family is that Caleb married Mary Cole, and the Luther's densely intermarried with the Coles in first century of Puritan settlement. Some of the cMs may reflect a common genetic inheritance of Cole genes through these intermarriages.

(2) An ancestor in the line of Samuel II's son *Consider*, who lived in Rhode Island. Consider had sons Consider Jr (1726-1808, p. 226 in *LFIA II*) and Benjamin (1722-1821, p. 230 in *LFIA II*). The data on Consider Jr's sons is not complete, but *LFIA II* describes his sons Benjamin (1753-1842, p. 343 in *LFIA II*, children born 1777-1798), Constant (1764-1827, married late), Calvin (1769-1863, married late), James (d. 1837, married late), John (no data), Elisha (married late), and Consider III (no data).

Consider Luther is the ancestor of *Martha C. Friddle* (25 cM in 1 seg), a person with Luther ancestry who has a strong cousin connection to me. She traces her line through Consider's daughter Bethany. Ancestry user *BarneyFord* (34 cM in 2 segs) also shows up as a relatively close cousin. He traces his ancestry through Consider's daughter Sarah. At least one other Consider descendant is a weak cousin.

(3) An ancestor in the line of Samuel II's son *James*, who had sons James Jr (1721-1801, p. 219), William (1729, p. 220 in *LFIA II*), and David (1736-1803, p. 220 in *LFIA II*).

Cousins *Faith Lindberg* (18cM) and *Karen Neary* (11 cM) trace their lines through James.

(4) An ancestor in the line of Samuel II's son *Eleazar*, who had sons Giles (1730, p. 230 in *LFIA II*), Eleazer Jr (1732-1781, p. 230 in *LFIA II*), Eli (1735, p. 231 in *LFIA II*), Harlow (1737-1827, p.

¹⁵ These two connections to Caleb's son Jabez lead to an interesting candidate for Ebenezer's ancestor. In *LFIA II*, p. 338, there is an entry for a son of Jabez named "James." The name "James" has echoes in Ebenezer's family—one of his two sons had that name. This James, son of Jabez, was born in 1763 in Swansea, Massachusetts. He married Philandra Brown (b. 1762) in 1781 and had three children, Pearce (b. 1782, married Sally Sweet), Sally (b. 1788, married Nathan Hopkins), and James Jr (b. 1794). The editors of *LFIA II* reconstruct many of the families in their genealogy through birth records, and this seems to be one of them. If James moved after 1794 to a place where birth records were not kept or did not survive, then there could be more children in this family that the *LFIA II* genealogists did not know about. Philandra was only 32 when the last son listed by *LFIA II* was born, so it is plausible that she could have had two more sons, John (b. 1795) and Ebenezer (b. 1797). This, of course, is pure speculation, but there is one interesting tidbit of data that connects the Ebenezer story and this family. James died about 1807 and the next year Philandra married a Nathaniel Kingsley. Three years later, her married daughter Sally and her husband seem to be in Norwich, Chenango County, New York. Given the dissolution of their natal family, the sons John and Ebenezer could have gone to live with their sister after their mother's remarriage and ended up in Chenango County. In 1812, John Luther is at Norwich when he enrolls in the army. John is mustered out, moves to western New York, and begins to receive a pension for his war wounds in 1815. Could he have arranged for his brother to join him in western New York after his exit from the army? Around 1820, Ebenezer meets and marries Aurilla Wait there.

Against this interpretation, of course, is the statement of Ebenezer in 1859 that he was "the only brother and heir at law" of John. But Ebenezer could have meant "the only living brother and the heir at law" of John. Perhaps Pearce, Sally, and James were all dead by 1859 and they had no living offspring, leaving no other claimants to inherit John's bounty land. No one today, I note, makes any claim to be a descendant of the first three children of James and Philandra. They simply disappear from the records.

239 in *LFIA* II), and Barnaby (1744-1777, p. 239 in *LFIA* II). Almost nothing in *LFIA* II makes this family stand out as a source of Ebenezer. However, Eleazar's son Eli, who cousin Swiltermuth (10 cM) claims as an ancestor, had a daughter Content who married Aaron Welch and Thomas Warren, both husbands from Chenango County, New York, a place that Ebenezer Luther's brother John mentioned on a pension document.

Cousins *Leighmarx* (17 cM) claims descent from Samuel II's son Eleazar. The strength of the cousin ratings in Eleazar's family is perhaps skewed by the fact that Eleazar married Hannah Easterbrooks, and the Easterbrooks densely intermarried with the Luthers in first century of Puritan settlement—some of the cMs may reflect our genetic inheritance of Easterbrook genes through these intermarriages.

(5) An ancestor from the line of *Samuel III*. This son of Samuel II had several children, but only one, Constant, survived to adulthood. Constant married Waitstill Ingraham (p. 219, *LFIA* II) and they had four sons, Oliver, James, Ezra, and Nathaniel, and a daughter Lydia, all born from 1743-54.

Ancestry user *lkuhnlein* (19 cM) has an Ancestry tree with over 3000 people in it. None of them are Luthers. However, *lkuhnlein* is descended from Jarrett (Jared) Ingraham, the grandfather of Waitstill Ingraham, the woman who married Samuel III's son Constant. User *beags* (9 cM) descends from the same Jarrett Ingraham and also has no known Luther ancestors. Ancestry user *D.* (17 cM, managed by *amagierka2*) has another Ingraham ancestor, Waitstill's great-grandfather Richard Ingraham, without also having any (known) Luther ancestors. User *jct_jack74* (13 cM), with no cited Luther ancestors from Captain John's line, is a descendant of Waitstill's father Obadiah (called Jeremiah in some tree listings). *Rosemarie Kraft* (9 cM) is also a descendant of Obadiah and does not have any known Luther lines. All these connections hint at an Ebenezer line that comes through Samuel III and his son Constant, even though no one on Ancestry currently claims descent from Constant or Samuel III.¹⁶ Interestingly, Constant has a son Nathaniel, born 1 May 1754, about whom *LFIA* genealogists know nothing, making him a possible grandfather or father for John and Ebenezer Luther. Also in Constant's line, and without further information in *LFIA*, are two sons of Constant's son James,

¹⁶ Other spouses of the fourth generation of Luthers, the generation where Samuel III is positioned, also trigger cousin connections when I search for their maiden names. However, there are issues with these other matches. Caleb, for example, married a Mary Cole, and Eleazar married Hannah Easterbrooks, but the Coles and Easterbrooks intermarried with the Luthers in the early generations, and this may account for why people with these names in their trees have a cousin connection with me, even though they have no Luthers in their trees. In addition, the Easterbrook and Cole ancestors that these Ancestry users cite do not match up with the Luther spouses and their parents as reported in *LFIA*. In the case of Benjamin's second spouse, Mary Beckwith, and of James's spouse, Martha Slade, the cousin matches are either absent or, if present, explainable through other connections.

What makes the Ingrahams stand out is that none of the complex marriage matrices in the first three generations of Luther seem to have included an Ingraham—the marriage between Constant and Waitstill is the first such union recorded in *LFIA*. But one of the descendants between Constant and Ebenezer could have, as Constant did, married an Ingraham, so it isn't possible to say that only Waitstill is the connecting link between me and my Ingraham-derived cousins. Then, too, my connection to the Ingrahams could conceivably come through my other new England line, Ebenezer's wife Aurilla Wait. No Ingrahams, however, are known to have married into my Wait line.

Ingraham Luther (b. 1767) and Zelmani Luther (b. 1771), and a son of Constant's son Oliver, Nathaniel Luther (b. about 1770, married Lucretia Pitts).

(6) An ancestor in the line of Samuel II's son *Benjamin* Luther. No one on Ancestry currently claims descent from this Benjamin. Benjamin's first wife, the *LFIA* II genealogists assume, was a Jane Merrow, daughter of Henry Merrow Jr., a son of Henry Merrow Sr. Benjamin and Jane had a son Nathan Luther, born 1726. Benjamin married second, they believe, Mary Beckwith, and had a son Benjamin Jr., born 1763.

My DNA test shows inconsistent connections to the Beckwith family, but the first wife, Jane Merrow, is interesting. Ancestry user *wildwilly691* (20cM) is descended from the Henry Merrow Sr. that was (according to *LFIA* II, p. 153) the grandparent of Samuel II's son Benjamin's wife, Jane Merrow. The line goes from Henry Merrow->Mary Merrow (m. Edward D. Polly Sr.)->Edward D. Polly->Daniel Paul->George Paul->James Paul (1799-1884). Henry Merrow Sr's daughter Mary Merrow, who married the Polly, is also the ancestor of *clingenpeel98* (11 cM) and *ecmott160* (9 cM), and Henry Sr's daughter Hannah is in the ancestral line of *sdwhetzel* (11 cM). *M.H.* (managed by *Ljheller2*) (12 cM) also descends from Henry Merrow Sr, but through Henry's son John (1663-1735). *Memmr54* (11 cM) has a line through Henry's son John Merrow. The same comments made above about the Ingrahams and their connections to me outside of direct Luther lines apply to this case as well. However, the assumption that the record of the marriage of this Benjamin Luther to Jane Merrow seems to me to be the weak point—it could have been some other Benjamin Luther. The marriage took place on Long Island, far from Benjamin's home ground around Swansea, Massachusetts.

(7) An ancestor with unknown lineage.

I have a strong (21 cM) cousin connection with Ancestry tester *John Latson*. Latson, however, is in the same boat: he can't match his Luther ancestor (Elizabeth Luther, b. 1805) with anyone in the *LFIA*.

(8) An ancestor in the John->Samuel->Theophilus line.

Mary Burbank's (17 cM) line includes John->Sam->Theophilus->Martin->Bathsheba and John->Sam->Sam->Eliz McKoon. *E.S.* (9 cM) has a line that goes John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Sarah. Ancestry member *Joan Weir59's* line is John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Mary. *Elizabeth Luther's* (10 cM) line from Captain John is John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Benjamin. *Swbmit* (9 cM) has lines through John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Theophilus->Sarah Cole and John->Sam->Ebenezer->Christian->Abigail Cole. *W. H.* (Matthew Hornbrook) (9 cM) claims descent through John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Theophilus->Benjamin->Sylvester->George->James->Oram M. Beckwith->Herbert Beckwith.

(9) An ancestor in the Samuel I line but not in the John->Sam->Sam II or John-Sam->Theophilus lines.

Cousin *B.L.* (18 cM) claims the ancestral line John->Sam->Joshua Luther->Mehitable Eddy. *Jake Davies* (17 cM) posits John->Sam->Mehitable Cole. *Janis Spencer* (18 cM) has the line John->Sam->Ebenezer->Ebenezer->Deborah Gowdy.

(10) An ancestor in the non-Samuel I lines (i.e., a line through Samuel's brother Hezekiah)

There is some small support in the Ancestry DNA data, noted in a few of the cousin listings below, for the ancestral connections to go through John->Hezekiah line. The Family Tree Y-chromosome data makes this less likely. That the descendants of John->Hezekiah show up in my cousin matches in this minor way may reflect the fact that many descendants of Captain John in Ebenezer's generation had more than one line of descent from Captain John.

Looking over these matches, I find possible support in the Ancestry DNA data that the Ebenezer Luther line goes through John->Samuel, but only limited support for carrying the line of descent further. I have reviewed the cases for each of Samuel II's children. I have also reviewed the possibility that Ebenezer Luther's line traces back through Sam's son Theophilus, a linkage favoured by the Y-chromosome data.

Conclusion. Three tools—family stories, searches through records and genealogical data, and genetic tests—have contributed their small morsels of evidence about Ebenezer Luther's ancestral line. While they have narrowed down the options and given hints about where to look, however, they do not take us to the final goal—we don't yet know who Ebenezer's parents are and how he and they connect to the Captain John Luther line.

It is entirely possible, of course, that all solid documentary evidence of this lineage has been lost and may not be waiting to be found. I hope this is not true. In any case, the search continues. I welcome any help.

Ancestry.com Luther cousins of interest, not descended from Ebenezer Luther, listed in order of cousin strength:

MarthaCFriddle (3-4th cousin) 25 cM in one seg

John->Sam->Sam->Consider (*LFIA II*, p. 132)->Bethany P->Barnett B. B. Hill->Jerome Hill->Arvilla M. Hill->Frank Samuel Coe->Gerald Frank Coe (d. 1984)

R. C. (3-4th cousin) 21 cM in 2 segs

John->Sam->Sam->Caleb->Jabez (b. 1725, *LFIA II*, p. 221)->Mary (m. Hezekiah Luther, *LFIA II*, p. 312, b. 1763, son of John->Hez->Hez->Hez, twin of Hopestill, Hez and Mary's children born 1786->1799)

John Latson (3-4th cousin) 21 cM in 1 seg

Elizabeth Luther, b. 1805 in NY, m. Wm T. Latson in 1830, NY, d. 1860 in Dexter, MI. Oddly, John's Latson's son (Jonathan Latson) has 27cM overlap.

BarneyFord (4-6th cousin) 34 cM in 2 segs

John->Sam->Sam->Consider (*LFIA II*, p. 132)->Sarah (1726->1760, m. James John Barney)->Benj Barney->Nathan Barney

Rita Luther (4-6th cousin) 34cM in 2 segs

John->Sam->Sam->Caleb->Jabez->Caleb

Sara Janes (4-6th cousin) 20cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Eleazar->Eli (m. Experience Cole)

B.L. (3-5th cousin) 18 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Joshua Luther (*LFIA II*, p. 38, b. 1670)->Mehitable (*LFIA II*, p. 98, b. 1712, m. Caleb Eddy)->Samuel Eddy (b. 1736)->Reuben Eddy (b. 1754)->Lydia Terisse Eddy (b. 1772)->Jesse Matteson (b. 1797)

Faith Lindberg (3-6th cousin) 18 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->James (p. 123)->Phebe (*LFIA II*, p. 126, b. 1731, m. Wm Buffington in MA, lived in CT), Preserved Buffington (b. 1759)->Content Buffington (b. 1786 m. Jesse Brockway)

Janis Spencer (buckjanis) (3-6th cousin) 17 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Ebenezer->Ebenezer (*LFIA II*, p. 178, b. 1726)->Deborah (b. RI 1753, m. James Gowdy)->Anne Gowdy (b. 1799)->Eliza Ann Clark

Leighmarx (3-6th cousin) 17 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Eleazar (b. 1704, *LFIA II*, p. 152)->Barnaby (b. 1744) (Leighmarx says daughter Polly Vinson married John Michael Luther, who is from another, non-Captain John Luther line. Odd)

Mary Burbank (3-6th cousin) 17 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Eliz (b. 1702, m. Thomas McKoon, *LFIA II*, p. 90)->James McKoon (m. Bathsheba Luther in 1747)

John->Sam->Theophilus->Martin->Bathsheba (b. 1724, *LFIA II*, p. 167)->Ruth McKoon (b. 1750, m. Robert Cole)->Robert Cole/man (b. 1755)->Catherine S. Cole (b. 1790)->William Godfroy (b. 1822)

Jake Davies, (3-6th cousin) 17 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Mehitable Luther (b. 1676, *LFIA II*, p. 38, m. Ebenezer Cole)->Ebenezer Cole (*LFIA II*, p. 54, b. 1715)->Edward Cole (*LFIA II*, p. 56, b. 1751)->Samuel Cole (b. 1780)

Deesturm1945 (5-8th cousin) 16cM in 2 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Eleazar->Eli->Content (fem.). In this same line are Robert Shubinski, Linda Taylor, Phil Taylor45, and nestnancy, all with about 9-11 cM.

Deborah McKeand (4-5th cousin) 15cM 1 seg

John->Hez->Hez->Levi (*LFIA II*, p. 193)->Avis Scofield b. 1747

JanetCrispo and L.C (5-8th cousin) 14 cM 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Eleazar->Eleazar

B.O. 14 cM 1 seg

John->Sam->Martha (*LFIA II*, p. 57)

Lesnegus (5-8th cousin) 13cM

John->Sam->Sam->Caleb->Frederick->Frederick->Gardner (m. Olive Churchill)->Amanda m. John C. Earle->Mary Eliz Earle->Frederick B. Negus, Frederick E. Negus->Les Negus

Ldwells5059 (4-5th cousin) 12 cM 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Caleb->Jabez->Caleb->William (*LFIA II*, p. 456, b. 1774)->Theodoric (b. 1799)->Charlotte Lamoreaux->Charlotte J. Lamoreaux->Altha Pickford->Letha Mae McRobert->Arthur Wells->Lori Wells

Khpro (4-5th cousins) 12 cM 1 set

John->Sam->Ebenezer->Bethia/Bethany Luther Hammond (b. 1727, *LFIA II*, p. 104)

H60Bubba (managed by Kevin Neary) (4-5 cousins) 11 cM 1 set

John->Sam->Sam->James->Lydia Chase (*LFIA II*, p. 124, b. 1726)

J.B. (managed by lisa dickson34) (4-5 cousins) 10 cM 1 set

John->Sam->Martha Cole (*LFIA II*, p. 57, b. 1681)

Rromatzick (5-8th cousin) 11cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Caleb->Frederick

Karen Neary (5-8th cousin) 11 cm in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->James->Lydia Chase (1726-1805)

Bevp5197 (5-8th cousin) 11 cM in 1 seg

John->Sam->Sam->Eleazar->Eli->Susannah

Swiltermuth (4-5 cousins) 10 cM 1 set

John->Sam->Sam->Eleazar->Eli (*LFIA II*, p. 231, b. MA 1735, wife Experience was the daughter of Ichabod and Mary Hammond Cole, Eli had all girls->)->Content Welch (b. 1763, *LFIA II*, p.232, m. Aaron Welch and Thomas Warren, both living in *Chenango* Co, NY)

Gmahite (managed by Erik Hite) (4-5 cousins) 10cM 1 set

John->Sam->Sam->Consider (*LFIA II*, p. 132, a Baptist)->Sarah (m. John Barney, *LFIA II*, p. 135, b. 1726 in Swansea)

Swbmit (4-5 cousins) 9 cM 1 set

John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Theophilus->Sarah Cole (b. 1765, *LFIA II*, p. 245)

John->Sam->Ebenezer->Christian->Abigail Cole (b. 1752)

W.H. (Matthew Hornbrook) (4-5 cousins) 9cM 1 set

John->Sam->Theophilus->Theophilus->Theophilus->Benjamin (*LFIA II*, p. 365, b. 1761)->Sylvester->George->James->Oram M. Beckwith->Herbert Beckwith

Rachel Busike (4-5 cousins) 9 cM 1 set

John->Hez->John->Nathaniel (b. 1692, *LFIA II*, p. 188)->Hopestill (b. 1729)

Annette Graziani (4-5 cousins) 9 cM 1 set

John->Sam->Sam->Caleb->Freelove (b. 1715)

M.R. (managed by jmpdalvarez) (5-8th cousin) 9cM

John->Sam->Sam->Sarah