

The Statue of Liberty stands prominently on the left side of the image, holding a torch aloft in her right hand and a tablet in her left. She is perched atop a tall, multi-tiered stone pedestal. The background is a bright blue sky filled with soft, white clouds. In the lower right, a small American flag flies on a pole, and some green trees are visible at the base of the scene.

To Every Man His Chance

Stories of Eight Families

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Second Edition—Published May 2024--Dennis Ver Mulm

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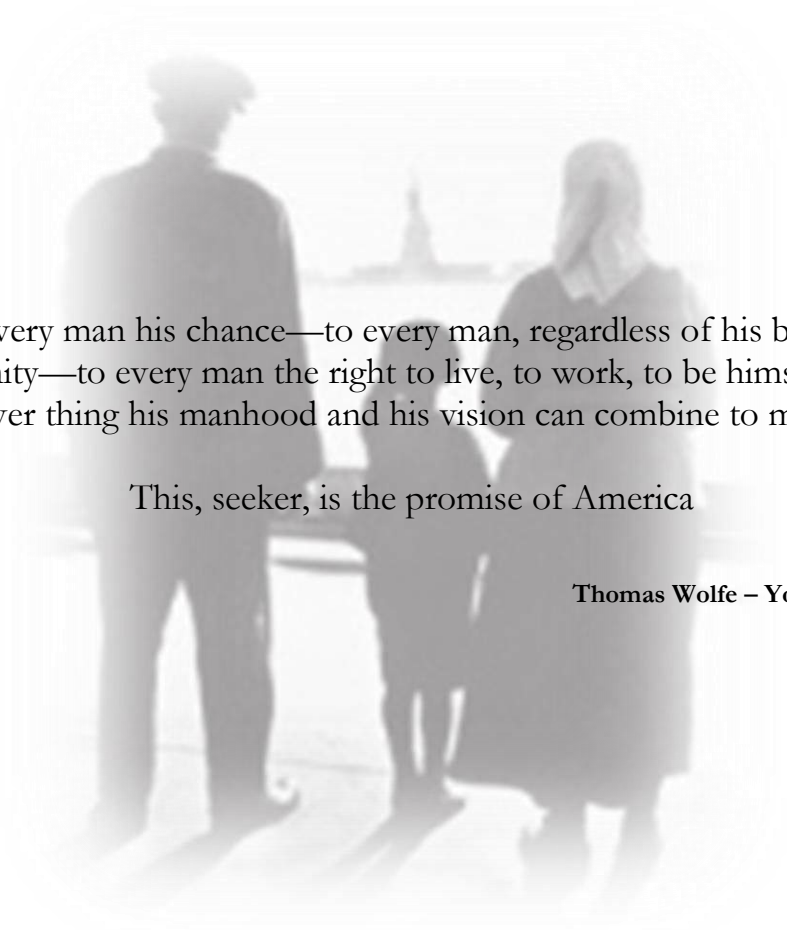
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Every book is a quotation; and every house is a quotation
out of all forests, and mines, and stone quarries; and every
man is a quotation from all his ancestors.

Ralph Waldo Emerson



So, then, to every man his chance—to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunity—to every man the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him.

'This, seeker, is the promise of America

Thomas Wolfe – You Can't Go Home Again



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Using a button hook to lift the eyelid, an Ellis Island health inspector checked arriving immigrants for the eye disease trachoma.

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From the Author



Welcome to this book of true stories. When I retired in 2011, I began researching our family ancestry. We had been to New York City and visited Ellis Island where, according to family history, Martha's great grandfather had passed through as a baby after being born aboard a ship in New York Harbor. We knew the family's Norwegian name, but strangely, the only person by that name listed at Ellis Island had arrived many years after her great-great grandfather and family. And so, we were curious to say the least. Thanks to the power and resources of the World Wide Web, we were soon to discover that everything we believed to be true about her great-great grandparents and the birth of her great grandfather wasn't true at all. They hadn't arrived in America via New York City, and her great-grandfather hadn't been born in New York Harbor. In reality, they had come from Norway on a small sailing ship via Quebec City, Canada. They then traveled via the Great Lakes to Chicago, and on to Iowa. You can imagine our surprise when we discovered that their first home in America had been less than 10 miles away from where we lived in Urbandale, Iowa. And this was only the first such discovery. It was one that sent us off on a quest to learn what other things we didn't know about our families.

That quest has taken us to eight different states and two foreign countries. Along the way, we've learned so much about our ancestors that we hadn't known. In many instances, we've learned things that no one had known—along with a few things that might have been better had they remained unknown. And we've found ourselves wishing that our parents were still alive so that we could share our discoveries with them.

Two things have happened to me during this journey of discovery. First, I've developed a profound sense of respect and admiration for these people we call ancestors. Their reasons for coming to America were as varied as the countries they came from. But in nearly every case, they left behind an environment where opportunity was lacking to come to a place where opportunity was abundant. These people had a character filled with determination, courage, and a faith in God that we today have in much smaller measure. I wonder, if we encountered similar hardships today, did our ancestors bequeath to us those same qualities buried somewhere deep within our DNA?

Second, I've learned how fragile our own histories are. So many people met untimely ends. Infant mortality was high, trans-ocean travel was perilous, diseases were numerous, and accidents and wars all too common. One tiny event, and either or both of us might not be here. What a different world it would be.

I hope you enjoy reading these stories. They're true stories about the eight families that came to America and laid the foundations of the Ver Mulm and Scott family names. They span America's history from Plymouth Colony to the present day. Our ancestors have been Pilgrims, revolutionaries, unionists, confederates, soldiers, and solid citizens—true Americans all. I hope you enjoy!

Dennis Ver Mulm
May 2024

About Castle Garden, the Barge Office, and Ellis Island

Our founding fathers neither encouraged nor discouraged immigration to America. Initially, they left it to the states to individually regulate immigration according to their specific needs. In 1855, New York's Commissioner of Immigration leased an ex-military fortress in New York City's Battery to replace a smaller and inadequate immigration office located in lower Manhattan. No longer used for military purposes, Castle Clinton had been renamed Castle Garden in 1824 when the military leased it to the City of New York for use as a popular resort, bathhouse, theater and dining area on New York's waterfront. After some modifications, Castle Garden began receiving immigrants in 1855. It functioned as New York State's primary immigration station until 1890.

By the late 1800s, political instability, religious persecution, and a rapid deterioration in economic conditions throughout Europe had a profound effect on migration. Dubbed “America Fever,” it resulted in the largest mass migration ever witnessed in human history. Soon the individual states realized they couldn't manage immigration, and in 1890, they ceded control of the process to the federal government.

That year, the federal government decided to convert another obsolete harbor fort on Ellis Island. It became the nation's first official federal immigration station. Castle Garden was closed, and during the two-year construction period, from 1890 until the first immigrants landed at Ellis Island in 1892, all arriving immigrants passed through the Barge Office in the Battery. Five years later in 1897, a disastrous fire burned the new immigration station to the ground. Many of the immigration files (including old files from Castle Garden and the Barge Office) were damaged or destroyed. The Barge Office was pressed back into service until a new fireproof facility on Ellis Island was opened in 1900. Immigration procedures evolved, and by the 1920s, few immigrants were passing through Ellis Island. The facility was officially closed in 1954. It was reopened for limited public visits in 1976 and as a museum in 1998. An immigration history center was added in 2001.



Castle Garden as it looked in 1855. Today it's been returned to its original Castle Clinton style and is used to sell tickets to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.



The Barge Office



The “Island of Tears” – Ellis Island in the early 1900s.

About Grosse Île Quebec

While most of our ancestors came to America through the ports of Philadelphia or New York City, two ancestral families entered America by first traveling from their homes in Europe to a port in Canada. The Skarvelands in 1857 and the Van Roekels in 1865 traveled through the port of Quebec City, Canada on the St. Lawrence River. This area, known as the Laurentian Gateway, was the main entry point for Canada in the 1800s.

With the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815, Canada experienced an immigration boom from the British Isles with most of the immigrants coming from Ireland and Scotland. Around 1830, epidemics of cholera and typhus were spreading around Europe. In response to fears that immigrants would bring these plagues with them, the colonial government of Canada decided to set up a health inspection and quarantine station to prevent the spread of disease. They chose an island in the middle of the St. Lawrence River about 30 miles downstream from Quebec City. Its name was Grosse Île. Beginning in 1832, all immigrant ships were required to stop at the island for a health inspection. Ships with known fever cases on board were required to fly a blue flag to warn medical personnel.

The history of Grosse Île is broken into two parts; 1832 to 1870 and 1871 to 1932. The first period is called the Improvisational Period. It was a time when little was known about how to diagnose and cure disease, and this period was a time of great tragedy on Grosse Île. If fever or disease was detected on-board a ship, all passengers were required to disembark and be quarantined for periods of up to 21 days. Since passengers were quarantined together during the Improvisational period, it was common for healthy passengers to become ill and die during the quarantine period.

In 1847, at the height of the Irish potato famine, 5000 Irish immigrants died at sea and more than 3000 Irish immigrants died at Grosse Île. 5424 Irish immigrants are buried there today in mass graves. In total, Parks Canada lists 7553 buried on Grosse Île of which 1545 are unidentified.

The second period of Grosse Île is called the Modernization Period. During this time, tremendous advances were made in diagnosis and treatment of disease. Fatalities and burials on Grosse Île declined precipitously during this period. Eventually, immigration slowed, and Grosse Île was closed in 1932. Today, it is administered as a national historic site by Parks Canada, which conducts regular tours.

It's unknown if either the Skarvelands or Van Roekels had to quarantine at Grosse Île, but given the prevalence of disease aboard immigrant ships, the possibility cannot be ignored.



Artist's drawing of an immigrant ship lying at anchor off Grosse Île, Quebec. The cannon was used to fire at immigrant ships that attempted to sail past Grosse Île without stopping for a health inspection.



This photo shows the quarantine arrangements inside the last remaining Grosse Île hospital building from the 1847 typhus epidemic. The building, called a **lazzaretto** was one of 12 such hospital buildings on Grosse Île at the time. Quarantined immigrants slept in these communal beds sharing mattresses and blankets. What hospital personnel did not know at the time, was that typhus was spread by fleas. As a result of these shared living arrangements, many immigrants who were not infected with typhus when they arrived at Grosse Île became sick while in quarantine. Many arrived healthy and died later. In addition, doctors at the time believed that the station was so ineffective at diagnosing disease that for every patient they properly diagnosed, two more infected patients were released from quarantine and allowed to travel onward to Quebec City where they would infect others.

Family Tree

Ver Mulm, Wassenaar, Van Roekel, Haagsma

Huibregt Dirkszoon VERMEULEN

07 Jul 1795 - 20 Aug 1848
m: 29 May 1826

Maria KOOLE

11 Feb 1803 - 30 Nov 1878

Jacob WARNAAR

26 Feb 1792 - 4 Dec 1851
m: 13 Jun 1856

Maartje Jansdr VOOGT

23 Dec 1798 - 17 Feb 1838

Willem Gerbens WASSENAAR

Sep 1817 - 2 Nov 1884
m: 25 Apr 1844

Johanna Poppes VAN DER MEULEN

18 Sep 1819 - 1909

Frans Olferts MEYERS

24 Jul 1812 - 6 Oct 1884
m: 6 Apr 1837

Tjitske Jaspers KEIZER

5 Aug 1815 - 1 Apr 1855

Jan Harmen VAN ROEKEL

2 Jul 1818 - 8 Oct 1865
m: 2 Oct 1847

Grada JANSEN

20 Nov 1823 - 3 Sep 1861

Guert VAN DE KROL

16 Oct 1829 - 16 Jun 1881
m: 6 Jun 1852

Willempje VAN MIDDENDORP

26 Aug 1828 - 1866 - Halifax Cholera Ship

Jacob Aukes HAAGSMA

Abt 1809 - 10 Jan 1870
m: 3 May 1828

Sjaartje Sjoerds BOERSMA

Abt 1808 - 26 June 1861

Meindert TYMENSMA

6 May 1823 - 23 May 1893
m: 9 May 1852

Bietske ERINGA



Kornelis VERMULM

3 June 1828 - 1895
m: 13 Jun 1856

Adriaantje (Jennie) WARNAAR

19 Oct 1832 - 4 Aug 1898



Poppe (Peter) WASSENAAR

19 Apr 1847 - 02 Jan 1932
m: 3 Nov 1870

Pietje (Nellie) MEYERS

20 Aug 1848 - 21 Nov 1922



Abraham VAN ROEKEL

21 Mar 1859 - 24 Jan 1917
m: 25 Oct 1877

Nennetje (Nancy) VAN DE KROL

22 Aug 1858 - 20 Nov 1928



Dirk (Dick) HAAGSMA

17 Feb 1851 - 15 Sep 1889
m: 19 Feb 1879

Baukje (Bertha) TYMENSMA

16 Feb 1854 - 1924



Willem Leendert VERMULM

b: 11 Oct 1872 in Hoogvliet, Rotterdam,
Zuid-Holland, Netherlands
m: 5 Nov 1898
d: 24 June 1944 in Rock Valley, Sioux,
Iowa



Tjitske (Tillie) WASSENAAR

b: 11 Sep 1878 in Het Bildt, Friesland,
Netherlands
d: 11 Mar 1957 in Rock Valley, Sioux, Iowa



Gradus (George) VAN ROEKEL

b: 18 Nov 1883
m: 19 Feb 1913 in Alton, Sioux, Iowa
d: 30 May 1969 in Sheldon, O'Brien, Iowa



Finkje (Fannie) HAAGSMA

b: 3 Nov 1889 in Alton, Sioux, Iowa
d: 19 Jun 1986 in Rock Valley, Sioux, Iowa



Jake VER MULM

b: 16 Feb 1919 in Rock Valley, Iowa
m: 19 Feb 1941
d: 29 Oct 2002 in Rock Valley, Iowa



Dorothy VAN ROEKEL

b: 24 Jul 1918 in Sanborn, Iowa
d: 19 Aug 2010 in Sanborn, Iowa



Dennis VER MULM
b. 6 Jul 1952, Rock Valley, IA
Martha SCOTT
b. 14 Apr 1952, Clarion, IA
Married May 15, 1976

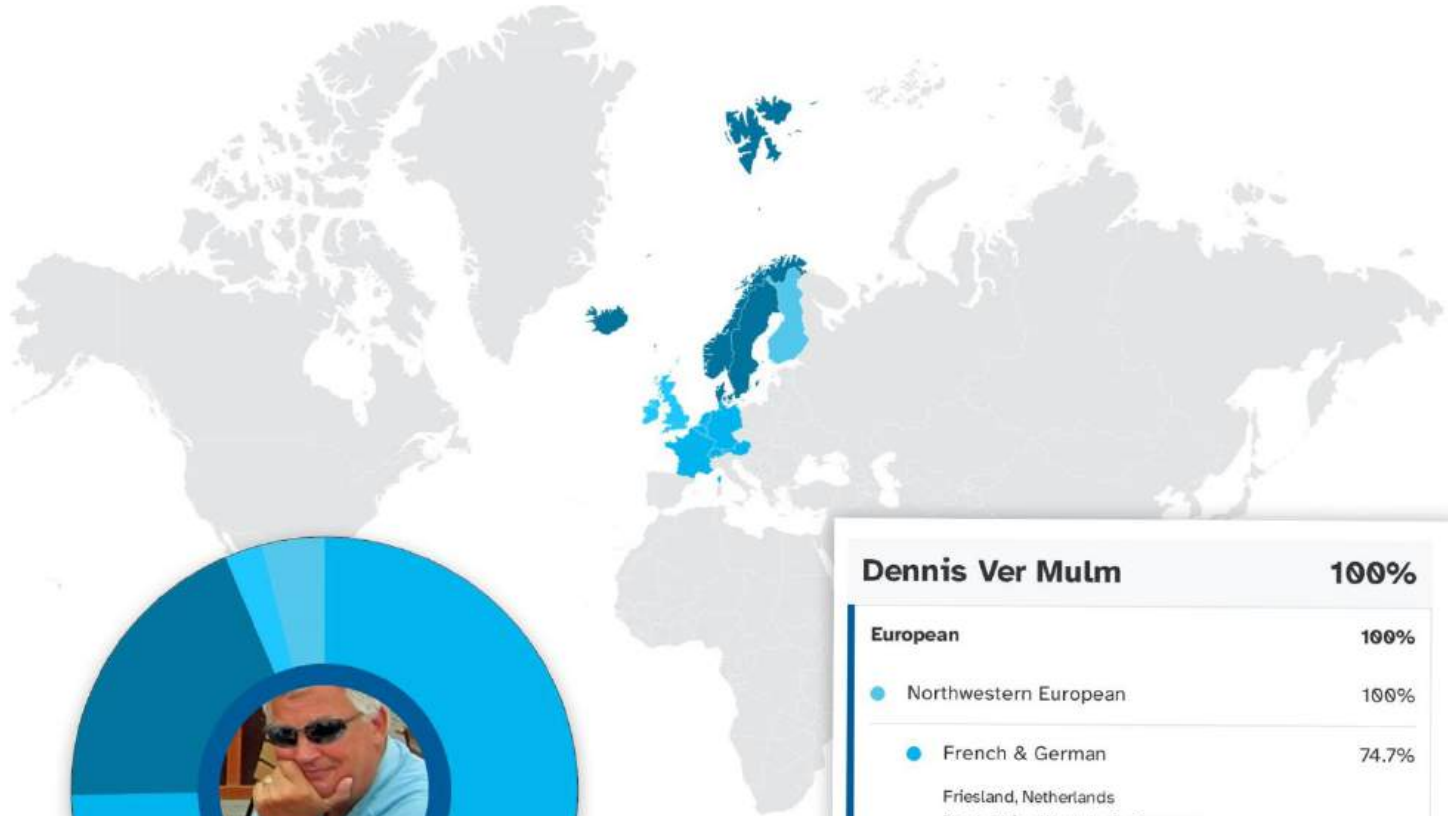


Scott VER MULM
b. 10 Feb 1982, Des Moines, Iowa
Kasey BAKER
b. 27 Feb 1979, Dallas Center, Iowa
Married 9 Oct 2010



Molly VER MULM
b. 7 Nov 1986, Des Moines, Iowa

Dennis's Ancestral Heritage



Genetic sequencing by 23 and Me

Dennis Ver Mulm		100%
European		100%
●	Northwestern European	100%
●	French & German	74.7%
	Friesland, Netherlands	
	North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany	
●	Scandinavian	18.9%
●	British & Irish	2.4%
	Greater London, United Kingdom	
●	Broadly Northwestern European	4.0%

Family Tree

Scott, Poundstone, Nauman, Eddy

Torris Tolleuson SCOTT

15 Oct 1824 - 10 Oct 1889
m: 19 May 1847

Seri (Sarah) Torrisdatter STORHAUG

22 Jun 1824 - 31 May 1894

Severt (Sjur) THOMPSON

10 Jun 1832 - 21 Jul 1909
m: 1861

Mary (Mari) TEIGLAND

24 Dec 1842 - 02 Jul 1883

David R. POUNDSTONE

23 Nov 1814 - 11 Nov 1871
m: 1840

Rebecca BUCHANAN

26 Sep 1817 - Aft 1852

John Barber OSTRANDER

11 May 1824 - 10 Jan 1910
m: 1 May 1849

Nancy Elizabeth LATHAM

21 Feb 1843 - 4 Mar 1901

Reuben NAUMAN

1817 - 10 Feb 1887
m: 23 Dec 1843

Elizabeth DOVEL

5 Nov 1822 - 3 Apr 1861

Charles William DAVID

1 Jul 1831 - 15 Jan 1889
m: 7 Aug 1851

Harriet KELSO

22 Feb 1833 - 04 May 1900

William Ford EDDY

14 Aug 1834 - 5 Nov 1902
m: 8 Mar 1860

Margareta Ann FUNK

7 Feb 1838 - 4 Jan 1919

Stephen J. LANSDOWN

1840 - 29 Jul 1909
m: 11 Oct 1883

Desdemonia LARIMER

1845 - 25 Jul 1933



Torris Andreas SCOTT

27 Apr 1857 - 26 Dec 1935
m: 21 Feb 1884

Mary (Maria) THOMPSON

10 Jan 1863 - 29 Sep 1943



John POUNDSTONE

7 May 1843 - 18 July 1913
m: 1874

Bellzora OSTRANDER

4 Mar 1855 - 25 Sep 1923



John William NAUMAN

4 Oct 1853 - 12 Sep 1921
m: 1883

Mary Irene (Mollie) DAVID

30 Apr 1867 - 15 Feb 1951



Elmer Percival EDDY

2 Apr 1861 - 13 Feb 1928
m: 1 Jan 1884

Mary Emily LANSDOWN

3 Mar 1865 - 30 Dec 1939



Mariel Silas SCOTT

b: 18 Jan 1884 in Kendall County, Illinois
m: 22 Dec 1909
d: 12 Apr 1958 in Clarion, Wright, Iowa



Helen Mary POUNDSTONE

b: 26 Apr 1889 in Grand Ridge, La Salle, Illinois
d: 27 Mar 1974 in Mason City, Cerro Gordo, Iowa



Luther Harold NAUMAN

b: 19 Apr 1884 in Craig, Holt, Missouri
m: 1 Apr 1908
d: 15 January 1969 in Mound City, Holt, Missouri



Edna Bell EDDY

b: 29 Aug 1886 in Mound City, Bates, Missouri
d: 11 Nov 1975 in Rock Port, Atchison, Missouri



Donald Rudolph SCOTT

b: 8 Sep 1919 in Minnesota
d: 8 Mar 1980 in Clarion, Wright, Iowa
m: 1 Sep 1940 in Clarion, Wright, Iowa



Edna Desdemonia NAUMAN

b: 31 Mar 1914 in Oxley, Ripley, Missouri
d: 7 Feb 1990 in Clarion, Wright, Iowa



Martha Leu SCOTT

b. 14 Apr 1952, Clarion, Iowa
Dennis Eugene VER MULM
b. 7 Jul, 1952, Rock Valley, Iowa
Married May 15, 1976



Scott VER MULM

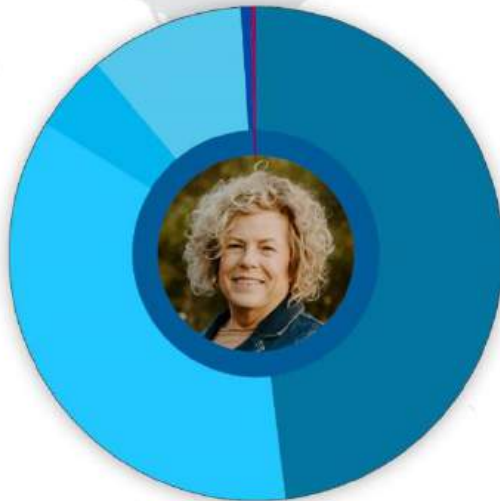
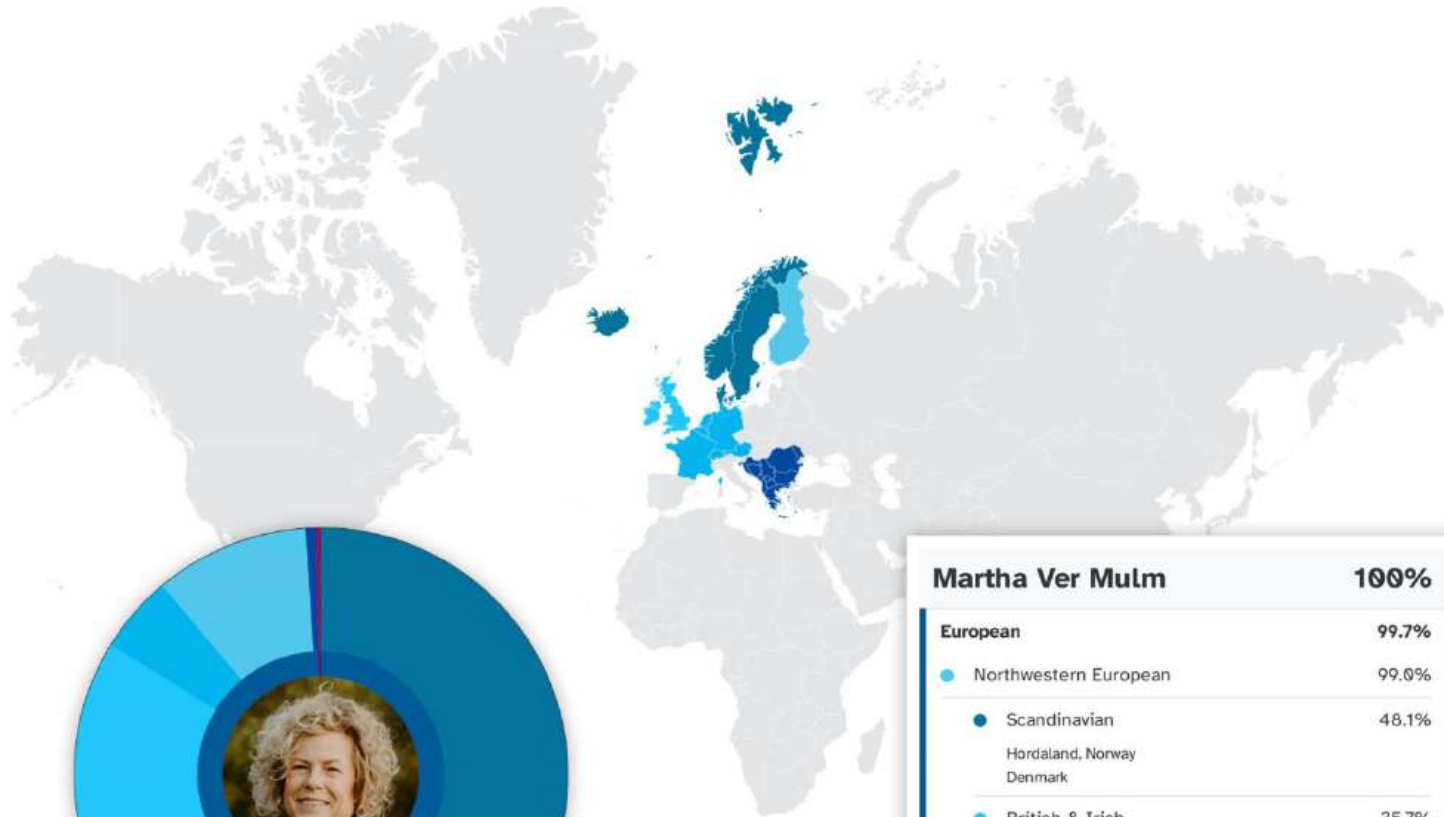
b. 10 Feb 1982, Des Moines, Iowa
Kasey BAKER
b. 27 Feb 1979, Dallas Center, Iowa
Married 9 Oct 2010



Molly VER MULM

b. 7 Nov 1986, Des Moines, Iowa

Martha's Ancestral Heritage



Genetic sequencing by 23 and Me

Martha Ver Mulm		100%
European		99.7%
Northwestern European		99.0%
Scandinavian		48.1%
Hordaland, Norway		
Denmark		
British & Irish		35.7%
Glasgow City, United Kingdom		
County Dublin, Republic of Ireland		
French & German		5.1%
North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany		
Broadly Northwestern European		10.1%
Southern European		0.7%
Greek & Balkan		0.7%