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# The Falkenburgs

A COLONIAL AMERICAN FAMILY



by

Donald Robbins Falkenburg



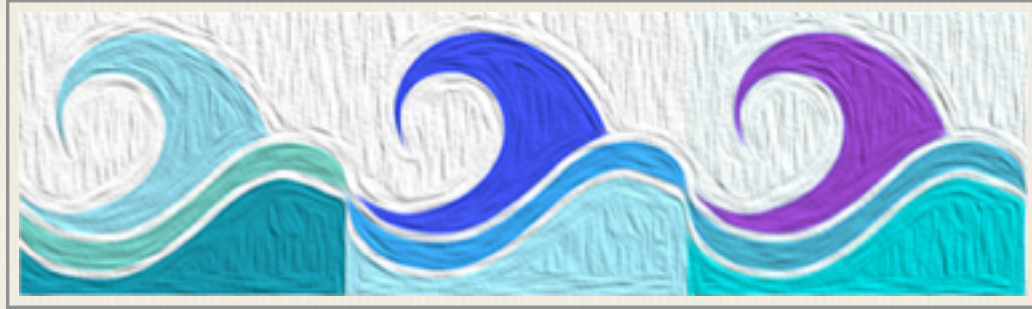


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**They sailed across my waves to a new land,  
and established a community on my shores.  
Generations labored on bountiful seas  
traveling to ports of call and exotic lands.  
Many lost their lives in my depths  
while widows and children grieved  
Others stood on my shore  
and marveled at the power of my life.**

cover photo

*Penn's Treaty with the Indians at Shackamaxon or more simply Penn's Treaty with the Indians, is an oil painting by Benjamin West, completed in 1771-2. The painting depicts William Penn entering into peace treaty in 1683 with Tamanend, a chief of the Lenape ("Delaware Indians") Turtle Clan, under the shade of an elm tree near the village of Shackamaxon*

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# Dedication

I dedicate this book to my grandchildren

*Benjamin Eugene*

*Jon Alan*

*Joseph Michael*

and to the

*generations of Falkenburgs who will follow.*

When I was a young boy I marveled at the stories told by my grandmother about my great-grandfather Solomon Falkenburg. He was the captain of a three-masted schooner and, as a merchant mariner, he sailed his vessel up and down the east coast of the United States as did his father and grandfather. My grandparents told me the sad story of loss the family suffered when Solomon who was on deck at the ship's wheel during an Atlantic hurricane was swept overboard as violent waves crashed across the deck. Although a bit frightening for a young boy, hearing this story began a life-long quest to learn more about the roots of my family. It seemed as though my parents and grandparents could not tell me much more about family history than this memorable incident. In my mature years I vowed to understand our roots and tell the story of our Falkenburg family. I really wish that I could share this book with my parents and grandparents, who have all passed on. I believe that they would be astonished by the stories I have uncovered.

I hope that you, Ben, Jon, and Joseph, will gain an appreciation for the role that our family has played in the development of the United States of America. The growing country impacted the lives of our ancestors, and each one of them influenced the development of this great nation.

Gramps

Donald R. Falkenburg

5 JUL 2016



# Preface

## Introduction

This history of the Falkenburg family is a view of one branch of family ancestry. It links 12 generations from Henry Jacobs Falkinburg to my grandchildren Ben, Jon, and Joseph. The time line spans over three hundred fifty years of the family in America!

I have attempted to tell this story not as a droll list of *who begat whom*, but as a story that links the history of our nation to individual ancestors. The history of a nation is an aggregate of the histories of many individuals and families. There are some like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison whose stories have been recorded for posterity. But what about the many other individuals who have never made it into the history books? In their own way each had a significant impact within their own sphere on this emerging nation.

In this family history I link American history with family history. You will learn about many individuals who were participants in the drama of the evolving American saga. In the chapter *Colonial Roots* you will learn about the paterfamilias of the Falkenburgs in America, Hendrik Jacobs who in the mid seventeenth century came to the Delaware colonies from his native Holstein. Henry Jacobs Falkinburg, as he was later called, played a pivotal role as interpreter for the Quaker Commissioners of William Penn's colony, negotiating land purchases from the native Lenape indians. In the chapter *Founding a Nation*, you will learn about John, grandson of Henry. John was a Quaker living in the peaceable community of Little Egg Harbor, in the Colony of New Jersey when the British attacked and burned his home. Charles A. Falkinburg, a 4-greats grandson of Henry, appears in *California Gold*. At age twenty three Charles was captain of the Schooner General Morgan. During

the Gold Rush, he sailed his ship through the treacherous Straits of Magellan, bringing the Connecticut Mining and Trading Company to the gold fields of California.

I have written each chapter in this book to tell a story. At the end of each chapter I include references used to support my work. There are discrepancies among the several records used by researchers. In most instances I have tried to seek the oldest, most historic sources to cite as a reference. In some cases, there are inferences that one can draw from the records. I try to clearly designate these by using the phrases “*it is most likely that...*” or “*one could conclude...*” These statements are not historical fact but are in my opinion reasonable extensions of the documented evidence.

Some early books present stories that were based on oral histories, often written years after the fact. Examples of these include the account of Penelope van Princis, one of my 9<sup>th</sup> great-grandmothers. This story along with a number excerpted from Leah Blackman’s seminal work documenting Henry Jacobs Falkinburg should be treated as stories that hopefully capture the essence of what happened. They should not be read as a true fact, but should be savored as part of the folk history of our family.

Throughout this book the reader will encounter various spellings of the family name. In the 1600s families of northern European extraction did not have surnames as we know them today. Henry the son of Jacob would often be called Henry Jacobson (sometimes shortened to Henry Jacobs). This is a patronymic designation. Of course as populations grew, there could be many persons with the name Henry Jacobs. Thus, family names evolved to represent occupations or regions in which the family lived. For example, Henry Jacobs Falkinburg was likely Henry son of Jacob from the town of Falkinburg. Already the reader has encountered the adopted surname of our paterfamilias—Falkinburg. How did this become Falkenburg for our current generation? As it turns out there are many different spellings of the surname. Henry’s name appears on colonial hand-written deeds as Falkinburge. Records of Henry’s grandson John and his family tend to be spelled Falkinburgh. You will see variants of spelling including Folkinburg, Falkenberg, Falkinbury, and many others. Some of these differences arise because docu-

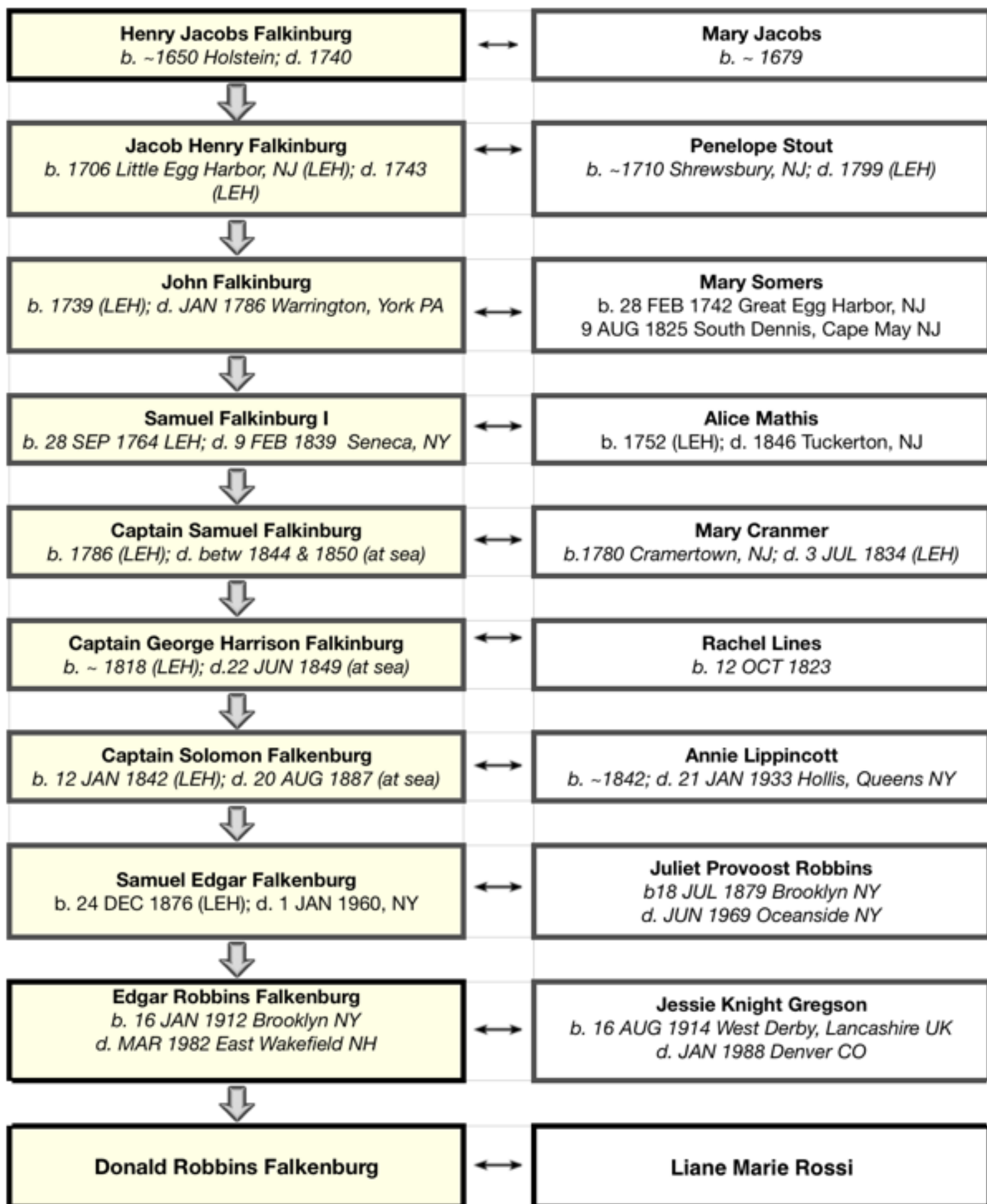


ments were recorded by scribes who wrote what they heard (or thought they heard). In some cases, these variants “caught-on” and entire branches of our family adopted the variation like Falkinburgh. In this book I will refer to the most common spellings of the surname. By in large this was Falkenburg, which in our branch of the family morphed to Falkenburg at the end of the nineteenth century. I know exactly when this happened, but I do not know why it happened.

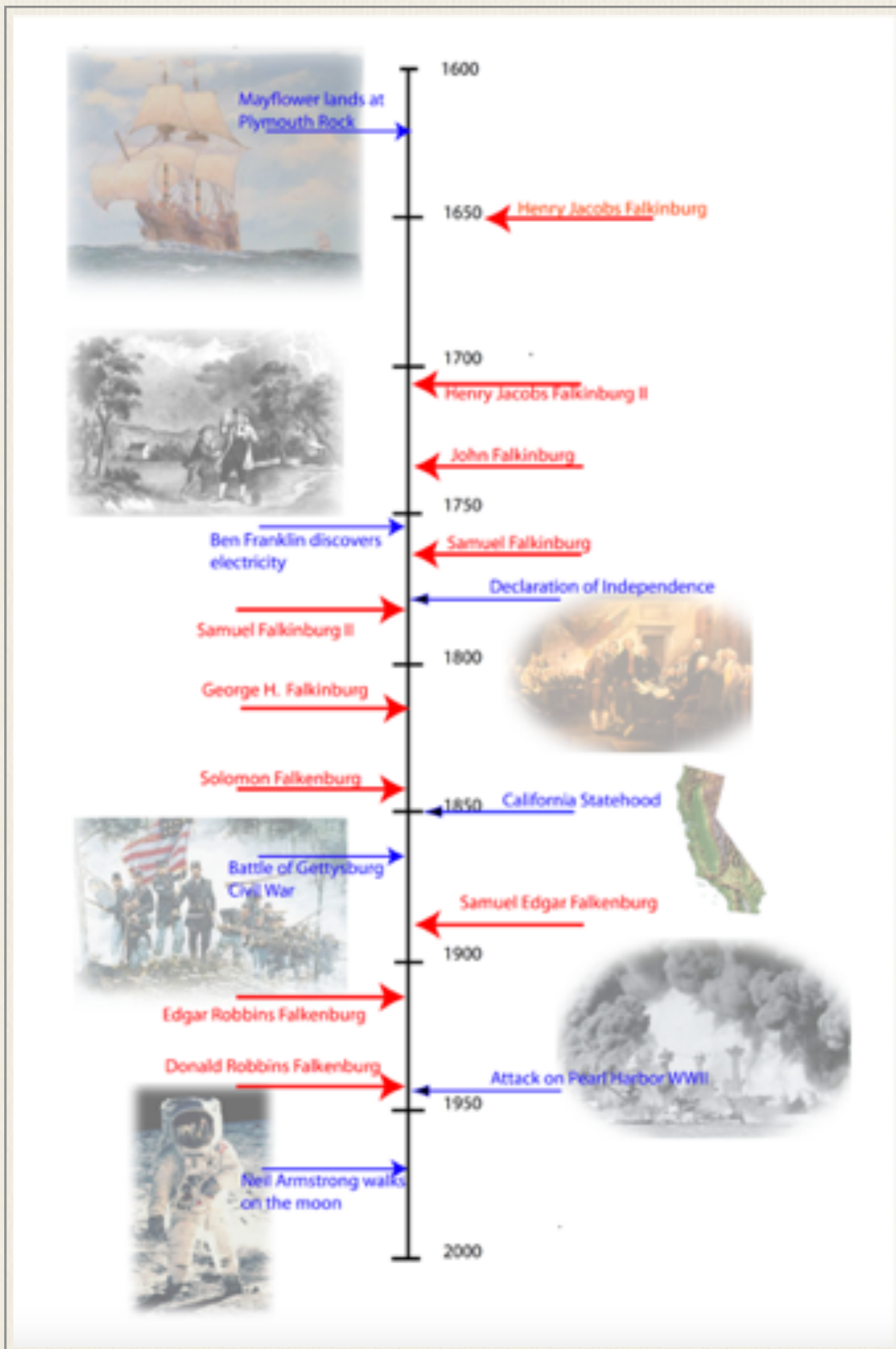
At the end of each chapter I have added a section entitled *Final Thoughts*. Here I paint personal sketches or develop impressions of one or more individuals you have met in the story. Again none of this is fact; it is informed opinion.

Finally, at the end of each chapter is a section entitled *The Story Behind the Story*. I did not simply sit down and write each of these stories. Each chapter evolved over many years. There have been many individuals who have brought things to my attention whom I thank in these concluding sections. In some cases these back stories provide insight into the question: How did you ever find this information? I hope that these hidden stories will give you a sense of the ebb and flow of research that has supported the evolution of this manuscript.

Any attempt to write a family history is limited. I have chosen to document a narrow slice of Falkenburg history tracing my ancestry back to Henry Jacobs Falkenburg. This ten-generation slice of the Falkenburgs provides a deep, yet one-dimensional view of the family. The tree is not linear as shown in the diagram on the next page, but it has a branching topology. Although I show two grandparents, my DNA flows through four grandparents. I have eight great-grandparents. If I follow this back to Henry Jacobs Falkenburg (my 7<sup>th</sup> great-grandfather), I would count five hundred and twelve 7<sup>th</sup> great-grandparents. In many generations there were large families. Captain Samuel Falkenburg (my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather) had fourteen children! If you extend the families at each generation, there is a countably large cohort of cousins and related family. My apology to the extended Falkenburg/Falkenburg/Falkinburgh family reading this work if your history does not appear in this volume.



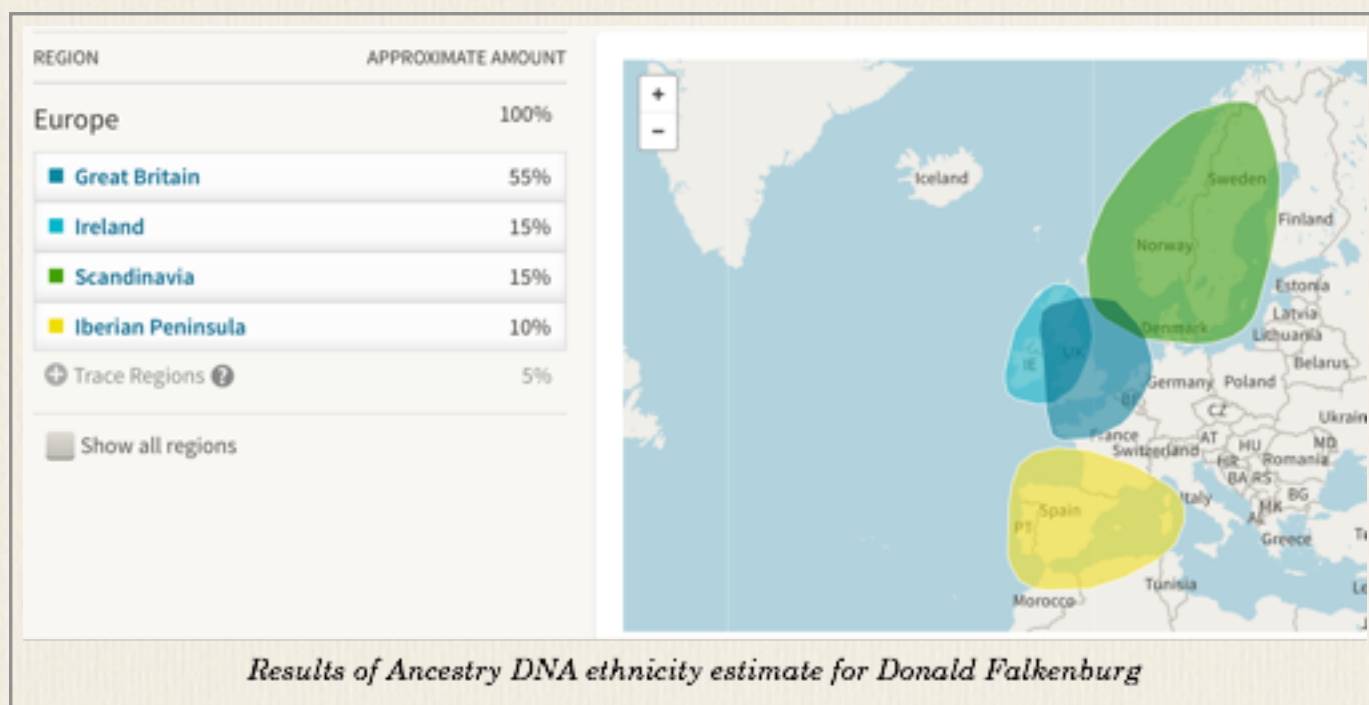
*Ten generations of my Paternal Ancestry from me to Henry Jacobs Falkinburg*



In the second section of this manuscript I trace the history of my mom's family (the Knight Gregsons) and my paternal grandmother's family (the Robbins) along with other related families. These are likewise linear views along other branches of the family tree. Again, time constrains me from following so many other interesting branches of my extended family tree.



Molecular biology has added a new tool to decipher our past. DNA, the building block of life, is created from the imprint of our mother and our father. Therefore, each of us carries a bit of our extended ancestral line in every cell of our body. I decided to have my DNA tested through Ancestry.com and the results reveal that I strongly share a DNA structure common in the ancestry from Scandinavia, and the British Isles. This seems to be reasonable from what I know about my family history. As you read the chapters in this book, each of these areas will appear. We know Henry Jacobs Falkenburg was born in Holstein on the Jutland Peninsula, and my mother had both English and Irish roots. The Scandinavian connection also likely stems from the fact that Norman conquerors of England were a mixed breed of Vikings and other central Europeans. The southern European connection is a bit of a mystery at this time.



The results displayed from these DNA tests go beyond what we can record from the genealogical record and may represent the family history measured at the scale of a millennium rather than a century.

As you read the history contained in these pages, I hope that you will enjoy learning about the history of our Falkenburg family.

Donald R. Falkenburg 13 MAY 2016

# Interactive Book

This book incorporates several interactive features. At the end of each chapter there is a list of references. These are marked with square brackets. Many of the references cited in this manuscript are hot-linked to internet resources. In this case, the text contains a hyperlink to a webpage. [2.1] Clicking on this link will open your internet browser and will display the cited reference. The sample link in this paragraph links to a great resource—archive.org, which like books.google.com archives content for out-of-copyright historical material. Some of the linked references I use are to ancestry.com; these will require you to have an account on that website in order to access information. Many libraries subscribe to ancestry.com providing non-members public access. Alternatively, familysearch.org (a free genealogical resource) has many of the same resources as does ancestry. In a few cases, I have used references which are available in print only. In that case, the reference will be in black (not hyperlinked). If you want to find such a reference in print format, use the website [worldcat.org](http://worldcat.org). Entering the information about the book or other resource will open a page which will describe where that resource can be found.

At the top of this book is a navigation menu. If you don't see this, move your cursor to the top of the page, and the bar will appear. Following the standard red, yellow and green buttons (close, minimize, and maximize) the next buttons will (1) return to your library, (2) display the table of contents, and (3) open a page where you may make your own notes. The find and bookmark buttons are on the far right.

This book contains some galleries of pictures. When you see a GALLERY, it will display the first of several pictures. You can access the next image by using a swipe gesture. In some cases, other media can be accessed by links from one of the pages. For example, in Chapter 1, there is an audio recording of Richard Wagner's opera *Der Fliegende Holländer*. When you get to that chapter, you will understand why I have included this. There are a couple of images that are enabled for zoom and pan. These are labeled INTERACTIVE. Click on one of the labels and use a two finger drag to move around the scene.

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