Mineau and Ancestory.com

Sitting at my Florida desk with fading sunlight slowly disappearing off my right shoulder, I continued staring at the computer screen, attempting to discover information about my great-great-grandfather. I was having some success with Ancestory.com when Mineau sat down beside me. "What are you doing," she asked. I responded, "I wanted to know more about my great-great grandfather's childhood." She asked, "How do you do that?" "It is triangulation," I said. "I try to find a name, date of birth, and location that match what I already have." "Can you do that for anyone?" she asked. "Well, the more information I have, the easier it is to find," I said. "With enough information, we can. "I'm looking for my sister," she stated. I turned my head and looked at her, wondering what she meant. "What?" I asked the rhetorical question. "What?" Nancy called us to join her for lunch. We had baloney and cheese, and Mino loves cheese, so the conversation ended.

After a delicious lunch, we all returned to the family room, Nancy to read and me to the laptop. Mineau sat down where she was before our lunch break and started her story. "I vaguely recall when my Mom, my brothers and sisters, and some aunts and uncles lived in a nice warm house with others. It was a strange house. I don't remember how we got there. I was young, but remember there were lots of us there. One day, my mother and sister disappeared, and I didn't know where they went. I was left with my four rowdy brothers. All they wanted to do was run around and wrestle. I overheard someone saying they had taken them to a pet store. "What's a pet store?' I had never heard of a pet store, and I wondered why my mother and sister were there. Someone remarked that my sister was the prettiest and friendliest. "That hurt my feelings."

Mineau continued, "A few days later, I heard them say that there were still too many of us and they would have to do something. The next thing I knew, someone put us in a box and took us to a new place they called a shelter. We weren't alone there as we heard lots of voices. Some doctors examined me, and I received some shots. It was a fun place, and we played a lot, although I missed my mother and sister. I came down with a cold and laid around and slept a lot. Still, I wondered where my mother and sister were. They weren't with us, and my brothers didn't know or care. They were too busy beating up each other."

"That's where I met you and Nancy. I remember you coming into the place with that look in your eyes. I was too sick to smile back, but I tried. That was almost a month ago," Mineau said. When Nancy signed the paperwork from the helper at the shelter, she asked the volunteer about my sister. "We don't keep track of those transactions," she said.

Mineau turned to me and asked again, "Can you find my sister?" Just as I started to come up with an answer, Nancy said, "See what I found," as she turned her Smartphone around and showed me a picture of Mineau. But it wasn't her. It was a look-alike. Mineau, but with only one ear. "Let's go see this look-alike without one ear," said Nancy.

The following day, we revisited the same shelter where we found you. Sure enough, there was a look-alike Mineau with only one ear. "One Eared's" name was Frankie, and she had lived with a woman and her daughter for a few months before arriving at the shelter. She did not live in a kind home. She had been traumatized and burned. Someone had burned Frankie's ear, probably with a cigarette or cigarette lighter. It got infected, and she became ill. At that point, she was dropped off at the shelter, and the volunteer said, "When she arrived at the shelter, the doctors removed her outer ear. Frankie can still hear because the doctors saved the inner ear. As for her being ill, we have medication for that, and when she isn't on medicine, she is quite energetic." Nancy asked Frankie if she wanted to come home with us. She reluctantly said "yes" because she didn't want to stay in the shelter.

It has been a few weeks since then, and Mineau and I are still trying to find the name of my great-grandfather's elementary school. Frankie wanted to put her past behind her. She asked, "Do you have a new name for me?" Nancy responded," Yes, Tito." Tito rolled over in the sun, on the floor, and smiled.

Mineau remembered what I said about triangulation of information, so she asked, "What is Tito's date of birth?" I had no answers for her but said, "Dates of birth are what they are. I usually expect them to be somewhat close to the actual date." "What about the oral history about Tito," she asked. "The oral history makes her my sister." "That could also be true," I said. "The papers we got with the two of you say you have different birth dates," I answered. "It is possible someone could have made a mistake?" she asked. I turned to Mineau and asked, "Do you believe that you and Tito, formally known as Frankie, are sisters?" Mineau turned to Tito – then turned to me. "We are now."Mneau joined Tito in the sunspot on the floor: two beautiful black and white tuxedo cats enjoying the day, one with one ear and one with two.