Jacob Donaldson (Jake's namesake)

When Buz and Karen were here I started looking again at the Donaldson line. I gained more confidence in my research when I found that the lines I traced back brought me to Jacob Donaldson, the same ancestor identified by the author of the Donaldson family book. Buz and I went back and forth as he read names from the book and I found the connection. So far, most of the interesting stories in the book happened to kin of our ancestors, not to our direct ancestors, but there's plenty of interesting stuff anyway. I went back a few generations before Jacob and found his grandfather was born and died in Scotland, while he and his father were born in Northern Ireland.

Daughter of a King
Margaret Drummond, our 15th-great-grandmother, was the mistress of James Stewart IV, King of Scotland. Her daughter Margaret Jane, our 14th-great-grandmother, was one of his many illegitimate children. According to Wikipedia, Margaret Drummond and her two sisters died immediately following a meal. One conspiracy theory (not from Jessie Ventura or Michelle Bachman) was that King James wanted to marry her, but some opposed this, and she was poisoned. It was said that had he married Margaret, Scotland would not have joined the British Union.

Salem Witch Trials
Moving down the line of our great-grandfather George Melvin Nichols' wife Sarah Lowe, I was researching our 8th-great-grandfather, John Proctor. I noticed he died "On Gallows Hill" in Salem MA, which intrigued me. Looking further I learned he was a tavern owner with his 3rd wife Elizabeth Bassett, our 8th-great-grandmother. In 1678, he was charged with allowing a customer to pawn property in exchange for drinks, and for selling cider to a drunken Indian.

In 1692 Elizabeth was charged with being a witch. John's defense of her only served to get him charged as well. He and Elizabeth (along with her sister and sister-in-law) were tried and convicted of witchcraft. They tortured his sons in front of him in trying to get a confession. He recited the Lord's Prayer, which reportedly could not be done by a "wizard", but it was the last thing he did before he was hung. They postponed Elizabeth's execution until she delivered her baby. By the time she delivered they had stopped the hangings. Her family had to pay the cost of her time and her husband's time in prison, and for his execution. She and her 3 children under 10 (including our then 3-year-old 7th-great-grandmother) plus 2 teenagers were left destitute since all assets had been seized. (She won some money, and her dowry, back 20 years later.) John Proctor was the main character in the 1996 movie "The Crucible". (I have ordered the DVD.) Elizabeth's paternal grandmother (who was also her maternal step-grandmother), Ann Holland, was also charged decades earlier with witchcraft but was found not guilty. The frenzy came in 1692, when 20 were hung, including John.

Maine Connection
Although Maine was the last state the Nichols lived in before Minnesota, they were not there long. From the time that Thomas Nichols arrived in 1635, the Nichols lived in Massachusetts until our 5th-great-grandfather James moved to New Hampshire around 1760, then moved to Maine around 1790. None of our Nichols line were both born and died
there. His son James 2nd was born in New Hampshire and died in Maine. James 2nd's son Hubbard was born in Maine, as were his sons George and Charles, who moved with him to MN in ~ 1856, along with some cousins. Of course, our non-Nichols-named ancestors moved more, but that was it for the Nichols.

Royal Connection
As Buz noted, half of the people living today can trace themselves to European royalty if you go back far enough. From Wikipedia "it can be estimated that as many as 150 million Americans have traceable royal European descent.[10] According to American genealogist Gary Boyd Roberts, an expert on royal descent, most Americans with significant New England Yankee, Mid-Atlantic Quaker, or Southern planter ancestry are descended from medieval kings, especially those of England, Scotland, and France". With so many ancestors from New England in the 1600s, we certainly have the connections. Makes for an interesting story anyway. And besides, we're descendants of Hoger, KING OF THE THURINGIANS. Does that sound cool or what