



## ***Fishing in Every Pond: Cousin Baiting***

[www.ChristineCohenGenealogy.com](http://www.ChristineCohenGenealogy.com)

**Descendancy Research** is a good method to reach out to previously unknown cousins who may help you to accomplish the following:

- Locate artifacts, heirlooms, documents, records, stories, and pictures
- Breakdown a brick wall
- Share your passion for genealogy connect with a research, library, or conferences, court house, cemetery, archives attendance buddy
- Let them know your interest in family treasures and you will cherish them
- Obtain to a Y, mt or autosomal DNA test

Do collateral descendant research forward in time, especially using the 1850 - 1950 Censuses. Try to locate and make family group sheets of adult children who married, had children, and who could living descendants.

Focus on people with uncommon first or last names to start in your research.

**Websites** to post a tree to bait and lure cousins:

- [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com) – Free for many features for your family tree
  - [www.MyHeritage.com](http://www.MyHeritage.com) – Family tree free for up to 250 ancestors
  - [www.Geni.com](http://www.Geni.com) - Free for many features for your family tree
  - [www.WikiTree.com](http://www.WikiTree.com) - Free
  - [www.Geneanet.org](http://www.Geneanet.org) – Free for many features for your family tree
  - [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org) - Free
  - [www.Fold3.com](http://www.Fold3.com) - Free to add Military Veteran Memorials
  - [www.LostCousins.com](http://www.LostCousins.com) – Free – United Kingdom (free newsletter)
- \*\*\*Add a photo of yourself to get better replies back

**Websites** to fish for cousins:

- [www.DAR.org](http://www.DAR.org) – DAR membership not required for most of the site
- Sons of American Revolution (SAR): Applications that can provide give descendants into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century – [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com)

- [www.CyndisList.com](http://www.CyndisList.com) - Surname / Family websites / Blogs
- Jewish Families - <https://knowlescollection.blogspot.com/>
- Periodical Source Index (PERSI)  
<https://www.genealogycenter.info/persi/> Search by location / Surname - then contact the publisher or the ACPL to obtain the article
- Social Security Death Index (1935-2014) / Applications and Claims Index (1936-2007) <https://www.deathindexes.com/>
- Visit <https://www.one-place-studies.org/> & <https://one-name.org/>
- Online Newspapers especially, obituaries and death notices. Be sure to check their hometown newspapers, in addition to their retirement states.
- Draft cards for WWI, WWII and Korean war – [www.Fold3.com](http://www.Fold3.com)
- Arkansas, WWI Discharge Records – [www.Fold3.com](http://www.Fold3.com)

Living People Search engines, are where you can get free information to create a family group sheet. However, you will often need to pay to get more details such as current address or email. Try each one to obtain different bits of information.

Consider creating a free genealogy email account just for these sites:

- [www.USSearch.com](http://www.USSearch.com)
- [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com)
- [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com)
- [www.FACEBOOK.com](http://www.FACEBOOK.com)
- <https://www.BeenVerified.com/>
- [www.SteveMorse.org](http://www.SteveMorse.org)
- [www.TruePeopleSearch.com](http://www.TruePeopleSearch.com)
- [www.PeopleLooker.com](http://www.PeopleLooker.com)
- [www.YellowBook.com](http://www.YellowBook.com)
- [www.FamilyTreeNow.com](http://www.FamilyTreeNow.com)
- [www.Spokeo.com](http://www.Spokeo.com)
- [www.WhitePages.com](http://www.WhitePages.com)
- U.S. Public Records, 1970 – 2009 [www.FamilySearch.org](http://www.FamilySearch.org)
- U.S. Phone & Address Directories 1993-2002 [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com)
- U.S. Public Records Index 1950- 1993 [www.Ancestry.com](http://www.Ancestry.com)

### **Online Cemetery** Indexes and Obituary Records:

- [www.FindaGrave.com](http://www.FindaGrave.com) (US & International)
- [www.BillionGraves.com](http://www.BillionGraves.com) (US & International)
- [www.DeceasedOnline.com](http://www.DeceasedOnline.com) (United Kingdom)

- [www.GraveStonePhotos.com](http://www.GraveStonePhotos.com) (International)
- <https://arizonagravestones.org/gpp-info.php> (40 US states in total)
- [www.USGWTombstones.org](http://www.USGWTombstones.org) (United States)
- [www.Interment.net](http://www.Interment.net) (US & International)
- <https://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/> (United States Department of VA)
- <https://www.legacy.com/> (US & International)
- <http://www.tributes.com/> (US & International)
- <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries> (US & Canada)

### Digital Photo Collections:

- <https://dp.la/> - Digital Public Library of America
- <https://www.flickr.com/> - Flickr
- <https://loc.gov/> - Library of Congress
- <https://openarchives.umb.edu/digital/collection/p15774coll6> - Massachusetts
- <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/> - New York
- <https://ohiomemory.org/> - Ohio
- <https://digital.denverlibrary.org/> Colorado

### DNA:

- [www.LivingDNA.com](http://www.LivingDNA.com) - United Kingdom focused / \$ 30 county focus upgrade fee - Upload Ancestry, 23 & Me, and MyHeritage zip files for free
- [www.FamilyTreeDNA.com](http://www.FamilyTreeDNA.com) – Upload Ancestry & MyHeritage zip files for free – New partnership with [www.WikiTree.com](http://www.WikiTree.com) for trees

### Communication:

- Be polite and specific in requests
- Offer to copy and share an item that may spark their interest such as: census records, citizenship papers, photos, diaries, journals, letters, military pension files, voter registrations, city directories, etc.
- Offer *your email* to show you are sincere
- Send a SASE, if using snail mail
- Offer to pay for DNA test and explain what can be learned from DNA
- Consider privacy issues & feelings
- They may not be interested now, but maybe in the future? Perhaps try a few times and use various forms of communication to connect with them.

- Keep a research log of connections who you contacted, what interface you used to connect (email, Facebook, X, twitter, Bluesky, Instagram, TikTok, phone, or snail mail, etc.) your relationship, how you determined your connection, such as DNA test or an online family tree.

## References:

Passey, C. H. (n.d.). *Genealogy in Reverse: Finding the Living. A Practical Guide for All Genealogists* Genealogical Publishing Company. 2025

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Finding\\_Living\\_People\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Finding_Living_People_in_the_United_States)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRiZPRbiuQI> – James Tanner

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/the-more-the-merrier-collaborating-with-your-dna-cousins> - Paula Williams

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/finding-cousins-confirming-connections-practical-strategies-for-descendancy-research>

<https://familytreemagazine.com/strategies/10-ways-to-find-cousins/>

<https://www.thrillist.com/travel/nation/find-family-ancestors-genealogy-sites>

<https://ancestralfindings.com/how-to-approach-living-relatives-for-genealogical-information/>

Finding the Irish cousins who stayed behind (RootsTech 2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PR9Z9gtaToo>

Discovering Distant Cousins through Facebook (RootsTech 2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04PR27Y5MUg>

Communicating with Cousins -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG2CiY\\_6c9Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG2CiY_6c9Y) (The Barefoot Genealogist – Crista Cowan)

Finding New Cousins and Building Your Family Tree with DNA –

(MyHeritage.com) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnwjRC\\_N85w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnwjRC_N85w)

Finding Cousins Using DNA -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7YGyCHu1ow> (MyHeritage.com)

All Hyperlinks valid as of April 29<sup>th</sup> 2026