

# Finding Living Cousins

## Reasons to Research Living Persons

- Find living cousins to exchange family information
- Find out who got all the family heirlooms and photographs
- Return a family heirloom such as an old photograph
- Locate living descendants of ancestors for DNA testing purposes.
- Find genealogical evidence such as the family Bible of a common ancestor
- Research all descendants of an ancestor for a book

## Gathering Information

- Who is the common ancestor? What do you know about her/him and siblings, offspring?
- Create a profile for descendants. Include all details—maiden names, last known locations, approx. ages, siblings, etc. (See *Locating Lost Family Members and Friends* by Kathleen Hinckley, "Research Work Sheet.")
- In addition to general online searches, identify specific record types that fit the profile.

## Resources to Use

- Traditional genealogical records (latest census, vital records, probate records)
- [FindAGrave](#) (obits, persons managing memorial or who left flowers)
- [Social Security Death Index](#) (to rule people out)
- Newspapers, for obituaries ([Chronicling America](#), [Newspapers.com](#), [GenealogyBank](#), state digital newspaper projects, local libraries)
- School records, including yearbook collections
- Published SURNAME histories
- Living relatives you know
- DNA matches
- [Google](#) (duh!) (lots of hints on blogs on how to frame your search)
- Family websites: blogs, web pages hosted by living relatives, surname associations
- Trees on [Ancestry](#), [MyHeritage](#), [RootsWeb](#), [WikiTree](#), [FamilySearch](#)
- [FaceBook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#)
- [Classmates.com](#)
- White pages / directories, e.g., [www.whitepages.com](#)
- Public Records Sites ([Intellius](#), [411.com](#), [Radaris](#), [Switchboard](#), etc.)
- [Zillow](#) or [Redfin](#) or [Zip Realty](#) (if you have a mailing address)
- Message Boards (e.g., Ancestry or RootsWeb)
- Cyndi's List "[Finding Living People](#)"

## Important: Check your work!

- Retrace your steps, make sure your own research is correct before contacting the wrong descendants.

## Contacting Found Cousins

- Email
- Send a letter by snail mail
- Use internal messaging systems on Facebook, Ancestry, [23&Me](#), FamilySearch
- Respond to a message board post (Rootsweb, Facebook groups)
- Create a "honey pot" public tree on Ancestry, WikiTree, MyHeritage, etc.

## Respect Peoples' Privacy & Feelings