

The Power of Networking

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What is networking, and what does it have to do with family history?

Networking is merely identifying and communicating with people who can help you in some way in the future. You may also be able to help them.

Online Message Boards

- www.rootsweb.com
- www.usgenweb.org
- www.genforum.com

You'll get best results if you make a good quality posting. Keep it short but enticing. Make them want to contact you. First, think about what the search engine will match on or what a reader will scan. Here is the recommended message posting form:

- Title The whole name, a location and dates.
- Body A short listing of the information you know (not too much) including other people or places related to the person.
- Body A question or what you are trying to find out.
- Body Offer to share information.

GOOD TITLE; GOOD MESSAGE

Title: Hugh C. Dunlap, Ohio 1805-1865

Text: Hugh C. Dunlap, b.09/03/1805 d.08/27/1865, married unknown, at least one son, Benjamin Hewitt Dunlap, b.10/22/1839 d. 08/26/1894, married Cynthia McGlaughlin. Areas are Meigs and Ross County, Ohio. Related names Husted, Mick, Kellough, Shoemaker, Yoakum, Wine. Do you have any information about Hugh C. Dunlap's wife?

OK TITLE; OK MESSAGE

Title: Mahala Cohenour

Text: I am looking for information on Mahala Cohenour. She was married to William Henry Harrison Sapp. Their children were Lewis, Frank, Mariah, Frances, Addie, Jefferson, William, and Susan. Thank you.

Online Lookups

- www.usgenweb.org
- www.raogk.org
- You'll get best results if you include enough information in your request so that the "look-upper" can make a match. But don't ask for too much. Be very specific about what you know and what you need to find out. Ask for a little, get a lot. Also, offer to share, or help your respondent find some information.
- If you are desperate, start your request with ... "I don't know if you can help, but I am looking for ..." end your request with "... What would you suggest I do to find out about this individual?"

Online Newsletters and Groups

- Cyndi's list, Ancestry.com, genforum, rootsweb, societies, etc.
- Ask yourself: Should I sign up? What is best for me? Should I wait?

Off-line Local Librarians

Use an on-line phonebook and look for a library in the small town in which you're interested. If you can't find a library, contact a church or cemetery and ask about the local library. Try a historical or genealogical society too. Calling or visiting them is usually more effective than writing.

- Do they have old newspapers, obituary collections, local histories, local historical pamphlets, school year books? Could they look up something for you?
- Do they have cemetery grave listings? Do they know which cemetery has the oldest graves? Was there a particular place where most children were born?
- Is there another town that might have information about the smaller town? What is the general history of the town?

If you request (and especially if you receive) information, be sure to send a thank you note, and perhaps a small donation to the organization.

- Be sure to let them know you are from Washington State. It is "way up here in the corner" of the US and that can be an advantage. People may be more willing to help you.

Everyday Acquaintances

- Talk about your hobby. Perfect an "elevator speech". Bottom line—OPEN YOUR MOUTH. You never know who might share your interest.
- Use bumper stickers ("Genealogists Collect Dead Relatives")

Society Interest Groups

- Once you are ready to join a genealogical society interest group, contact your local genealogical society to determine whether they have a group that can help you.
- Contact the State Genealogical Society to find out what societies are near you.
- Consider joining a genealogical society in an ancestral hometown. Some societies will search their records for your surnames as a benefit of being a new society member.