

# History of the Hubbard County GenWeb Project

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I can't really talk about Hubbard County until you know a bit about the GenWeb project. It was begun in 1996 by a group of Kentucky Genealogists as an easy way to share information. Basically, they decided it was time to do something on the Internet about genealogical research. It was time to do something to get those valuable documents ONLINE..... accessible to anyone with a computer and modem.

I started volunteering in early 1997 by setting up a small space for people to ask questions. So, if you needed information on Great Aunt Agatha - you'd type up what information you had and post it up there. With luck, someone would drop by that needed Agatha's birth information, and you could trade information of value to both of you.

Then, Beth Waller and Jan Lokensgard put me in touch with Ira Benham, and I began to answer *Thank You* notes about what a treasure Mr. Benham really is!

Due to Ira's work and the people who have helped me get him online - Hubbard County Genweb is one of the top 5 counties in MN for information available online! No, that isn't true. I got an update yesterday, and Fillmore County has quite a bit of information available. But Hubbard County is now Best in the STATE of MN! and I'd like to share a quick recent thank you note:

Dear Sharon,

Thank you for your response to my query about the Scheer's family of Akeley. I found Marian among the grads of 1925. Your Genweb pages are well done. Keep up the good work.  
~Debby Was

Ok, she got my name wrong - there ARE people out there who will appreciate any tidbit that you care to share. MN is one of the lowest states for information online, so there's plenty of room to grow in the right direction.

All of the states are online, and all of them have archives. This project is run from the county level. Of **3,137** US counties, 3,050 are online [as of 1998]. If I can put in a shameless plug, I also have small pages for Marshall and Mahnomen counties and recently took over Clay county. All of this wonderful news about Hubbard makes them look just pitiful! If anyone wants to volunteer or knows someone with information to contribute - Just let me know.

Enough of the brief history - There is a NEW project to GenWeb called Gen Connect. <http://cgi.rootsweb.com/~genbbs/qindex.html> This project will be extremely helpful as it gets rolling because it is searchable nationally. You can find everyone looking for your surname who has posted in this system. You've already seen this if you've updated your Query in the Hubbard

System. This also offers Obituaries right now, and has the potential for Biographies. I just got the word this week that new sections may be added. We'll be able to post Wills, Deeds, Bible Records, and Pension information.

This is the main page for the GenWeb information, in case you haven't yet seen it.  
<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

Although these projects are all terrific - and FREE -- They aren't the only ponies on the internet.

My most commonly asked question about the internet is along the lines of what is it, and what it does. The internet is actually an alternate phone system made by the US Government (and called DARPA) in case the Russians bombed ATT. It started with email, then some files, and now it's mostly surfing. The smart university fellow who invented the marriage of text and graphics called World Wide Web calls it that! Not because you need expensive tools and good luck to do it well.

All of the sites that I've mentioned so far have started with http:// Just so you've seen this - it's hypertext transfer protocol, and next is usually www. for World Wide Web, then the name of the computer you are going to. There are quite a few places to get a better understanding of all of this. What's important now is to understand that the internet isn't one big organized computer someplace. You can't visit it like the Grand Canyon. There's this computer connected to another computer - connected to another. One of my major "WOW" factor issues is "Where Am I?" I know that Cornell is in NY, and that Silicon Valley is in California. If you look at some addresses, sometimes they end with something other than .com or .org - the odd ones are country codes. .uk for England .ca for Canada. When I first started on the internet, I ran from England to Singapore to Australia and back to Sweden before midnight! So, I saved myself quite a bit of airfare and time. And, with luck, I got the information I was looking for.

Another thing the internet has done for us is to debunk an old saying. Stop me if you've heard this before - "If you get a million monkeys on a million typewriters, eventually they'll write Romeo and Juliet. Well, there are more than a million primates typing reams of information, and I haven't yet found the next Billy Shakespeare!

But, there are quite a few terrific collections and places to visit. We've already talked about some of the RootsWeb and the GenWeb project. RootsWeb is also the largest and oldest Genealogical database collection on the internet. <http://www.rootsweb.com/> It started in 1987 for Queries - questions and answers - on the RootsL mailing list. RootsL has now collected a huge database of surnames and migration patterns that now includes 452,150 names.

Including our own HCGS web page, there are 2,827 similar county pages. There are also specific topic mailing lists, for instance Irish in NY, Hubbard Co - 3,969 of them. If there was enough interest, we could start one of our own. Even if it was just in praise of Ira Benham!

Just to show you how this works, I'll pull up a name we know something about. Benham

If you click searches, you find the big list of different ones available.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/rootsweb/searches/> The one that's the biggest is the RootsL Surname List (RSL). (skim down, mentioning the different options) It's obvious there's quite a bit of work here, but I've had really good luck with RSL, so we'll start there.

<http://www.rootsweb.com/rootsweb/searches/rslsearch.html> I'll pull up a name we know something about. Benham And, we get the list of people researching the Benham surname. If we go back to the search using the back button, we can limit the search to people researching the Benham name in MN.

One person, kjane. This long line of gibberish is actually a migration pattern. This person is looking for the family that started in England, went to New Haven CT, then Chittendon Co, VT - through MN to King Co Washington. To get more information on this person, you just click on their nickname. The winner is - Melanie Kittelson of Mesa AZ!

If you click on "See all Surname Queries by this Submitter", these are all the names that this person is searching for - this will give you more of a clue if this person is also searching for other lines related to you Benham surname. If you want to get into touch with her, just click her email.

The message screen comes right up, or you can cut and paste into your email program. Now, what do you SAY to this person? Well, be polite, use your spell checker - be complete! This could be someone new to the hobby, or someone like me with 2200 names and trying to get more, or , with luck, it could be a gem like Ira!

You get great results if you start with what you have - names dates, places and ask a specific question. When you are ready, there are good instructions for you to put your names in here.

Before I go on - are there any questions about RootsWeb or GenWeb that I missed? Ok, would anyone like for me to do another walk thru of the Roots Surname List search engine?

Ok, I left off with email and briefly touched on mailing lists. When you have email - it's very easy to leave things in your "box". But, in order to keep the messages filed as a source, you really should print the important messages. Computer's break, hard drives do die, programs fail or need to be upgraded. The mailbox isn't very good as an archival source.

Another thing is organization. We all have our own email system and our favorite means of organization. Yet, there are a few features that most of them have in common. Email comes in - it goes out, and it gets trashed. If you need any of those messages back, luckily there are folders to check. Incoming email usually comes into your inbox, outgoing messages in an outbox or sent mail file, and some email programs even keep your trashed messages for a while in case you come up needing them later.

There are more uses for folders. Take my system for instance, I have folders for my different Genealogy counties, and one for the society, I have different ones for homeschooling - so even stuff that isn't important enough to get printed out can still be saved neatly. If you get ambitious, you can even send up filters to automatically sort your email into those folders. The best place

to check on features like these is with the company that produced your email program.  
<http://www.netscape.com> or <http://www.microsoft.com/>

Even with all of these helpers - Use Your Printer for the important things!

That's already quite a bit of information. I've talked about my pet project - GenWeb, the RootsWeb, the big database, mailing lists and email. More than enough for many nights of happy searching.

Some of it you'll forget right after the quiz, but at least you can be a bit more familiar with your computer and how the things work. If you still have questions or feel computer illiterate, there is a wonderful series of books that can answer questions that you haven't even thought of yet. It sounds like a bad title choice, but it really fits this feeling. Check out the "For Dummies" yellow books. They even make gardening for dummies, finances for dummies. But, for computers, you'll either want "Windows 95 for Dummies" or "Internet for Dummies". They have a very good basic overview, and then in the margin there are notes from "experts" about the advanced features and their advantages.

But, now we still have some time, so I can start to give you the grand tour of "What Else"? What else has been cobbled together out here? <http://www.CyndisList.com/netting.htm> To answer that question Cyndi Howells has written a book called Netting your Ancestors, already in it's 5th printing. I was told that the library had ordered a copy, does anyone know if it's yet arrived? We could spend the next few nights exploring what she's collected, but we'll just give it a quick look. You can go back and see all of this for yourself.

<http://cyndislist.com/> According to this, she now has 90 categories of 30,650 links, and has had over 4 million visitors. (Run thru the list) So, if she doesn't have it - it might be online yet.

Here, we could touch on one of the advanced features, and you can decide if you want to jump in this here. Cyndi has a big list of chat and IRC places to go to meet people who are genealogy minded. Chat and IRC (internet relay chat) can be very good, especially to give the phone bill a break during the long winter! At the moment, my favorite chat is called ICQ  
<http://www.icq.com> This is a free program, and it's pretty simple to install. I actually have most of my family on this already. You can send a note, pull up a little window to chat in, or exchange files. This main page is rather confusing, to get the program, try  
<http://www.icq.com/download/>