

Willowtree Research
Genealogy Services



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PRESENTATIONS 2023

(WATCH FOR THOSE MARKED **NEW!** & THOSE WITH '*Companion study group available*').

BASICS -----

BEGINNING & IMPROVING GENEALOGY SKILLS

Learn some basic tips to getting started in genealogy (or possibly fill in some gaps): interviewing, checking your home, using charts as tools, formulating research questions, tracking sources, online search tips, resisting Bright Shiny Objects, using social media intelligently, sharing your discoveries, and utilizing local experts. Whew! That's a lot to pack in but Laura makes it fun!

GENEALOGY BARE-BONES BASICS

This is your chance to experience an overview of the "bare-bones" basics about researching your family history! Find out how to start with what you know, fill out classic forms (like Family Group Sheets or Pedigree charts), use desktop software, flesh out dates with historical stories, and much more.

STARTING RESEARCH (WITH HIDDEN TREASURES YOU ALREADY OWN)

Go beyond the basics by hunting for family history "hidden treasures" right in your own home! Do you have birth, marriage, or death certificates? Or a family Bible? What about funeral cards? Old Valentines? Journals? Photos? Newspaper clippings? Explore what to look for and how to get the most out of these and many more to build your own family tree.

DNA -----

DNA #1: BEGINNING GENETIC GENEALOGY

Since DNA has become the latest technique in our genealogy toolbox, it's important to understand what this means for your own research. This presentation covers some DNA Basic Training and helps you develop a DNA research question based on your own personal testing strategy. Which test? Which company? Come explore some answers.

DNA #2: WHAT DO I DO WITH IT NOW THAT I HAVE IT? WORKING WITH DNA TEST RESULTS

Once you get your DNA test results back, how can you best understand and utilize them? This presentation covers lots of tips on transferring raw DNA results to other companies, creating a skeleton



digital family tree to link to your test results, working with family members' tests & more. *Companion study group available.*

DNA #3: GOING THE EXTRA MILE: ADDITIONAL SITES, TOOLS, & TECHNIQUES

After learning the basics and making the most of our DNA tests, this third installment looks at analyzing our results using the DNA tools like Shared Matches and Chromosome Browsers, plus an introduction to GEDmatch, Visual Phasing, DNA Painter and more. There are so many cool tools out there expanding our DNA abilities! *Companion study group available.*

HEADLINE DNA: HELPING TO SOLVE TRUE CRIME

With DNA making headlines as a key forensic tool, many want to know more about the science of crime-solving DNA analysis. What kind of DNA is this? How is it obtained? How is the DNA used? What are the developing issues involving privacy, insurance or personal control? Come explore this hot topic and hear some examples from recent true crime headlines.

ETHNIC / IMMIGRATION -----

ETHNIC RECORDS & INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH

Are you intimidated by starting a family history search with overseas records? Starting with your immigrant ancestor and continuing through locating their home village, town, or city, this presentation shows some of the points you'll need to cover and a good selection of tools to help your journey over the border or across the pond!

IMMIGRATION RECORDS

A more in-depth dive into specific immigration record searches, continuing on from Laura's Ethnic Records & International Research topic. Arranged as a hands-on workshop, participants will practice using several of the best immigration record search engines and look at the wealth of information these records can provide.

QUAKERS PLAIN AND SIMPLE

Do you, like so many others, have Quaker ancestry? Laura will share tips on researching their amazing records and some stories of her own Quaker family – right down to the present day. Learn how the history of the Society of Friends (the official name of this religion) has impacted the United States for good and why you can be proud of Quaker additions to your family tree.

METHODOLOGY -----

COLLATERAL & CLUSTER RESEARCH

Collateral & Cluster Research - What do these two interrelated terms mean? How can learning about this type of search help you unpuzzle your ancestors' stories? Understanding and utilizing this "backdoor" approach can help break down brick walls. Come explore these fascinating and rewarding techniques.



INTRODUCING THE GPS (NOPE – NOT THAT ONE!)

It sounds dry but it's fun! Come learn about a fundamental genealogical concept – the Genealogy Proof Standard, GPS for short. The group will look at and practice all five steps together. We will also begin looking at the 3x3 Evidence Analysis Process (from Elizabeth Shown Mills) to understand Source, Information, and Evidence and how they impact each other. Putting all these pieces together makes your research accurate, complete, and fascinating to share!

ISSUING CITATIONS THAT HELP “PROVE” YOUR GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH

Using Dr. Thomas W. Jones' book: Mastering Genealogical Proof, as a template and resource, this presentation explores, in a hands-on format, how to build essential citations documenting our sources used. Learn why citations are so essential, the 5 Ws of citations, how to craft 2-part citations, and details on the various types of citations. Review basic genealogical underpinnings to understand and implement excellent citations. These include characteristics of good research questions & the 3x3 Evidence Analysis Process (by Elizabeth Shown Mills). Bring your own thoughts and be prepared to talk to your neighbors during this fun approach to issuing your own citations!

ONLINE & SUBSCRIPTION SITES -----

NEW! ADVANCING WITH ANCESTRY.COM

Ancestry.com has changed a great deal recently. AND ... AncestryDNA is growing exponentially! Come catch up on all the latest tools and tweaks so you can reach more rewarding results on your own.

Companion study group available.

NEW! FAMILYSEARCH SLEUTHING

FamilySearch.org offers so many genealogical treasures and ALL FOR FREE! This presentation begins with the FamilySearch basics and goes on to investigate many of FamilySearch's under-utilized features. This wonderful site offers a great deal more than you might think! *Companion study group available.*

NEW! FINESSING FINDMYPAST

With its United Kingdom emphasis, FindMyPast is an incredible resource but are we taking advantage of it? Learn to finesse its finer points in this presentation and enrich your research. Laura covers FindMyPast's specialties, searching for records, their Family Tree function, and plenty more.

Companion study group available.

NEW! FOLD3 FLAIR

Many family historians find Fold3 to be a bit intimidating. Since it's indispensable in doing Military Records research and has so many other hidden gems to offer, why not develop some Fold3 flair? Learning Fold3 will benefit you in countless ways! *Companion study group available.*



NEW! HANDY WITH MYHERITAGE

Searching effectively on MyHeritage may be a challenge when you are more used to using other sites. Help yourself access all that MyHeritage offers – increase your “handiness factor,” becoming familiar with this valuable resource. From Family Trees, your MyHeritage personal website, and their DNA offerings to their impressive Photo tools, this presentation is designed for you. [*Companion study group available.*](#)

HISTORYGEO

Explore a little-known subscription site perfect for family historians! HistoryGEO combines historical maps, geographical details, and the Bureau of Land Management documents for the original sale of land in many states.

NEW! LOOK INTO LESSER-KNOWN APPS & SITES

This presentation highlights specific, but under-used and often lesser-known apps, sites, and helpful tools for our family history research. Get enlightened on free sites, screen capture apps, photo tools, cloud storage, and generally fascinating new things! [*Companion study group available.*](#)

ONLINE SITES VERSUS SOFTWARE ON YOUR OWN COMPUTER

Even though many people now keep their family history research exclusively on online sites (like Ancestry.com) because it's super convenient, there are dangers and drawbacks to this. Laura will examine the pros and cons and show you how to get the best of both an online tree AND software that lives on your own computer!

PAY IT FORWARD: LEARNING TO INDEX ON FAMILYSEARCH

Contribute to the future of genealogy - volunteer to help index new FamilySearch collections! This is not only rewarding since you are paying it forward, but it also hones your own skills reading old handwriting, deciphering place names, and becoming familiar with diverse records. A win-win all around! Laura walks you through getting registered, tutorials, how to pick your projects, and assessing your progress and contribution. Genealogists unite!

NEW! ROOTSMAGIC MASTERY

RootsMagic 8, the latest version, is a powerful and versatile lineage software that could be just the thing for you! Learn plenty of 'how-to's' in all aspects of the program, then apply them to your own research – achieving RootsMagic Mastery! [*Companion study group available.*](#)

SHAKY LEAVES ... YES! SHAKY TREES ... NO! – BEST SEARCHING ON ANCESTRY.COM

SO much wonderful information is available on Ancestry.com that we cannot ignore it, but we must guard against making errors that result in “shaky foundations” in our family trees. This session will explore tips, techniques, and strategies to minimize the risks and maximize the results.



NEW! WHAT'S YOUR MISSION – INHERITED COLLECTION, FUTURE-PROOFING, OR ATTACKING YOUR STACKS?

Which of these Missions fits you? It's safe to say any of us yearns for a treasure trove of already completed research to fall into our lap from a relative! But if this windfall comes to you (and it probably will at some point) how do you handle it? Many of us are concerned about leaving our legacy of research to someone in the future. And, if we're honest, many of us still have stacks to attack! Laura walks through a step-by-step strategy to organize, sort, and integrate new information, safe-guard current information, and get your piles into files. A blindingly accurate, valuable, traceable life's work is our Mission Target!

ORGANIZATION -----

COLOR CODED ORGANIZING

The first step in successful research is to have a workable organization system. Who wants to spend all their time trying to locate something you KNOW you've seen? This presentation demonstrates a Color-Coded system based on the FamilyRoots Organizer long taught by Mary Hill. Assign one color to each grandparent, match your document folders to that color, and follow a simple method to get organized and stay that way. This is making a positive difference in Laura's own filing madness! Establish your filing system with a good method, in a good way, and you'll reap the rewards forever!

DIGITAL FILES

Swamped with photos and scans from your research and don't quite know what to do with all of them? This presentation will help you find answers. Explore what encompasses digital files and how to create a consistent structure, file names, and storage – with lots of detailed examples. Adapt a system from Laura's bountiful examples.

DIGITIZING THOSE PRECIOUS MEMORIES

This topic focuses specifically on scanning, archiving, and organizing precious photographs. Using additional resources and handouts Laura will help participants think through their own digitizing projects and begin to make plans.

GETTING (& STAYING) ORGANIZED

A big challenge in genealogy as a pastime is keeping yourself organized – all those papers and digital files! Organization becomes a necessity very quickly! Come hear what Laura shares as best practices and ideas to meet this worthy goal. Touches on file-naming strategies, color-coding, and so much more.

RECORDS & RESOURCES -----

ARCHIVES RESEARCH & HOW TO USE BASIC RESOURCES FOUND THERE

How do archives differ from libraries? We will explore the colorful history of archives, types of archives & the roles they play, how they're organized, & how to find and access their holdings using catalogs, databases, finding aids and digital collections. We'll even talk about planning your own archival research trip!



CENSUS DISCOVERIES: THE SPRINGBOARD TO SPLASHY RESEARCH

Exploring primarily the U.S. Federal Census, we will learn about its history, purposes, how to use it, and where to find it. Laura demonstrates some tips and tricks to try on your own and looks at a case study from her grandmother's Quaintance family.

FINDING & WORKING WITH PUBLISHED SOURCES

Have you ever wondered whether somewhere out there is a published book or manuscript in a repository giving fantastic, never-before-seen details on a surname you are researching? Learn how to locate these kinds of resources. Laura presents a method utilizing the GPS system to do an exhaustive search, gather your evidence, and analyze the materials you find for quality & accuracy. Though often difficult to locate, these published sources may prove invaluable!

PATHWAYS TO SPICY STORIES: AN OVERVIEW OF COURT RECORDS

Court records in their infinite variety are a treasure trove for genealogists because they are not just legal documents. They are pathways into the stories of our ancestors' lives, often leading to clues we might otherwise miss. While vital statistics like birth, marriage, and death dates and places are important, it is the stories we uncover that add the something spice. Attend this humorous attempt to give an overview of the various documents found in an American court!

PROBING FOR PROBATE: RESEARCHING IN THE PROBATE COURT

Building on Laura's "Pathways to Spicy Stories: An Overview of Court Records," we zero in on only the Probate Court for a more in-depth look at the rich detail to be found in: Wills, Administration records, Inventories, and much more. If you haven't yet dug into your ancestral probate files you're likely missing out!

RECORD VITALITY WITH VITAL RECORDS

We can always learn a little something more, even about familiar records like those for Birth, Marriage, and Death. This session skims the surface of the various vital records (what they are and how to locate them). Next, we explore substitutes to utilize when normal vital records cannot be found or do not exist. Finally, we examine challenges facing genealogists regarding records access and what we can do to improve that increasing danger.

TIP-TOEING THRU TOMBSTONES: THE BASICS OF U.S. CEMETERY RESEARCH

Transcribing information from cemetery tombstones is something most every family historian does early on. Come learn about the history of cemeteries and how they've evolved, death customs through the years, meanings on tombstone symbols, religious clues, and much more. You'll come away with a plethora of informative handouts. Plus, Laura shares her best strategies for preparing for your next cemetery field trip!