



Sylvia Tracy Doolos
Genealogy Speaker & Educator
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Over 40 years helping others uncover the stories behind the records!

Historian, researcher, teacher, writer. Sylvia brings deep insight, engaging delivery, and practical strategies to every presentation. Her talks are rooted in decades of experience and a history degree with a minor in linguistics, focused on how language impacted our ancestor's records. Proud graduate of ProGen 48!

Member of the Colorado Chapter, Association of Professional Genealogists (APG)*,
Colorado Genealogical Society*, International Society for British Genealogy and Family History (ISBGFH)*,
Longmont Genealogical Society*, National Genealogical Society (NGS), Oklahoma Genealogical Society, Virginia
Genealogical Society, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, England Family History Society (WISE-FHS)*
and Weld County Genealogical Society.

*Current Board/Committee Member



Speaking Details

- Remote and in-person presentations/workshops available.
- Presentations can be customized for your state/region.
- Tech needs (in-person): projector & screen; microphone, appreciated for large rooms.
- Webinars: Please provide high-speed internet.

See my topics specifically designed to celebrate the 250th anniversary of our nation!



Presentation Topics

General Topics

Family Tree Feuds:
Building Consensus with
Confidence

Family tree disagreements are inevitable. Learn how to present evidence persuasively and turn relatives into research allies.

Gretna Greens:
America's Elopement Hotspots

Across North America, couples found creative ways to marry outside community control. Explore America's Gretna Greens, places where elopements flourished, and records were generated in unlikely places.

Hidden Clues in Census
Records

Census instructions changed every decade, reflecting the nation's priorities and challenges. Discover how these evolving guidelines shaped what was recorded, and what was left out, giving genealogists crucial insights into their ancestors' lives.

Hook 'em & Reel 'em In

How do we get our family tree or DNA relatives to bite when we cast a hook into their genealogy pond? By giving them enough information to show you are worth their time, but not so much that you get nothing in return. It's a balancing act!

Johnson, Jones, or James: English Roots in America	As a result of the Revolutionary War, our ancestors often identified as less English and more as American patriots. Take a fresh look at lingering English identity with me.
New Leaf Workshop: The Right Tool for the Job	Not all genealogy websites are created equal. This interactive workshop helps you match the right tools to your research goals, saving time and frustration while advancing your family history discoveries.
Vitaly Important: Vital Records and Their Substitutes	Birth, marriage, and death records are the backbone of genealogy, but what if they are missing? Learn how to locate substitutes that provide equally valuable insights, from church registers to newspaper notices.

Culture & Its Influence on Records

18th Century America: Cultural Changes and Their Effect on Records	From colonial expansion to revolution, 18th-century America was a time of upheaval. Discover how political, cultural, and social transitions shaped recordkeeping, and learn where to find the surviving documents of your ancestors.
19th Century America: Cultural Changes and Their Effect on Records	America in the 19th century underwent geographic, cultural, and historical shifts that influenced recordkeeping, especially for women, African Americans, and immigrants. We will explore the century broadly to understand these changes.
Faith and Founding Fathers: Religion's Role in America's Story	Beginning with the American Revolution, religion has shaped our ancestors' lives. Discover faith-driven events that can help unlock your family's story.
From Territory to State: Records You Might Miss	As our nation grew, territories began keeping records to achieve statehood. Let's look at records and research strategies that can help you.
Invisible Enemies: How Disease Shaped America from Independence to Today	Explore 250 years of U.S. illness, including epidemics, that shaped our American ancestor's history from the Revolution to the modern era.
Saying Goodbye: Our Ancestors' Traditions of Death and Dying	Death traditions reveal how ancestors faced loss, faith, and community. This program explores funeral practices, mourning customs, and death records that show not only how lives ended but how communities remembered them.
Tracking Beliefs: Identity in Records	Ancestral identities were shaped by overlapping faiths, cultures, and languages. Learn how these affiliations influenced recordkeeping, and how genealogists can use them to track shifting group memberships and uncover hidden connections.



Language Tools & Surname Research

Certainties and Uncertainties in Spellings	Spelling was variable, and our ancestors' names show it. Explore the reasons behind spelling variations, from phonetic writing to local pronunciation quirks, and learn strategies to recognize your ancestors despite shifting spellings.
Language Tools for Genealogists: Google's Translate and Other Tools	From Google Translate to alerts and advanced searches, Google offers free tools that can expand your research reach. Discover how to use them effectively to interpret foreign records, follow discussions, and find hidden resources relevant to your ancestry.

Language Tools for
Genealogists:
One-Name Studies

One-Name.org is a website that has the potential to not only advance your research but also connect you to other researchers who can provide insights into your ancestry.

Lost in Translation?
Finding Ancestors with
Language Insights

Language differences often hide ancestors in plain sight. Learn how dialects, spelling shifts, and translation tools can uncover records you have missed and break through even the toughest genealogical brick walls.

Mastering Language Tools
for Genealogy

Genealogists need more than records; they need the right tools to understand them. This presentation explores how language-based resources like Forvo and Google can shine light on ancestral names, pronunciations, and cultural contexts.

One Land, Many Voices:
Unity and Division
Through Language

Explore how diverse tongues; German, Igbo, Welsh, and more, left traces in records that connect genealogists to their ancestors' stories.



Two Windows into the
Past: AI & Google Ngram

AI and Google Ngram complement each other, bringing language and history to life while opening new doors for your genealogical research.



Who Said What in
America: The Effects on
Spelling of Language
Variations

Accents and dialects shaped how clerks heard and recorded names. This talk explores how regional speech patterns and cultural influences produced spelling variations, and how genealogists can use them to uncover hidden connections.

Migration Research

American Migration:
Pushes, Pulls, and
Problems

Arrival in North America was only the beginning. Explore the pushes and pulls that drove migration, the hardships immigrants faced after landing, and the records created as they built new lives in a changing world.

Drawn by Opportunity:
Migration to the American
West

The West represented opportunity, freedom, and land. Discover why immigrants bypassed the colonies to head directly west, what drew them there, and what records reveal their journeys.

Homesteading in America:
Men & Women,
Immigrants & Native-Born

The Homestead Act opened the frontier to men and women, immigrants and the native-born alike. Learn how families carved lives from raw land, the struggles they faced, and the rich records homesteading left behind.

Crossing the Atlantic:
European Migration to
America

From the 1600s to the 1900s, millions crossed the Atlantic. Explore the waves of European migration, what drove them to leave, and the records that reveal their paths to North America.

U.S. Immigration History:
The Tangled Web of Land,
Lives, and Legislation

America's growth depended on people, land, and laws. Explore how immigration policies shaped settlement, who was welcomed or excluded, and how legislation influenced the records genealogists use today.

Westward Migration:
Basic Tools for Charting
Their Course

How do we track a family constantly on the move in search of their corner of paradise? FAN research is the answer. Let me show you how to effectively research your ancestors' Friends, Associates, and Neighbors.

BOOK NOW FOR 2026!

CONTACT SYLVIA:

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Research Methodologies

Family History Foundations: Records and DNA	Starting your family history journey can be overwhelming. This presentation covers the essentials of sound genealogical methods and DNA basics, helping beginners avoid common mistakes and building a solid foundation for research.
British Genealogy Research: A Practical Guide	British research differs from American in several key ways. Sylvia will cover the best places to search and highlight significant differences in terminology, language, and records. Extra Q&A time is included for beginners.
Getting Started with Irish Genealogy	New to Irish research? Begin with North American records to build a solid foundation. This session walks you through the basics, preparing you to take the leap across the Atlantic.
Mastering Irish Research: Methods for Breaking Through	Ready to go deeper? Learn advanced techniques to overcome Ireland's record challenges. Explore targeted strategies that guide you toward finding your Irish ancestors.

Women in America

Bound by Law, Freed by Law: Women and Our Legislative History	Trace women's stories through the law, and explore how centuries of legislation restricted, reshaped, and recorded women's rights for future genealogists.	
Her Genius, Our History: Innovating Women in America	Explore and celebrate the women whose brilliance, diligence, and innovation helped shape America's history and continue to inspire progress today.	
Tracing Female Ancestors Through Everyday Records	American women in the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries left records, none unique to women. However, these records can provide unique insights when looked at through a historical lens as American women's lives changed.	
Women of Letters: Voices from the Frontier	Women wrote in diaries, newspapers, magazines, and letters to family and friends. Learn about the joy, heartbreak, and determination it took to be a frontier woman.	
Women on the Move: Migration in 19th-Century America	During the 19th century, women's lives changed in many ways. This presentation focuses on the historical timeline of the 19th century and the events that impacted women's lives the most.	