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Current list of presentations

Bio: Annette Burke Lyttle, CG® owns Heritage Detective, LLC, providing professional genealogical services in research, education, and writing. She speaks on a variety of genealogical topics and loves helping people uncover and share their family stories. Annette is a course coordinator for the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy. She is a published writer whose research interests include Quaker ancestors and ancestral migrations in the United States. She is past president of the Association of Professional Genealogists and editor of The Florida Genealogist.

Organization note: Presentations are listed once under a primary category. When a talk fits more than one track, an “Also fits:” note highlights additional placement options.

Courses and multi-session programs

Finding Your Roots with Sound Research (Four Two-Hour Sessions over Eight Weeks)

Build a repeatable research process that keeps you organized and moving forward. You’ll learn how to define a focused question, plan your searches, track what you’ve checked, and evaluate evidence so you don’t re-search the same ground. A mix of lecture, guided discussion, and homework helps you apply the process to your own project.

Best Practices Study Group (Nine Two-Hour Sessions over Nine Months)

Dive deeply into the genealogy research process and practice the techniques that lead to reliable conclusions. Each participant works on a personal research project throughout the series, with structured assignments that strengthen analysis, correlation, and written conclusions. Sessions combine teaching with both small- and large-group discussion for shared learning.

Write Your Family Stories (Six Two-Hour Sessions over Twelve Weeks)

Turn research into readable stories, one manageable “small bite” at a time. We’ll cover ways to organize your material, choose a story-sized scope, draft efficiently, and share in formats your relatives will actually read—from short posts to longer narratives. You’ll leave with a plan and momentum, not a blank page.

Getting started in Genealogy

Intro to Genealogy: Let’s Find Some Ancestors

Genealogy starts simple and quickly becomes complex. Learn a clear plan of attack for beginning research—what to collect first, which records to pursue early, and how to build a foundation you can expand with confidence.

Core skills: research, evidence, and writing

Evidence and research methods

Looking Beyond the Household: Interpreting U.S. Census Evidence

Census records can support strong conclusions when we ask the right questions of them. Learn how to use enumerator instructions, superintendents' reports, Census Bureau maps, and demographic publications to interpret what you see on the page—and what might be missing. You'll leave with a repeatable method for extracting, testing, and applying census evidence.

Correlating Evidence: A Powerful Tool for Solving Genealogical Problems

No single record tells the whole story of an event. Three case studies will show how to compare sources, weigh conflicts, and draw stronger conclusions by correlating details across multiple documents.

Find Our Ancestors by Researching the Neighbors

Brick-wall problems often require looking beyond the individual ancestor we're researching. Learn how to identify an ancestor's cluster of family, friends, associates, and neighbors; trace that group through records; and use their documents to reveal connections, migration patterns, and origins. You'll leave with practical strategies for applying FAN research to your own difficult problems.

Finding the Parents of Jacob S. Perry (1827–1914): The Research Process in Action

Watch the research process at work in a focused case study. See how careful planning, targeted record selection, and evidence evaluation combine to solve a real problem and build a well-supported conclusion.

Genealogical Proof for the Everyday Genealogist

How do you know your conclusions are right—and how do you avoid grafting someone else's family onto yours? This introduction to the Genealogical Proof Standard (GPS) shows how to move from finding records to building well-supported conclusions, using clear steps and real-world examples.

Parents for Tillie: Resolving Evidence Conflicts with Whole-Family Research

Some genealogical problems resist easy answers. In this case study, follow how whole-family research, careful analysis, and evidence correlation untangle shifting identities after early death, remarriage, and migration—resulting in a defensible conclusion about Tillie (Cigrand) Little's parents. You'll leave with a repeatable whole-family workflow for resolving identity and parentage conflicts.

Timelines: A Path to Your Next Research Steps

A good timeline does more than list dates—it reveals relationships, contradictions, and what you should research next. Learn how to build timelines that capture sources and evidence, highlight gaps, and turn an overwhelming problem into a plan of action.

Workflow, ethics, and writing

Citations: Not as Scary as You Think

Many genealogists find citations intimidating, but they don't have to be. This session demystifies source citations and introduces a few core principles that make them easier to understand and use in everyday research.

Genealogical Research Dilemmas

Genealogy can raise legal questions, moral tensions, and hard choices about privacy, disclosure, and responsibility. Using real-world scenarios, learn how to navigate sensitive discoveries, copyright/fair use, DNA ethics, and “gray areas” with integrity—balancing truth-telling with respect for the living and the dead.

How Research Plans Can up Your Genealogical Game

Many genealogists jump straight into searching—but the most productive research starts with a plan. Learn a simple framework for defining the research question, choosing the most promising record sets, and organizing your next steps before you begin. You'll leave with a practical planning method that can save time and uncover evidence you might otherwise miss.

Responsible Use of AI as a Genealogy Assistant

AI can speed up many parts of genealogical work—but it can also introduce confident-sounding errors if we treat it as an authority. Learn what AI can do well for genealogists (brainstorming, summarizing, extracting patterns, drafting, and workflow support), what it cannot do reliably (prove identities, replace evidence analysis, or cite sources accurately without verification), and practical habits for using AI responsibly.

Rethinking Source Citations with Guidance from EE4

Evidence Explained, 4th edition, brings significant updates to genealogy's most widely used citation guide. This session highlights the key changes, explains how to use the new structure efficiently, and demonstrates practical ways to apply EE4 in everyday research.

Stay Organized by Logging Research: Four Methods to Choose From

Reliable conclusions depend on knowing where you've searched, what you've found, and what it means. Compare four practical approaches to logging research so you can choose a method that works for you—one that supports analysis, correlation, and forward momentum.

How Much Research Is Enough? Understanding “Reasonably Exhaustive” Research

The Genealogical Proof Standard calls for “reasonably exhaustive research”—but how do we know when we've reached it? This session explores what the standards actually require and how genealogists can recognize when they have gathered sufficient evidence to support a defensible conclusion. Through practical examples and discussion of the research process, learn how to judge the scope and depth of your research with confidence.

Writing up Our Research Findings

The final GPS step is a soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion—and it's where many projects stall. Learn how to turn evidence into clear proof arguments, document your reasoning, and create write-ups you can return to (and share with others) confidently.

Record types and specialized sources

Bounty Land: It's Complicated

Bounty-land programs created rich documentary trails—but they are rarely straightforward. Learn how bounty land worked in major U.S. conflicts, why land warrants often changed hands, and how to trace the records that connect soldiers, heirs, and later buyers. You'll leave with practical strategies for using bounty-land files to uncover military service, family relationships, and migration patterns.

Probate Records: Wills and a Whole Lot More

Most genealogists think of wills when they hear “probate,” but probate files contain much more. Learn what kinds of documents appear in probate packets, why living people are often involved in probate actions, how to locate these records online, and how to use them to uncover relationships and family context.

Researching in Federal Land Records

Federal public land moved into private ownership by our ancestors through many paths, each with its own records. Learn how to identify the correct land program, locate the right documents, and make sure you're searching in the jurisdiction where the records actually live.

Federal Land Law: Who Should Get the Land?

Public land laws set the rules for settlement across much of the United States. Learn how changes in federal land policy affected who could obtain land, how claims were made or transferred, and what options settlers had. Understanding those rules helps explain the actions your ancestors took and the records they left behind.

Maps Galore: Finding and Using Online Maps from the Library of Congress

Maps can reveal the landscape our ancestors actually lived in—their neighbors, roads, boundaries, and communities. Learn how to navigate the Library of Congress's remarkable online map collections and use historical maps to add context, test assumptions, and enrich both research and storytelling.

Using Published Books and Articles for Genealogy Research

Books and articles written by other researchers can lead you to sources you might otherwise miss. Learn how to locate useful authored works, evaluate their reliability, and use their citations and bibliographies as guides to the original records.

Tax Records: More Exciting Than You Might Think

Tax lists can track residence, land status, migration, and even life events between censuses. Learn what tax records can reveal, how different taxes were assessed, and how these records help clarify identity, residence, and timing in your ancestor's story.

Church and Cemetery Records—Ways to Locate Our Ancestors' Vitals and Locations

When civil vital records are missing, church and burial sources can fill the gap. Learn how to use church registers, cemetery records, and funeral records to identify births, marriages, deaths, and residences—especially for periods when civil recordkeeping had not yet begun or was incomplete.

Online platforms and digital collections

Find Your Family History in Free Online Newspapers

Newspapers can add names, dates, stories, and community context—but paywalls and scattered collections can slow you down. Learn how to locate free newspaper sites (U.S. and international) and apply search strategies that improve research results.

Dig Deeper into FamilySearch

A simple name search only scratches the surface of FamilySearch. Learn how to search within collections, browse images efficiently, and use site tools like Full-Text Search and Simple Search to uncover records that won't appear in a basic search.

Finding and Using Digitized Manuscript Collections for Genealogical Research

Letters, diaries, photos, and local collections can answer questions no other record ever will—if you can find them. Learn how to locate digitized manuscript collections, read finding aids, and extract genealogical value from these underused sources.

Doing a Deep Dive in Ancestry's Collections

Ancestry's search form misses much of what's on the site. Learn how to search by location, target specific collections, and use filters strategically so you can uncover more records your ancestor appears in.

Prospecting for Family History in Unexpected Places

Family history research sometimes feels like prospecting—success comes from knowing where to dig. Learn how to recognize overlooked record sets, explore unexpected repositories, and follow promising leads that can uncover new evidence.

Using Digitized Books to Advance Our Research

Digitized books can preserve rare details, connect you to local context, and point to records you didn't know existed. Learn how to find digitized books, evaluate what you're reading, and use clues and citations to move from published narratives to original sources.

FamilySearch Full-Text Search: A Game Changer for Our Research

If your ancestor isn't turning up in indexed results, full-text search may be the breakthrough. Learn what FamilySearch full-text search is, what kinds of unindexed materials it can reveal, and how to use it strategically to surface names and details that standard searches miss.

Essential tools and major repositories

What to Do When Vital Records Don't Exist

When birth, marriage, or death registrations are missing, you can still build solid conclusions. Learn a practical set of vital-record substitutes, how to assemble indirect evidence, and how to spot vital information hiding in unexpected record groups.

Researching at the National Archives

The National Archives holds federal records that can add detail, resolve identity problems, and open new research paths. This session explains which record types live at NARA, how to predict when an ancestor interacted with the federal government, how the records are organized, and how to use the online Catalog to locate and access what you need.

Storytelling and social history

Chasing Uncle William Through the Wilds of Cyberspace

Follow the remarkable life of William Crout—Civil War veteran, hotel owner, rancher, and local character—through records scattered across the web. This case study shows how to reconstruct a vivid life story while strengthening your research methods along the way.

Reconstructing the Lives of Our Farming Ancestors

Many of our ancestors weren't "just farmers"—they were skilled managers of land, labor, and risk. Learn how records and social-history sources can reveal daily life, economic realities, and community connections that bring farm families to life on the page.

What Is Social History and Why Should a Genealogist Care?

Social history helps us understand how ordinary people lived, and it improves both research and storytelling. Learn what counts as social history, where to find it, and how to use it responsibly to add depth without adding fiction to our ancestors' stories.

How Advertising Brought Our Ancestors to the Midwest

Railroads, land speculators, and frontier communities sold a dream—and those ads shaped migration. Explore newspapers, pamphlets, gazetteers, and booster publications to see how hard work and pioneer living were marketed, and how these sources can add context to your family's moves.

Reconstructing the Lives of Our Blacksmithing Ancestors

Blacksmiths were essential to community life, making everything from tools to wagon parts. Learn what the trade looked like in different eras and how to use records and context sources to tell a fuller story of your blacksmith ancestor's working life.

"Use Lots More Apples": Vintage Cookbooks as Genealogical Sources

Community cookbooks and vintage recipe collections can preserve names, organizations, places, and everyday culture—especially for women's lives. Learn where to find cookbooks, what genealogical clues to look for, and how to use them as responsible social-history sources.

How Settlers Guides Can Help Us Understand Our Ancestors' Lives

Settlers' guides were written to persuade and assist migrants, and they're packed with details about work, costs, land, and daily life. Learn where to find these guidebooks and how to use them to reconstruct what your ancestors likely faced when they migrated.

Turn Family History Facts into Stories You Can Share

Pedigree charts don't keep relatives reading—stories do. Learn two simple principles ("what the facts imply" and "take small bites") plus a four-step process for turning research notes into stories you can share right away.

Get Organized to Write Your Family Stories

Writing gets easier when your space, time, ideas, and research are set up to support the work. Learn practical ways to organize your materials and workflow so you can draft consistently and finish what you start.

How to Blog Your Family Stories the Easy Way

Blogging lets you share stories in manageable chunks while building a searchable archive for the future. Learn how to choose a platform, draft efficiently, and publish in a way that invites family engagement.

Migration and mobility

Following Migrating Ancestors: Three Case Studies

Tracing migrating ancestors can be one of genealogy's challenges. Through three case studies—colonial Pennsylvania to Virginia, Vermont to New York to Illinois, and Illinois to a Nebraska homestead—learn how patterns, records, and historical context help us follow people as they moved across the American landscape.

The Erie Canal and the Opening of the Midwest

The Erie Canal reshaped travel, trade, and settlement in the nineteenth century. Learn why it mattered, what your ancestors experienced along the route, and how to use canal-era context to enrich research and storytelling.

Exodusters: The Exodus of Freedmen to Kansas in the 1870s

After Reconstruction, many African Americans sought safety and opportunity in Kansas settlement colonies. Learn the history of the Exoduster movement, where to look for evidence of participation, and how to research families on the move.

Also fits: African American research.

The National Road: America's First Federal Highway

Built from 1811 to 1837, the National Road connected Maryland to the frontier and allowed thousands to move west. Learn who traveled it, what communities grew along it, and how the road's history can help you interpret migration paths and records.

Border—What Border? Our Ancestors Who Called Both Canada and the USA Home

For generations, the U.S.–Canada border was easy to cross and hard to document. Learn when border records begin, what they reveal, and how to trace families whose lives unfolded on both sides of the line.

Also fits: Canadian research.

Before Roads and Rails: Waterways to the Midwest

Rivers and lakes were the highways of early America. Learn how waterways shaped migration and work, and how to use water-route context to reconstruct the travel and livelihoods of ancestors as they moved west.

Colonial American Migration Routes and Modes of Travel

Colonial families moved inland along rivers, paths, and emerging roads into newly opening settlements. Learn the major migration routes and travel methods of early America—and how understanding these pathways can help predict where migrants went, where records were created, and where to look next in your research.

Ancestors on the Move: Migration from Farms to Cities, 1870–1920

Between 1870 and 1920, millions moved from rural areas to cities, reshaping family life and records. Learn what drove this shift, how it shows up in documents, and ways to research and narrate families transitioning to urban life.

Three Generations, Seven Migrations: Following the Boones from Massachusetts to Illinois

Some families seem to move every generation. In this extended case study, follow Revolutionary War veteran Francis Boon and his descendants across multiple migrations, and learn how to track a family through changing locations, records, and communities.

Early Railroads in New England and the Mid-Atlantic States

Railroads transformed how far (and how fast) people could move in the 1840s and 1850s. Learn how to read the developing rail networks using maps, gazetteers, travel guides, and newspapers—and how that context helps explain migration choices and record trails.

New Yorkers and Florida: Find Your Sun-Loving Ancestors

Florida drew generations of New Yorkers seeking opportunity, health, and warmer winters. Learn why New Yorkers traveled, wintered, served, and settled there from the mid-1800s forward, and how to trace the records that document those movements and lives.

Pathways from the Ports: How Immigrants Moved West

Arrival is only the first chapter. Learn how immigrants traveled inland from eastern ports—by waterways, roads, and rail—and how those pathways shape the records you need to track them through place and time.

Understanding Ancestral Migration with Maps and Gazetteers

Understanding ancestral migration begins with understanding place. Learn how maps and gazetteers can help identify locations accurately, reveal jurisdiction changes, and clarify the routes families likely followed—especially for later nineteenth-century migrations.

Also fits: Record types and specialized sources.

Union Pacific and Northern Pacific Land Grants and East-West Expansion

Railroad land grants reshaped settlement and created paper trails worth following. Learn why the federal government granted land to railroads, how the system encouraged migration, and what records to look for when researching settlers who acquired railroad-grant lands along key routes.

Quaker research and history

Our Quaker Ancestors: Their History and the Records They Left

Quakers were prolific record keepers, and their minutes can document family relationships, migrations, and community life in extraordinary detail. Learn key Quaker history, how meetings were organized, and where to find the records that make Quaker research so rewarding.

Slavery, Quakers, and the Underground Railroad

Quaker attitudes toward slavery did not remain static. Over time, many Quaker communities moved from tolerating slavery to opposing it. Learn how these changing beliefs shaped responses to slavery, what Underground Railroad involvement might have looked like, and how the evidence appears in surviving records.

Quaker Resources in the FamilySearch Library and Other Archives

Important Quaker records are preserved in many repositories. Learn what the FamilySearch Library holds, what has been digitized, and how to identify additional archives—such as major Quaker college collections—for deeper research.

History of Quakerism: Testimonies and Beliefs

Quakerism emerged in mid-seventeenth-century England and challenged social and religious norms. Learn key events, leaders, and testimonies that shaped Quaker life—and why that history helps you interpret the records your Quaker ancestors left.

Quaker Women's Meetings and Their Records

Women's meetings played a central role in marriage approvals, discipline, and community decision-making. Learn what women's meeting records contain, how they differ from men's records, and how they can reveal women's lives and status in Quaker communities.

New England Quaker Records

Quakers in New England faced intense persecution, and that history shaped both migration and record creation. Learn the story of early "Yankee Quakers," the role of Rhode Island, and how to access the rich records of the New England Yearly Meeting.

Following a Quaker Family: New Jersey to Iowa the Long Way Around

Quaker migration rarely followed a single straight line. Follow the Hunt family through multiple moves (New Jersey to Virginia to western Pennsylvania to Ohio) and learn how to track our ancestors as families migrated and sometimes left the Society of Friends.

Researching Our Irish Quakers

Irish Quaker history is intertwined with seventeenth-century missions, community growth, and later emigration to America. Learn key historical context and where to find Irish Quaker records that document families, meetings, and migrations.

Researching Welsh Quakers in Colonial Pennsylvania

Welsh Quakers helped shape early Pennsylvania communities while preserving language and customs. Learn the historical backdrop of persecution and settlement, plus record strategies for finding Welsh Quaker families in colonial Pennsylvania.

Quaker Migrations to Ohio, 1795–1840

Ohio became a major destination for Friends—especially Southern Quakers seeking to live their anti-slavery convictions. Learn the major migration streams into Ohio, what meeting records and local context can reveal, and how Ohio Quaker history connects to abolition, the Underground Railroad, and women’s suffrage.

Also fits: Migration and mobility.

African American research

Introduction to African American Research

African American research blends strong core methodology with specialized record knowledge. Learn an effective research approach, foundational sources, and strategies for reconstructing lives in communities of African descent.

Intermediate African American Research

Move beyond the basics into Reconstruction-era records, Civil War service, and evidence that can identify the last enslaver. Learn how to assemble proof from multiple sources and build a reliable foundation for tracing families back into slavery-era records.

Military research

Putting Flesh on the Bones of Your Civil War Ancestor

Service records provide the framework of a soldier’s service, but the story lies in the details. Learn how to use military, local, and contextual sources to reconstruct what your Civil War ancestor likely experienced during the war.

What Did You Do in the War, Granny? Women in the Army in World War II

More than 150,000 women served in the U.S. Army in World War II, reshaping expectations about women’s roles. Learn what their service looked like, where to find documentation, and how to reconstruct their wartime stories.

Finding the Stories of Military Women in World War I

Thousands of women served in and alongside U.S. military efforts during World War I. Learn where to find evidence of service, how to connect official records to personal stories, and resources for deeper research.

America’s Second Revolution: The War of 1812 and Our Ancestors Who Served

The War of 1812 is both a pivotal national story and a rich research opportunity. Get the historical grounding—causes, theaters, outcomes—then learn what records and authored works can help you reconstruct service stories through examples of men who served.

Give My Regards: New Yorkers in World War I

More than 500,000 New Yorkers served in World War I—and their stories are findable. Learn where to look for evidence of service for soldiers, sailors, and marines (both men and women), and how to move from basic facts to a fuller picture of your ancestor's wartime service.

New Yorkers' Stories in War of 1812 Claims Applications

New York's 1857 War of 1812 claims process generated applications packed with supporting documents and human detail. Learn what these files contain, why they were created, and how to use them to recover the lived experiences behind a soldier's service.

The Language of Our Military Ancestors: Music, Parades, Semaphores, Radios

Armies run on communication, and the methods changed dramatically over time. Learn how military messages were sent—from music and visual signals to radio communication—why it mattered operationally and culturally, and how understanding these systems can add context to your ancestor's military experience.

Case Study: Ancestral Service in the Revolution and War of 1812

Follow one family across two wars and multiple migrations in a richly documented case study. This session traces a Massachusetts Revolutionary War veteran who moved west through Vermont into eastern New York, and three sons who served in the War of 1812 from Bolton, New York. Learn what military records can—and cannot—tell you, and how to combine service evidence with local records to reconstruct movement, relationships, and identity across generations.

Tracing New York Ancestors in the War of 1812

New York was on the front lines of the War of 1812, and that proximity produced a documentary trail for the men who served. Learn which New York record groups are most useful for War of 1812 research—especially holdings at the New York State Archives—and how to move from a name to a fuller picture of your ancestor's service.

Regional and ethnic research

Miners, Cattlemen, Merchants, and More: Finding Colorado Immigrants and Settlers

Colorado's settlers came from many backgrounds, leaving records in both local repositories and online collections. Learn which sources best document Colorado lives and how to use them, with lively case studies that show the records in action.

Miners, Lumbermen, Farmers, and More: Finding Your Michigan Roots

Michigan's mines, forests, and farms attracted generations of settlers. Learn how to locate the records they created, explore key Michigan resources (online and onsite), and apply research strategies that work across much of the Midwest.

French Canadian Settlements in the Midwestern U.S.

French Canadians built Midwestern communities from the late seventeenth century through major nineteenth-century migration waves. Learn the history of these settlements and research strategies for finding and documenting French Canadian ancestors in the Midwest.

Digging Deeper into the Ontario Collections on Ancestry

Ancestry's Ontario holdings are deep, but basic searches miss a lot. Learn how to search within targeted collections, use filters effectively, and uncover Ontario records that most researchers never find.

Hiring a professional

Why, When, Where, How, and Who: Hiring a Professional to Help with Your Research

Sometimes the best next research step is hiring help—especially for brick walls, complex problems, or interpreting DNA. Learn when it makes sense to bring in a professional, how to find qualified genealogists, what to expect in a contract and deliverables, and how to choose the right person for your project.

Genealogy business and professional development

Your Education Plan for Going Pro

Becoming a professional genealogist requires both skill-building and a plan. Learn how to evaluate education options, prioritize what to take next, and build a practical roadmap toward client-ready competence and a sustainable business.

Writing for Genealogy Magazines and Journals

Publishing is one way to preserve stories and share research with a wider audience, as well as to showcase your professional skills. Learn what editors look for, how to shape an article idea, and the practical steps from concept to submission.

Also fits: Storytelling and social history.

The Business of Genealogical Speaking

Speaking is both an art and an operation. Learn how to manage proposals, deadlines, logistics, fees, and “back-room” systems so you can show up prepared—and keep demand strong with fresh, relevant topics.

What Is Soft Marketing and Why Should We Care?

Soft marketing builds trust over time and helps you reach people who tune out sales pitches. Learn practical, ethical ways to become visible and memorable through service, education, and community presence—without the hard sell.

Client Communication: It Can Keep Us Out of Trouble

Great client work depends on great client communication. Learn how to set expectations, explain timelines, provide meaningful updates, and reduce misunderstandings so clients feel confident and projects run smoothly.

How to Propose an Institute Course

Coordinating a genealogical institute course is deeply rewarding—and highly competitive. Learn how institutes work, what course coordinators need to see in a proposal, and how to develop an idea into a strong, realistic institute-course plan.

Answering the Call: Crafting Successful Presentation and Course Proposals

Turning a good idea into an accepted presentation proposal requires more than enthusiasm. Learn how to locate calls for proposals, understand what program committees are really looking for, and craft session and course proposals that clearly match conference or institute priorities.