

Speak!

The Online Newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild



In This Issue

From Our President	1
Welcome New Members.....	2
Member Profile: Jamie Mayhew	3
NGS Conference Update	5
Get More From Guild Membership	
C. Ann Staley.....	6
GSG Board Election Results	8
Member News	9
Annual Meeting	10
Speak! Policies/Board Members	11

*The next issue of **Speak!**
will be published in September 2026*

From Our President

Welcome to our new members listed on the next page. We are glad you are here!

Summer is here, and for many of us, that means conference season is ramping up. We had a fantastic National Genealogical Society Conference and are thrilled to welcome 12 new or returning members who joined us there! It was wonderful to meet and visit with so many of you who attended. A special thank you to those who volunteered to cover our booth —

your time and dedication are what make the Guild visible and vibrant at events like this.

I want to encourage each of you to ensure your profile on the website is up to date.

Before you sign your next speaking contract, I want to share something I learned the hard way.

I missed a clause in one of my own contracts. As a result, the video of one of my presentations is now on the open market and available to anyone. That is entirely on me, and I share it not to complain but because I do not want any of you to make the same mistake.

Whenever possible, I recommend using your own contract. It puts the terms in your language and ensures your requirements are built in from the start. That said, some organizations require the use of their own contracts, and that is when reading every word becomes absolutely critical! Or, use an AI tool to help. Paste the contract text into Claude or ChatGPT and ask it to flag anything related to recording, video distribution, handouts, or intellectual property. It takes two minutes.

Every member handles these matters differently. Some do not mind recordings at all. Some charge extra for them and structure fees around how long the recording stays available. That is entirely your call — but it should be *your* call, made before you sign, not discovered afterward.

For my part, I require that recordings be accessible to members only. In one case, the



agreement was that viewers had to come into a library and watch on a library PC. I apply the same standard to handouts: they must be behind a member-only wall. I check the organization's website a month out, a week out, and the day before my presentation to confirm my handouts are not sitting in the open.

Know your terms before you agree to them. Read the contract. Every word.

Thanks for listening. Together, we continue to make the Guild not just a society, but a community where speakers support speakers.

Larry

Larry W. Thomas
C/O Gilshot Genealogy Svc
PO Box 1511
Powder Springs, GA 30127-7511

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

1 March 2026 – 30 June 2026

Welcome to the following new members of GSG who joined, or rejoined, us. We look forward to your contributions to the Guild!

Rick Allen

Andre Kearns

Kaitlyn Pauley

Warren Bittner

Susan Kim

Jamie Poorman

Linda Debe

J. Stephen Little Jr.

Torhild Shirley

Stephen Gill

Cecelia McFadden

Gray Stabley

Hope Glidden

Sue McNelly, AG

Pamela J. Vittorio

Devra Harney

Denise Miller

Kim Harrison

Ric Murphy

We also want to acknowledge members who renewed. Thank you for your continued support.

Tina Beaird

Grant Din

Dana Ann Palmer

Robert M. Wilbanks IV

Sheila Benedict

Liv Marit Haakenstad

Cynthia K Patton

Robert Glenn York

Gail Shaffer Blankenau

Dan Jungclas

Alexander Tolksdorf

Megan Clark Young

Dawn Carlile

Dana Kelly

Kathryn Townsend

Richard Young

Christine Cohen

Louis Kessler

Bethany L Ware

Laura H Congleton

Rebecca Rothman McCoy

Robert Cameron Weir

MEMBER PROFILE

Speak! is pleased to provide a forum for members of the GSG to introduce themselves to one another and to the many others who read *Speak!* If you are a new member, or a long-time member who has not yet been profiled, we would love to invite you to take the opportunity to let the genealogical world know who you are and what your particular talents and accomplishments are.

We are very pleased to introduce in this issue, with her own Member Profile, GSG member and Director, **Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew**.

If you are interested in having your profile featured in an upcoming issue of *Speak!* please contact Lauren Maehrlein at Editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.com

JAMIE MAYHEW

Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew, PLCGS, along with her husband, Bill, and their chickens, live on five acres in Coarsegold, California, just south of Yosemite National Park. Raised in Southern California, she now loves calling the Sierra foothills home. Their extended family includes four grown children, fifteen grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren—with another on the way.

Jamie's pursuit of her genealogy came naturally, having two parents who chased their own roots. At the age of 13 a visit to her maternal grandparents in Montevallo, Alabama, ignited her fascination with family history. After finding a hand-drawn family tree in an old notebook, her mother brought her to the Birmingham Public Library where she began to learn about her ancestry. In the ensuing years, Jamie earned a BA in sociology and an MA in educational technology. She taught for ten years and then served as Director of Technology for a large urban school district.

As with most genealogists, life and career got in the way of her genealogical research. With no internet, research meant writing letters and making a 70-mile roundtrip to the Los



Angeles Temple Family History Center. But by the 1990s, she was a serious researcher and attended her first NGS conference in Nashville, Tennessee, in 2005, and her first institute in 2012.

Her personal mentor was her mother, who introduced her to family and archival research. Jamie describes herself as a genealogy education junkie and credits the many excellent professionals she's taken classes

from Elizabeth Shown Mills, Tom Jones, Karen Mauer Jones, Jill Morelli, Karen Stanbary, Rick Sayre, Pam Boyer Sayre, J. Mark Lowe, Judy Russell, and many others. In 2012 she earned a professional learning certificate in American studies through the University of Toronto.

Beginning her speaking career about 20 years ago, with pro bono talks for her local society, Jamie specializes in United States genealogy, primarily the Southern States, New England, and the Midwest. She also frequently lectures on *FamilySearch*; *Ancestry*; land records—particularly homesteading and public land states; maps and American migration; DNA; census records; and beginning research.

Her first talks to large groups were at the old Southern California Jamboree and she has also spoken at RootsTech. Providing programs several times a month, mostly via webinar, can be a lot of fun! Because she no longer lives near many genealogy societies, webinars for groups all over the country are an affordable way for societies to engage her. On the other hand, she enjoys speaking in person in order to better interact with the audience.

What words of wisdom do you have for the GSG?

Since webinars are now so popular, you need to become an expert in your presentation program, be it PowerPoint or Keynote. Learn how to use Zoom, especially how to arrange your screens so that you can see your presenter notes while your audience sees your slides.

In five years as president or vice president of the APG Writers SIG I have been working with some top-notch speakers and become uniquely familiar with the quirks of working with Zoom.

Do you have a unique speaking assignment to share?

During the pandemic, when there were no in-person speaking opportunities, I did my first recorded presentation for RootsTech. What a learning experience! It must have taken me three hours to get an error-free recording. I was either looking off to the side or up or down or forgetting what I was going to say. Because I was recording the presentation, I felt it had to be perfect, which it never was.

How long have you been a GSG member? Other societies?

I believe I joined the Guild in 2015. I've been a director on the GSG Board for four years. I'm also a member of NGS and APG and have been on the board of the APG Writers SIG for seven years and president of the SIG for three years. I am a director for the Utah Genealogical Association and belong to several state and local societies. I work one day a week assisting researchers at the Oakhurst, California, *FamilySearch* Center where I am director.

Closing words of wisdom?

You will learn more about your subject by preparing a presentation than your audience will learn by listening to you.

Jamie may be reached through her website:
<https://www.californiacousins.com>

SPEAK! is your newsletter!

Please send announcements, member news, upcoming events, etc. to Lauren Maehrlein, Editor, at:
editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.org
by 5 Sept. 2026 to be included in the September issue.



NGS 2026 NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY FAMILY HISTORY CONFERENCE

The 2026 National Genealogical Society Family History Conference was held 28-30 May 2026 in Fort Wayne, IN. Guild presence was felt in a mighty way.

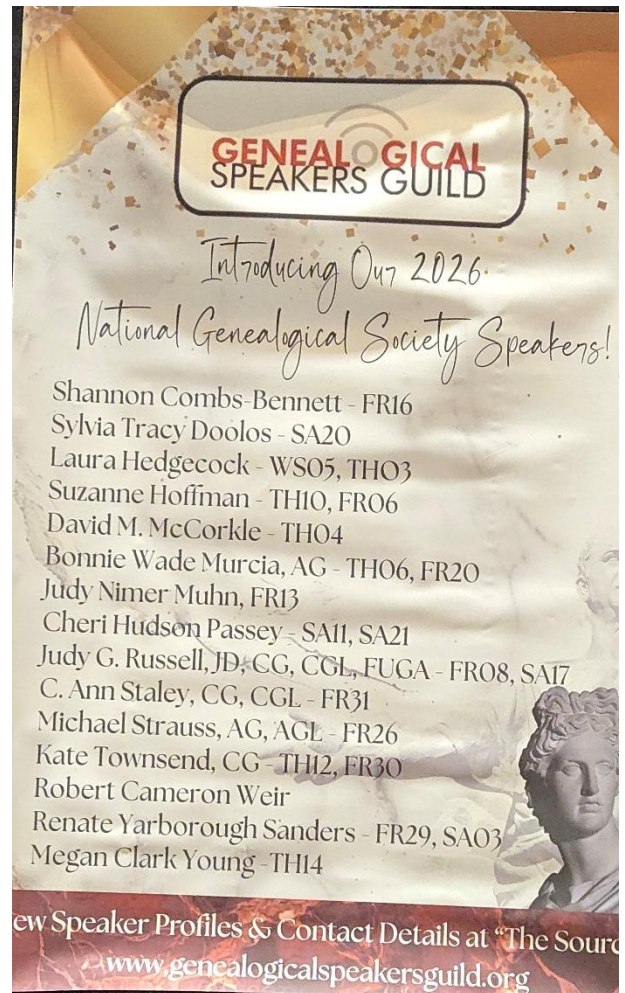
- 15 Guild members provided presentations in the conference
- 11 Guild members helped provide booth coverage
- 11 new Guild memberships were received

Guild members who spoke are:

Shannon Combs-Bennett
Sylvia Tracy Doolos
Laura Hedgecock
Suzanne Hoffman
David M. McCorkle
Bonnie Wade-Mucia, AG, AGL
Judy Nimer Muhn
Cheri Hudson Passey
Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL, FUGA
C. Ann Staley, CG, CGL, FNGS
Michael L. Strauss, AG, AGL
Kate Townsend, CG
Robert Cameron Weir
Renate Yarborough Sanders
Megan Clark Young

A big "Thank You!" to the Guild members who volunteered for booth duty. Many of them volunteered for more than one time slot. Their efforts helped the Guild gain new members and renewals. GSG greatly appreciates the time and support they gave.

Margo Fariss Brewer
Sylvia Tracy Doolos
Laura Hedgecock
Scott Lee
Lauren Maehrlein
Anni Parsons



Kaitlyn Pauley
C. Ann Staley
Larry W. Thomas
Terri Ward
Megan Young



GETTING MORE OUT OF YOUR GUILD MEMBERSHIP

C. Ann Staley, CG, CGM, FNGS

Have you taken advantage of all that a GSG membership can offer? The Guild is a “unique international group whose members strive to impart information about genealogy by publicly sharing their knowledge and experience with others.” There are many opportunities within your membership to create those possibilities. Here are a few ideas:

Upload a PDF to your GSG Webpage: This feature allows you to add even more value to the public profile seen by prospective clients. You can upload a PDF of your speaker brochure, a listing of your current lectures, etc. (The file must be a PDF file.)

Advertise with the GSG Logo: The GSG logo is available for use by all active members in their printed and electronic business materials. The downloadable logo can be found in the Members’ Corner of the website.

Advertise with your GSG Webpage: Add a link to your business website from your GSG member webpage and vice versa AND add a link to your GSG member web page from other personal or directory web pages (such as your APG, BCG, or any other society member page). These are ideal opportunities to maximize your exposure with a minimum of rekeying your information.

Advertise with the GSG Calendar: Update the calendar with your upcoming presentations. Your fans will appreciate the opportunity to keep up with where you are speaking and the societies you are presenting to will love the advertising of their event. The Guild Publicity Chair uses information from the calendar for the public Facebook page, also.

GSG Educational Webinars: This is twofold. First, review the wonderful recorded presentations by very knowledgeable speakers available to you on the website under "Members Only." Second, do you have an educational presentation you would like to present? Let us know by sending your name and contact information to President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org. We do pay an honorarium.

GSG Facebook: There are two Facebook pages for GSG. In our private Members Group you can ask questions about being a genealogy speaker, as well as share ideas and experiences related to your genealogical speaking business. On Facebook search for “Genealogical Speakers Guild Members.”

GSG Newsletter: *Speak!* is a benefit of your membership in GSG; it's your newsletter and needs your participation. Introduce yourself to your fellow Guild members in a “Member Profile.” Do you love to write about the art of speaking? Provide a regular (or occasional) article for *Speak!*

Business Brochures: Displaying your brochures in the GSG booth at conferences is a membership benefit—let the attendees know about your business. Now is the time to start preparing! We can accept up to 50 tri-fold brochures or advertising material that measures 3.75" X 8.5". We cannot display business cards or odd-sized materials.

Booth Volunteer: Have you volunteered in the Guild booth at the national conferences? Yes, this is a benefit. The networking opportunities to interact with the public—the public that hires you—is great. Talk directly to society program chairs and members promoting, not only the Guild, but also yourself.

Guild Volunteer: Have you volunteered to help with Guild matters, either on the Board or as part of a committee? Again, yes, this is a benefit. You have the opportunity to meet and work with like-minded individuals who enjoy working to continue the legacy of the Guild.

CONGRATULATIONS

The GSG's own C. Ann Staley was named a Fellow of the National Genealogical Society!

Those of us in the Guild well know of all her efforts to keep our society humming smoothly and of her expertise in providing extraordinarily informative and topical programs for the entire genealogical community. That the NGS has recognized her dedication and continuous pursuit to master the field is a wonderful and well-deserved feather in her cap!!

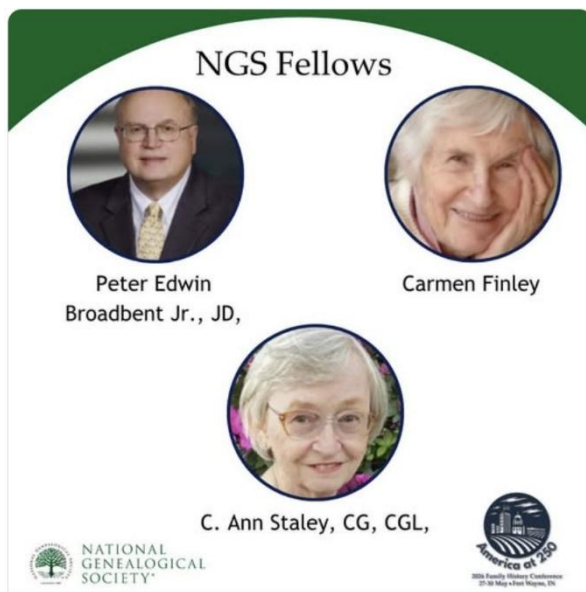
Other Guild members recognized by NGS for their achievements and dedication to the field of genealogy include:

Sylvia Tracy Doolos: NGS Award of Merit

Judy G. Russell, JD, CG, CGL, FUGA: 2026 NGS Annual

Honorary Campaign Chair

Terri Ward: NGS James Worris Moore Leadership Academy
Inaugural Class



CONGRATULATIONS ON THE RE-ELECTIONS OF BOARD MEMBERS



President Larry W. Thomas has been GSG President for four years. He is a professional genealogist and national speaker specializing in evidence analysis, proof arguments, and courthouse-based research, with particular emphasis on land, probate, tax, and court records.

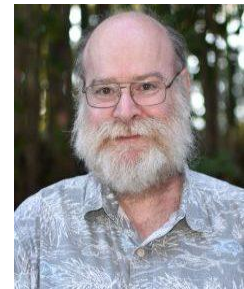
He began researching his own Thomas family—Georgia residents since the 1750s—over 30 years ago and expanded into client research in 2008. His work frequently addresses complex lineage problems, indirect evidence, and challenges associated with record loss, particularly in Southern research.

A retired U.S. Army Captain with 23 years in aviation, transportation, and logistics,

Larry holds a bachelor's degree in aviation maintenance management, an MBA in management information systems, and is a certified project management professional (PMP). He is also a graduate of ProGen 38.

Larry is a member of the National Genealogical Society, Association of Professional Genealogists, and Georgia Genealogical Society. His work can be found at AtlantaGenealogy.com [Directory of Members | Larry W. Thomas – Genealogical Speakers Guild](#)

Treasurer David M. McCorkle became GSG Treasurer in December 2023. A native of North Carolina with roots dating back to the 1700s, he is a land records expert (land grants and records, maps, mapping tools, and land platting) with experience in court records, probate, colonial records, governmental records along with DNA and Artificial Intelligence. He's given lectures and workshops to national, state and local genealogical and historical organizations, as well as corporate and government audiences. David is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his almost 50 years working in the software industry enabled projects and seeing how technology and Artificial Intelligence can help researchers.



He created the free website NC Land Grant Images and Data that contains 200,000+ searchable land grant records issued by North Carolina since 1663, with 1.2 million original document images. The president of the North Carolina Genealogical Society, he is also president and founder of [NC Historical Records Online \(NCHRO\)](http://NCHRO), a non-profit that provides online access to images of original records and information for North Carolina researchers. David's website: <http://davidmccorkle.com/> [Directory of Members | David McCorkle – Genealogical Speakers Guild](#)



Director Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew has been a GSG Director for four years. She is a California native with deep Southern roots, a speaker, family genealogist, genealogical educator, occasional blogger, and professional researcher with over 30 years' experience.

She holds a BA in sociology, an MA in educational technology, and a professional learning certificate in genealogical studies (PLCGS).

She is active in numerous societies and is currently President of the APG writers SIG, a director of the Genealogical Speakers Guild and a member of the Educational Webinar Committee, and the Director of the Oakhurst FamilySearch center.

"The Speakers Guild should be an important resource for both speakers and organizations looking for speakers. We have a wonderful website and have had some great educational webinars. The Guild has a lot to offer and I'd like to continue to be part of that." [Directory of Members | Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew – Genealogical Speakers Guild](#), Jamie's website: [California Cousins](http://CaliforniaCousins)

The Board would like to hear your ideas to help keep GSG moving forward. Please send them to President@GenealogicalSpeakersGuild.org.

MEMBER NEWS

The 2026 SCGS 53rd Annual Summer Workshop, hosted by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, was held 17-18 July in Columbia, SC.

The Genealogical Speakers Guild was well represented by three of our stellar Southern specialists: **J. Mark Lowe**, **Cheri Hudson Passey**, and **Larry W. Thomas**.

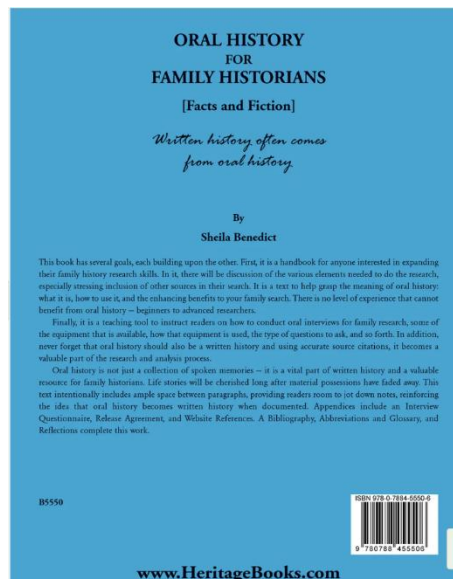
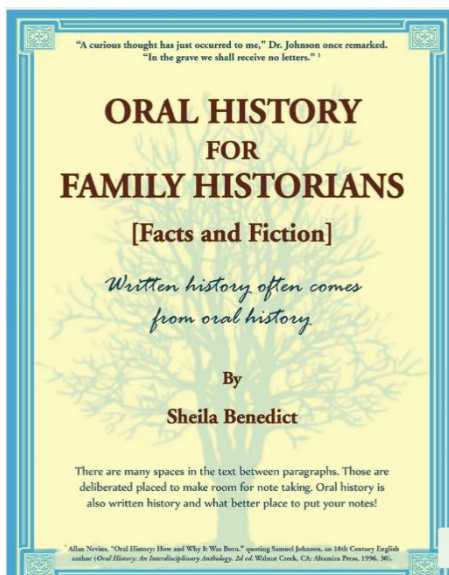
Congratulations on what was, undoubtedly, a very grateful audience!



An exciting announcement from **Sheila Benedict**:

“I am pleased to report that my book has been published by Heritage Books.”

Hooray & Congratulations, Sheila!!



GSG ANNUAL MEETING AND PRESENTATION

Put the annual meeting on your calendar!

What has the Guild been up to this past year? Join us for the annual GSG membership meeting to find out. This is the perfect opportunity for you to let the Board know your ideas for the future of the Guild.

After the meeting we will have a presentation by J. Mark Lowe, FUGA, as part of our Educational Webinar Series. He will be presenting *What 3 Questions Will Your Presentation Answer? Developing the Basic Scope & Sequence*. Teaching opportunities should be met with our best efforts. Preparing a thorough and complete presentation should benefit every student who participates. Careful planning will include specific skills and knowledge to be shared along with the examples of those skills for reinforcement.

Date: 11 Aug 2026

Time: 8:00 PM ET

Place: Zoom Meeting - Link will be provided in a future email.



NOT A MEMBER??

Join the Genealogical Speakers Guild to take advantage of its benefits and the expertise and experience of accumulated knowledge from its outstanding roster of speakers.

Sign in at [Join GSG – Genealogical Speakers Guild](#) and choose from various levels of membership:

- **Membership Plans**
 - 1 Year Membership - \$40 / 1 Year membership in the *Genealogical Speakers Guild*.
 - 2 Year Membership - \$80 / 2 Years membership in the *Genealogical Speakers Guild*.
 - 1 Year Family Membership - \$45 / 1 Year
 - 2 Year Family Membership - \$90 / 2 Years

Speak! Policies

Speak!, the quarterly newsletter of the Genealogical Speakers Guild, is published in March, June, September, and December. The deadline for submission of articles and other material for the newsletter is the 15th of the prior month (15 February, 15 May, 15 August, and 15 November).

As stated in Article II of the Bylaws of the Genealogical Speakers Guild (as amended and restated May 2004), the objectives of GSG shall be

1. To provide a unified, effective voice to promote speakers' interests by providing a forum for the discussion of topics of concern to genealogical speakers;
2. To broaden the speaker base by identifying, educating, and assisting promising speakers;
3. To raise professional lecture standards; and
4. To aid speakers in understanding and fulfilling their obligations to program planners and to audiences.

Guidelines for Submitting Feature Articles Prior to submitting a feature article, authors are requested to review the newsletter guidelines outlined in this document (*Speak!* Policies) and submit article topic to *Speak!* editor, Lauren Maehrlein (editor@genealogicalspeakersguild.org), for approval. Unsolicited articles will be returned to the author along with a copy of *Speak!* Policies.

- Articles must address a topic directly related to genealogical speaking.
- Articles should be no more than 2,000 words.
- Book reviews should be no more than 750 words.
- The editor retains the right of acceptance of all articles, news, and announcements.
- The editor retains the right to edit articles for accuracy, clarity, and length. Articles will be edited to conform to the latest edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Authors retain their copyright.
- First-time submissions should be accompanied by a short (75 words or fewer) bio of the author and a photo. Both will be printed with the article when published.
- Not all articles submitted may be accepted for publication.
- Articles may not be published in the order in which they are received. The editor will balance content and topics throughout the year.
- Articles by non-members will be considered when space permits.

These guidelines do not apply to member news, calls for papers, or other notices and/or announcements submitted by GSG members. Adopted November 2010; updated January 2015.

GSG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Larry W. Thomas, 2028

Vice President: Michele Doyle, 2027

Treasurer: David McCorkle, 2028

Secretary: Laura Hedgecock, 2027

Director: Shannon Combs-Bennett, QG, 2027

Director: Jamie Lee McManus Mayhew, M.Ed., PLCGS, 2028

Speak! Editor: Lauren Maehrlein, MA
Tami Mize, proofreader

Editor Emeritus: Phyllis Matthews Ziller, MLIS

Webmaster: Mark Beasley

Roots-L Mailing List Moderator:
Jeannette Pieczynski

GSG Facebook Page Administrator:
Eric Basir

National Conference Coordinators:
Vacant