

Sylvia Tracy Doolos

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2027 Presentation & Workshop List

Over 40 years helping others uncover the stories behind the records!

Sylvia brings historical context and practical strategies to genealogical research, drawing on decades of experience as a historian, researcher, teacher, and writer. Her background includes a history degree with a linguistics minor and ProGen 48 training.

Affiliations: Association of Professional Genealogists, Colorado Genealogical Society, International Society for British Genealogy and Family History, Genealogical Speakers Guild, Longmont Genealogical Society, National Genealogical Society, Oklahoma Genealogical Society, Virginia Genealogical Society, Wales-Ireland-Scotland-England Family History Society, and Weld County Genealogical Society.

Speaking Details Presentations are available in person or online, with regional customization available. For in-person talks: projector and screen required; a microphone is appreciated for large rooms. For webinars: reliable high-speed internet required.

General Topics

NEW: Artificial Intelligence and Human Judgment: A Genealogist's Guide	Discover what AI can and cannot do for genealogical research. Through practical examples, explore its strengths in historical interpretation, document analysis, and research planning, while learning to recognize errors and evaluate the evidence yourself.
Cross the Line and Say "I Do": America's Gretna Greens (updated for 2027)	Missing a marriage? Discover how changing laws, borders, and transportation created marriage havens, and how to predict where the records survive.
Family Tree Feuds: Building Consensus	Learn to present evidence persuasively, resolve family-tree disagreements, and turn skeptical relatives into research allies.
Hidden Clues in Census Records	Census instructions changed every decade. Learn how those shifts influenced what was recorded, and what you might overlook or misunderstand.
Hook 'em & Reel 'em In	Reach out effectively to family-tree and DNA matches. Learn how much information to share to spark a useful response.
Johnson, Jones, or James: English Roots in America	Explore how English identity persisted and changed as colonists increasingly identified as Americans during the Revolutionary era.
New Leaf Workshop: The Right Tool for the Job	Match genealogical websites and tools to specific research questions in this practical, interactive workshop.

General Topics continued

NEW: Those That Came Before: Ancestry and the Stories That Shape Us	Does knowing where we came from change who we become? Through historical examples and lively discussion, explore how family stories, ancestral experiences, and forgotten voices shape our understanding of ourselves and those who came before us.
Vitally Important: Vital Records and Substitutes	Missing a birth, marriage, or death certificate? Find alternatives in church, newspaper, probate, and other records.

Culture & Its Influence on Records

18th-Century America: Culture and Records	Discover how colonial expansion, revolution, and social change affected recordkeeping, and where ancestral evidence survives.
19th-Century America: Culture and Records	Explore the century's geographic and social transformations and their effects on records, especially for women, African Americans, and immigrants.
Faith and Founding Fathers: Religion in America	Explore how religious movements and events shaped ancestral lives and created revealing records.
They Never Moved, but the Records Did: Territory to State (updated for 2027)	An ancestor stayed put while jurisdictions changed. Use historical maps and timelines to identify who created the records and where to find them.
Invisible Enemies: Disease in American History	Explore 250 years of epidemics and illness, and how disease shaped families, communities, migration, and surviving records.
Saying Goodbye: Death and Mourning Traditions	Explore funeral practices, mourning customs, and death records to understand how families and communities remembered their dead.
Tracking Beliefs: Identity in Records	Faith, language, and culture shaped identities and recordkeeping. Follow changing affiliations to uncover hidden ancestral connections.

Language Tools & Surname Research

Certainties and Uncertainties in Spellings	Discover why ancestral names changed spelling across generations and records, and learn strategies for identifying variants without losing the family connection.
Google Language Tools for Genealogists	Use Google Translate, alerts, and advanced search techniques to interpret records and discover multilingual resources.
One-Name Studies: A Research Tool	Discover how one-name studies can broaden surname research and connect you with fellow researchers.

Language Tools & Surname Research continued

Lost in Translation: How Language Hides Ancestors (updated for 2027)	Discover how translation, multilingual records, and changing languages can obscure ancestral identities. Apply practical strategies to uncover hidden connections through interactive exercises.
Mastering Language Tools for Genealogy	Explore pronunciation and language resources, including Forvo and Google, to interpret names and cultural context.
One Land, Many Voices: Language, Identity, and Records (updated for 2027)	Treat language as genealogical evidence. Discover how dialects, multilingual communities, and language loss shaped names, institutions, and ancestral records.
Who Said What? Dialects and Name Spellings	Explore how regional accents, dialects, and unfamiliar sounds influenced the way clerks recorded names, and how these linguistic clues can help identify ancestors.

Migration Research

American Migration: Pushes, Pulls, and Problems	Investigate the forces behind migration, the obstacles immigrants faced, and the records they created while building new lives.
Crossing the Atlantic: European Migration	Trace European migration waves from the 1600s to the 1900s, including departure pressures and records of the journey.
Drawn by Opportunity: Migration to the West	Why did some immigrants head directly west? Examine the opportunities, routes, and records of their journeys.
NEW: Following the Water: Migration and the Great Lakes	Follow Great Lakes waterways, canals, and transportation corridors to reconstruct migration routes, identify intermediate stops, and find overlooked records.
Homesteading in America	Explore the opportunities and hardships of homesteading for women and men, immigrants and the native-born, and the records left behind.
U.S. Immigration: Land, Lives, and Laws	Examine how immigration laws influenced settlement, inclusion and exclusion, and the records available to genealogists.
Westward Migration: Charting the Course	Use friends, associates, and neighbors (FAN research) to trace migrating families and build more complete routes.

Research Methodologies

Family History Foundations: Records and DNA	Build sound research habits using essential genealogical methods, record analysis, and an introduction to DNA.
British Genealogy: A Practical Guide	Learn where to search and how British terminology, record types, and practices differ from those in the United States.
Getting Started with Irish Genealogy	Start with North American evidence, then build a practical foundation for tracing ancestors across the Atlantic.
Mastering Irish Research: Methods for Breaking Through	Advance your Irish research skills with targeted techniques for challenging records and persistent brick walls.

Combine these two Irish programs for an in-depth methodology!

Women in America

Bound by Law, Freed by Law: Women's Legal History	Follow laws that restricted and expanded women's rights and discover how those changes shaped the records we find.
Her Genius, Our History: Innovating Women	Celebrate women whose ideas, determination, and achievements transformed American life.
NEW: More Than Housewives: The Working Women of Early America	Explore women's often-overlooked economic contributions as merchants, farmers, midwives, artisans, and business owners. Discover how occupations, family circumstances, and legal restrictions shaped their opportunities and the records they left behind.
Tracing Women Through Everyday Records	Discover how familiar records can reveal women's experiences when interpreted in their historical and legal context.
Women of Letters: Voices from the Frontier	Read women's diaries, letters, and published accounts to understand the joys and hardships of frontier life.
Women on the Move: 19th-Century Migration	Explore the changing circumstances that influenced women's lives and migration choices during the 1800s.

To discuss a 2027 presentation or workshop, email sylvia@newleafgenealogy.com with your preferred topic, event date, and whether the event will be in person or online.