



Sylvia Tracy Doolos

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Credentials: Sylvia has over 40 years of genealogical experience as a researcher, teacher, lecturer, and writer. She is a member and officer of the Colorado Chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists, the International Society of British Genealogy and Family History (ISBGFH), and the Wales, Ireland, Scotland, England Family History Society (WISE-FHS), plus a member of the Colorado Genealogical Society and others. She has a BA in History with a minor focusing on linguistics to better understand the role of language change and its effect on record keeping.

AV / Equipment: I only need a screen and projector unless your group wants me to use a microphone.

Fee: \$100 per lecture plus travel over 1 hour each way. A discount rate of \$75 is available for small societies if agreed upon in advance.

Travel Restrictions: None

Webinars: Experienced in providing remote webinars. Society must provide high-speed internet and a platform (i.e., Zoom, Go-To-Meeting, etc.)

Presentations

General Topics

Centuries of Censuses: What Census Instructions Can Teach Us	Instructions to census enumerators differed every ten years and can tell us much about what was happening in the country. Understanding the details hidden in the census can help us take advantage of the information gathered and the context of our ancestor's times.
Family Tree Squabbles: How To Build Consensus When Researchers Disagree	How do you convince your family, or extended family, that your family tree is accurate? Proof, evidence, and documentation - sounds like the Genealogical Proof Standard.
Gretna Greens: Where Our American Ancestors Went to Marry (and Perhaps Why)	Marriage was controlled by the family, the community, or the church. Couples often struggled to find someone who would officiate. North America has its own Gretna Greens, and unlike Las Vegas, what happened there did not stay there.
Hook 'em & Reel 'em In: Getting Your DNA Matches to Respond.	How do we get our family tree or DNA relatives to bite when we cast a hook into their genealogy pond? Giving them enough information to show you are worth their time but not so much that you get nothing in return is a balancing act.
Johnson, Jones, or James, English Ancestry is All Around Us	As a result of the Revolutionary War, our ancestors often identified as less English and more American patriots. Yet, over half of America's 100 most common surnames could be English. Let's look at the hidden history of being English in America.

New Leaf Workshop: The Right Tool for the Job (one or more hours based on your group's needs)	Each website and database has its own genealogical offerings. Knowing the right site for your research needs will save you time and frustration. Sylvia will help you pinpoint which site, or sites, will help advance your research.
Vitaly Important: Vital Records and Their Substitutes	Vital records are integral for good genealogical research. Learn why they are valuable and how to find vital records and their substitutes.

Culture & Its Influence on Records

19th Century America: Cultural Changes and Their Effect on Records	America in the 19th century saw geographic, cultural, and historical changes that affected the records that were created. While this was true for all Americans, it was especially true for women, African Americans, and immigrants. We'll look broadly at the 19th century to understand these changes.
18th Century America: Cultural Changes and Their Effect on Records	North America in the 18th century was a land in transition! Sylvia will guide you through some of the most significant changes in the 18th century and how to find the surviving records of your ancestors.
Faith of Our Forefathers	Churches were an anchor for many communities for our ancestors. A general understanding of faith's role in their lives and its effect on communities, states, and our nation will aid your understanding and may guide you to unexpected records.
Saying Goodbye: Our Ancestor's Traditions of Death and Dying	What can we learn about our families by observing their traditions on death and dying? Faith, culture, and community influenced our ancestor's death traditions. How can their surviving records help us understand their lives?
Tracking Ancestral Beliefs: What Group Our Ancestors Chose to Belong to	Many of our ancestors belonged to more than one culture. Perhaps more than once, they chose to identify with one specific culture. This could be based on faith, language, or social standing. Fitting in while becoming American was a transition that all navigated, and their records may reflect that acculturation.

Language Tools & Surname Research

Leveraging Language Tools for Your Genealogical Brick Wall	Discover linguistic tips, tricks, and resources to help you find your most elusive ancestors. Brick walls can sometimes be an obstacle with more to do with language than anything else. We will explore how the language of our ancestors and the language of the area they settled in can affect our research results.
Language Tools: Methodologies for Language-Based Resources	Language-based tools require different methods than genealogy tools. Learn how to take advantage of them, which can help you better understand ancestral name changes. We'll focus primarily on Forvo.com and Google's advanced language tools.
Language Tools for Genealogists: Google Translate and Other Google Tools	Google Translate can help you search for your ancestors more effectively. Other Google tools can help you monitor discussions that are happening now about records, articles, or books which may apply to your ancestry. Learn more about the free tools that Google offers.
Language Tools for Genealogists: One-Name Studies	One-Name.org is a website that has the potential to not only advance your research but connect you to other researchers who can provide insights into your ancestry. Other resources are available for those who want to conduct an in-depth study of a surname.

Who Said What in America: The Effects on Spelling of Language Variations Regional language and culture differences affected how our ancestors' names were heard and, therefore, recorded. We'll explore how an area's prevalent culture(s) might have affected your ancestor's names and help you research more effectively.

Certainties and Uncertainties in Spellings We trace our families and laugh out loud at the spelling variations when we find them. Let's try to understand them and learn about the pronunciation that created the fun variations we encounter. This presentation may be tailored to focus on a particular language group.

Migration Research

Beeline to the West: Migration pulls for immigrants Immigrants who settled in the "West" had their own reasons for coming. Compared to immigrants into the Colonies, those who came directly west had different pushes and pulls. This presentation focuses on the pulls of the West and who was attracted by them.

Homesteading in America: Men & Women, Immigrants & Native-Born Homesteading in America was a way to coax people to settle on lands throughout the country. Anyone willing to brave the frontier with a few dollars in their pocket could apply. It was not for the faint of heart!

Territorial Records in the U.S.: You Might Be Surprised! As our nation grew, territories began keeping records to achieve statehood. Let's look at some records and research strategies that can help you.

Trekking Across America: A Case Study in Westward Migration Many of our ancestors entered America in the East and made their way toward the West, where land was cheap and opportunities were abundant. Learn how I traced a family as they moved across the country.

U.S. Immigration History: The Tangled Web of Land, Lives, and Legislation Becoming and expanding a nation required a delicate balance between the manpower to build, the military might to hold, and the capital to finance. Legislation played a significant role in responding to these needs while catering to those who wanted the right people in their communities.

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.

Research Methodologies

Genealogy Basics, Including DNA: A methodology Let me show you how to get started by learning to avoid the pitfalls that experience taught me. This will cover the basics for those getting started or restarted on their family history. It will also include DNA basics.

British Research Methodology: How, what & Where to Search British research differs from American research in a variety of ways. Sylvia will highlight the best places to search, plus quickly cover the significant differences in terminology, language, and records. Extra Q&A time is built into this presentation for those new to the topic.

Getting Started with Irish Research. Irish research can be tricky, but knowing all you can about your ancestors in North America is vitally important. Success can be achieved with a wee bit of luck and a good bit of research. Learn how to build a body of knowledge that will help you jump the pond!

Irish Research Methodology Uncovered: Who, When and Where to Search	Irish research is challenging due to record loss, poor record keeping, and the turmoil that is so well documented within Ireland. Specific techniques and methods of researching can streamline your quest for your Irish ancestors.
Lutheran Research Methodology: How, What, & Where to Search	Martin Luther wanted to change the Catholic Church. Instead, he launched a movement that built on Catholic tradition while adapting to the languages used by its followers. As Lutheranism expanded through migration, it continued to adapt to meet the needs of its parishioners and spawned other groups.

Women in America

Women of Letters: Frontier Women Wrote, and We Benefit from What They Shared	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: Changing Migration in 19th Century America	During the 19th century, women's lives changed in myriad ways. This presentation focuses on the historical timeline of the 19th century and the events that impacted women's lives the most.
Women's Records: Researching the World of Our Female Ancestors	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.

NEW – 2025

- [*18th Century America: Cultural Changes and Their Effect on Records*](#)
- [*Language Tools for Genealogists: One-Name Studies*](#)
- [*Tracking Ancestral Beliefs: Which Groups Our Ancestors Chose to Belong To*](#)
- [*U.S. Immigration History: The Tangled Web of Land, Lives, and Legislation*](#)
- [*Women of Letters: Frontier Women Wrote, and We Benefit from What They Shared*](#)

Ready to book a presentation?

Contact Sylvia Tracy Doolos:

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