

**The Tax Man Cometh:** Do not overlook the wealth of information found in the tax records. As Daniel Defoe is credited for saying in a book in 1726, "Things as certain as death and taxes..." we simply cannot avoid them. Up until the early 1900s, people were taxed on their land and other possessions and these can help in the research of your ancestors. We will examine several sets of records from around the U. S. and see what we can learn from them.

**Tying History to Your Research:** Do you know how to interpret your findings on an ancestor in light of history? Are you looking at what was happening in the area, the country, and the world for the time period being researched? How often do we hear that a family emigrated from Ireland in the 1830s due to the potato famine which did not start until 1845? We need to examine history very closely so we can better understand our ancestors and how they lived their lives. We will examine several situations you should be aware of that will aid you in telling their story.

**Build Your Case at the Courthouse:** This is a 1-hour overview of researching courthouses for estate records, land records, and other court papers in learning more about our ancestors. While judicial methods vary from state to state and community to community, they all process the same types of records. Therefore, this presentation is more about the records than the structure of the court system in any one location.

**Telling their stories:** This is a 1-hour presentation taking the listener beyond the birth, marriage, death, and maybe occupation of an ancestor and getting to know the person and what their life was like. We will look at places to search for additional information on them and how to put their ancestors into proper historical context.

**How not to do genealogy: A look at common mistakes beginners (and some experienced) make in conducting their research:** This is a 1-hour look at many of the common errors and a bunch which are not as common but still can cost you valuable time and effort if you avoid them to start with. Whether it is believing the family tree that your mom or Aunt Mary wrote or a record attached to someone else's tree on the internet, each piece of evidence must be broken down and evaluated for accuracy.

**Two Colonial Georgias: Understanding History Helps Find Records:** Most people know Georgia was originally a Trusteeship; but what did that mean? Understanding a state's pre-statehood government will help you locate & understand records. This 1-hour presentation will explain the two distinct government entities that controlled Georgia before the American Revolution and where to find records.

**Tips and Tricks using FamilySearch.org:** We will explore the myriad of records located on *FamilySearch.org* and how to locate them. Many are not indexed and will require time spent searching page by page but these records could be invaluable in your research. We will also look at faster ways to

find the specific recordset you are looking for. This presentation is available in both a short 10-minute version for many lineage societies as well as a standard 1-hour presentation.

**Solving a Brick Wall with DNA – A Case Study:** How I used both Mitochondrial and Autosomal DNA to prove a great grandmother's maternal line. When no paper trail gives answers, sometimes we can turn to DNA to provide the proof of the relationship and then introduce new documentary evidence to draw a valid conclusion. In this case, my father's maternal grandmother's parents were a complete mystery but I was able to conclude who her mother and grandparents were using DNA and documented evidence. Since her mother was not married and no evidence at this time, her father remains a mystery. For now.

**Not another Organization Presentation:** There are as many methods as there are people using them, some are complicated and involve colored folders, labels, etc. Some use Ahnentafel numbering (and others) methods and some are quite complicated. I take a rather simplistic route that I think will work for anyone. This method works for both electronic and paper filing.

**How Civil War Pension Packets Told a Different Story – A Case Study:** A Case study of the life of Edmund T. Manning, A Company, 16<sup>th</sup> Iowa Infantry. We will explore the Civil War Pension application process for both the soldier and the wife and how together they can tell the real story your ancestors chose to ignore.

**This That and The Other: Researching beyond the standard documents:** While many may not have heard about using Voter Lists, have you used the Oaths of Allegiance that the former Confederates were required to take? We will take a quick tour of some less used places to research such as the Southern Claims Commission; company ledgers and tax records; election records, and loose papers (letters, notes, internal documents) found in special collections, and other obscure resources.

**Probing Probate Records for more than just a will:** This presentation will explain why you may not find an estate, why you should not stop at just the will, and the importance of looking at every available scrap of paper in the estate packets. Most people do not realize that sometimes the best estates are Intestate ones where a will does not exist or the will is tossed out by the court. These additional records may reveal the daughter's husbands, grandchildren, and extended family members.

**Reaping a Harvest with Land Records:** I have met people who have done genealogy research for over 20 years and never once looked at land records. There is often quite a lot of useful information in these records that go overlooked. Everything from family members, family dynamics, occupations, and wealth. I have found legal separations, gifts of land to children and grandchildren, membership in

associations, and many other interesting information. With this you might reap a harvest of information.

**When things don't make sense: Sorting through Mysterious and Misleading Information** How do you know what strange information to look at and what to ignore? What do you do with information that does not line up with what you have learned, etc. We will take a look at several cases and how I went about resolving them and what I did with the information. Hopefully it will get you from scratching your head in confusion to an enlightened plan for a good outcome.

**Dissecting a Cemetery to See What's Underneath:** Using cemetery maps, layouts, history, and even spreadsheets can help find the information seek. A better understanding of cemetery operations equals more information discovered. We will analyze how to assess the graves immediately surrounding the one which you are interested might tell you more about the family. We will also look at methods to help analyze the graves at a cemetery when those interred, along with grave location information can be viewed in spreadsheets.

I also have a list of topics designed more for short presentations of less than 30 minutes. Please request them from me.