

LECTURE TOPICS

1. Federal Records

Passenger Arrival Records, Colonial Times to Mid-20th Century

This lecture begins with a discussion of sources for discovering the arrival time and place—and perhaps the ship—of an immigrant to colonial America. It then explores U.S. passenger arrival records, especially 1820-1957, available on microfilm and the Internet. It suggests what facts you need to begin your search and explains step-by-step how to conduct that search. Specific examples illustrate how to use Web sites, National Archives microfilmed indexes, book indexes, and other research tools.

U.S. Passenger Arrival Records, 1820-1930s: Sources and Strategies for Challenging Cases

This lecture summarizes briefly the sources for finding the arrival record of a 19th- or 20th-century immigrant to America. It then elaborates on a variety of alternative sources and methods for overcoming particularly challenging issues that often hinder success, such as variant spellings of names, conflicting arrival dates, confusion of ship names, various ports of departure and arrival, and missing passenger manifests.

Naturalization Records, Colonial Times to Mid-20th Century

This lecture addresses the legal means by which non-British settlers in colonial America could become naturalized citizens of Great Britain. It then explains U.S. naturalization laws and processes, which began in 1790, and describes the records that resulted from them. It considers the naturalization of both alien classes and individuals, and provides guidance on how to find an ancestor's records, whether the naturalization occurred in a municipal, state or federal court. Pertinent research tools such as Internet sites, manuals and indexes are all demonstrated.

U.S. Naturalization Records, 1790-1930s: Sources and Strategies for Challenging Cases

After summarizing briefly the basics of finding an immigrant ancestor's naturalization record, this lecture focuses on more challenging cases. It discusses possible reasons why a record may not be found and offers alternative sources and strategies. Specific examples demonstrate how using other types of federal records, such as passport applications and homestead files, as well as Web sites and microfilmed indexes, may lead to success.

Records of the Federal Courts, 1789-1911: Drama in Your Ancestors' Lives

Federal court records contain all manner of information about your ancestors: their finances, business dealings, personal and family relationships, homes and property, personalities, disputes, triumphs and defeats. This lecture explains the system of federal courts, 1789-1911, and describes the records those courts created. Research strategies demonstrate how to use the Web site of the National Archives, public records, newspapers, *Federal Cases*, the *Federal Reporter*, and other tools to find federal court cases involving your ancestors. Particular case studies reveal the fascinating personal information these records contain.

U.S. Censuses, 1790-1940: Population and Non-Population Schedules

This lecture examines the federal population censuses enumerated every ten years, 1790-1940, as well as non-population censuses: mortality schedules, 1850-80; 1810 and 1820 censuses of manufactures; agricultural and industrial schedules, 1850-80; 1840 census of military pensioners; defective, dependent and delinquent classes of 1880; special 1880 enumeration of Indians; 1885 census of Colorado,

Florida, Nebraska, Dakota Territory and New Mexico Territory; 1890 Special Enumeration of Union Veterans and Widows; and various enumerations of Indian tribes. Specific examples illustrate the peculiarities of these records. Search strategies employ other kinds of historical sources, such as maps and city directories. Census records contain a lot more information about our ancestors than just names, dates and places.

U.S. Military Service Records, 1775-ca. 1916

After distinguishing military service records from military pension and bounty land records, this lecture explains how the service records are housed in the National Archives. It suggests what information you need to initiate a search for an ancestor's record and where you might find that information. Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War case studies demonstrate the step-by-step procedure for locating, identifying and retrieving specific records, whether the service was rendered in a volunteer unit or a branch of the regular armed forces—Army, Navy and Marine Corps. Finding aids include resources in state archives, key Internet sites, National Archives indexes, and published guides.

U.S. Military Pension and Bounty Land Records, 1776-ca. 1916

This lecture describes how military pension and bounty land files in the National Archives differ from

military service records. It suggests what information you need to initiate a search for an ancestor's file and where you might find that information. Then, using a variety of Web sites, National Archives indexes and other finding tools, this lecture works through the step-by-step procedure for locating, identifying and retrieving a particular file. Two cases, Revolutionary War and War of 1812, illustrate the process.

Lesser-Used Federal Records: Sources of Rich Detail about Ancestors' Lives

Whenever the path of an ancestor's life intersected with a federal government agency, paperwork was created. That paperwork fills our National Archives. Most of it has not been indexed, published, microfilmed or digitized, but some of it has. This lecture explores some of the more easily accessible paperwork that provides rich biographical detail about our ancestors. Discussion includes a selection from the following: 1) passport applications, 1791-1925; 2) homestead files, beginning 1863; 3) Civil War Income Tax records, 1862-72; 4) The Journals of Congress, 1789-1873; 5) Appointments of Postmasters, 1789-1971; 6) Federal Court records, 1789-1911; and 7) Civil War draft registrations, 1863-65. (Can also be a two-hour lecture to include all of these federal records.)

2. Sources, Methodology and Writing

Libraries, Archives and Public Record Offices: Understanding Resource Repositories

Old records are the lifeblood of genealogy. To locate the records of ancestors, genealogists must use a variety of repositories that differ dramatically one from the other. This lecture distinguishes among libraries, historical societies, public record offices, public archives, private institutions, and private archives. In addition, when

a pertinent historical source is found, genealogists must decipher its informational content. This lecture explores original and derivative sources: what they are, their relative importance and reliability, and the many challenges they present. It addresses ways to find the repositories you need and how to access their holdings, including Internet sites, genealogy manuals, guides, catalogs and indexes.

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Breaking through Brick Walls: Use your HEAD!

When the path of genealogical investigation leads to a brick wall, it's time to use your head. This lecture offers guidelines and points of methodology for overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles, such as: several men of the same name; several towns with the same name; several names for the same town; errors in original sources; families with common surnames; insufficient or contradictory information. Six case studies demonstrate the principles.

Using Original and Derivative Sources: How to Evaluate Evidence

Finding the sources to reconstruct the lives of our ancestors is only half the challenge; the other half is understanding what those sources say. This lecture defines and discusses original and derivative sources, and explores their importance, challenges and relative reliability. One case study drawn from *Only a Few Bones, a True Account of the Rolling Fork Tragedy and Its Aftermath*, together with two other examples, demonstrate how to derive the full informational content from a source; the importance of knowing the origin and purpose of the source; how to analyze and correlate information in order to resolve conflicts; the difference between information and evidence; and how to test hypotheses to learn the true facts for each ancestor. It culminates in an understanding of the "Genealogical Proof Standard."

Only a Few Bones: Case Studies in Assembling Sources to Reconstruct Real-Life Events

The biographical facts we discover about our ancestors did not happen in a vacuum. Our ancestors were born, lived and died in specific physical circumstances at specific moments in time. To reconstruct their lives, therefore, the facts we discover about them must be "situated" in the proper historical context. Three 19th-century case studies drawn from *Only a Few Bones, a True Account of the Rolling Fork Tragedy and Its Aftermath* demonstrate how to

use multiple sources to assemble vivid accounts of ancestral events and generate biographies that portray individualized ancestors.

Principles of Good Writing and Good Storytelling

This lecture demonstrates how to present an ancestor's life in writing as an engaging true story. It addresses the essential elements of setting, action, characters, and theme. Specific vocabulary examples show how to evoke the five senses, incorporate archaic expressions and period quotations, and remain accurate by using qualifiers, such as "probably," "perhaps" and "evidently." Well-rounded episodes from the Civil War experience of one soldier show how to use literary techniques that hook a reader's interest, employ powerful verbs and effective adjectives, keep the ancestor always "at center stage," portray ancestors as three-dimensional individuals, support speculation, and portray an ancestor's personality, temperament or character.

Evidence from Material Culture: Using Artifacts in Research and Writing about Ancestors

This lecture demonstrates how to use family heirlooms—such as jewelry, a pocket watch, photographs, kitchen utensils, furniture, books, letters and diaries—and on-site inspection of ancestral places—such as gravesites and homesteads—to help portray who an ancestor was. Clues from material culture, in conjunction with oral family lore and information from written records, may reveal an ancestor's physical appearance, character, temperament, personal interests, social standing, day-to-day life, and perhaps even personal goals and motives.

Erie Canal Genealogy: The Peopling of Upstate New York and the Midwest

Triumph of American ingenuity and wonder of the world, the Erie Canal affected the lives of millions of our ancestors from Maine to Minnesota. This

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lecture chronicles the building of the canal, 1817-25, and describes the many ways our ancestors may have worked for, on, or along the “Big Ditch.” It also explores numerous ways they may have used “Clinton’s Folly” or benefited from it.

Turning Biographical Facts into Real Life Events: How to Build Historical Context

The biographical facts we discover about our ancestors did not happen in a vacuum. Our ancestors were born, lived and died in specific physical circumstances at specific moments in time. This lecture demonstrates how to turn biographical data into the real-life experiences they represent. The suggested methodology results in ancestors who are more than names on a chart. They are distinct individuals.

Writing a *Narrative* Family History: The Snares and Pitfalls

To narrate the life experiences of our ancestors is to tell their true stories. The undertaking is rewarding, but fraught with snares and pitfalls. Portraying the physical and social world of a bygone time in a bygone place is no easy matter. Citing diverse examples, this lecture addresses some of the most common errors made in the name of “historical context” and suggests ways to avoid them. Family historians who are not on guard may produce ancestral accounts that are imprecise, misleading or downright untrue.

The Library of Congress: An Introduction and Overview

The Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., is one of the country’s greatest repositories for genealogical research. Yet, because it is dauntingly huge and requires on-site research, it tends to be underutilized. This lecture takes the mystery and trepidation out of using our national library and demonstrates the tremendous benefits of making a research trip to Washington. It explores the institution’s extraordinary website, sketches its history, describes the formalities

for using it, and highlights—one reading room at a time—the innumerable and often unique treasures it holds. The lecturer worked half-time at the Library of Congress for twenty years.

Using 19th-Century Newspapers for Family History

Newspapers contain much more information for family historians than birth, marriage and death notices. Perhaps no other single source provides a more thorough picture of an ancestor’s neighborhood. Using many examples, this lecture examines advertisements, judicial calendars and reports, river and harbor news, legal notices, social columns, estate settlements, real estate transfers, local elections, officials, boards, organizations, clubs, and entertainment. Newspapers transform ancestors from disembodied names into real people living in a real world.

Assembling and Writing a *Narrative* Family History

For experienced genealogists as well as beginners, this lecture addresses the joys and challenges of producing a written account of their discoveries. Whether a genealogy (record of descendants) or family history (record of ancestors), the work has a dual nature: reliable record and readable story. This lecture addresses both aspects. Fundamental considerations include deciding the form, content and style of the account, selecting a numbering system, and documenting the work. Narrative techniques include putting ancestors into historical context and describing their lives, rather than simply relating facts. Editing, illustrating and indexing are discussed to equip genealogists to commit their discoveries to writing... before it’s too late!

Publishing Your Genealogy or Family History: Choices and Essential Considerations

There are many ways to publish the results of your genealogical research. This lecture provides an overview of the possibilities you have to consider

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and highlights the decisions you must make. It distinguishes between self- and subsidized publishing and discusses the relative merits of publishing in paper format versus electronically (Web sites and personal blogs). Using *Only a Few Bones, A True Account of the Rolling Fork Tragedy and Its Aftermath* as an example, many practical issues are discussed.

From Proposal to Final Product: Publishing a Genealogy Manual with a Commercial Publisher

This lecture describes the process of publishing a genealogy guide or manual (not a genealogy or family history) commercially. From the initial idea for the book to the finished published volume, this lecture covers all of the steps involved. *They Came in Ships* (Ancestry) and *Finding Italian Roots* (Genealogical Publishing Company) serve as examples.

How Do You Know That? Documenting Your Family History

This lecture discusses the rationale and forms for citing the sources used in the preparation of a family history. Genealogical works from three different periods provide sample source notes for comparison and debate. Current standards found in the *Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edition) and Elizabeth Mills' *Evidence Explained, Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace* are evaluated in light of earlier practices. Thorough, consistent documentation is an essential part of every genealogy and family history.

Private Archives: What They Are and How to Use Them

Private entities, such as churches and synagogues, businesses, social organizations, and educational institutions, create records about their activities and their members. Over time these records accumulate, and eventually many private entities segregate them into an archives for preservation and research. Using Internet sites, this lecture describes the various kinds

of private archives that exist and explains when and why you might want to search for one. Five sample cases illustrate how using private archives contributed to the speaker's genealogical research.

State Archives: What They Are and How to Use Them

State archives hold vast collections of materials that document the lives and activities of the state's residents. Each state's archives is tied organizationally to the state library, and sometimes to historic sites and museums. These repositories hold population censuses, vital records, land transactions, public school, hospital and other institutional records, newspapers, manuscript and cartographic collections, cemetery information, military service and pension records, naturalization and other court records, and more. This lecture examines the Web sites of select state archives from the North, West, East and South, displaying the wealth of genealogical and biographical resources they contain. It also explores the electronic and paper finding aids that help family historians access the treasures in state archives.

Our National Archives: The Astounding Institution and How to Use It

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) encompasses many buildings across the country. It holds millions of records that document American families from 1776 through the 20th century. This lecture takes the fear and mystery out of using such an enormous repository. It explains how NARA is organized and how archival research differs from library research. It describes the finding aids that help researchers access what they need in NARA's universe of historical materials. Three research cases demonstrate how military, legislative and judicial records are accessed at Archives I in Washington, D.C., and NARA's regional archives.

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Understanding Archives: What They Are and How to Use Them

Most historical sources have not been published. Genealogists who want to conduct a thorough search for their ancestors must eventually turn to original records housed in archives. This lecture shows how archives differ from libraries and manuscript collections. It describes archival organization and the finding aids researchers use to access materials. Private archives, state archives and the National Archives in Washington, D.C., are all discussed. Web sites are examined as the major portal to archives of all kinds, but guides and manuals published in paper format are also discussed. This lecture takes the trepidation and mystery out of graduating from published materials to original sources.

The County Courthouse: Your 'Trunk in the Attic'

County courthouses vary from one county to the next. They may be congenial places to do research or dismal places to do research. They may be modern with records organized for easy access or old and totally chaotic. Some burned down once, some burned down twice. County clerks and their staff members differ dramatically in temperament and expertise, too. In general, though, courthouses are chock full of family information. This lecture examines the full scope of their precious contents and reviews many resources for learning about the records created in your ancestors' counties. Using courthouses, you will get tired and dirty. But you will reap a rich harvest of information about your ancestors, almost like discovering a trunk in the attic.

Discovering Your Ancestors' World through Maps and Gazetteers

The facts you discover about your ancestors did not occur in outer space. They represent real-life events that took place in a physical place at a particular time. Cartographic collections—maps, atlases and gazetteers—are essential tools for grounding all of

your genealogical discoveries in the real world. This lecture describes different kinds of maps, current and historical, U.S. and foreign, and illustrates the broad range of information they provide. It explains how to use Internet sites to locate cartographic collections in libraries, archives, courthouses, historical societies, as well as those available online in digitized format. Specific examples illustrate how maps form an integral part of thorough genealogical investigation.

Principles and Rewards of Effective Interviewing

The first resource to exploit for genealogy is the memory of those who already know something about your family's past: elderly relatives. Interviewing lays the groundwork for all subsequent research in written records and published sources. But effective interviews require thoughtful preparation, careful organization, and the exercise of special skills and techniques. Using the speaker's experiences as examples, this lecture illustrates how interviewing is one of the most important and enjoyable aspects of genealogy.

Stories that Instruct: Using Case Studies to Teach Genealogy

A case study is a *particular* example that illustrates a *general* methodology. Even when the specific elements are changed, it still demonstrates the same principle or lesson. But a case study is also a story and as such, makes an effective teaching tool. A story is more memorable than explanation, and more fun, too. This lecture describes the characteristics of a good case study and then uses case studies to teach a variety of genealogy sources and skills. Case studies instruct by showing, rather than telling.

Sixteen Repositories, One Life: Uncommon Original Sources Portray a 19th-Century Immigrant

Myriad small, specialized repositories across the country hold original records containing information about our ancestors. These collections are usually maintained on a shoestring budget by a staff of one

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or two people. We don't know about them until an ancestor's work or creed or social activity leads us to one. Carl Ludwig Richter is a good example. The facts of this 19th-century Prussian immigrant's marriages and children may be gleaned from "standard" genealogical sources. However, the more interesting and historically significant aspects of his life come to light only by exploiting original historical sources in sixteen different repositories. This lecture encourages family historians to explore small, specialized collections for the personal details of their ancestors' lives.

Finding Local History... When There Is No Published Local History

Every time you discover a new fact about an ancestor—date of birth, place of marriage, military service, overseas town of origin, etc.—you come face-to-face with a real-life experience. The way to personalize a biographical event is to learn all you can about it, utilizing as many sources as possible. Then you examine the event thoughtfully in light of the social, economic, cultural, political, religious circumstances where and when it happened. That is, you examine the ancestral event in light of

local history. Unfortunately, for many counties, no published history exists. This lecture demonstrates how to extract details of local history from a variety of unlikely sources, so that you may place each ancestor's life in its proper historical context.

Mississippi: An Overview of Genealogical Sources

This lecture summarizes Mississippi State history and resources for genealogy, 1699-late 19th century. Most 18th-century records are in French or Spanish; only records of the 19th century and later are in English. Materials at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History in Jackson are highlighted, as are typical courthouse holdings and pertinent federal records, such as censuses and land and military records. Three 19th-century case studies illustrate how to combine multiple sources to reveal real-life Mississippi lives: a Vicksburg wedding; a backcountry cabin birth in the Yazoo-Mississippi Delta; and a quiet funeral in Vicksburg.

Hacks and Hookers and Putting Up Pickles: Snares of Yesteryear's English

Lecture version of banquet talk. See "Banquet Talks" below.

3. Continental European Immigration and Genealogy

Finding the Town of Origin: U.S. Sources for Discovering an Ancestor's Native Town Overseas

This lecture addresses the challenge of discovering an immigrant ancestor's native town in Europe. It explores a broad range of sources that *may* contain the coveted information. It also demonstrates the importance of locating the town on a map of the ancestor's era, rather than a modern map, in order to discover the local history and what repositories may hold the records created in that area at that time. Examples from a variety of different countries utilize resources in print and online to suggest possible methodologies.

Discovering the REAL Stories of Your Immigrant Ancestors

The immigrant experience was not the same for every one of the millions of English, Irish, Italians, Germans, Jews, and others who came to America. Each immigrant's story is unique. Using three 19th-century case studies, this lecture describes the original records and published materials available to discover the particular facts of your own ancestor's story. It discusses how to evaluate those facts and assemble them into a story that conveys both the drama and individuality of your ancestor's emigration/immigration experience.

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How to Prepare for Successful Research in European Records

This lecture discusses how Americans can prepare for successful genealogical research overseas, whether that research is conducted through correspondence or in person. Using numerous examples, it addresses the facts that are needed to get started on European research, how to break through language barriers, become familiar with the records of the target country, and learn to read the old script. It explains the importance of writing letters of introduction and knowing the historical and cultural context in which the old records were created.

French Ancestry: Researching in the United States and France

Beginning with the Acadian settlers of 1604, followed by the Québécois, Louisiana French, French in the Mid-West, Huguenots, and the German-speaking Alsatians and Lorrainians of the 19th century, French immigration to America has spanned four hundred years. This lecture describes key colonial and federal records for researching French ancestors in North America, then explains the records of France. Using digitized and microfilmed examples, this lecture demonstrates the challenges of tracing French ancestors and offers a variety of resources and techniques for meeting those challenges. (This may also be a two-hour lecture: 1) Research in the United States; 2) Research in France.)

The Germanic French: Researching Alsatian and Lorrainian Families

This lecture explains how a significant population of German-speakers came to reside in France and explores the peculiarities of researching ancestors of Alsace, Lorraine, and Elsass-Lothringen. It discusses when, why and how people from these areas came to the United States from the late eighteenth to the late nineteenth centuries. Research challenges include: records kept in French, German and Latin; shifting

national borders; peculiar surnames; and Catholic, Protestant and Jewish residents. Indispensable Web sites are reviewed, as well as books and manuals, and the large body of microfilmed records available from the Family History Library in Salt Lake City.

From France to the New World: Four Hundred Years of Very Diverse Immigration

Throughout the 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, French immigrants arrived in America. But the flow was not steady or homogeneous. Six distinct groups may be identified: Acadians, Québécois, French in the Mid-West, Louisiana French, French Huguenots, and German-speaking Alsatians and Lorrainians. Each group differed in many ways from the others. This lecture describes each group's history and salient characteristics, so genealogists understand what to look for and what questions to ask when seeking French ancestors.

Rediscovering "La Famiglia:" Accessing and Using the Records of Italy

Resources for reconstructing the heritage of American families of Italian descent are more plentiful and more easily accessible than ever before. However, skills are needed to read and understand them. This lecture summarizes key U.S. resources for tracing a family back to the immigrant from Italy, then describes the civil and religious records of Italy that extend that family back in time. Italy as a united nation is young and astoundingly diverse in its topography, customs, dialects, cuisine, and people. An Italian heritage may be many different things, depending on the *paese* of your *famiglia*!

Records of Italy for Family History: One by One, Line by Line

This lecture is an in-depth examination of the most important records created in Italy, both civil and religious, for genealogy. Birth, marriage and death records, 1820-1900, are displayed and translated into

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English, as are Roman Catholic Church records of baptism, marriage and burial in Italian and Latin, 17th-20th centuries. Also viewed are records peculiar to Italy, such as *stati di famiglia* (parish censuses) and notarial records (marriage, land, and other legal documents). Military and emigration records, and Protestant and Jewish resources, are mentioned. These materials rich in genealogy may be accessed in person, by mail, using microfilm, using Internet sites, or by hiring a researcher in Italy.

The 17,000,000 Stories of Ellis Island: What's Fact? What's Myth?

Ellis Island occupies a mythical place in the history of our nation. Millions of Americans trace their ancestry to immigrants who arrived at Ellis Island. Yet many myths and misconceptions about the place hamper family research and distort family stories. This lecture puts Ellis Island into its proper place within the larger context of U.S. immigration history. It sets the record straight regarding what's fact and what's myth.

Immigration to America, Colonial Times to Post-World War II: Where Do Your Ancestors Fit in?

This broad overview covers: 1) the colonial period (Spanish, French, English, Dutch, Africans, Germans, Welsh, Finns, Scots and Scotch-Irish); 2) 1820-1882 (Irish, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes and Chinese); 3) the "New Immigrants" (Bohemians and Slovaks, Poles, Jugoslavs, Russians and Hungarians, Austrians, Jews, Italians, Greeks and Armenians and Japanese); and mentions very briefly: 4) Immigration since World War II (Mexico, Central and South America, Korea, Laos and Vietnam, and the Arabic nations). Key characteristics of each group are sketched, including most prominent occupations and places of settlement in America. General principles and patterns of immigration are also considered. (Can also be a two-hour lecture: 1) Colonial Times to 1882; 2) 1882 to Post-World War II.)

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