

Association of Professional Genealogists

Writers Special Interest Group

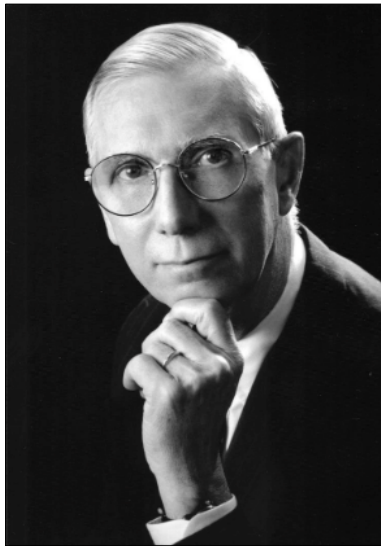
2025 Program

The APG Writers SIG provides education and support to authors, editors of genealogical publications, freelance writers and editors, publishers, and others who have an interest in any aspect of genealogical writing. Membership is open only to members of APG.

The Writers SIG meets online via ZOOM on the **third Wednesday of each month** except December at 8 p.m. ET, 7 p.m. CT, 6 p.m. MT, 5 p.m. PT. Breakout rooms begin a half hour earlier. Annual dues are \$20.

George J. Hill, M.D., M.A., D.Litt. *A Page a Day*

15 January



My Dad had many talents, and I inherited some of them. He was a part-time sportswriter before he became a banker, and he encouraged me to learn to type and write as a journalist. A sportswriter never has “writer’s block,” and he finishes his story of a game when the whistle blows at the end. My work as a writer is based on what Dad taught me. Just sit down and start typing. Keep it simple. Let your thoughts flow into your fingers as you type. Try to do a page every day.

George J. Hill in his own words:

I have had several careers – physician, surgeon, professor, scientist, genealogist, and historian. These careers all demand writing, and the style required for each is different. And I also have many avocations. For instance, a playwright, lecturer, and motivational speaker. However, I do not think of myself as a professional writer. I am certainly not a creative writer, and I do not intend to write fiction.

Mark Lowe, FUGA *Sharpening Our Digital Skills for Genealogical Writing and Presentations*

19 February



What’s new in digital production? Are you considering using an Avatar to present a concept or using AI for editing or templates? Have you stepped into the new world of online courses, webinars, or video presentations? Video and Audio production is a crucial component for students & educators to be up to date or “even marginally effective” for your writing and presentations. Let’s look at a few important tools and learn to focus on techniques that enhance digital learning content as a quality component of your presentations.

J. Mark Lowe describes himself as “born to be curious.” He is a professional genealogist and educator who specializes in original records and manuscripts throughout the South. He coordinates “Research in the South” courses at IGHR, SLIG, and TIGR, worked on several TV series, hosts a YouTube channel, and does webinars.

John Colletta, Ph.D.

More Than Pretty Pictures: Sources for Visual Enhancement of Your Story

18 March



Using three articles of mine that have been published in the past four and a half years, as well as *Only a Few Bones*, I talk about the illustrative images--photographs, prints and engravings, documents, maps, etc.--and discuss why I selected them and not other possibilities (including a couple that the editor rejected). I propose some "Bedrock Principles" and some "Stern Caveats" for illustrative material that accompanies historical narrative.

For 40 years **John Colletta** has been helping family historians discover and write the stories of their ancestors. After working at the Library of Congress and teaching classes at the Smithsonian Institution and National Archives, he became a popular lecturer at NGS and FGS national conferences and a faculty member of the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (U. of Georgia) and Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy. His publications include many articles, both scholarly and popular, two manuals (*Finding Italian Roots* and *They Came in Ships*), a murder mystery/family history, *Only a Few Bones* (the second edition includes instruction on how to write narrative family history), and a Great Course titled "Discovering Your Roots" available from The Teaching Company. Recipient of professional awards and honors, Dr. Colletta resides in Washington, D.C., where he earned his doctorate at the Catholic University of America.

Wesley Pippenger

Reconstructing the Past: Three Case Studies

16 April



He will discuss projects that he is currently working on and the issues that arose. (1) Chain of title of the original Tappahannock town lots from about 1705 to the present; (2) Chronicling businesses that have come and gone in Essex County starting in the 1800s; and (3) preparing surviving King William County historical court records for publication.

Wesley Pippenger is a historical researcher and compiler of numerous genealogical reference books. He is past president of the Virginia Genealogical Society, contributing editor of *The Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, and is or has been a member of numerous genealogical and historical organizations. Perhaps most noted is his 12-volume master index to wills and administrations and other estate records for both Virginia and West Virginia before 1865. He maintains a personal research library of about 10,000 history books, thousands of local photographs, and box upon box of research materials at his historic house Little Egypt in Tappahannock.

Ian Watson
Genealogical Writing and Publishing in the 2020s:
Thoughts from Ian Watson, Editor of the NYG&B Record

21 May
**2 p.m.
Eastern**



Ian Watson will share his thoughts about how the environment for genealogical writers and publishers is changing. He will talk partly about the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record (now in its 156th year) and what kind of material it publishes, and partly about the broader landscape of genealogical writing and publishing. For example, what is the best way to bring your work to the public and ensure that it has the effect that you want? How can you make sure that rare knowledge and one-of-a-kind documents are preserved? Should you sell your writing or give it away? How can we integrate the print and online worlds? How can we cite sources in an efficient, helpful, and durable way?

Ian Watson, PhD (www.ianwatson.org), is the editor of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record and author of a number of articles and books about New York and New England genealogy.

Dan Bouk, Ph.D.
The Census is a Fascination and Flawed Record of Doorstep Conversations

18 June



As researchers we rely on census records to establish a wide range of facts. This presentation explores some of the limits of census records and, also draws attention to the ways that bias or error in the census can allow us to better understand the past and those people we seek to study. Topics that will be covered include: the history of census takers and their training, the history of the undercount of Americans, the ambiguity in census categories or responses, and how it can be useful to look at the history of the census itself in crafting family histories. All who attend should come with a new understanding of the census as a record of millions and millions of doorstep conversations.

Dan Bouk writes about the history of bureaucracies, quantification, and other modern things shrouded in cloaks of boringness. His most recent book, *Democracy's Data: The Hidden Stories in the US Census and How to Read Them* was a New York Times notable book for 2022. He teaches history at Colgate University in upstate NY.

Craig R. Scott, CG, FUGA
Procrastination: Friend or Foe?

16 July



Once you overcome the problems associated with becoming a writer; like putting ink on paper or its equivalent there are several things that will interfere with your ability to keep putting ink on paper. Procrastination is a major cause of failing to complete writing projects in a timely manner. It is important to identify how you deal with procrastination and its impact on your writing.

Craig Roberts Scott, MA, CG, FUGA is the President and CEO of Heritage Books, Inc., a genealogical publishing firm with over 10,000 titles in print. A professional genealogical and historical researcher for more than thirty-eight years, he specializes in records of the National Archives, especially those that relate to the military. He has coordinated the Military tracks at IGHR, SLIG, and GRIP in years past. He is currently the Coordinator of the SLIG

Consultation Track, helping students solve their brick wall problems.

Sharon Hoyt, MLIS, CG
Refocus! When New Research Changes the Article You Planned to Write

20 August



You've built your story around one person but newly found research makes you rethink your focus. Share one author's dilemma on whether to redesign a journal article.

Sharon Hoyt is a genealogy researcher, speaker, and writer from California's Silicon Valley who enjoys researching intriguing stories and brick wall cases. She has spoken at local, regional, state, and national events, and has taught for the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG) and the Board for Certification's 2024 "Putting Skills to Work" workshop. Her research has won Family History writing contests sponsored by the National Genealogical Society and the Minnesota Historical Society, and has been published in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly, the NYG&B Record, and Minnesota Genealogist. Sharon holds a master's degree in Library and Information Science.

Pam Anderson

The Art of Self-Editing for Genealogists: Overall Written Products

17
September



Authors are told to self-edit their writing but are rarely given strategies to review their work. The first step in this four-step self-editing process will discuss examining "Overall Written Products." Future presentations will look at paragraph development and organization; sentence structure; and word choice. Authors will come away with a checklist of items that can be used to evaluate and edit any work product, whether for a credential, publication, family, or themselves.

Pam Anderson, CG® is the owner of Anderson CoGen in Franklin County, Pennsylvania. She used her master's degree in Speech Pathology until changing careers in 1991, becoming owner of

Anderson Construction until 2016. She began studying her family history in 2010, went professional in 2014, and obtained her CG in 2018. Pam mentored ProGen 47 in 2020–2021. She taught "Editing Your Work" for Jill Morelli's AppGen Institute course, "Just Do It! Self-Publishing Your Work" in 2023; and a one-hour APG webinar and twelve-hour AppGen Institute course on "The Art of Self-Editing for Genealogists" in 2024. Pam has written articles for the Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly, National Genealogical Society Quarterly and Magazine, New York Genealogical and Biographical Society Record, Maryland Genealogical Society Journal (article reviewer), and Utah Genealogical Society Crossroads (editorial team member).

Jan Joyce, DBA, CG, CGL, AG

Restarting Research: Writing Your Way Back after a Break

15 October



Whether you've been absent from your family history work for days, weeks, months, or years, learn practical writing techniques that help restart your research. Transform scattered thoughts into structured plans as you write your way back into active research. Rather than feeling overwhelmed by where to begin again, these writing methods will help you build confidence and clarity, turning your genealogy restart into an organized and achievable journey. Join us to discover how the simple act of writing can be your most powerful tool for reconnecting with your family history research.

Jan Joyce is a genealogist whose journey began in 1998 while managing the marketing initiatives at Genealogy.com. Specializing in research methodology, Jan divides her time between personal research, writing, and education. She developed the comprehensive "Assemblage" course for the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), which guides students through preparing, writing, and revising case studies. Her innovative Document

Work Workshop helps aspiring genealogists prepare for BCG certification. And at the GRIP Genealogy Institute she is pioneering "Merging & Separating Identities: Strategies and Tactics to Solve" to advance the field's research strategies and tactics.

Patti Hobbs, CG[®], CGG^(SM)

Building Convincing Case Studies through Logical Arrangement

19 November



Genealogical case studies that are difficult to follow or fail to persuade often suffer from poor organization of evidence. In this presentation, we will explore the common pitfalls genealogists and writers face when presenting complex information and how to arrange evidence in a way that strengthens your argument. Using both traditional sources and DNA evidence, we'll discuss key factors to consider in structuring your case studies effectively.

Patti Lee Hobbs, resides in Clever, Missouri. She considers herself blessed to have ancestors from many geographical locations leading to research in varied repositories. She serves on the editorial board for the National Genealogical Society Quarterly and is former trustee for both the Board for Certification of Genealogists and the BCG Education Fund. Patti is the coordinator for the week-long course "Genetics for Genealogists: Fundamentals of DNA" at the Institute of Genealogy and Historical Research (IGHR). Her two articles "DNA Identifies a Father for Rachel Lee of Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania" in March 2017 and "DNA Merges the Families of Stephen Stilwell of Dutchess County, New York; Cornwall, Upper Canada; and Coshocton County, Ohio," in March 2024 were published in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly. She is a contributing author of *Advanced Genetic Genealogy: Techniques and Case Studies*.

No Meeting in December

Summary

15 January – George J. Hill – A Page a Day

19 February - Mark Lowe, FUGA - Sharpening Our Digital Skills for Genealogical Writing and Presentations

18 March - John Colletta - More Than Pretty Pictures: Sources for Visual Enhancement of Your Story

16 April - Wesley Pippenger - Reconstructing the Past: Three Case Studies

21 May - Ian Watson - Genealogical Writing and Publishing in the 2020s. [2 p.m. EST]

18 June - Dan Bouk - The Census is a Fascination and Flawed Record of Doorstep Conversations

16 July - Craig R. Scott - Procrastination: Friend or Foe?

20 August - Sharon Hoyt - Refocus! When New Research Changes the Article You Planned to Write

17 Sept - Pam Anderson - The Art of Self-Editing for Genealogists: Overall Written Products

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