

Association of Professional Genealogists

Writers Special Interest Group

2026 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 current members of APG.

The Writers SIG meets online via ZOOM on the **third Wednesday of each month at 8pm EST**, except December. Breakout rooms are available for networking a half hour prior to the start of the meeting. Annual dues are \$20.

Pam Anderson, CG®

Self-Editing at the Paragraph Level, Part 2 of 4

21 January



Authors are told to self-edit their writing but are rarely given strategies to review their work. The second step in this four-step self-editing process will discuss “Paragraph Development and Organization.” The first step looked at overall written products. Future presentations will examine 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 and GenProof 95 in 2025. She has taught various courses on “The Art of Self-Editing for Genealogists” since 2023. 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). She won the NGS 2025 Family History Writing Competition.

Jennifer Zinck, CG®, AG®

Feedback is a Gift

18 February



Join us for “Feedback is a Gift,” an engaging session where we’ll rethink feedback as a supportive partnership that can strengthen genealogical writing, improve clarity, and elevate the reader’s experience. Seeing feedback as a gift shifts the focus from judgment to generosity: a colleague has paused their day to offer questions and perspectives that sharpen your narrative. No critique of personal writing is required—just a willingness to explore how collaboration can transform our writing. Come ready to participate in group exercises as we discover how collaboration can enrich our writing and make the process more productive and enjoyable.

Jennifer Zinck is a professional genealogist, writer, editor, and educator who unites skilled research with genuine enthusiasm for uncovering the past. She holds the Certified Genealogist® credential from the Board for Certification of Genealogists and the Accredited Genealogist® credential from ICAPGen. Her work focuses on New England research—particularly Connecticut—and the interpretation of DNA evidence. Jennifer is dedicated to helping others build sound, well-documented genealogies, making complex ideas clear, and fostering a community that values historical accuracy and encourages the thoughtful, ethical use of both genetic information and artificial intelligence.

Rhonda Lauritzen

Organize Complex Writing Projects for Success

18 March



Big projects need an organizational structure and systems to stay on track and avoid becoming overwhelmed. This class shares what I wish someone had taught me when I first began doing historical research and writing books. Learn best practices I’ve picked up along the way, including the specific files and infrastructure I set up at the start of each project. Finally, we will introduce new AI technologies and automations to make quick work of what used to be tedious...without sacrificing your unique voice. See which tools save time without a ridiculous learning curve.

Rhonda Lauritzen is a professional biographer with multiple published books and is a regular speaker at international events like RootsTech and APG’s Professional Management Conference. She has an MBA from the University of Utah and served as CEO of her family business, working alongside her six brothers. In 2007, her writing journey began with her parents’ family business saga. She founded Evalogue. Life in 2016. Since then, Rhonda has been hired to help tell the stories of families, cities, and nonprofits. Two of her books have been traditionally

published. She believes that when you tell your story, it changes the ending.

Jill Nock, AG®

Beyond the Obvious: Uncovering Stories in Probate Records

15 April



Attendees will acquire advanced analytical techniques for interpreting subtle language variations in legal documents, identifying relationship patterns through inheritance distributions, and correlating probate timing with family circumstances. They'll learn to build comprehensive family narratives using systematic evidence correlation from multiple probate-related records, and develop professional presentation skills for transforming legal findings into engaging human stories that bring ancestors to life while maintaining genealogical accuracy and scholarly rigor.

Jill Nock, AG®, is a professional genealogist accredited through ICAPGenSM in the U.S. Upper South with nearly five decades of research experience. She operates Mountain State Genealogy and subcontracts with Family Locket Genealogists. A ProGen59 graduate, she has completed advanced training at GRIP and IGHR in DNA evidence, forensic genealogy, and advanced methodologies.

Volunteer positions include serving with ICAPGen and local genealogy societies as well as multiple officer and committee positions with the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Her expertise combines traditional record analysis with advanced DNA interpretation, specializing in transforming complex research findings into clear, professionally written reports.

Barbara Vines Little, CG®, FNGS, FUGA, FVGS

Forty Years of Writing and Editing: You'd Think I'd Know What I Was Doing

20 May



Assumptions you shouldn't make, issues you need to plan for (some under your control and some not), and most of all what to do when "life happens" in the middle.

Barbara Vines Little, CG®, FNGS, FUGA, FVGS, a professional genealogist, has lectured over the past thirty-plus years at conferences in thirty-two states on research methodology, Virginia and West Virginia resources and writing and publishing. Author of *A Researcher's Guide to Virginia's Historic Records*, editor of the quarterly *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy* since 1996 and winner of the NGS Quarterly Award of excellence in 2001 and 2022, she has written articles for a number of publications including the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, the *National Genealogical Society Newsletter*, and the *Board for Certification of Genealogists' newsletter, OnBoard*. The current editor of *National*

Genealogical Society's Research in the States series, she is the author of the West Virginia volume and has published three volumes of Virginia court records and edited others for publication. A former member of the board of the Library of Virginia, the Board for Certification of Genealogists, and a former board member and president of both the National Genealogical Society and the Virginia Genealogical Society.

Jane E. Wilcox, FGBS
New York State Archives Guide--Your Turn

Join author Jane E. Wilcox, FGBS, for a Q&A session about the New York Genealogical & Biographical Society's recently published book, *New York State Archives Guide: For Family Historians, Biographers, and Historical Researchers*. Briefly learn the featured topics and highlights of the book and some insights about writing the book. Then it's your turn to ask Jane questions.

Professional genealogist **Jane E. Wilcox, FGBS** serves on the New York State Archives Advisory Committee and the New York Genealogical and Biographical (NYG&B) Society's New York Family History Advisory Committee. She authored the NYG&B's *New York State Archives Guide: For Family Historians, Biographers, and Historical Researchers*. This ground-breaking work opens access to and understanding of the treasure-trove of records for genealogists and historians at the state archives. She is the newest Fellow of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society. A former editorial board member of the NYG&B Record, Jane speaks at genealogy institutes and national, regional, and local genealogy conferences, as well as presenting webinars for genealogy societies and companies and speaking at the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, and the National Archives and Records Administration in New York City. With her company, Forget-Me-Not Ancestry, in Albany, Jane specializes in colonial and early federal New York research. She hosted The Forget-Me-Not Hour podcast for more than six years, with archives at www.BlogTalkRadio.com/JaneEWilcox. She received her M.S. in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, and her B.A. in history and English literature with honors from the University of Michigan, in addition to her teacher's certification from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. Her training as a journalist, a historian, and a teacher has provided an academic foundation for her work in genealogy. As a records geek, Jane loves to share her knowledge and understanding of old documents.



17 June

Michael Strauss, AG®
TBD

15 July

Julie Miller, CG®, CGL™

Indirect Evidence Overturns a Direct Evidence Conclusion: From Hypothesis to Published Article



19 August

Direct evidence is a piece of evidence that answers, by itself, a research question. It is usually the easiest evidence for genealogists to use, but it can be incorrect. Take the case of Philip Hart of Goffstown, New Hampshire. There was direct evidence that he had two wives, but indirect evidence revealed that he had three. Was the error made knowingly to suppress the controversial truth? This case study will be used to show the process of taking a problem from hypothesis to publication in a genealogy journal. I think I've given it just once and that was at the NGS 2019 Conference.

Julie Miller holds Certified Genealogist (CG) and Certified Genealogical Speaker (CGL) credentials and is a fellow of the National Genealogical Society. She is a full-time professional researcher, speaker, and writer who lives in Colorado. Julie speaks on a wide variety of genealogy subjects both locally and nationally. Her articles have appeared in the NGSQ, NGS Magazine, NYG&B Record, and the OGSQ. Julie was the NGS interim Education Manager (2018), was a member of the NGS conference committee for twelve years, and was a volunteer at NARA-Denver for twenty-one years.

Amberly Beck, AG®

Bringing Identities into Focus Using the Correlation Power of Airtable



16
September

Written proofs for complex genealogical problems require time, skill, and careful analysis. The more complex the problem, the greater the need for tools that help us visualize and correlate evidence effectively. Airtable—a relational database platform—offers genealogists a flexible way to track research, link records, and analyze identity questions with clarity and precision. This presentation demonstrates practical approaches and creative possibilities for using Airtable to organize research, strengthen analysis, and bring correlated evidence into sharper focus—so you can more clearly see how each piece connects. By supporting the correlation process at the heart of the Genealogical Proof Standard, Airtable helps you separate, compare, and merge identities; manage your subject's FAN club; and move forward in your research with greater confidence and insight so you will be ready to write.

Amberly Beck is an Accredited Genealogist® professional specializing in research in France. She graduated from Lewis-Clark State College with a BS in Elementary Education in 1998 and is the former director of the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy. Her love for genealogy began as a child poring over family photos with her grandmother and became a serious research endeavor more than twenty-five years ago. Amberly lives in Utah with her family.

Rebecca Whitman Koford, CG®, CGL™
Men of the Same Name: Research Tools & Methodology

Our genealogical trees eventually run up against one of the most common research challenges: sorting out men and women of the same name who live in the same locality. Dealing with these doppelgängers takes patience and diligence. This lecture will discuss how to approach men of the same name research and effective tools and methods to employ to find the identities of each.



Rebecca Whitman Koford holds credentials as a Certified Genealogist® and as a Certified Genealogical Lecturer®. She focuses on research in Maryland, Upstate New York, Virginia, the District of Columbia, colonial records, military records from the Revolution through the Civil War, federal records at the National Archives (D.C.), and land records of all types. She has published articles in the NGS Magazine, APG Magazine, SAR Magazine, and the Maryland Genealogical Society Journal and is co-author of the NGS Research in the States series book on Maryland. She is a graduate and former mentor of the ProGen Study Group and served as its Administrator from 2015–2020. She speaks at national conferences and regularly teaches at the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy (SLIG), the Institute of Genealogical and Historical Research (IGHR). She served as Executive Director of the Board for Certification of Genealogists® from 2018–2024. In 2021, she was named as Director of the Genealogical Institute on Federal Records (GenFed) in Washington, D.C. Rebecca was elected as the vice-president of the National Genealogical Society in October 2024. She takes clients and runs her business under the name Rebecca Whitman Koford Genealogical Research, LLC.

21 October

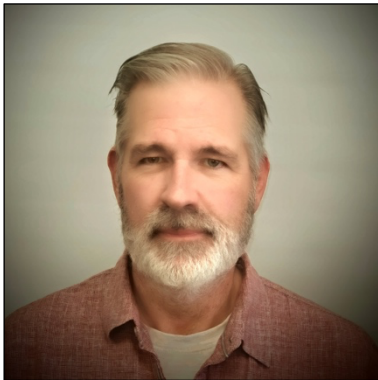
Jeff Damron

Lessons from Locality Guides

Locality guides educate us about the geography and history of a place. They point the way to facts that add context to the lives of those we are researching, enabling us to write about those people with increased insight. This presentation will cover what I learned from preparing locality guides for two adjacent, yet very different, counties: Hamilton County, Ohio, and Dearborn County, Indiana. Hamilton County, which includes Cincinnati and its metropolitan area, has an abundance of resources and repositories. Dearborn County, on the other hand, is very rural and agricultural, with more limited repositories. Nevertheless, many German immigrants settled in the area and often crossed the borders freely from generation to generation. Topics covered will include the steps and resources consulted in preparing the guides, the use of AI during the process, relevant information learned, and plans for using that information in relating family stories.

Jeff Damron was born in Eastern Kentucky, in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, where his ancestors have lived for 200 years. He moved to Lexington, Kentucky to attend college and law school. There, he met his wife, Ann. During most of the 36 years that he was a litigation attorney, they lived in a small town in the county of his birth, where they raised their two children. Jeff first became interested in his family history in 1991 and has worked on his own genealogy as time permitted ever since. In 2019, Jeff and Ann moved to Georgetown, Kentucky, to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Jeff retired from practicing law in March 2024, and since then has dedicated most of his time to genealogy education. He has always wanted to be an author and has had writings published in the Lexington Herald-Leader, Bench and Bar magazine, and Newsweek. Additionally, he has a long-time passion for photography, and a collection of his black and white pictures is featured in *Life on Interior Plains*, a book of poetry by Ysabel de la Rosa.

Jeff is a volunteer with the Kentucky Historical Society, and the Sons of the American Revolution, as well as the Kentucky Genealogical Society, where he also serves on the nominating committee. He has inherited an abundance of photos, correspondence, and artifacts from his wife's family, and he is currently working on researching the family and writing an illustrated history that both provides context and includes images of many of the items which he is still in the process of scanning and cataloging.



18 November

No Meeting in December

Summary

January – Pam Anderson, CG® – *Self-Editing at the Paragraph Level, Part 2 of 4*

February – Jennifer Zinck, CG®, AG® – *Feedback is a Gift*

March – Rhonda Lauritzen – *Organize Complex Writing Projects for Success*

April – Jill Nock, AG® – *Beyond the Obvious: Uncovering Stories in Probate Records Beyond the Obvious: Uncovering Stories in Probate Records*

May – Barbara Vines Little, CG® – *Forty Years of Writing and Editing: You'd Think I'd Know What I Was Doing*

June – Jane E. Wilcox, FGBS – *New York State Archives Guide – Your Turn*

July – Michael Strauss, AG® – TBD

August – Julie Miller, CG® – *Indirect Evidence Overturns a Direct Evidence Conclusion: From Hypothesis to Published Article*

September – Amberly Beck, AG® – *Indirect Evidence Overturns a Direct Evidence Conclusion: From Hypothesis to Published Article*

October – Rebecca Whitman Koford, CG®, CGL® – *Bringing Identities into Focus Using the Correlation Power of Airable*

November – Jeff Damron – *Lessons from Locality Guides*

NO MEETING IN DECEMBER