



## MAY 2024 NEWSLETTER

Mount Prospect, 18 May

**CAGGNI's Only Annual Offering**

**What's New in Technology: 2024**

by John Stryker



John Stryker is back for our beloved and only annually recurring feature, *What's New in Technology*. John keeps up with the technology news and will bring word of the best in hardware, gadgetry, applications, and websites, all with an eye on how it can best be used to pursue our genealogical hobby.

**John Stryker** is retired from being distinguished professor and chair of Computer Technologies and Information Systems at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines. He has been a member of CAGGNI since 2008 and is a member of the CAGGNI technology team. John speaks at CAGGNI and other groups, including this annual feature on technology. He holds a B.S. in Actuarial Science from the University of Illinois and an M.S. in Computer Science from Northeastern Illinois University.

This meeting will be hybrid style from Mount Prospect Public Library. We hope you will join us there for the optimal experience. [Register here.](#)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**4 May**

10 am via Zoom

**Reunion SIG**

with Bruce Christopher

**11 May**

10 am via Zoom

**Family Tree Maker SIG**

with Marty Acks

**18 May 2024**

10:30 am Hybrid, Mount Prospect Public Library

**What's New in Tech: 2024**

by John Stryker

**23 May**

**Newsletter Deadline**

**25 May**

10 am, Schaumburg

Township District Library - Commons Area

**Storytellers SIG**

with Marti Swanson

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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COMPUTER ASSISTED  
**GENEALOGY GROUP**  
OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS

**caggni**

P.O. Box 59567, Schaumburg, IL 60159

**May 2024**

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Cathy Gulbrantson



*A retired IT professional, Cathy began her genealogy research in 1977 after she received a copy of her family tree from an aunt. Cathy has been a CAGGNI member since 2011.*

Dear Fellow Genealogists,

I wanted to inform the membership that at the June meeting updates to **CAGGNI's Bylaws** will be voted on. A copy highlighting the proposed changes is posted on the CAGGNI website for members to review.

Michelle Wilson, Elaine Beaudoin, Nancy Reese, and I worked on the required revisions.

The essential changes are:

- 1) Changing the term of office for board members from one year to two years. Our plan is to inaugurate half the board in odd years and the remainder in even years. A two-year term will aid CAGGNI in maintaining institutional knowledge and continuity.
- 2) For voting purposes, we will formally be defining "in attendance" to encompass physical or electronic (i.e., Zoom) presence.
- 3) We are officially authorizing paying member speakers honoraria consistent with that paid to non-CAGGNI speakers.
- 4) We are eliminating the "joint" membership. Joint membership was originally established for two members at the same address. In the era when we printed and snail-mailed newsletters, couples in a joint membership received a single newsletter. Since we no longer mail newsletters, and haven't actually

offered joint membership in years, this membership class is no longer necessary.

There are a few other minor changes, addressing technicalities, formatting, and grammar. You can [read the markup here](#) (login required). Please have a look!

When the CAGGNI Bylaws are approved by membership they, will be effective July 1, 2024. I will be soliciting for members to participate in the Nomination Committee, which will provide recommendations for CAGGNI board members for 2025.

I want to provide an update regarding the **GeneaQuest 2024 Conference (GQ 2024)**. The committee has been working on reviewing speakers and presentation topics. I think we will have a great line-up. After we have received the signed contracts, the committee will share information on the speakers and topics. If you responded to the GQ 2024 Survey last November, note that we used these responses to plan the conference.

Many survey responders wanted an in-person conference, and the committee has delivered. GQ 2024 will be live-only with all speakers, attendees, and vendors in person. We will be able to meet and greet each other in person just like we did pre-COVID

The survey responses also indicated the conference would be best held in the Schaumburg/Palatine area. Again, the GQ committee has delivered. The GQ 2024 committee is pleased to announce that we have contracted with Harper College in Palatine, Illinois, at a wonderful facility on campus. Harper College is located at Algonquin and Roselle Roads. The campus is

located less than a mile north of I-90 at the Roselle exit.

I think you will be delighted with what is being planned. Mark your calendar with the conference for Saturday, September 14, 2024!

Spring weather may finally be here and I'm excited to start my cemetery sleuthing. Yes, I'm one of those people. Visiting cemeteries helped me with **brick walls regarding my Irish ancestors.**

I had no clue where my Lynch and Clennan great-great grandparents were from in Ireland. I had heard from an aunt that they were from County Cork, but I had no evidence.

I knew that most of the early Irish records were destroyed by fire in 1922. I needed to find other sources to find where my ancestors were born and lived. Having previously listened to a genealogy presentation about finding out ancestor information in cemeteries, I planned a trip.

In 2018, I drove to northern Wisconsin to visit the cemetery where my Irish ancestors settled in the 1850s and 1860s.

First, I went to St. Patrick Cemetery's website to locate the family graves. When I arrived at the cemetery in County Cork in person, I had my camera, a pair of grass cutting shears, a bottle of fresh water, and a soft cloth at the ready. I located my great-great-grandparents, John Lynch and Catharine Hyde, quickly. I took pictures of their tombstone from all sides. The stone was weathered, as it was made of sandstone, and it was out in the middle of farmland. I couldn't make out all the information.

I found my other great-great-grandfather, David Clennan, on the other side of the

cemetery. Again, I took pictures of all sides of the gravestone. I noticed that David's tombstone had the following information, "David Clennan Born in the Town of Garryvoe Parish of Cloyne Co. Cork, Ireland." I was able to locate the parish of Garryvoe. I was able to use this information to gain more information on David's birth location, where I verified his last name was not "Clennan" but rather "Cullinane."

I wasn't as lucky to find the town for John Lynch and Catharine Hyde. I had to view their gravestone photos on a large monitor before I realized the inscription read "a native of Co. Cork, Ireland." This inscription finally confirmed the Lynches were indeed from County Cork. Later I learned that John Lynch was from Cork City in County Cork and Catharine was from Castlelyons, also in County Cork.

*Wishing you much success in your genealogical research!*



## Newsletter Deadline Change!

CAGGNI's newsletter submission deadline is now set for the 23rd of every month. Send your stories, formatted in .docx or .rtf format, to [newsletter@caggni.org](mailto:newsletter@caggni.org). What a great way to get *your* family in print!

# BOOK REVIEW: I HATE GENEALOGY!

By Liz Ross



Liz Ross is CAGGNI's vice president and program chair, and a popular area speaker. Visit Liz at her blog, *Dancing Branches*.

## ***I Hate Genealogy: A Very Personal Introduction for Beginners and Nonbelievers***

Jeannette Woodward, Squaw Creek Press  
2016

The book title here sounds like a spoof – like the start of a Saturday Night Live sketch, or a slightly more serious “10 reasons to not do ‘x’ “ list — because we genealogists regularly enlarge our driving route to ‘tour’ every cemetery in every town that shows only on maps with maximum magnification, or which were created between 1820-1885.

But no, this book is a “start at the edge & learn.” Learn how to find, how to store /organize and share all the information that we find, uncover, and assemble about our ancestors. It is important to note that this book deals mostly with online information and databases, both huge, big and small, and the last chapter names and gives links to 2<sup>nd</sup> tier gatherers which are online (i.e., Fold 3). After this book, plan on a change to your road trip

routes as you add visits to every courthouse, historical society and archive to gather your ancestors information from the repositories that are unlikely to ever be on line.

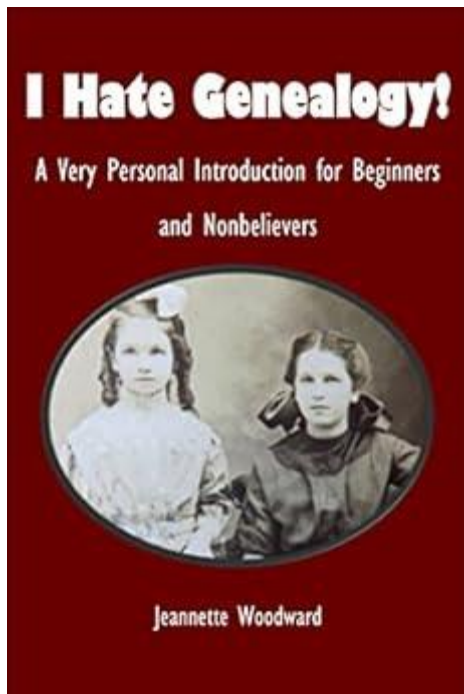
Four years ago my go-to book recommendation for initial exploring and learning was **Unpuzzling Your Past**, by Emily Anne Croom, written in 2001, which I reviewed in summer 2023. It is a good book still, but getting a bit dated. It was written before online sources played an important role in all genealogy research, especially beginning research. This book, written in 2016, is “fully wired” – and the two huge and basic databases, Ancestry (.com) and Family Search (.org) are named and integrated into the learning path.

This book also uses a less formal style. Written in first person, the narrative is

approachable, easy to digest and moves smoothly from introduction to expanded findings.

The first six chapters walk through the orientations and the organization that will assist in building a solid family. Chapter seven suggests that by this point you have moved from hating to loving genealogy. Chapter eight goes further and postulates that you will want to delve deeper and gives suggestions of “how to do so.” Chapter nine is a long and

useful list of computer addresses where you can “find wonderful things” as you venture further on the net and explore paper archives and records, which may only apply to your





people. Please note, again, this is a list of computer addresses. If your kin ran a company in Belleville in the 1880s, a first line of exploring – off the computer – could be in Belleville courthouse for wills and probates, or the local library looking at plat maps, city directories, or biographies written by Aunt Sadie about her grandmother, which might include tips/hints/snippets about your kin.

I recommend this book without reservation. It might make a great stocking stuffer for spouse, friend or child who has a hard time understanding your delight in courthouse basements and dead people. Did I mention that it is also available in a Kindle edition?

A sidebar comment: my Kindle Paperwhite is becoming a standard in my purse. Paperwhite doesn't have color, but it does have a non-glare screen, which I find wonderful given the many places I end up grabbing minutes to read. Additionally, genealogy books are more often B&W text than color. I also find the non-glare front a major game changer to read when I have a few minutes between. I know there is a way to put .pdfs onto Paperwhite, but that is not totally learned quite yet.

Summary: a totally enjoyable book, and/but very much a starting out book. I bought the Kindle version, so it's in my library.

What do you think for next month? I'm leaning towards a book about a locality. Possibly ***The History of Morgan County, Illinois***, or ***The History of Wilson County, Tennessee***, or maybe "just" a book about Chicago. My ancestor connection is tenuous, and only lightly proven. Mainly, however, I want to deal with a data source rather than an index or another methodology tome.

*Happy reading...*

## CONNECT WITH CAGGNI!

Connect with CAGGNI on social media.

Our website is [www.caggni.org](http://www.caggni.org). Here you will find the calendar of events, the current newsletter, our Speaker's Bureau, and more. Members will also find a member directory, a complete newsletter archive, links to presentations and handouts, and other members-only content.

CAGGNI hosts several groups on Facebook. Our main group can be found by searching "CAGGNI – Computer Assisted Genealogy Group of Northern Illinois":

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CAGGNI/>

Roots Magic and TMG SIG group can be found by searching "RootsMagic and TMG SIG (CAGGNI)":

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/241815482936482/>

Colonial America SIG group can be found by searching "CAGGNI-ColonialSIG":

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/CAGGNI.ColonialSIG/>

On Instagram, our group can be found by searching "@caggni":

<https://www.instagram.com/caggni/>



# CAGGNI CALENDAR MAY - JUNE

**Saturday, 4 May**  
**Reunion SIG**  
**10 am via Zoom**  
with Bruce Christopher

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**Saturday, 11 May**  
**Family Tree Maker SIG**  
**10 am via Zoom**  
with Marty Acks

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**Saturday, 18 May**  
**Monthly Program Meeting**  
**10:30 am, Hybrid**  
Mount Prospect Public Library,  
10 S. Emerson St.  
Mount Prospect  
**What's New in Technology: 2024**  
by John Stryker

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**Thursday, 23 May**  
**Newsletter Deadline**

Members are invited and encouraged to submit material for the newsletter in .docx or compatible format. We welcome stories on most genealogically related topics. Typical compositions are 500-1,000 words. Submit your stories to [newsletter@caggni.org](mailto:newsletter@caggni.org).

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**Saturday, 25 May**  
**Storytellers SIG**  
**10 am, Schaumburg Library**  
Commons Area - Main Floor  
130 S. Roselle Rd, Schaumburg

**Saturday, 8 June**  
**Colonial SIG**  
**10 am via Zoom**  
with Mary Hoyer

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**Saturday, 15 June**  
**Monthly Program Meeting**  
**10:30 am, Hybrid,**  
**Arlington Heights Memorial Library,**  
**500 N Dunton Ave, Arlington Heights**  
**German Genealogy - Sources Beyond the Basics**  
by James Beidler

**DNA SIG**  
**12:30 pm, Hybrid,**  
**Arlington Heights Memorial Library**  
**DNA Reveals Becky's Great-Grandfather**  
with Michelle Wilson and guest Larry Olson

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**Thursday, 23 June**  
**Newsletter Deadline**

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## COLONIAL AMERICA SIG EXPLORES THE INDIAN SLAVE TRADE

By Mary Hoyer



*Mary Hoyer is a long-time CAGGNI member and former board member. She currently leads CAGGNI's Colonial SIG.*

Join us in June at the Colonial SIG for

### **The Indian Slave Trade, Bacon's Rebellion, and It's Roll in The Expansion of the Transatlantic African Slave Trade**

When a prominent genealogist said the Indian slave trade did not happen, I felt compelled to find primary sources documenting its role in Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 and how it laid the foundation for the expansion of the transatlantic slave trade. Come and find out how an almost erased history can be found and where to look. I will share the journey of peeling back the layers with an extensive syllabus of sources, repositories, and scholars, and the process that uncovered the untold story.

*The Colonial SIG will be held 8 June via Zoom. The SIG is free to members with a \$5 fee for non-members. Attendees can [register here](#).*

## STORYTELLERS SIG TOPIC FOR MAY

By Marti Swanson



*Marti Swanson was a longtime CAGGNI member in 2008, when our on-line membership records commenced. She has led the Storytellers SIG since its inception in 2015 .*

Taking risks is a part of life. Our ancestors took risks, either escaping from intolerable situations in the lands of their birth or seeking a better life and new opportunities in new lands. The risks we take today are usually (but not always) less dramatic, but they still can change lives.

So, write about a risk an ancestor or you yourself took. As always, set the scene, introduce and identify your characters, and indicate the nature of the risk. Was it purposeful or inadvertent? Tell about the risk and the outcome, either expected or a surprise. Did the outcome change the future life of the risk-taker? In what way?

Please bring two copies of your writing (risk-taking or anything else you've been working on) to share. And please do consider submitting anything you've written for our CAGGNI newsletter.

*The Storytellers SIG will be held 25 May at Schaumburg Township District Library, in the Commons area, main floor. Registration is not necessary.*



## AL WILSON'S COLUMN

By Al Wilson



*Al Wilson is a CAGGNI past president and leader of CAGGNI's Internet SIG. An engineer by trade, his research interests include Kansas, Norway, and DNA.*

This month, I want to follow up on the news about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its application to genealogy research. At the Internet SIG meeting in April (see the [video and handouts link](#)), I touched on several AI applications from Microsoft (Copilot) and Google (Genesis), among others. The one application that seemed most useful to me was *Perplexity*. This month I will explain why I am examining Perplexity more fully.

One important element of telling a family history story is setting the context so that readers can understand what the ancestors did and why they did it. It is very easy to look at past history after more than a century of hindsight and wonder, "Just what were they thinking back then?" Of course, for our ancestors in their time and place in history, their decisions and actions made perfect sense since they did not know the eventual outcomes we inherited.

One major problem for most AI apps trained with contemporary language sources is that they just assume that every question is about the present time, and not some time in the past. This was obvious when I asked questions about the family history of my 3<sup>rd</sup> great-grandfather, John Michael Rockhold (1825-1906). To an AI language model, this name

looked a lot like John David Rockefeller (1839-1937), so it conflated the two people since it was trained with a lot of data about Rockefeller and nothing about Rockhold. AI presumed that Rockhold was somehow a descendant of Rockefeller, living in the present time, so he must be a wealthy philanthropist. This is just wrong, or to describe it in technical terms, it's an AI hallucination.

The Perplexity app avoids most of these hallucinations. It actually found the correct profile on WikiTree for John Michael Rockhold and some other sources from the Kansas Historical Society. Other AI apps did not cite WikiTree. I did not find those references to be personally helpful since I already knew about them, and I was the author of the WikiTree profile.

However, the challenge of historical context is a different matter. An explanation of the context of Kansas in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is complicated since it transitioned from a territory as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 to a state by 1860 and a significant source of farm production in the USA by 1900. Kansas' history played a significant role at the beginning of the Civil War in 1860, and it was also part of the Wild West from 1865 to 1890 as portrayed in many Hollywood movies. These changes were accelerated by several technologies, including steamboats along the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, railroads crossing the Great Plains to the Pacific, the opening of the Eads Bridge across the Mississippi at St Louis in 1874, and numerous improvements to mechanize farm production. Explaining this context in family history is a challenge that requires collecting a lot of facts and then organizing them into a consistent story that applies to any family living in

Kansas. Perplexity is better at explaining this context than the other AI apps I have tried.

My exploration of Perplexity has taken me back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and even the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The challenges of AI hallucinations become more pronounced in those distant centuries. However, Perplexity has managed to captivate me with its ability to avoid these issues, by seeming to be aware of differences in the historical context.



## BEST OF 101 TIPS

### Tip 34: Keep Track of Your Objective

Random research may be fun, but eventually you'll look back on your pile of research notes and wonder where you've gotten and how you got there, and whether you'll have to do it all over again to figure it out. So, try to focus from the start and keep careful records of your objectives for each research session, and for each record you searched. This way you'll make progress that is more noticeable and when you review your work, you'll be able to tell what you searched for and why, and what you might have missed. This will help you determine whether you need to re-examine the same records once new information becomes known or whether you can safely say you've covered that base and move on.

### Tip 73: How to Ease Eye Strain

A great deal of genealogical research these days is done on computer, and this can sometimes cause eye strain and headaches. To relieve this, try changing the default size of type on your monitor or adjusting the color contrasts. In Windows, you can do this by right-clicking an empty area on the desktop and choosing "properties," "appearance" and then the font, font size and font color you prefer. To change the text size on websites, if you're using Windows Explorer, go to "view," choose "text size" then you can adjust the size from the default (medium) to "larger" or "largest." To change the color of both text and background (default is black on white) choose "tools," "Internet options," "colors," deselect "use windows colors" and then you can click on "text" or "background" and choose any color you like from a wide array of choices. Other Internet browsers have similar functions.

*Selected from Janice Nickerson's 101 Best Genealogy Research Tips. Toronto, Ont., Moorshead Magazines, 2006. Reprinted with permission.*

## 2024 CAGGNI SIGS

Below are CAGGNI's remaining 2024 Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings. Always check CAGGNI's [events calendar](#) to confirm times and venues as we are currently meeting throughout the northwest suburbs.

CAGGNI SIGs are designed to be interactive, with contributions from attendees. Come with your thoughts and questions ready.

### Internet

SIG lead: Alan Wilson

Quarterly on 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays, Zoom

11-Jul, 7 pm

10-Oct, 7 pm

### Roots Magic / The Master Genealogist (RTM/TMG)

SIG lead: Larry Olson

Quarterly on Saturdays, Zoom

20-Jul, 12 pm

12-Oct, 10 am

### Reunion

SIG lead: Bruce Christopher

Quarterly on 1<sup>st</sup> Saturdays, Zoom

4-May, 10 am

3-Aug, 10 am

2-Nov, 10 am

### Family Tree Maker (FTM)

SIG lead: Marty Acks

Quarterly on Saturdays, Zoom or Hybrid, TBA.

11-May, 10 am

17-Aug, 12 pm

9-Nov, 10 am

### DNA

SIG lead: Michelle Wilson

Quarterly on Saturdays

15-Jun, 12:30 pm co-presenter Larry Olson

7-Sep, 10 am

19-Oct, 12 pm

### Colonial

SIG lead: Mary Hoyer

Quarterly on Saturdays, Zoom

8-Jun, 10 am

16-Nov, 12 pm presenter Judy Russell

### Storytellers

SIG lead: Marti Swanson

Odd months, 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays

Schaumburg Library Commons

25-May, 10 am

27-Jul, 10 am

28-Sep, 10 am

23-Nov, 10 am

### Board Meetings

Occasional 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays, Zoom

27-Aug, 7 pm

22-Oct, 7 pm

26-Nov, 7 pm



## UPCOMING EVENTS

By Michelle Wilson, [events@caggni.org](mailto:events@caggni.org)

### SPECIAL EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

16-18 May - Virtual

**Expanding Possibilities:**

**2024 Family History Conference**

*National Genealogical Society*

28 September - Naperville

**30th Fall Conference**

*Fox Valley Genealogical Society*

26 October - Joliet and Virtual

**2024 Fall Conference**

*Illinois State Genealogical Society*

### MAY EVENTS AROUND TOWN

4 May - Virtual

**Using Fold3 Library Edition**

Debra Dudek

*Northwest Suburban Genealogical Society*

4 May - Rockford and Virtual

**Italian Heritage: We're All Related**

Steven Salvato

*Winnebago & Boone County Gen. Soc.*

8 May - Fountaindale and Virtual

**Graceland Cemetery**

Adam Selzer

*Fountaindale Public Library Genealogy Club*

11 May - Wilmette

**New Language? Deciphering Genea Docs**

Jacque Schattner\*

*North Suburban Genealogical Society*

11 May - Sarasota, FL, and Virtual

**I Did a DNA Test, Now What?**

Michelle Wilson\*

*Genealogical Society of Sarasota*

15 May- Wheaton and Virtual

**Choosing the Right Genealogical Software**

Jenny Warner

*DuPage County Genealogical Society*

19 May - Northbrook and Virtual

**Historical Maps in Genealogy Research**

Ed Mitukiewicz

*Jewish Genealogical Society of Illinois*

*Is your event missing? Write us at*

*[events@caggni.org](mailto:events@caggni.org)*

*\* CAGGNI Member*

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GENEAQUEST 2024

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**Sept. 14, 2024**

**Where the Past Meets the Future**

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[facebook.com/groups/CAGGNI](https://facebook.com/groups/CAGGNI)

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Wojcik Center  
Palatine, IL