



## NATIONAL GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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### GENEALOGY: IT'S NOT JUST FOR CELEBRITIES AND HISTORIANS

#### NGS Home Study Course Helps Anyone Ride the Family History Wave

*April 28, 2010* – Genealogy is more popular than ever in the United States. Sarah Jessica Parker, Spike Lee and Stephen Colbert are among the notable Americans who have uncovered their family roots on national television. But celebrities are not the only ones who can trace their ancestry. Today's unprecedented access to public records and readily-available research tools make it possible for anyone to engage in family history.

"Celebrities have interesting stories, so we're elated that they're helping to put genealogy on the public radar," said Pamela Boyer Sayre, director of education for the National Genealogical Society (NGS). "But the fact is that *everyone* has fascinating roots. And anyone can learn about their ancestors if they know where and how to look."

NGS, which promotes genealogy education and sound research methodology, offers a self-paced program to help Americans explore the paths to their past. The three-disc [NGS Genealogy: Home Study Course](#) was designed for people with all levels of experience, from beginning family historians to those seeking skills to become certified genealogists.

NGS urges family history sleuths to be selective in their research. The Web is the first stop for most people seeking access to records and lists. However, "Genealogy is more than simply collecting names and dates from a convenient source," cautions Elizabeth Shown Mills, author of *Evidence Explained*, the definitive book on citing and analyzing historical resources. "Without a solid, structured foundation, self-trained family historians will have holes in their knowledge. They need to know how to trust their information, how to interpret it, and how to put it all together to draw valid conclusions."

Sayre agrees. "Finding your ancestor's name in a courthouse record is just the beginning. With the NGS Home Study Course you learn how to research discerningly and follow the next logical step toward more relevant information." Fully self-paced

**FOR GENERATIONS PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

and interactive, the NGS home study program focuses on best practices in research, document analysis, citation, and writing family histories. Topics include:

- Instruction about a variety of genealogical resources
- Strategies for conducting family history research on the Internet and in libraries, courthouses, and archives
- Analyzing documents to get the most out of sources
- The principles of evidence analysis
- Explanations of source citation, including examples
- Tips for writing narratives
- Assignments with examples of how they should be completed
- Self-correcting exams
- Bibliographies and reference lists
- An online mail list for advice and research help

The Home Study Course can be completed on either a graded or self-graded track. The graded option offers written feedback and suggestions from genealogy experts.

Founded in 1903, the [National Genealogical Society](#) is dedicated to genealogy education, high research standards, and the preservation of genealogical records. The Arlington, VA-based nonprofit is the premier national society for everyone, from the beginner to the most advanced family historian, seeking excellence in publications, educational offerings, research guidance, and opportunities to interact with other genealogists. Please visit the [NGS Pressroom](#) for further information.

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