



Past and Present

Newsletter of
The North Florida Genealogical Society

April 2026

nfgen.org

Upcoming Meeting Information

Saturday, April 11, 2026

from 10:00 am to 11:30 am at the NFGS Library

Feel free to bring your own laptop or tablet!

<p>DISCOVER YOUR FAMILY HISTORY AT NFGS</p> <p>Roots and Branches for Beginners and Those Needing a Refresher!</p> <p>Join us for a free informal, interactive Basic Genealogy program open to all!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn the basics of family history research• Explore helpful resources• Bring your questions—we'll help you find answers and new discoveries.• No experience needed—just curiosity, a love of family stories. 	
 <p>FEATURED SPEAKER: ALANA MASTERS NFGS PRESIDENT & EXPERIENCED GENEALOGIST</p>	<p>Saturday 04/11/2026 10:00 AM-11:30 AM</p> <p>NFGS LIBRARY: 6215 SAUTERNE DRIVE JACKSONVILLE LIMITED SEATING</p> 

Saturday, May 9, 2026
from 10:00 am to 11:30 am
at the Mandarin Branch Library



NFGEN MAY 9TH 2026 PROGRAM:

**FAMILY SEARCH: IT'S MORE
THAN JUST A TREE!**

Speaker: Joel Warner has lived in Jax for 35 years and is a longtime member of the NFGEN Society, formerly SGES . He has had an interest in Family History since he was a boy. This was due to **his mother and grandparents, who did family research and shared stories of how his ancestors came to America, the problems they faced and what they left behind. He finds working with others is enriching and fulfilling.**

TIME: 10:00 - 11:00 am

TOPIC: He will explore many aspects of family search! Their tools are free and available to all.

- Go beyond the FamilySearch family tree
- Explore powerful free research tools
- Improve your record keeping
- Discover features you may not be using yet

LOCATION: Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Road, Mandarin, FL

FREE and OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

From our members:

Libraries as Genealogy Lifelines

By Georgia Pribanic



April is a major month for library advocacy and celebration, making it the perfect time to highlight the essential role libraries play in family history research—where genealogy truly becomes personal. Libraries hold local knowledge, context, and a few “secret weapons” that online searches often miss. When digital records fall short, libraries frequently provide the missing pieces that help us understand how our ancestors lived.

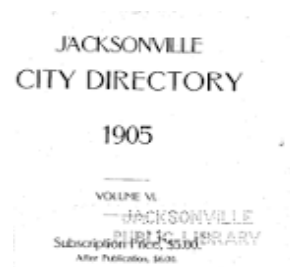
Local collections preserve materials that are not always available online, offering insight into daily life, community connections, and historical context. And, of course, we can’t forget the librarians themselves. Many are seasoned genealogy guides who know their collections inside and out. An informal conversation can often lead you to sources you didn’t even know existed.

So, while libraries may not have flashy search engines, they offer something just as powerful: hidden gems quietly waiting on the shelves, ready to come to your rescue.

4 Genealogy Helpers to Look for at the NFGS Library

1. City Directories

City directories are among the most practical—and surprisingly rich—sources for family history research. Think of them as annual snapshots of everyday life between census years. They track families year by year, showing addresses, occupations, and household changes. City directories turn static names into moving lives and are essential for building accurate timelines and fuller stories.



2. Local Newspapers and Periodicals

Local newspapers document life events both large and small. Beyond obituaries, they may include birth, marriage, and death notices; engagements and anniversaries; court cases, land sales, bankruptcies; military service updates; and church, school, or club news. Many libraries maintain newspaper and periodical indexes for publications not available or indexed online. These indexes are the keys that efficiently unlock rich local stories.



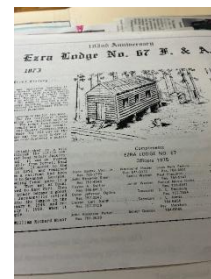
3. Maps and Plat Books

Historic maps and plat books are powerhouse tools that help you move beyond names and dates to see your ancestors in real places. Maps can pinpoint towns, neighborhoods, and rural locations, often leading you to the correct jurisdiction for additional records. Plat books show how land was divided and who owned it at a specific time—often naming property owners and revealing neighbors and family connections.



4. Vertical Files

Vertical files are “hidden in plain sight” library treasures. These subject-based folders contain loose materials collected over time, often from local newspapers, churches, schools, organizations, and families. Much of this content was never digitized or formally published, making vertical files a gold mine for researchers seeking unique local information and personal stories.



Would you like to see your story in one of our future newsletters? Then please submit your article to:

By email: nfgenjax@gmail.com – Subject Line: Newsletter

By snail mail: PO Box 7728, Jacksonville, FL 32238-7728

In person: Library is open on Wednesdays from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.