



Past and Present

The Newsletter of
The North Florida Genealogical Society

July 2026

nfgen.org

Upcoming Program Information

Saturday, July 11, 2026 from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
at the NFGS Library

RESEARCH YOUR ROOTS

NFGEN LIBRARY OPEN HOUSE

WHEN: Saturday, July 11, 2026

TIME: 10 am to 1 pm

WHERE: NFGEN Library
6215 Sauterne Drive
Jax, off Blanding Blvd.

Free - Visitors welcome

There will be no July program

Although there will be no monthly program meeting in July, the NFGEN Library will be open for research and assistance.

Come explore your family history!

- Access genealogy books, records, and resources
- Receive help with your family research
- Use Ancestry Library Edition at no cost
- Access FamilySearch resources as a FamilySearch Affiliate Library
- Meet fellow genealogy enthusiasts

Saturday, August 8, 2026 from 10:00 am to 11:30 am
at Watson Realty

 **NORTH FLORIDA
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**
Your Family. Your History. Our Mission.

— **AUGUST 2026 PROGRAM** —

DNA

and Your Family Story

— **with Member Terri Sellers** —

 **SATURDAY
AUGUST 8, 2026**

 **10:00 AM – 11:30 AM**

 **WATSON REALTY**
4194 San Juan Avenue
Jacksonville, Florida

 **FREE & OPEN
to the public**
No registration required.



Everyone
WELCOME!
Bring your questions!

 **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DNA**
Terri will provide a helpful overview of DNA testing and how it can enhance your genealogy journey.

 **INFORMAL CONVERSATION**
Come join the conversation! Ask questions, share experiences, and learn from one another.

 **North Florida Genealogical Society Library**
6215 Sauterne Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32208
Library open Wednesdays 10 AM – 3 PM or by appointment

 Learn more at
nfgen.org



HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY

**In Case You Missed the June 2026
Program:**

**Photos courtesy of Luis Aponte
Congratulations to Betty Reed, Carol Clay
and Alana Masters for
their leadership over many years!**

**See next page for highlights of June
program. Many thanks to those who
helped:**

**Mary Jeanette Howle
Valerie Bennett
Joan Halaka
Georgia Pribanic
Alana Masters
Luis Aponte**

It takes many hands!



The June 2026 North Florida Genealogical Society (formerly SGES) program celebrated the upcoming 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States by exploring quilts as remarkable pieces of American social history. Speaker Alison McConoughey shared how quilts preserve family stories, reflect community traditions, and document the lives, values, and experiences of generations of Americans. The program highlighted the important role quilts play as historical records, connecting us to our nation's rich heritage as America prepares to commemorate its semiquincentennial in 2026.

The meeting also provided a special opportunity to recognize three past SGES/NFGS presidents whose leadership and dedication have helped strengthen and guide our society through the years. Their commitment to preserving family history, expanding educational programs, and supporting our library has left a lasting legacy that continues to benefit our members and the community.

★ CELEBRATING SGES/NFGS LEADERSHIP ★



Alana Masters (2023-2026) and Betty Reed (2012-2014) Carol Clay (2019-2022)



Keeping Our Library Cool

A Comfortable Place to Discover Your Family History

The North Florida Genealogical Society is pleased to share that our library has a **new, efficient air conditioning system!**

From diagnosing the problem to installing the new unit and passing final inspection, our dedicated team and trusted professionals worked together to ensure a smooth and successful upgrade.



1. Diagnosing the System



A Cooler Library for Better Research

This upgrade helps us provide a comfortable environment for researchers, volunteers, and visitors—and protects our valuable collections for generations to come.

Thank you to our members and supporters for helping us continue our mission!



2. Installing the New Unit



3. Final Inspection



Thank You!

We appreciate everyone who made this important project possible.

Your support keeps our library a great place to learn, explore, and connect.



Stay Cool. Keep Discovering.

We look forward to seeing you at the library!



NFGS Library
6215 Sauterne Drive
Jacksonville, FL 32210

Open Wednesdays 10 am – 3 pm
or by appointment

Thanks to Quenton and Ian of AC Allstars for responding quickly to our emergency.

UNF LIBRARY PARTERSHIP

By Georgia Pribanic

It was a pleasure to celebrate the retirement of **Susan Swiatosz**, who has dedicated more than 20 years to archival work and the last 8 years at the University of North Florida Library. In addition to her archival work, Susan brought valuable experience as a historic preservationist in New York City and has been an active leader in regional and state archival organizations, serving as President of the Society of Florida Archivists from 2017–2018.

Many of our members will remember Susan's outstanding presentation to the Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society (now the North Florida Genealogical Society), arranged by Carol Clay, on the preservation of photographs. We extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Susan as she begins this well-earned new chapter. Thank you for your many years of preserving our history and inspiring others to do the same.



1st photo: Carol Clay, UNF Library Dean, Georgia Pribanic, Mitch Hemann; 2nd photo: Robin, UNF LIBR Dean's Council Representative; Susan



NFGEN NEW LIBRARY MATERIALS

Generously Donated by

∞ *Dick Cardell's Estate* by Georgia Pribanic ∞



The North Florida Genealogical Society extends our sincere thanks to **Dick Cardell's Estate** for this generous donation of books to our library. These additions enrich our collection and provide valuable resources for researching family history and local history.

TITLE	AUTHOR	CALL NO.	RESEARCH FOCUS
 <i>Theatre Jacksonville: A History of a Little Theatre, 1919–20 to 1987–88</i>	Gerri Turbow	FL677	Chronicles the history of one of Jacksonville's oldest community theatres. Valuable for researchers interested in local performing arts, organizations, and community history.
 <i>River City News, v. 1, no. 2</i>	River City News (Jacksonville, FL)	FL674	Local newsletter featuring news, articles, and community information from Jacksonville. Provides valuable insight into local events, people, and organizations.
 <i>Legendary Locals of Jacksonville</i>	Laura Jo Brunson	FL675	Profiles notable individuals who have made a lasting impact on Jacksonville and Northeast Florida. An excellent resource for local biographical research.
 <i>Along the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers</i>	Ed Mueller	FL670	Explores the history, communities, and people along the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers. An important resource for local and family history research.
 <i>Barnett Bank</i>	David Ginzl	FL671	A detailed history of Barnett Bank, its origins, people, and role in the economic development of Florida and the communities it served.
 <i>Century of medicine in Jacksonville and Duval County</i>	Webster Merritt	FL673	Documents the history of medical professionals, institutions, and advances in healthcare in Jacksonville and Duval County over the past century.
 <i>Ocklawaha River Steamboats</i>	Ed Mueller	FL667	The history of steamboat travel on the Ocklawaha River, including vessels, routes, and their importance to transportation and commerce in Northeast Florida.



VISIT THE NFGEN LIBRARY!

Discover thousands of books, local histories, maps, periodicals, cemetery records, and more. Our volunteers are here to help you find the resources you need to tell your family's story.

∞ LIBRARY INFORMATION ∞

-  6215 Sauterne Drive, Jacksonville, FL 32258
-  Open Wednesday 10:00 am – 3:00 pm or by Appointment
-  nfgen.org

*Thank you, Dick Cardell's Estate by Georgia Pribanic,
for helping preserve the past and support future family historians!*





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TITLE	AUTHOR	CALL NO.	RESEARCH FOCUS
 <i>St. Johns River Steamboats</i>	Ed Mueller	FL668	The history of steamboat travel on the St. Johns River, including vessels, routes, and their importance to transportation and commerce in Northeast Florida.
 <i>Steamboating on the St. Johns: some travel accounts</i>	Ed Mueller	FL669	The history and daily lives of the steamboat era on the St. Johns River. Includes descriptions of steamboats, routes, ports, and travelers' experiences.
 <i>Territorial giants: Florida's founding fathers</i>	Louise Porter	FL678	Biographical sketches of the territorial leaders who shaped the first Florida Constitution of 1838 and laid the foundation for statehood.
 <i>Blue and Gray 1970 Yearbook</i>	Robert E. Lee HS Editors	FL406.6	The 1970 yearbook of Robert E. Lee High School (Jacksonville, FL) featuring student life, activities, and school history.



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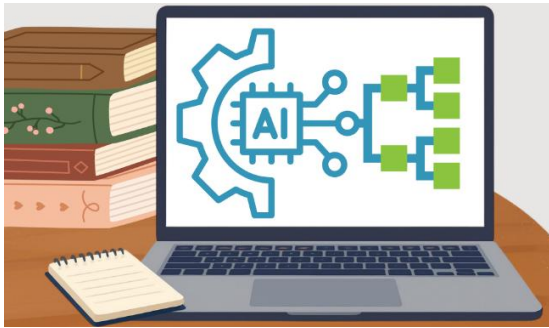
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From our members:



Mystery of Undated Online Articles: Tech Tip

By Georgia Pribanic

Family Tree Magazine is widely respected for its practical, easy-to-understand genealogy guidance and serves as an excellent resource for beginning and intermediate family historians. The magazine's print and digital editions clearly identify issue dates,

such as January/February or September/October.

One challenge, however, involves determining the publication date of articles found on the magazine's website. While articles published in the print magazine are associated with a specific issue date, articles transferred to the online platform may not always display a visible publication date and we shouldn't assume the email date is the publication date.

Example: Article Roundup: AI Tools at Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and MyHeritage have no indication of when published.

1. Check the webpage source (often works)

- Open the article in your browser
- Right-click → **View Page Source** (found sometimes near bottom of list options)
- Search (Ctrl+F) for things like:
 - datePublished
 - article:published_time
 - pubdate

A lot of sites hide the date in metadata even if they don't display it.

Page source for above article: Tools at Ancestry.com, FamilySearch and MyHeritage - Family Tree Magazine", "datePublished": "2026-05-28T09:40:48-04:00", "dateModified": "2026-06-01T12:28:03"

Original publication date: May 28, 2026, at 9:40:48 AM Eastern Time

Last modified date: June 1, 2026, at 12:28:03 PM Eastern Time



...I'm glad I did!

By Valerie Bennett

What? you say?? Glad you did what?

I hired a professional genealogist, Terri Sellers, and am so glad I did! Let me tell you about my experience: Told my brother I had hired a professional, and his remark was "I thought you are a pro". "No way!" was my response.

I got serious about researching my family tree after retiring in 2004 from BellSouth (formerly known as Southern Bell). My father had left the barest family tree that I used as my basis: there were names only, no dates, no locations.

Using Ancestry.com, searching the US Census beginning 1850 I was able to find enough information about my father's father and was able to establish the line back before the American Revolution in 1770s.

But his mother's line was a bit elusive. Of course, it was "easy" to identify her parents and grandparents.

My grandmother, Lillian Elizabeth Burney, was the daughter of Lillian Bryant Smith and Noah H Burney. Noah's parents were easily identified. Lillian Bryant Smith was the daughter of Isham A Smith & Mary Elizabeth Byrd Smith---all in the Miccosukee area of Leon County, Florida.

Over the decades of census records Isham was also listed as Al, Ishom, IA, Arnold and even once as EA (was that a transcribing error based on fancy penmanship of the times?) Being born in 1833-34, Ishom appeared on the 1850, 1860 census with his parents. By the 1870 census he was married to "girl next door" and had his own family in Leon County. He was a farmer one census and a retailer dealer on the next.

Being of a certain age, I was sure he had served in the War Between the States (WBTS). Alas! No trace of him on Confederate Troops rolls. I did, however, find where two of his brothers, Edward Choice and Minon B Smith had both enlisted in Captain Dyke's Company, Florida Light Artillery in Tallahassee. Both fought at the Battle of Olustee on February 20, 1864, where Minon was KIA and buried in mass grave in Lake City.

Edward survived the war and went on to lead a successful life. I have been to Edward's grave at Miccosukee Methodist and with help from others, cut back brush and cleaned headstones. Others buried there include his wife, daughter and a granddaughter.

I found Isham on the 1880 US Census and the Florida 1885 State Census. Then he totally disappeared!

I was able to trace his wife, Mary with ease. In 1900 she is in Leon County with son, Robert, and one daughter, Ida Mary. In 1910 she is in Gadsden County with daughter, Lillian and her family including husband, Noah Burney.

By 1920 census, Mary, her sister, Ida Mary, and the Burney family had moved to Nassau County and Noah is a boarding housekeeper in Fernandina. She is listed as a widow on this census. Her death certificate in 1922 list her as the widow of IA Smith. So...what happened to Isham??

So, that was my brick wall... when did Isham die, where is the world is he buried and exactly what was his legal name?? I exhausted my limited knowledge of how to search more. That was the challenge presented to the pro.

As with any employing of others, the experience will vary. I think any genealogist one hires has a disclaimer: results not promised. The information may not be retrievable. Results will depend partly on the expertise of the genealogist, the rest on records available and perhaps a bit of luck!

Meeting with "My" pro, we discussed scope of research and I signed an agreement. She then went to work: accessing (among others) newspapers.com, land records and probate records that I had not looked at. She went behind me on census to see if there was a usable tidbit that I did not see/use.

Ishom was a busy man! Records found include tidbits:

Hosted, in his home, (along with "his good wife"), delegates to a District Conference, July, 1887. The denomination of the church was not indicated.

Appointed Election Clerk, District 4, Leon County, October 1888.

Elected Secretary of Miccosukee Lodge No 44 F&AM (Masons) January 1892.

Elected Justice of the Peace, Miccosukee, Leon County, January 1893. There are records of fulfilling his duties as late as December 21, 1893.

His Justice of Peace successor was sworn in March 12, 1894. Ishom is listed as deceased on that record.

So.... Ishom passed between December 21, 1893 and March 12, 1894. Where is he buried??

There were two churches in Miccosukee during that time. Attempts to reach out to the Miccosukee Methodist and Indian Springs Baptist churches yielded no response. There are no records under his name on FindAGrave.com.

As for his legal name, consensus is Ishom Arnold Smith. He often signed with his full name and other times I.A. Smith.

The State of Florida did not require reporting of deaths until 1899, so exact date and burial place are lost to time.

Being such a prominent member of the community, I would think, there would be info..but, the time frame shrunk from 5 years to less than 3 months! Thank you genealogy pro!

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.