



# *Past and Present*

*Newsletter of  
The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society*

*September 2025*

[sgesjax.org](http://sgesjax.org)

## **Upcoming Meeting Information**

### **September 13<sup>th</sup> - Climbing that Brick Wall**

When: Saturday, September 13, 2025 from 10:00-11:30 am

Where: Mandarin Branch Library, 3330 Kori Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32257

Speaker: Alana Masters, President



Alana Masters is the current President of SGES and has served in various positions on their Executive Board for the past 8 years. She has been doing genealogy about 10 years now and enjoys digging deep into research. Unconventional research methods, "self-taught" skills and technological knowledge have aided her on her genealogical journey.

Topic: Climbing that Brick Wall

Join us for an enlightening program as Alana takes us through her process to "scale that brick wall." Based on a real brick wall given to her by one of our members, you will learn how to familiarize yourself about the area you are researching, how to locate the records you need, newspaper sources, and how to edit and organize the records you find using programs such as Microsoft Word and Evernote.

## **October 11<sup>th</sup> – Salem Witch Trials**

When: Saturday, October 11, 2025 from 10:00-11:30 am

Where: Watson Realty, 4194 San Juan Ave., Jacksonville, FL 32210

Speaker: Hanna Dennis, member of the Associated Daughters of Early American Witches

Topic: Salem Witch Trials and the ADEAW Organization

Hannah Dennis is a descendant of four women accused of witchcraft in Colonial New England. Her presentation will be on the Salem Witch Trials and the ADEAW Organization.

## **Society News**



### **A Fresh Start: Our Roof Replacement**

**By Georgia Pribanic**

After 22 years of service, the roof over the SGES library has been replaced on Monday, August 25, 2025! The new roof not only gives our building a much-needed facelift, but it also ensures that our priceless genealogical resources are kept safe and dry for years to come.

The project began, with crews carefully removing the old shingles and installing a sturdy new roof designed to withstand Florida's weather. We are grateful to the 3 SGES volunteers who spent part of the day to assist the roofers with their needs such as access to an electrical outlet. (Luis, Mary Jeanette, Georgia)

Members and visitors are asked to be mindful of nails or debris that may remain around the parking area although a metal detector was used to cover the area. The replacement marks an important investment in the future of our society and the preservation of the history we work so hard to collect and share. This is one more example of how, together, we're strong.

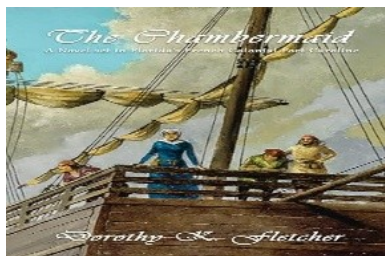


### *Collection Highlights by Georgia Pribanic*



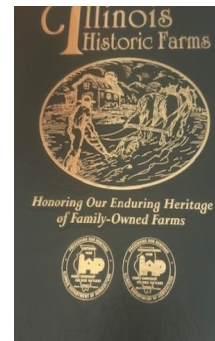
Selection of August donated books:

**SGES received several large donations during August.**



**HIGHLIGHTED TITLE:** In 2007, Dorothy K. Fletcher retired after 35 years of teaching English in Jacksonville, Florida, and she discovered life as a writer. Her novel, "The Chambermaid," published recently by the Florida Historical Society is set in the 1564 colony of Fort Caroline, which was in the Jacksonville area. I read this in 1 day as it is a captivating read of that time and life. Enjoy!!

**Patricia Wilson donated the following:**



**Illinois Historic Farms IL49**

Old Florida memories FL634

Fawn Grove Borough York County PA 1881-1981 PA222

Onstott Family FH1349, 1349.1

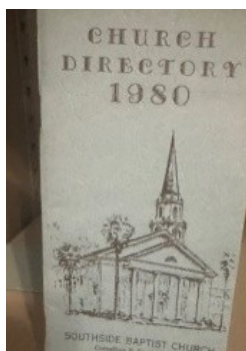
Ruse Family 1764-1983 FH1348

### **Other Donations:**



#### **Big Book of Business 2025**

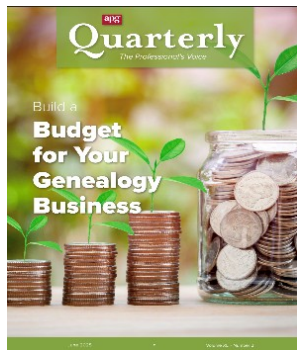
By Jax Daily Record. This inaugural edition is divided into 3 sections: data, lists, key businesspeople in NE FL  
FL635



#### **Church Directory 1980**

Southside Baptist Church, 1435 Atlantic Boulevard, Jax  
FL636

## Quarterlies



**Q473** 2024-2025 issues of the **Assoc of Professional Genealogists** include topics such as “Frugal effective marketing strategies” to Improve your public speaking skills.”



### **Q437 Genealogical Forum of Oregon Bulletin**

from Fall 2023 to Sept 2025- (quarterly) Selected articles include: Researching & remembering Rev. War Patriots; Introducing Plymouth Colony Mass. Freeperson families in 1790; Heraldry in America



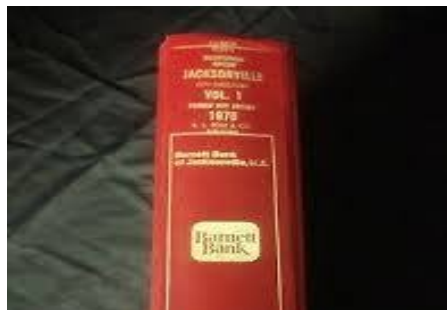
**Family Tree Magazine**, Sept/Oct 2025 issue :Articles include “Melungeon’s ; New owner for 23 and me; Pope Leo XIV finding his roots with Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Tombstone symbols and their meaning; Zen and the art of cemetery transcription ; IDAHO research guide ; NORTH CAROLINA research guide ; Special US Censuses ; Saving funeral memorabilia



## ***Highlights from the SGES Reference Desk***

### ***by Georgia Pribanic***

This month has been quieter at the reference desk, but quiet months give us time to share some small gems you may find useful in your own research.



#### **Did You Know?**

Our library has a collection of Jacksonville city directories dating back many years. They are a goldmine for family historians—listing occupations, addresses, and even the names of spouses. If you're tracing ancestors in the area, these directories can help you place them on the map year by year.

#### **This Month in History – Recovery from the Great Fire of 1901**



The city was in the process of recovering from the Great Fire of 1901, which occurred on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. The fire devastated 146 city blocks, destroying over 2,300 buildings and leaving nearly 10,000 people homeless. The intense smoke was visible as far away as Savannah, Georgia. It was one of the worst disasters in Florida history.



**FamilySearch.org**, a free online database includes many helpful resources. for researching Revolutionary War ancestors. One such collection is the "U.S. Revolutionary Compiled Service Records, 1775-1783" index which contains direct links from the index to the soldiers' file on Fold3.

### **From our members:**

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

By email: sgesjax@att.net – 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.

## **Do you have Hispanic Ancestors?**

**By Joan Hakala**

Then get ready to celebrate **National Hispanic Heritage Month**. This observance “celebrates the contributions of Americans tracing their roots to Spain, Mexico, Central America, South America and the Spanish-speaking nations of the Caribbean. In 1968, Congress set aside a week for this observance and two decades later expanded it to a month stretching from September 15 to October 15. The timing is historically significant as September 15 is the anniversary of independence in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. The designated period is also a nod to those from Mexico and Chile, which celebrate their independence September 16 and September 18, respectively.”

(<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features/2025/hispanic-heritage-month.html>)

### **Not sure where to start?**

#### **Start with the FamilySearch.org Research Wiki**

“The sometimes-overlooked FamilySearch Research Wiki is a great starting point when research takes you to an unfamiliar place. How-to information here is primarily user-submitted, so the content on its pages varies. From the wiki homepage, type a country into the search box, or select List All Countries to see an alphabetical list. Country pages may contain historical background, information about administrative divisions and important record groups, details about related records on microfilm at the FHL in Salt Lake City and digitized at FamilySearch, and links to other websites and databases. The Mexico page boasts a particularly exceptional research guide (look under the Research Tools subhead).”

**Then expand your search with FamilySearch Online Records**

“The superstar of FamilySearch is its online historical records collection. It includes digitized records for 14 Latin American and Caribbean countries: Bahamas, Barbados, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. From the FamilySearch home page, scroll down and click on the Caribbean, Central and South America link to see an alphabetical list of available records from this region.”