Preserving the Past, Enriching the Future

The West Florida Genealogical Society *Newsletter*

P.O. Box 10217, Pensacola, Florida 32524-0217

Volume 45, Issue 4 **Website: wfgs.org** **December 2026**

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https://www.facebook.com/WFGenSoc
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https://www.youtube.com/@WestFloridaGenealogicalSociety

West Florida Genealogical Society Meeting

In-person and Virtual

December 7, 2026—Saturday, 10:30 am

The West Florida Genealogical Society will meet on Saturday, December 7, at 10:30 am. The meeting will be held in meeting room B on the first floor of the downtown Pensacola Library (239 N. Spring Street). A society update and informative business meeting will precede the program.

WFGS President, Kelley Harris, will present the "State of the Society." Election of four Board of Directors will be held. The secretary's position remains vacant.

To register, email wfgsmeeting@gmail.com; the Zoom link and passcode will be sent the day before the meeting. The WFGS Board of Directors has instituted this procedure to prevent potential hacking of the meeting.

Meetings are free and open to the public and include a presentation on genealogical research or relevant history. **Refreshments will be provided.**



Holiday Treats for December 5 Meeting

To celebrate the holidays, members are encouraged to bring a family holiday treat and its recipe. We will have these treats instead of our customary donuts.

Election of Officers and Board of Directors for 2027-2028

Members nominated for the following positions are:

Secretary
Vacant
Board of Director – 2027
Jean Booton
Board of Directors – 2027-2028
Bryan Stapleton
Jane Caffrey
Theresa Gagnon

Voting for Board members will be held on December 5, at the general meeting.
If you want to add your name, contact Jennifer Rollins at rollins.jl@me.com.



Give a welcome to:

Amanda Carter
Jessica Aycock

We encourage you to explore our resources, participate in events, and connect with other members. Don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or need assistance.

Once again, welcome aboard!

January Meeting

The January monthly meeting will be held on January 9, the second Saturday. The library will be closed on the 2nd for the New Year's holiday.

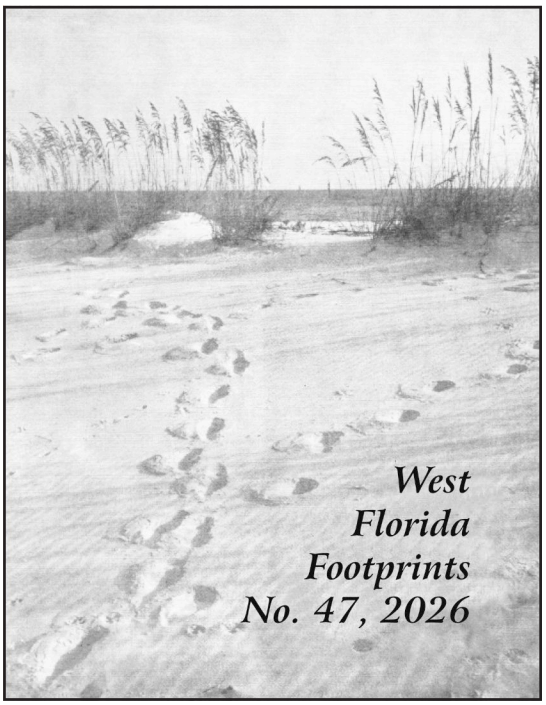
Jeanette Sheliga will present a program on "Beefing Up Your Ancestor's Timeline" (virtual speaker).

Palafox Market

The WFGS has been participating in the Palafox Market on one or two Saturdays for the past few months. This venue helps us reach people who may be interested in family history but don't know where to start. If you are interested in manning the display table on one of those Saturdays, please contact a Board member for details. Also, a sign-up sheet will be available at the next meeting.

Webinars

Nancy Loy puts together a monthly list of upcoming webinars of interest to genealogists and historians. The link is on the home page of the WFGS website. So, click here to see this wonderful resource!



Articles Needed for the *2026 West Florida Footprints*

We need articles for the 2026 issue of *West Florida Footprints*.

The issue will center on the 250th Anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026. If you have Revolutionary War ancestors, we encourage you to write an article about them. It doesn't have to be long. Include photos or images of documents, if available. Please contact the editor if you are interested in submitting an article for publication.

If you need guidelines for writing the articles, please contact Denise Mowery, at wfgsfootprints@gmail.com

Guidelines for *Footprints* Articles

- Articles can be submitted anytime. The deadline for article submissions is September 30 for the current year's issue.
- Article file types include Microsoft Word (doc or docx), Rich Text Format (rtf), and text files (txt), among others. If you are unsure, contact the Editor.
- Articles in past issues of *Footprints* have been one to two pages in length, sometimes longer (1,200 – 3,000 words).
  - Before submitting articles, please verify the spelling of names, place names, etc.
  - Submit photos with the articles, if available. See below for image (s) submission information:
    - Provide the original photo(s) (preferred method). Photos will be returned after the Footprints issue is sent to the printing company (this will ensure that there are no problems with the images).
    - Scan the photo(s) at 300 dpi (v per inch), which is the minimum setting for printing. Save the image file as a "jpg," "tif," "png," "bmp," etc. file type.
- You can embed the image file within the article to establish the position of the photos. However, send the images as separate files.
    - If you would like a photo caption, please provide the necessary information for the caption.
- Articles and photos can be turned in at the monthly meeting or emailed to the editor at:
  wfgsfootprints@gmail.com
  Denise Mowery
  Editor, *West Florida Footprints*

SAVE THE DATE

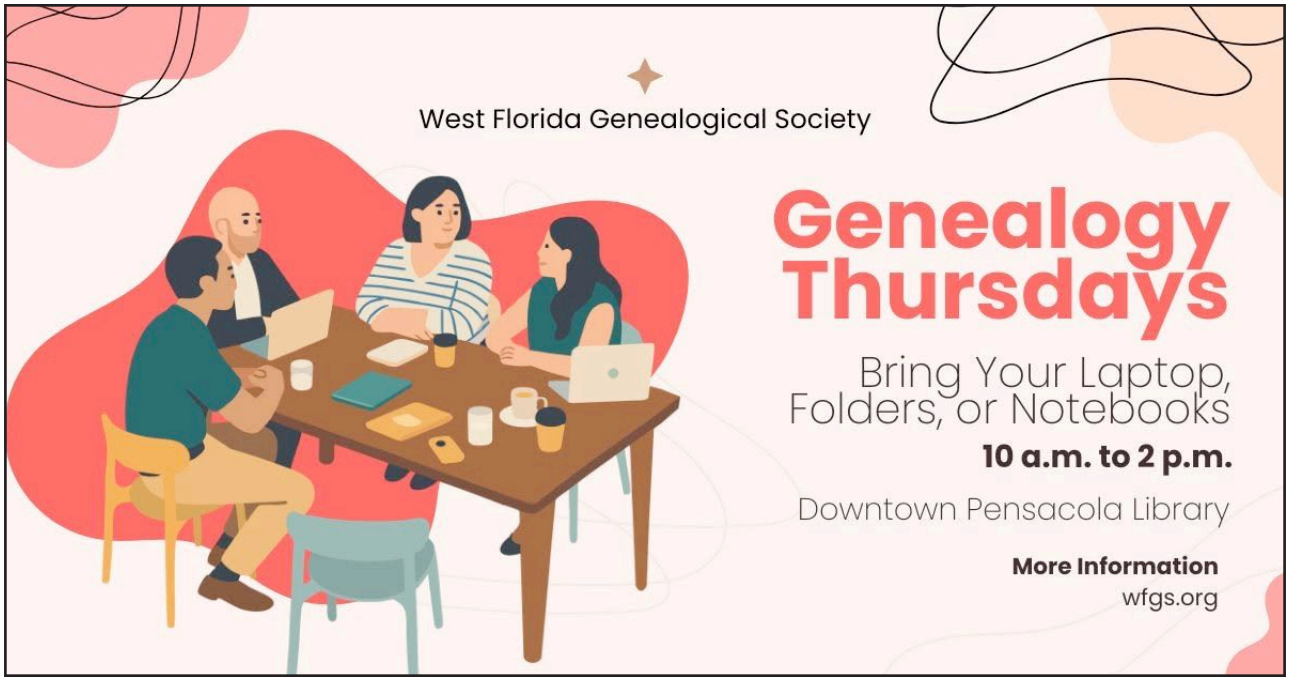
WFGS Spring Conference

March 13, 2027

See the conference flyer and registration form attached to this issue.

Monday, January 18, Luncheon

Sign-up and join us in January for our next luncheon. Meet at 11:00 AM at Ruby Tuesday at 110 Loblolly Lane (Pine Forest and I-10). Bring a friend. Hope to see you there!



Palafox Market
November 21, 2026







RootsTech 2027

March 4–6

Registration is now open for RootsTech 2027! Come and celebrate your story at the world's premier family history event. This year's theme—"Celebrate!"—invites attendees to see family history as more than looking back. Family history is also a living celebration of the past, present, and future. https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/rootstech-2027-registration#exploring-the-theme-behind-rootstech-2027-celebrate

American Bloodlines

Are you interested in what country your family may have come from or learning about certain unusual traits? Do you want to know about eye color, blood types, DNA, hair color, or American Indian background? You'll find all of this and more on the 20-minute American Bloodlines videos on their YouTube Channel. https://www.youtube.com/@AmericanBloodlines

The Power of Names in Tracing European Immigrant Origins

December 17, 2026

David Ouimette

Webinar Abstract: Names are the most powerful means of identifying ancestors. Name-based research techniques can supercharge the investigation of European ancestral origins. We describe and demonstrate several of these techniques, leveraging name etymologies and origins, the shape and texture of names, the uniqueness of immigrant-family handprints, the names of potentially related immigrants, and surname-distribution maps. We also highlight genealogy standards that empower each of these techniques.

Presenter: David Ouimette, CG, CGL, has researched in several hundred archives in seventy-five countries spanning all continents. His personal research focuses on French Canada, New England, Ireland, and Poland. David led FamilySearch Content Strategy for two decades, seeking key genealogical records worldwide and making them available online. He also provided genealogical guidance to FamilySearch Engineering on user experience, artificial intelligence, historical records, and family trees. Previously, David was a lead developer and product manager at Ancestry.com, responsible for family trees, U.S. records, DNA testing, and the search experience. He has served as BCG President, VP of the Utah Genealogical Association, and NGS board member. David holds degrees in Mathematics from Brigham Young University, is an author, and presents at international, national, and local conferences.

Registration: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_xu7lJXOSQBqah4j3CLEePQ

Mayflower Tricentennial Meeting

Karen Sutton

Mayflower Colony Governor Karen Sutton and Genealogy Board member Vicki Schell attended the tricentennial meeting in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in September 2026.

The pre-trip, entitled "Rags to Riches," began in Boston with a city tour. Sites toured included the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, which is based on the movie "Glory," starring Denzel Washington. Then we went to the Granary Burial Ground, where John Hancock, Samuel Adams, and Robert Treat Paine (all signers of the Declaration of Independence) are buried. Paul Revere is also buried there.

We visited the Old North Church, where the pews were owned by the rich and famous. We viewed the entire city from the top of Prudent Tower, then on to the Naval Yard to tour the USS *Constitution*.

We spent a day in Salem with a great experience at the Salem Witch Museum. It portrayed the events of the witch trials. Vicki had a cousin, Susannah Martin, who was tried and hanged as a witch.

In the afternoon, we toured the House of Seven Gables. The owner of the house was a cousin of Nathaniel Hawthorne. He spent a lot of time there and got the idea for his book. The best part was the secret staircase that went to the attic from behind the fireplace.

Another day was spent in Duxbury at the Alden Home and the cemetery where Alden family members are buried. Myles Standish (Vicki's ancestor) and George Soule (Karen's ancestor) are also buried there, along with other Soule family members. It was a moving experience for Karen.

Back in Plymouth, we spent time on the Mayflower II, seeing the small area where 150-plus people shared space with animals on their 66-day voyage.

Another day took us to the Jahez Howland House, where we saw a more modern way of cooking over the fireplace. We also saw what is believed to be the original Coat of Arms for the Howland line.

Then, a day in Patuxent and a visit to the homes of the surviving 50. Karen got to visit with her 11th great-grandmother, Mary Soule, wife of George. This was quite an experience. Mary had arrived a few years later aboard the "Anne." George had been an indentured servant to Edward Winslow. We got to see the homes that they lived in and how they grew their gardens. At the end of the day, we got to "eat like a pilgrim" with foods fixed the way they would have eaten them.

We were able to tour Plymouth House, which a lot of people don't get to see. The sarcophagus at Cole's Point is just outside and overlooks "Plymouth Rock" houses the remains of the 50 who passed away during that first winter. Their names are carved on it. My 12th great-grandfather, William White, is buried here. Six months after his death, my grandmother, Susannah, marries Edward Winslow.

We took another side trip to Newport, Rhode Island, for the Riches of the Gilded Age. Visiting the Marble House, home to some of the Vanderbilts, was like touring Versailles.

In Fall River, we visited the Lizzie Borden House. If you don't know the story, ask me. Did she really get away with murder?

We also visited Aptucxet, the first Plymouth Colony trading post. All groups—Indians, Pilgrims, and others—traded here: furs, tea, fruit, and vegetables. We learned about the sassafras tree and how to make the tea. Also used in making root beer.

Pilgrim Hall Museum housed some original artifacts. These included the basket the White family used to bring their belongings in, which then served as Peregrine's baby bed when he was born. Other items included a spoon belonging to George Soule, passed down through the families, John Alden's Bible, and Myles Standish's sword.

I think we had the most fun on our last side trip to Boston, where we visited the Boston Tea Party Museum. We were greeted by Samuel Adams and got into the spirit of what was to come next. We watched a reenactment of the "shot heard around the world," and then we got to throw the tea overboard.

Karen did sit in on one day of business at the conference while Vicki went sightseeing with a friend. They found a unique statue of Myles Standish. In 1922, a lightning bolt struck the bronze statue and took the top half completely off.

This tour was specifically made for Mayflower descendants. Still, I highly suggest that any Mayflower descendant make a trip to Plymouth/Boston for at least three days to relive our ancestors' pasts. There is so much to see.

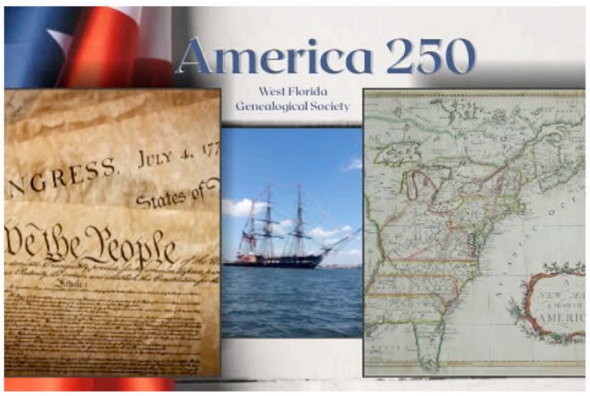








THE
West Florida Genealogical Society
Preserving the Past, Enriching the Future



WFGS New Website

The WFGS website transition to the new platform is complete. The URL is the same (www.wfgs.org).

As a WFGS Member, your login name to the website will remain the same.

Your password did not transition because it is encrypted.

At your FIRST LOGIN, you will need to go through the "forgot password" process.

Click on the "I forgot my password" link on the Member login page. This link takes you to the "Reset Password" form. Enter your email address in your profile and reset instructions will be sent to you. The email will come from ENS CRM.

Your password must be at least eight characters long and include at least one capital letter and one number.

Website Feedback

The new WFGS website has been active for a few weeks, and the Board would like feedback from the members. There are a few problems that we are aware of. If you encounter any problems while using the website, please let a Board member know.

Meeting Recordings

Please remember that presenters copyright all program content. Recording, photographing slides, copying content, or reposting our program recordings anywhere online or on other platforms is strictly prohibited without the presenter's explicit permission. Failing to obtain permission violates copyright and undermines the generosity of the speakers who share their research with our community.

Please respect our presenters and their intellectual property by not recording, photographing, or redistributing program recordings in any form.

Thank you for helping us protect our speakers' work.

General Meetings

General meetings are held on the first Saturday of the month (except July) at 10:30 a.m. at the downtown Pensacola Library, meeting room B, on the first floor (239 North Spring Street), Pensacola, Florida.

Each month features a different speaker and topic. Our meetings are open to the public and free of charge.

Executive Board of Directors Meetings

Regular and special meetings of the Board are open to all members of the WFGS. Members who are not on the Board may not participate in any deliberation or discussion unless expressly authorized by a vote of a majority of the Board or have been placed on the meeting agenda.

Board of Directors meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month at 4:00 p.m., via Zoom.

Monthly Meeting

The meeting room is reserved from 10:30 am until 1:00 pm for our monthly meetings. Members and visitors are welcome to stay to socialize and have discussions. Board members will be available during this time to answer any questions.

WFGS Membership Dues

Annual dues are $20.00 for an individual membership or $25.00 for a family membership.

Annual dues shall be payable on or before January 1. Dues should be paid before March 1 for members to retain access to the members' side of the website.

Dues may be paid at the monthly meetings, by mail, or on the website (https://wfgs.org).

Please make checks payable to the West Florida Genealogical Society.

Send checks to:

WFGS Treasurer
P.O. Box 10217
Pensacola, Florida 32524-0217

Update Your Email

Please log in to the WFGS Members' portal on the website (https://wfgs.org/login) and verify your email address. The email on the membership list is the one used to contact you (i.e., newsletter, conference updates, general information, etc.). **If you haven't been receiving emails from the Society check your spam folder.**

Contact me, if you have problems. Denise Mowery, Editor, wfgsfootprints@gmail.com