

2026 GCGSI MEETINGS, PROGRAMS, EVENTS

Sound system with clip-on microphones and a/v equipment are requested for every meeting.

Items on this schedule are subject to change.

January Monthly Meeting - Saturday, January 17, 2026 (Annual Meeting)

Burnett Family Ancestry & Scottish Heritage

Speaker: Past President, Founder, GCGSI Researcher and Author, and SAR Past President Earl Cagle (Earl will be wearing his kilt)

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.

Program Description – Earl has been a champion of the GCGSI dating back to its foundation with the Gilmer County Heritage Book Committee. He is presenting on his Burnett Family History going back to their origin in Scotland. He will also touch on his Edmonson Family of Gilmer County that traces back to the Revolutionary war.

February Monthly Meeting - Saturday, February 21, 2026

Potter's Fields and Poorhouses

Speaker: Christopher Feldt

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.

Program Description - A Potter's field is a piece of ground reserved as a burying place for friendless paupers, unknown persons and criminals. In many cases, poorhouses were accompanied by these graveyards. Cherokee, Pickens and Gilmer Counties were no exception. Due to the tireless pursuits of local history lovers and the invention of Ground Penetrating Radar, many of the unmarked graves have begun to be found. This is that story. The story of the forgotten. The forgotten in our area, in our State, and across the United States beginning with the colonists.

March Monthly Meeting - Saturday, March 21, 2026

Civil War Comes to Gilmer County and the North Georgia Mountains

Speaker: Dr. Kathleen Thompson

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.

Program Description – January 1861 saw a tumultuous convention in Milledgeville, Georgia, more so than in previous years due to the election of Abraham Lincoln and fears of abolitionist policies. Contentious debates between immediate secessionists and cooperationists went on for days. In the end, the vote was 208 to 89 in favor of secession. Dr. Kathy Thompson leads us through this turn of events and the roles our North Georgia representatives played leading to the that decision. She recaps the war that soon followed in April and the impacts of the Civil War here at home. Dr. Thompson will also touch on Gilmer County's David Freeman, the Confederate's youngest soldier. Little David Freeman enlisted one month before his 11th birthday and played an active role during the war.

Library Appreciation Week - Library Staff Appreciation Luncheon - 2026 Date TBD

National Library Week: April 16-19, 2026

Find Your Joy

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 12:00 noon

Event Description - Gilmer County Library Staff will be feted with a luncheon to show our appreciation for all they do for GCGSI.

April Monthly Meeting - Saturday, April 18, 2026

Deep Gilmer County Roots: Stories from my Grandparents: Gudger, Crawford, Waddell and Seay

Speaker: Judith Carole Waddell Piette, GCHSI Secretary and GCGSI First Family Member

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.

Program Description – Judith Piette shares stories about the ancestry of her Gilmer County families – the Gudgers and Waddells dating back to the 1840s and 50s. Piette will also share an interesting story of her very young 2nd great-grandmother Seay who married (at different times, of course) 2 older Civil War veterans and became one of the last dependents to receive a Civil War pension.

May Monthly Meeting - Saturday, May 16, 2026

Memories of our Mothers: Members share memories, heirlooms, recipes and family stories

Speakers: GCGSI Members in a “Show and Tell” Program

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.

Program Description – Honoring Mother’s Day, Society members share stories and memories passed down from our ancestors through mementos, heirlooms, recipes and family stories.

~~June Monthly Meeting - No monthly meeting~~

June Workshop/Field Trip - Date & Time TBD???

Ducktown Museum Field Trip – History of the Copper Mines & Miners

Facilitators: Mitchell Hicks, Museum Director?

Ducktown, TN-Date & Time TBD

Workshop Description – Group tour of the Ducktown Museum and a newly created documentary of the mining history (with a Ken Burns-like quality). Regional historian Harriett Frye wrote much of the script and Steve Procko filmed and directed. Kathleen Thompson also played a minor role in the film’s creation.

July Workshop/Date & Time TBD???

Taking advantage of AI in Family Search or Find-a-Grave

Presenter: Rebecca Amerson (will do either June or July program ... to let us know which)

Gilmer County Library Lower Level – 10:00am? TBD

Bring laptop or tablet

Workshop Description –

August Monthly Meeting/Event - Saturday, August 15, 2026

Harvest Luncheon

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 12:00 noon

Event Description - GCGSI members and their families celebrate the Harvest Season with GCGSI providing the protein, beverages, and paper goods and members bringing side dishes and/or desserts to share. Door prizes will be given.

September Monthly Meeting - Saturday, September 19, 2026

History of Marble Mining, the Tate Family and Tate House (This might change to a different program, but the speaker will remain the same. Kathleen Thompson is a previous speaker and has written a number of books, and has a number of topics she can present.

Speaker: Kathleen Thompson

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.

Program Description -

~~October Monthly Meeting - No monthly meeting due to Apple Festival~~

November Monthly Meeting - Saturday, November 21, 2026

Election and appointment of 2026 GCGSI Board.

The Sanfords of Gilmer County – 1850s to Today

Speaker: Dwight Sanford, known locally as Mr. Ellijay

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 12:00 noon

Program Description - Dwight is a life-long resident of Gilmer County, a former City police officer, local singer, song writer, producer and musician. He will entertain with local stories and lore of the Sanford Family and hopefully also a few songs, including "Ellijay", which he wrote several years ago.)

Gilmer County Library Event: November, 2026-January, 2027, Dates & Times TBD

Festival of Trees

Event Description - An annual event at the Gilmer County Library when organizations decorate Christmas trees for display through December. GCGSI designs and decorates a tree for display in the Family Research Room.

December Monthly Meeting/Event - Saturday, December 13, 2026 (Changed to 2nd Saturday in December)

GCGSI Holiday Luncheon and Installation of 2027 Board

Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 12:00 noon

Program Description - GCGSI members and their families' luncheon celebrating the Holiday Season with GCGSI providing the protein, beverages, and paper goods and members bringing side dishes and/or desserts to share. 2026 GCGSI Board members will be installed. Door prizes will be given.

Additional options: History of Copper Mining in Ducktown

Ellijay Buildings Then and Now – Barbara Dover

Moonshining in Gilmer County – possibly by Dwight Sanford and/or others

First Families presentation (on Holts & Whiteners, Watkins, Sisson, Allen, etc)