

MOUNTAIN HERITAGE

The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.

June 1, 2026

Volume 14, Issue 2

Edward P. Davies: Welshman, Tailor, Accused Spy

Erin Brandy

My grandmother, Irene Davies, instilled in me a love of family history. She and her sister Blanche conducted pre-internet research, and passed along the results, along with letters, pictures, and family heirlooms. to their children and grandchildren.

I've long been intrigued by the tragic story of my 3rd great-grandfather, Edward P. Davies, Welshman and tailor by trade, who became our Davies forefather in the United States. From Grandmother Irene, I inherited this miniature portrait, several letters, and learned Edward's birthplace and date, as well as his death place and date. A birth record from FamilySearch, matching his birth date, lists an "Edward, Bastard son of Ann Davies." His status as bastard means we do not know his father, or if Davies was his mother's or father's surname. That and Davies being one of the most common surnames in Wales have made it difficult to learn more of Edward's Welsh origins.

TAILORING.
THE subscribers respectfully announce to the citizens of Snickersville and its vicinity, and to the public generally, that they have commenced the above business in that place, where they will thankfully receive, and faithfully execute, all orders in their line.---Having procured Ward's patent rule for cutting, and, in addition to the Philadelphia and New York fashions for this spring already received, having made arrangements for their regular quarterly reception in future, they are prepared, and pledge themselves, to do work in the neatest and most fashionable style.
By an unremitting assiduity, and prompt attention to business, and an earnest endeavour to please, they hope to merit, and respectfully solicit, a portion of public patronage.
JOHN W. OWEN,
EDWARD P. DAVIES.
Snickersville, April 21, 1832.---16 4t
Genius of Liberty, Volume 16, Number 18, 5 May 1832

Nothing is known of why Edward decided to leave home, nor is the exact date of his immigration to America known. A 1900 census record of his middle son, Llewellyn, lists the immigration date of his father as 1828. An ad for tailoring services in Snickersville (Loudoun Co), VA shows he had landed prior to 1832. Regardless of the exact date, a letter that his mother Ann Davies wrote to him in 1839 indicates that Edward left under mysterious circumstances, and his mother had almost given him up for dead.



Davies/Brandy Family Photos

Wellsford August 4th. 1839.
My Dear Son,
I had almost given up my hopes of ever being favoured with a letter from you, as for a number of years I have been labouring under feelings of anxiety and suspense which were almost insupportable by reason of your very long absence from me. I have spent many restless days and nights upon that account. The worst thing which I have feared is known to some, but God save myself. Sometimes I had made up my mind that you had departed this life, and gone as I hoped to a better world;
Direct to Ann Barry, Bonnie Street
Wellsford -

Photo: Davies/Brandy Family Ephemera



**Edward P. Davies:
Welshman, Tailor, Accused Spy
-continued-**

His mother Ann discusses Edward's two brothers, but we don't know if they were full, half, or step brothers. An interesting tidbit at the end, shows Ann had married (or remarried) and pinpoints her exact location to a very short street (Berriew) in Welshpool, Wales.

From Ancestry.com, I was able to gather a few pieces of evidence, such as his location, family members, trade, and place of origin, as listed in the 1860 census for Snickersville, Loudoun Co, VA. It was surprising to learn he employed an enslaved person in his business.

Edward P. Davies	48	M	Taylor	800	1100	North Wales
Elizabeth Davies	38	F				Virginia
John P.	14	M				"
Swollen K	12	M				"
Madison K	7	M				"

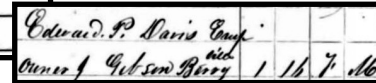


Photo: Ancestry.com - 1860 Census and Slave Schedule



Photo: Davies/Brandy Heirloom

Ancestry.com records also yielded the record of Edward's marriage to Elizabeth Klein in 1844, of the Waterford, VA Klein family. This fact was already known to me, and makes it most likely that the antique tortoiseshell calling card case passed on to me by grandmother Irene was a wedding gift to the bride. It carries the date 1844 on a metal tag at the top of the case.



Photo: Davies/Brandy Heirloom.

More records from Ancestry.com provided new information on the Davies family: they lost a son in 1855, who did not live long enough to be named. The cause of death was not listed.

Death Register	18	July 25, 1855	Snickersville	Infant	1 day	W	M	Davis, E.P. & Elizabeth
1853-1866								

Photo: Ancestry.com—Loudoun County Death Register 1853-1856

I learned the most about Edward from the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg, Virginia. In-person visits and webinars through the library produced much information about my third great-grandfather. From deed books, I learned that Edward bought and sold several pieces of property in Snickersville, and one in Lovettsville, VA.

Personal property tax records revealed that Edward lived in the households of several



**Edward P. Davies:
Welshman, Tailor, Accused Spy
-continued-**

persons before owning his own home. Further research revealed that the three different individuals in whose households Edward lived were all just various owners of the same house!

One of the most interesting resources in the Balch Library was a General Store Ledger from the 1840s from Snickersville, VA. It shows the accounts of Edward, several of his in-laws, and neighbors. Often, when someone owed money to another, rather than a direct cash payment, the person owing made a payment on the other person's store account.

Through Ancestry.com, I met a Davies cousin in possession of the Davies Family Bible, and from the bible learned that Edward and Elizabeth had had a daughter, Eva, who was born in Lovettsville, and died in Snickersville.

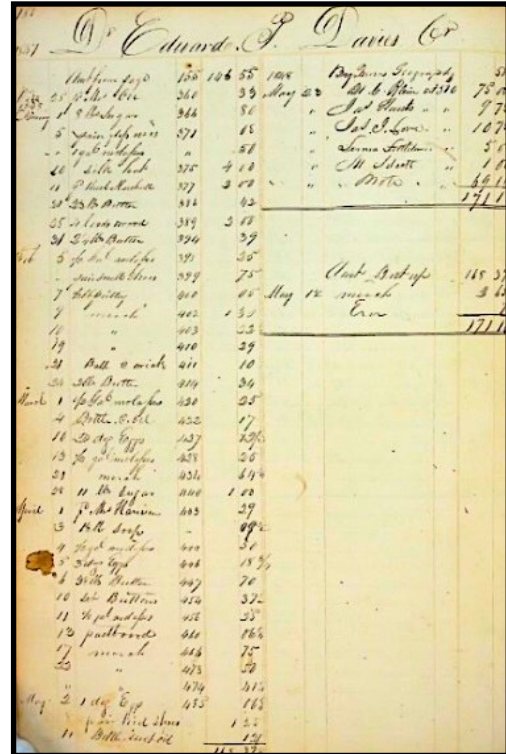
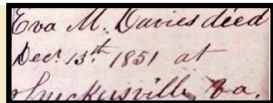
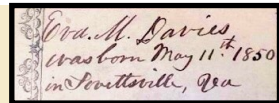


Photo: Thomas Balch Library; Leesburg, Virginia



Photos: Davies Family Bible via Ancestry.com

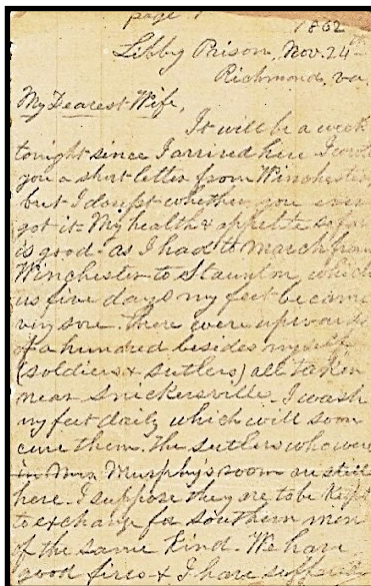


Photo: Davies/Brandy Ephemera

So, what's the tragic part, you're wondering, besides the long estrangement from his family in Wales and the loss of two small children? Well, in May of 1861, Loudoun County, Virginia voted on whether or not the state should secede from the Union. Edward was one of only three in the county that voted against, which may or may not have played a part in his being arrested as a Union spy in November of 1862. This accusation he steadfastly denied. Through a series of letters he wrote to his wife Elizabeth, I learned some details of his incarceration. Edward was taken first to Winchester, where able-bodied prisoners were held in the county courthouse yard. From there, he was marched to Staunton, and then put on a train to Libby Prison in Richmond. While at Libby, Edward got sick with scurvy and was hospitalized in General Hospital #13, and released back to Castle Thunder, part of the Libby Prison complex.



**Edward P. Davies:
Welshman, Tailor, Accused Spy
-continued-**

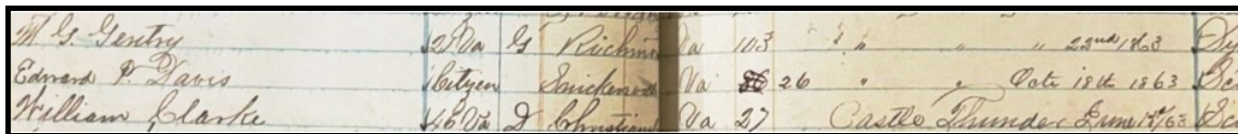


Photo: The National Archives - General Hospital # 13 Registry of Patients

I learned the details of his illness from The National Archive’s records in Washington, D.C. Edward was sent from Libby Prison to Salisbury Confederate Prison in Salisbury, North Carolina, where he died and was buried in a mass grave, mere months before the end of the Civil War.

Incarceration in Libby and Salisbury prisons would have been difficult, but Edward remained positive in all of the letters he wrote to his wife. He no doubt did not want to worry Elizabeth, who was sickly and predeceased him by five months, effectively making orphans of their three boys.

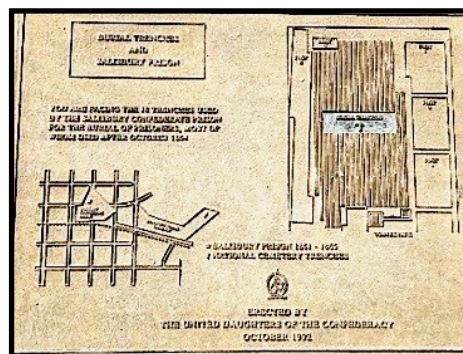
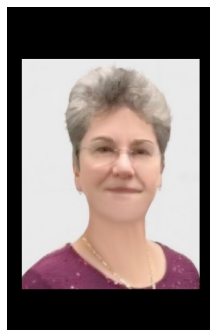


Photo: Salisbury National Cemetery Plaque



Davies/Brandy Family Photos

However, all turned out well for their sons. They sold their parents’ house in Virginia and lived with their grandmother and aunt in Maryland before moving out west: two to Nebraska and one to Indiana. I am descended from the middle son, Llewellyn Klein Davies, who moved in with his maternal uncle and married his first cousin, Emma Virginia Kline.



Erin Brandy was born in New Jersey and raised primarily in south Florida. Graduating from FSU with a bachelor’s in Classics, and Nova Southeastern University with a master’s in Computer Applications, Erin spent her 37-year career in education. She retired in 2021, ending as a tech support specialist for Gilmer County Schools. Erin is actively involved with the Gilmer Retired Educators’ Association, the Gilmer County Genealogical Society, the Gilmer County Democrats, various LGBTQ+ organizations, and the James Kell Chapter of D.A.R. Erin’s great-grandmother, Rebecca Peery Ball of Tazewell, VA was also a member of D.A.R. Most vacations involve visiting the places her ancestors lived, including the ancestral homes if they still stand, and cleaning and photographing their headstones. She also helps caretake for the Rose Cemetery in Gilmer County.



President's Post

Barbara J. Dover

Well, June is here, a month with a strong association with genealogy. (But for us, almost every month has a strong association with genealogy, right?) According to Google's AI overview of the etymology of "June," it is "derived from the Latin *Iunius*, which honors 'Juno,' the Roman goddess of marriage and childbirth (and the wife of Jupiter.) Ancient Roman writer Ovid suggested *Iunius* might come from *iuniores* (meaning 'young people.')" Hmm, childbirth + young people = descendants. And descendants + ancestors = genealogy.



Our Gilmer County Genealogical Society has learned a lot from our meeting's speakers from the past quarter. The presentations have given us insight into the local history of the Civil War, local pioneer family history, and some of our own members' family stories and memories. We appreciate the talks from Dr. Kathleen Thompson in March, Dr. Judy Piette in April; and GCGSI members such as Erin Brandy, Rebecca Burrell, and Frances Reynolds in May.

On April 21, 2026, during National Library Week, we feted the staff of the Gilmer County Library with a lunch event planned by Events Co-Chairpersons Lydia Bassetti and Erin Brandy. They chose delicious food from Ellijay's Back Porch Bistro and created goody bags for those special people that assist their patrons and our society with all their library needs.

First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia installed a new member at our May meeting. Melissa Sue Bryant provided documentation of her lineage to Gilmer County's pioneer settler Elijah Chastain. She is the first applicant to qualify with Elijah Chastain as her ancestor, so if you know of anyone else that might be able to use part of her documentation, please encourage them to apply. See our website www.gcgisi.org for application information.

Next quarter, GCGSI will be taking a break in June, but we will sponsor a workshop in July with Rebecca Amerson as facilitator. The workshop, *10 Reasons I Use FamilySearch.org*, will be held in the upstairs community room of the Gilmer County Library on Saturday, July 25, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Please bring your laptop or tablet to follow along with Rebecca, our resident FamilySearch.org wizard.


Saturday, August 15, 2026 is our annual member luncheon with this year's theme in celebration of *America 250*. As in the past, GCGSI will provide a protein, beverages, and paper products and ask that members bring side dishes, salads, and/or desserts to share. The luncheon will be held in the lower level of the Gilmer County Library beginning at noon. Mark your calendars to be a part of our society's celebration of our country's semiquincentennial.

The GCGSI Board encourages you to attend our meetings and events if possible and bring at least one additional friend or family member with you. Our speakers and their presentations are stellar, and you will learn more about their subjects and families that can assist in your own genealogical research. If you have recommendations for the society, please do not hesitate to let us know. Have a sensational summer!



Second Quarter Highlights 2026

March 2026



Gilmer County Genealogical Society

Civil War Comes to Gilmer County and the North Georgia Mountains

Dr. Kathleen Thompson, speaker

Saturday, March 21, 2026
Gilmer County Library
2:00 p.m.

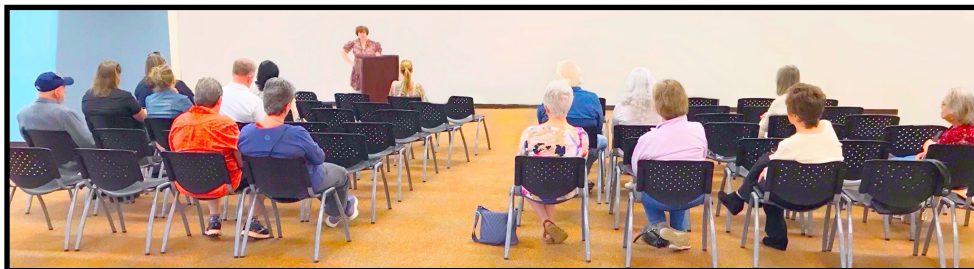
Photos submitted by Rebecca Burrell, Barbara J. Dover, Doug Piette, and Debbie Wilcox.

GCGSI held its March Monthly Meeting on Saturday, March 21, 2026. The program was *Civil War Comes to Gilmer County and the North Georgia Mountains* and was presented by Dr. Kathleen Thompson. Dr. Thompson told of the 1861 convention in Milledgeville, Georgia, and the days-long debates between Secessionist and Cooperationist representatives prior to the vote of 208 to 89 in favor of secession.

The Civil War followed soon after the vote, and Dr. Thompson reviewed its history and told how the war affected Gilmer County and North Georgia. In addition, she told the story of Gilmer County's "Little David" Freeman. Freeman, known as the Confederate's youngest soldier, enlisted one month before he turned 11 years old and, regardless of his age, played an active role in the war.



Dr. Kathleen Thompson

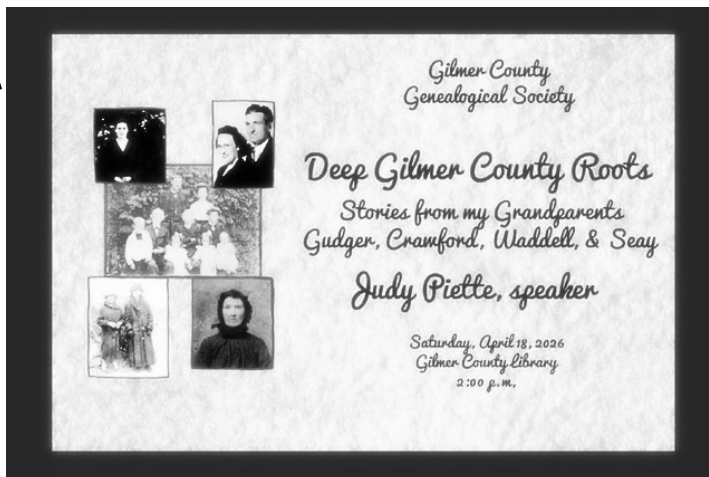


See **Second Quarter Highlights 2026**, page 7.



Second Quarter Highlights 2026
-continued-

April 2026



First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia member and Gilmer County Historical Society Secretary Dr. Judy Piette was the speaker for the GCGSI meeting on Saturday, April 18, 2026. Her program, *Deep Gilmer County Roots: Stories from my Grandparents Gudger, Crawford, Waddell, and Seay*, focused on these families, all of whom were early Gilmer County pioneers. Her stories included her young great-grandmother who married not one, but two Civil War Veterans, the surprise discovery of her Cherokee heritage, her third great-grandparents who lived in the Chief Vann House, her great-grandfather who was a U. S. Marshal, and her granddaddy who was a builder for the nuclear bomb facility in Oak Ridge Tennessee during World War II.



Dr. Judy Piette



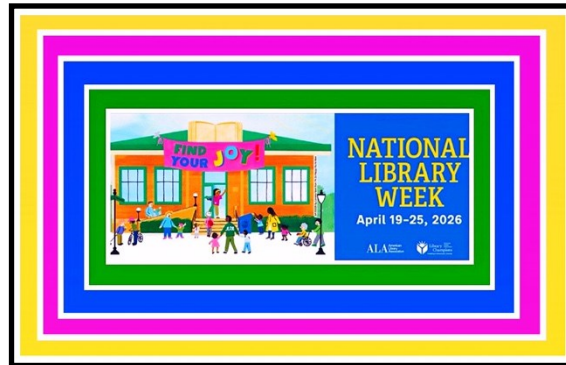
To view a video recording of this presentation created by Doug Piette, please go to: <https://facebook.com/share/v/1BH29BJTq/>

See **Second Quarter Highlights 2026**, page 8.



Second Quarter Highlights 2026
-continued-

April 2026



On April 21, 2026, during National Library Week, we feted the staff of the Gilmer County Library with a lunch event planned by Events Co-Chairpersons Lydia Bassetti and Erin Brandy. They chose delicious food from Ellijay's Back Porch Bistro and created goody bags for those special people that assist their patrons and our society with all their library needs.



Thank you, Gilmer County Library Staff!



*Erin Brandy (L) and Lydia Bassetti
GCGSI Events Committee Co-Chairpersons*



Among Gilmer County Library staff members attending the luncheon were (from left to right:) Karen Phillips, Glenda Garland, Sharon Key, Hillary Griggs, Tanya O'Neal, and Alex Thomerson.

See Second Quarter Highlights 2026, page 9.



Second Quarter Highlights 2026

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May 2026

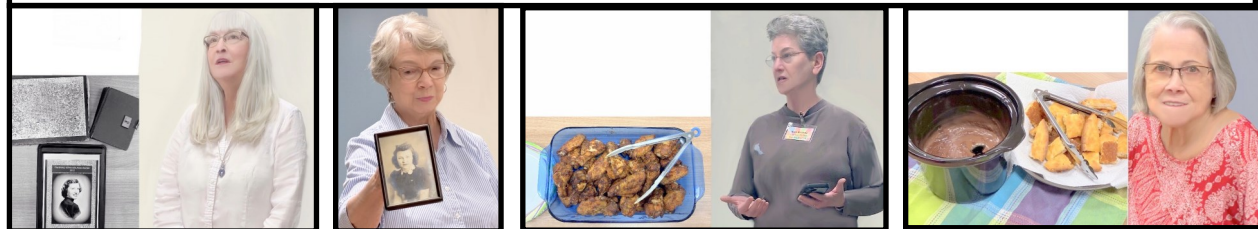


GCGSI’s program for their meeting on May 16, 2026 was a “show and tell” tribute to mothers. Members shared stories, heirlooms, and hand-written and prepared recipes in honor of Mother’s Day. Among the participants was Frances Reynolds of Leesburg, Alabama. She told about her Holt and Painter ancestors from Gilmer County and how her family ended up in Alabama. She shared memories of her mother Effie Harris Fowler and her strength, honesty, tenacity, and love for her own children and local children from needy families.

GCGSI President Barbara J. Dover told about her mother’s generational lineage in Gilmer County, shared her mother’s photo album from birth in 1934 to 1952 and read from her 1952 diary and newspaper articles co-authored by Wanda Harper under the pseudonym “Swampy.” “Swampy” and her best friend Ruth Wimpey, aka “Pinkey,” wrote the Ellijay *Times-Courier* column *Mountaintown News* at that time. Wanda’s diary was the story of a young working woman in Ellijay: her family, her social life, teaching Bible School at Mountaintown Baptist Church, and dating Hansel G. “Hank” Dover. They became engaged in 1952 and were married the next year.

GCGSI Recording Secretary and Events Co-Chair Erin Brandy told of her mother Susan Ball Brandy’s ancestry and life in Florida. She shared one of her mother’s favorite recipes: Moroccan Chicken Wings. Not only did she share the recipe, but she also brought samples of her mother’s recipe. Also sharing a recipe and samples was GCGSI Corresponding Secretary Rebecca Burrell. Rebecca told how her mother Beuna Keener Hales often made a sweet treat for her kids, so Rebecca brought her mother’s chocolate gravy with biscuits. At the end of the meeting, everyone enjoyed the flavorful chicken wings and the yummy chocolate gravy with biscuits, just like Susan and Beuna used to make.

Photos (Left to Right): Barbara J. Dover with her Mother Wanda Harper Dover’s Photo Album and 1952 Diary; Frances Reynolds with portrait of her Mother Effie Harris Fowler; Erin Brandy with her Mother Susan Ball Brandy’s Moroccan Chicken Wings; Rebecca Burrell with her Mother Buena Keener Hales’ Chocolate Gravy and Biscuits.





First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia

The First Families program is designed to honor those pioneers who settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or before, and to recognize their descendants upon becoming members of this program. We encourage anyone who is directly descended from early settlers whose names appear on the 1840 or any prior Gilmer County Census to apply. Discovering your Gilmer County roots can be challenging and exciting; and your research can serve as a source of information for generations to come. Applicants are not required to currently reside in Gilmer County. Once approved, members receive a certificate and pin acknowledging this Gilmer County ancestor. Come and join our 253 descendants who are currently members of First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia. For more information, please visit our website at: www.gcgisi.org.



The First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia organization recently inducted new member Melissa Sue Bryant at the GCGSI Meeting on May 16 in the Gilmer County Library. The First Families of Gilmer County, Georgia organization is under the umbrella of The Gilmer County Genealogical Society, and it honors the men and women who were settled in Gilmer County in 1840 or earlier. Members are approved after submitting proof of their lineage to those qualifying ancestors. Ms. Bryant submitted documentation of her lineage to the Gilmer County pioneer Elijah Chastain.

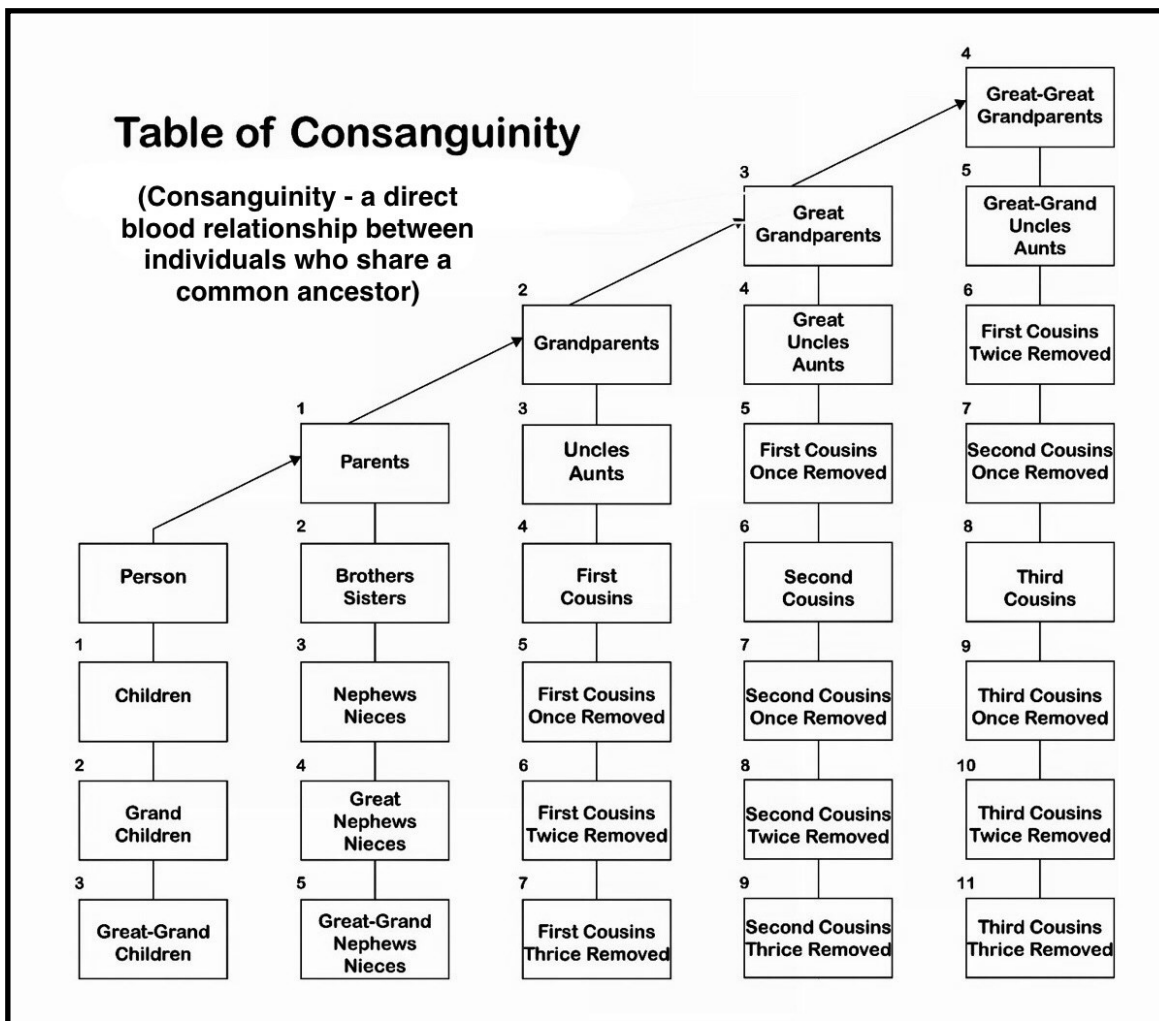


First Families of Gilmer County, GA Committee Chairperson Patricia Hyatt Henson (left) and newly inducted First Families of Gilmer County, GA Member Melissa Sue Bryant (right.)



Consanguinity Cousins

How many times have you been in the Walmart and come across a person in the produce department that you knew was your kin, but didn't know the exact relationship you had with that person? You may have gone up to the person and said, "Hi there, how are you doing? Don't those maters look plumb terrible?" And depending on the gender or the mutual realization that you were related, you shake hands, hug, or both, but you cannot seem to figure out what the consanguinity was. Well, never fear, you no longer have to say, "Aren't we kin? I know we both have the same great aunt, but what are we? You know, we both have Great Aunt Marcie in common, the fun Great Aunt who always wears bright red lipstick and multicolored scarves and Converse high-tops and has a luau every summer?" Instead, you can become familiar with this *Table of Consanguinity* and say, "Hey there, Second Cousin, how's Aunt Marcie?" It may not help you remember the second cousin's name, but at least you will know your relationship, and can say, "Well, see you at the luau," and both walk away from the tomatoes.





Bulletin Board



Fourth of July Parade, ca. 1886
Alfred Cornelius Howland (American, 1838-1909)

June 2026

- Monday, June 1 - Friday, July 31
SRLS Summer Reading Program
Summer Discovery 2026 - Unearth A Story
See Gilmer County Library Calendar for events.
- Sunday, June 14 - Flag Day
- Friday, June 19 - Juneteenth
- Sunday, June 21 - Fathers' Day

July 2026

- Saturday, July 4 - Independence Day
America's Semiquincentennial

- Saturday, July 25 - GCGSI Workshop
Finding Your Revolutionary Roots: A FamilySearch Workshop
Rebecca Amerson, facilitator
Gilmer County Library Upper Level Community Room
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
Bring your laptop or tablet with birth and death dates of parents and grandparents.

August 2026

- Saturday, August 15 - GCGSI Meeting/Event
Gilmer County Library –Lower Level - 12:00 noon
America 250 Luncheon
GCGSI will provide protein, drinks, and paper products. Members bring side dishes, salads, and/or desserts. Let's continue celebrating America's Semiquincentennial! *Please RSVP via gilmergenealogy@gmail.com with names and number attending.*



Mountain Heritage Newsletter
Published by Barbara J. Dover
Gilmer County Genealogical Society, Inc.
President, Publications Committee Chairperson,
Publicity Committees' Co-Chairperson

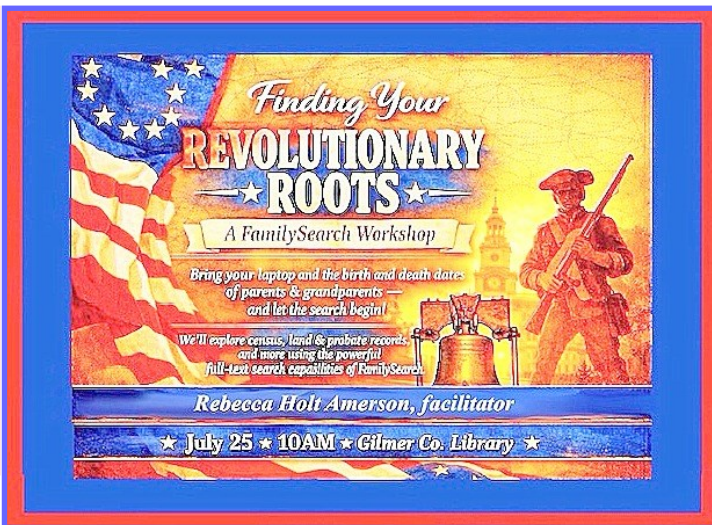
2026 GCGSI Officers and Committee Chairpersons

Barbara J. Dover: President, Publications Committee Chairperson, & Publicity Committee Co-Chairperson,
Deborah Wilcox: Vice President, Program Committee Chairperson, & Publicity Committee Co-Chairperson
Rebecca Burrell- Corresponding Secretary & Historian
Erin Brandy: Recording Secretary & Events Committee Co-Chairperson
Susan Noles: Treasurer & Membership Committee Chairperson
Patricia Henson & Beverly Hill: First Families of Gilmer County Committee Co-Chairpersons
Lydia Bassetti & Erin Brandy: Events Committee Co-Chairpersons



July and August Events

GCGSI will be taking a break in June, but we will sponsor a workshop in July with Rebecca Amerson as facilitator. The workshop, titled *Finding Your Revolutionary Roots: A FamilySearch Workshop* will be held in the upstairs community room of the Gilmer County Library on Saturday, July 25, 2026 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. Please bring your laptop or tablet with birth and death dates of parents and grandparents for hands-on tutelage from Rebecca Amerson, our resident FamilySearch.org wizard.



Gilmer County Genealogy Society

AMERICA 250 LUNCHEON

Saturday, August 15, 2026
Gilmer County Library
12:00 noon

GCGSI will provide a protein, beverages, and paper products. Members are asked to bring side dishes, salads and/or desserts to share.

**Please email gilmergenealogy@gmail.com if you plan to attend.*



Saturday, August 15, 2026 is our annual member luncheon with this year's theme continuing the celebration of *America 250*. As in the past, GCGSI will provide a protein, beverages, and paper products and ask that members bring side dishes, salads, and/or desserts to share. The luncheon will be held in the lower level of the Gilmer County Library beginning at noon. Mark your calendars to be a part of our society's celebration of our country's Semiquincentennial.

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- First Families Application
- Genealogical Links
- Officers and Chairpersons



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- 1834 and 1840 Census
- Contact Information
- GCGSI Newsletters