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.

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.

Library Appreciation Week - *Library Staff Appreciation Luncheon* – April 21, 2026
National Library Week: April 19-25. 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.

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, Gilmer County Genealogical Society members share stories and memories passed down from our ancestors through mementos, heirlooms, recipes and family stories.

~~**June Monthly Meeting**~~ **- No monthly meeting**

July Workshop – July 25, 2026
Finding Your Revolutionary Roots: A FamilySearch Workshop
Facilitator: Rebecca Amerson
Gilmer County Library Upper Level Community Room – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon
Bring laptop or tablet along with names and birth and death dates of parents and grandparents.
Workshop Description – Attendees will explore census, land & probate records, and more using the powerful full-text search capabilities of FamilySearch.org.

August Monthly Meeting/Event - Saturday, August 15, 2026
America 250 Luncheon
Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 12:00 noon
Event Description - GCGSI members and their families celebrate America's 250th anniversary with GCGSI providing the protein, beverages, and paper goods and members bringing side dishes, salads, and/or desserts to share. Door prizes will be given. Please RSVP via gilmergenealogy@gmail.com with names and number attending.

September Monthly Meeting - Saturday, September 19, 2026
Saving History, With and Without AI
Speaker: Dr. Kathleen Thompson, author
Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.
Program Description –Artificial Intelligence is a hot topic and tool today. Can its usage be helpful in family genealogical research? Thompson will advise on both the helpful uses of this technology as well as exposing pitfalls to family genealogical research. Additionally, she will share the work of *Historic Displays*, a company that creates history-based displays for museums as well as governments and businesses. You can preview their work at www.HistoricDisplays.com. The company uses traditional time intensive research and interviews as well as AI for specific tasks. Steve Procko is a partner with Thompson in this enterprise.

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

November Monthly Meeting - Saturday, November 21, 2026
Election and appointment of 2027 GCGSI Board.
Our Celtic Origins
Speaker: George McClellan, author
Gilmer County Library Lower Level - 2:00 p.m.
Program Description – Learn about your Scots-Irish heritage.

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 12, 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, salads, and/or desserts to share. 2027 GCGSI Board members will be installed. Door prizes will be given.

Additional options: History of Copper Mining in Ducktown
The Evolution of Ellijay – Barbara Dover
Moonshining in Gilmer County – possibly by Dwight Sanford and/or others
First Families presentation (on Holts & Whiteners, Watkins, Sisson, Allen, etc)