



# PASTFINDERS OF SOUTH LAKE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

<https://pastfindersslc.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/pastfindersofSL>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/pastfinderssouthlake>

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As the seasons change, yes even here in Florida, we transition our attention to different activities. Programs that have been dormant for the summer gear up, others that have kept steadily kept going welcome returning and new members. What will you become involved with this year?



The Cooper Memorial Library and Pastfinders of South Lake digital collaboration. An important mission to preserve local history. Don Kotar, Shirley McDaniel, Sandra Oliver and Pam Saucerman hard at work.



Speaker programs, special interest groups (SIG) Window at the library Heritage Day in Clermont Research help & Volunteering with activities in the genealogy room. (Melinda Short stands by to help Anjie Mercer.)



A great resource is old newspapers. Old advertisements, social news, court procedures, lost Family letters it is fascinating reading and loads of information.

## Welcome to the Fall Edition of the Pastfinders newsletter!

Dear Members,

As we embark on a new season with Pastfinders of South Lake County Genealogical Society, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to each of you—returning friends and newcomers alike. The changing of the seasons brings a sense of renewal and fresh opportunity, and so does our society's ongoing commitment to exploring our shared histories and family stories.

It has already been a busy season, filled with vibrant activity and enthusiastic participation. From our very first program, coffee chats, Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings, volunteers at the library and many behind the scenes activities, it has already been a busy start to the year.

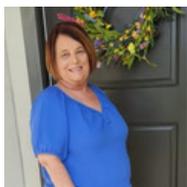
We would also like to take a special moment to highlight the tireless dedication of our very active President, Anjanette Mercer. Much like the energizer rabbit, Anjanette is always on the go—her enthusiasm and leadership keep our society moving forward. Many of the hours she devotes to our mission go unseen, but we want to express our heartfelt appreciation for her steadfast commitment and for all the ways she inspires us to dig deeper and reach higher. Thank you, Anjanette, for your passion and perseverance.

Whether you are just beginning your genealogical journey or are a seasoned researcher, this season promises to be rich with exciting programs, educational workshops, and opportunities to connect with fellow enthusiasts. We look forward to expanding our knowledge, sharing discoveries, and strengthening the bonds that unite us through our common pursuit of ancestry and heritage.

This year, we will be hosting a variety of events, including guest speaker sessions, hands-on research clinics, and collaborative projects at the library and beyond. Be sure to check our newsletter and website regularly for updates on upcoming meetings and activities. Your participation is what makes our community thrive, and we encourage you to get involved, share your ideas, and reach out with questions or suggestions.

Let's celebrate the start of this new season with energy and enthusiasm as we continue to honor the past and inspire each other for the future. Together, we can uncover the stories that shape our lives and preserve them for generations to come.

Welcome to a new season of discovery! Click the links in the newsletter, there are tons!



Carol Landry-Fiske  
Newsletter Editor

by Anjanette Mercer, President

## The Unique Relationship Between Pastfinders and Cooper Memorial Library

The partnership between Pastfinders and the Cooper Memorial Library is multifaceted. In essence, Pastfinders serve as the curators of the library's genealogy room and as the caretakers of its specialized collection. Our stewardship ensures that invaluable historical resources remain accessible and organized for community use.

### The Genealogy Room: Resources and Facilities

The Genealogy Room is a dedicated space within the library, featuring 24 bookshelves filled with a wide variety of research materials. These include books, magazines, binders, and albums, offering researchers comprehensive support for their genealogical and historical inquiries. Additionally, several file cabinets house donated collections related to genealogy and the local history of the area.



To facilitate the examination of older records, the room is equipped with a microfilm and microfiche reader. This specialized device enables users to access and study archival documents preserved on film or fiche—a common storage method for historical newspapers, official documents, and other significant materials.

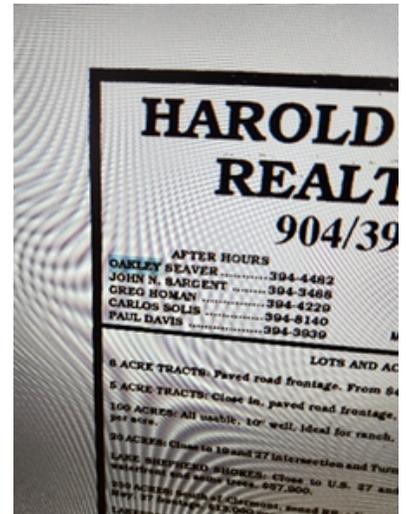
### Digitization Efforts and Volunteer Opportunities

Pastfinders is actively engaged in digitizing select documents from our collections. The goal is to make these materials accessible to a broader audience via the Digital Public Library of America. This project not only preserves valuable historical records but also simplifies the research process for everyone. We continually seek new volunteers to contribute to this important and commendable initiative.

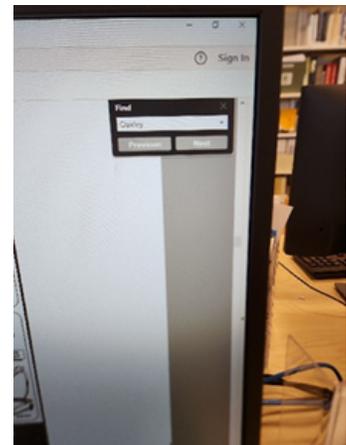


## Preserving Local Newspapers and Archival Materials

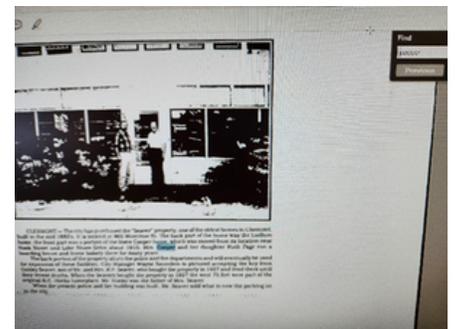
The genealogy room's filing cabinets contain a rich assortment of maps and microfilm reels featuring early South Lake County newspapers. These include editions of the Clermont Clarion, Clermont Press, South Lake Press, and Groveland Press, with publication dates spanning from 1914 to 2010. Several years ago, the library undertook a microfilm preservation project to salvage newspaper issues. I was informed that, unfortunately some papers were damaged by a ceiling collapse in the old library before they could be preserved.



By approximately 2018, Pastfinders began efforts to preserve deteriorating microfilm reels. The Cooper Memorial Library Association played a pivotal role in facilitating the digitization process. On May 23, 2024, Iron Mountain collected copies of each reel for scanning. The encrypted digitised files were returned for inspection on July 24, 2024, along with the original microfilm. While the quality of the digitized copies depends on the state of the original reels and some damage may affect readability, most pages remain clear and accessible.



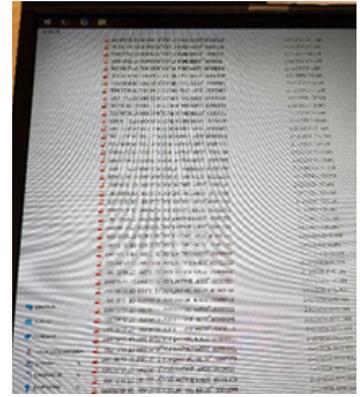
Currently, searchable digitized images are available on four desktop computers in the genealogy room. These computers also offer access to public research websites and additional materials, such as records from Edge Funeral Home and local newspaper archives.



## About the South Lake County Newspapers Collection

The library's collection of South Lake County newspapers is particularly noteworthy. The earliest issue discovered dates back to December 25, 1913.

Copies of these newspapers are also preserved on microfilm at the Library of Congress and the University of Florida Libraries. However, the collection at Cooper Memorial Library is the most extensive assembly of these Lake County newspapers on film and is the only location where digitized versions with OCR capability are available. dd a little bit of body text



In March of this year, the South Lake Tablet published a story highlighting Ann Dupee, the newspaper's owner, and her lasting legacy in connection with this digitization program:

[Ann Dupee's Legacy Lives On At Cooper Memorial Library | South Lake Tablet as featured in the South Lake Tablet.](#)

### Acknowledgments

Pastfinders extend their gratitude to Rachael Smoyak, the Library Regional Branch Manager, and the Cooper Memorial Library Association Board for their substantial contributions to the success of the Lake County Newspaper Archives Digitization Project. Appreciation is also due to Iron Mountain Library Services for their excellent communication and facilitation throughout the digitization process.

Researchers interested in Lake County history—or those simply curious about details like the price of milk in the 1900s—are encouraged to visit Cooper Memorial Library to explore its extensive local archives and historical collections.

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## Family History Month Lobby Display



Pastfinders have beautifully decorated the main floor of the library for October and November. This effort is part of our initiative to showcase Cooper Memorial Library and the various programs and activities it supports.

**\*A special thank you\*\*** to everyone who contributed items for display. If you live nearby, we invite you to visit the library and check out our window display!

While you're there, don't miss the opportunity to explore our genealogy room on the second floor, where you'll find an impressive collection of both new and previously overlooked resources. *Please remember to sign in!\*\**

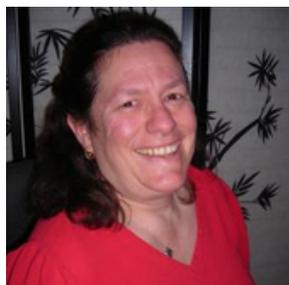
Thursday, October 9, 2025 5:00 pm EST



**Researching Historic LGBTQ Relatives**  
presented by Janice Sellers

*Please note*  
**Zoom only**

You may have heard the rumors about “that” bachelor uncle or aunt and their choice of roommates. Perhaps you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community and would like to know if anyone else in your family chose that life style as well. This is valid family history research, but the ethical concerns about the past and the present must be considered. Understanding gay history is critical to finding and understanding information.



**Janice M. Sellers** is an international speaker and genealogist. She is related to actor Peter Sellers and to John of Gaunt, son of a king and father of a king. At least that's what her grandparents told her. Unfortunately, they were wrong, but that's why she has researched her family for 50 years and now helps others find the right pieces to fit their genealogy puzzles. She specializes in Jewish, Black, forensic, and newspaper research.

[Register Here](#) for Zoom link

Thursday, November 13, 2025 5:00 pm EST



**Creating an Ancestor Sketch**  
presented by Thomas MacEntee

*Please note*  
**meet** at Cooper Memorial Library, Room 108. Come early to socialize and have refreshment. or **ZOOM**

Do you dream of writing a book for future generations but are overwhelmed at the prospect? How about an ancestor sketch? In this program Thomas will include the Basic Elements of an Ancestor Biography Sketch, Ancestor Sketch Formats, Importing Genealogy Research Information, Source Citation, Copyrighted Material, and Credits, Documenting Family Stories, Tips, Tricks, and Tools and a Resource List , Anecdotes, and citations. Once you have a few sketches, you can compile them into a comprehensive book!



**Thomas MacEntee** author, educator, advocate, entrepreneur, and that “genealogy guy” who helps you accomplish your family history goals. Thomas MacEntee is a guy with a love of punk rock music but also art history who somehow “fell” into the technology industry years ago. He left a lucrative tech career to pursue his love of family history and genealogy. Technology and historical research seem like opposites, but “tech people” like Thomas are needed to guide you through the maze of options so you can find your ancestors and bring their stories to life.

Register **here** for Zoom link:

<https://tinyurl.com/AncestorSketch5PMNov13>

**be sure to check out PastfindersSLC.org for additional information.**



Family Tree Maker is coming to Florida! Join us for a special program covering the latest FTM 2024 features, FTM usage tips, tree management, and more, with plenty of time for Q&A.

If you need help with your upgrade to FTM 2024 or any specific questions please bring your computer for individual hands on time at the end of each session with our Family Tree Maker Ambassadors.

Registration is required – please see your society Eventbrite link below. More specific details will come via our calendar page in the coming weeks. [www.familytreemaker.com/calendar](http://www.familytreemaker.com/calendar) as well as via email to Family Tree Maker customers.

**Monday, December 8 – Clermont**

**Time: 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM**

Venue: Cooper Memorial Library, 2525 Oakley Seaver Dr, Clermont, FL 34711 Capacity: 150

Eventbrite Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1748965475819?aff=odtdtcreator>

Status: Three active FTM SIGs Partner Societies: Central Florida Genealogical Society Kinseekers Genealogical Society Pastfinders of South Lake County

\*\*\*please note there are 3 societies involved, if you are interested, I would be sure to register now.

**JOIN US**

Instead of a program on **December 11th**

Pastfinders will be meeting  
for a holiday luncheon

Save the date! More details coming.

## SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG)



**IRISH SIG**  
meets at 1 pm EST  
3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, of October

please read the note on the following page Changes are coming Soon...

all groups held via Zoom and you must register first

Karen Keaneley Beagle leads this group. It consists of genealogists with varying levels of experience who gather to exchange their insights on Irish research with fellow members. This collaborative sharing of information fosters a wealth of ideas and guidance on understanding the reasons behind ancestors' departures from the Emerald Isle.

To register: <https://form.jotform.com/PastfindersSLC/Join-Irish-SIG>



**BRITISH ANCESTORS SIG**  
meets at 7 pm EST  
the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month

Led by Carol Landry-Fiske, this group consists of genealogists with diverse levels of experience. They come together to exchange insights about the British Empire and the continents and countries where their ancestors settled. Much like the winds that filled their sails, the English have spread across the globe.

To register: <https://form.jotform.com/vagabondiam/British-SIG>



**Family Tree Maker -**  
meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays  
of the month at 2:00 EST

This group follows the Companion book for FTM . It will help you understand the programs capabilities better. <https://form.jotform.com/240597315736059>



**Family Book Creator -**  
meets 4<sup>th</sup> Monday  
of the month at 7 pm EST

This is a support group for those who are already using FBC and Rebecca Shamblins "Leaving a Legacy" method to create a book. If you are signing up for this program you must already have knowledge of this program.

Register Here <https://form.jotform.com/242118558449161>

# SIG information



Irish SIG News by Karen Kenealy Beagle

Hello, fellow Irish genies! There is a change in the schedule for the Irish SIG (Special Interest Group) Zoom for the coming year starting in October. We have 3 Pastfinder SIGS back-to-back in the same week (3rd week) so I am making this change.

Here is the new Irish SIG schedule:

4th Monday of the month at 1:00 Eastern. Please change to 1:00 so that the West Coasters can join in.

November 24th at 1:00 (before the 27th--Thanksgiving)

Dec 22nd at 1:00

Jan 26th at 1:00

Feb 23rd at 1:00

March 23 at 1:00

April 17th at 1:00

May 25th at 1:00

June 22nd at 1:00

I hope this works for you. We will see how the holidays go. Dave and I are traveling to Seattle over both Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays this year.

Please let me know of topics we can discuss. I plan to look at the Northern Ireland counties and do a little research on research tips for researching this area. I have Irish ancestors from this area but going back to earlier migrations to the US before the famine years. We are in this together! Peggy will be presenting some information on Canadian Irish immigration.

Beannacht De leat (slawn -ban-ukht) "God's blessings with you"



Come join the coffee chats at Just Coffee in Clermont

Karen Beagle invites you to join her and others on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 10 am.

**Family History Research Class**

**by Cathy Kwech**

**will meet on ZOOM**

**November 5, 12, 19**

**1 - 3 pm**

**Never Stop Learning**  
Beginning Researchers and others

**Our sister, Kinseekers Genealogical Society also has SIGs (Labor & Employment Records, FTM, Military, Black Family, NARA) which we have highlighted on the attached calendar.**

**For more information go to**

<https://kinseekers.org/index.php>



Cruise and DNA Genealogy  
Conference  
sailing  
November 6 - 18, 2026

The folks at Heritage Books present a 12-night roundtrip journey leaving from the port of Miami on November 6, 2026 including a partial transit through the Panama Canal.

Come learn from top Genetic Genealogists  
Angie Bush – Expert in using DNA to break through genealogy “brick walls.”  
Blaine Bettinger – The Genetic Genealogist, known for making DNA research clear and actionable (Leeds Method)

Included are Exclusive One-on-One Consultations with DNA Experts  
Angie Bush  
Blaine Bettinger  
Craig R. Scott

for more information click here

<https://heritagebooks.com/products/2026-cruise-conference-fee>



There are countless activities available in our region. Here's just a glimpse of what is nearby. These suggestions are perfect for enjoying time with visiting family and friends (as well as for yourselves!). Check them out! I have my eyes set on some I plan to attend.

[\(2\) Friends of Golden Triangle History | Facebook](#)

[EVENTS | WG Heritage](#)

[Okahumpka Rosenwald School - Division of Historical Resources - Florida Department of State](#)

[The Stetson Mansion - Deland, FL](#)

[The Old Courthouse Heritage Museum - Citrus County Historical Society, Florida Traditions](#)

[Groveland Historical Society and Museum of Florida](#)

Historical newspapers are an invaluable source in our research. They offer insights into the cultural, educational and social aspects of past generations. Some are behind a subscription pay wall and others are available for free through digital libraries or private sources. All are invaluable to our search. Pastfinders has and is involved in preserving newspapers and articles of interest of South Lake County. Cooper Memorial Library is the hosting site of these digital copies for the present and future generations.



*tracking family  
in newspapers*

## Some Free sources of historical newspapers

### [Florida Digital Newspaper Library](#)

items such as The Floridian published in Pensacola March 4, 1822 mentioning the Clermont Agricultural Society or Sketch of the Creek Country in the year 1798. You can search with a map finding a specific geographic area of Florida.

### [Chronicling America | The Library of Congress](#)

is accessed via the Library of Congress. The collection contains millions of newspaper pages from nearly every state and territory in the United States published through 1963. Ex. Der Deutsche printed in Baltimore, MD (1850's) or maybe you prefer St. Croix Avis printed in Christiansted, St. Croix, V.I. in 1860's. or even the Omaha Daily Bee from Omaha, Nebraska 1870 – 1922.

### [Browse by Partner | DPLA](#)

(Digital Public Library of America) partners with many other institutions and by following the link you can find many digital libraries in specific locations. A link to the Digital Library of Georgia opened with old Savannah morning news, 1904.

### [Home - Free Historic U.S. Newspapers by State - Research Guides at Purdue University Libraries](#)

this source divides the historic newspapers by states and regions of the United States. It is a centralized location to find many but not all free historical newspapers.

### [Google News Archive Search](#)

Did you know just looking for Google Free Historical Newspapers you could get a whole list of them? You can even use Google translate and translate the ones in foreign languages to English.

## Digital Historical Newspapers

<https://fultonhistory.com/>

The work of one man, Thomas Tryniski, who has spent the last 29 years digitizing old newspapers. What started with 1 postcard given to him by a colleague when he retired from his position as a manufacturing engineer at the age of 49 has turned into 57 million and counting pages of digitized newspapers from the US and Canada. It is a great resource!

[Home | Search the archive | British Newspaper Archive](#)

allows you to search millions of pages for free from the 1700's onward in courtesy of Findmypast and the British Library. Full access does cost.

### **Some subscription historical newspapers sites.**

**Most offer a free 7 day trial. Pastfinders has a discount code for one.**

<https://www.newspapers.com>

Newspapers.com by Ancestry.com. This mega search engine is the largest online newspaper archive with newspapers dating back to the 1700's. Look for plans to go on sale periodically. You can save directly to ancestry with either the basic or publisher extra subscription.

<https://newspaperarchive.com/>

Newspaper Archive, another site which you can browse by location from all over the world or by publication.

[OldNews.com: Historical Newspapers Online Archive](#) launched in 2024 as part of MyHeritage. Has many pages in foreign languages.

[www.genealogybank.com](http://www.genealogybank.com)

GenealogyBank A mega search engine with over 16,000 big city and small-town newspapers. Newspapers from the late 1690's to 2016 are available. Over 260 million obituaries and death records, the largest collection online.

Pastfinders has a discount of 44% off membership until December 31, 2025. Annual membership will be \$55.95 vs \$99.90, [www.genealogybank.com/2025event](http://www.genealogybank.com/2025event). The code is [2025EV](#)

# Summer Travel

by Christine McLaughlin

Pastfinders member, Christine McLaughlin, recently shared her experiences from a historical road trip she took this summer. Can you picture traveling along a segment of the Oregon Trail in an authentic manner? Personally, I would certainly miss the comfort of my cushioned, air-conditioned car, as well as the convenience of restroom stops! However, I would have also missed out on the incredible aspects that made this adventure so memorable. Hats off to Christine and her grandson for engaging in this remarkable activity! What a fantastic bonding experience for a grandmother and grandson—a road trip he will cherish forever!

In June my 16 year old grandson and I made a 3 day trip of 40 miles on the Oregon Trail riding in -----a covered wagon and -----on horseback. I wanted my grandson to experience the pioneer life on the Oregon Trail.

The leader provided opportunities my grandson to learn several skills of the pioneer:

- Driving the team of horses for the wagon, including harnessing and unharnessing of the horses
- Riding and controlling a horse
- The care and feeding of the horses
- Build a campfire to cook meals
- Putting up/taking down our teepee tent



The terrain of the trail was challenging! It included pastures, valleys, up & down hills and rocky ridges, and crossing rivers. I rode in the wagon and it ranged from bumpy to being on a roller coaster. Now I understand why pioneers would rather walk than ride the wagon.

Over the 3 days the leader told stories of the trail and stopped at sites to explain challenges, calamities, and losses the pioneers experienced.

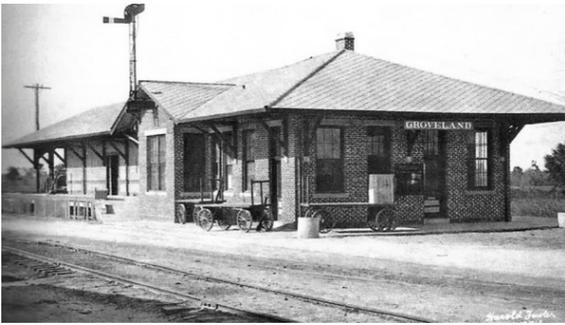
This experience far exceeded all expectations my grandson and I had of the trip and generated his interest in learning more about the history of the different trails of the westward movement. In addition, my grandson wants to go again next year and now he wants a horse!

If you are interested, this was conducted by <https://www.historictrailswest.com/> that is owned and operated by Morris Carter just outside of Casper Wyoming.



# Spotlight on Groveland

**1925: Groveland Train Depot**



**Archibald Gano Sawmill 1880's, Villa City**



**1866 Daniel Sloan's House on Edge Island /First known house in Groveland**



**Downtown Groveland: 1915**



[All photos courtesy of Groveland Historical Society](https://www.grovelandhistory.org/)

<https://www.grovelandhistory.org/>

Some of Groveland's early founders were:

**Daniel Sloan 1866**

**Simon Thomas Brown 1870 (Brown's Ford)**

**Archibald Gano (Millford)**

**George King 11885 (Villa City previously Millford)**

**Lewis Taylor and his brothers 1889 (Taylorville previously Brown's Ford)**

**Elliot Erastus Edge and his son Lacy Day Edge (Youngest Florida Speaker of the House) 1899**

**John Ray Arnold 1910**

**John Washington Beach 1911 (Groveland previously Taylorville)**

picture of man with alligator in the last newsletter was Loram P Brown of Groveland



**Simon Thomas Brown b. 1845 (Brown's Ford Pass is named after him)**



Simon Thomas Brown, born in 1845 in Columbia County, Florida, married his wife Polly in 1867. The couple settled in the early 1870s several miles north of Groveland at Indian House Lake near the present-day intersection of Highways 19 and 27. Later the couple and their eight children built a log cabin a short distance south near a place in the Palatamaha River where it was shallow enough for wagons and livestock to cross. The pass became known as Brown's Ford. One of the area's first schools was built nearby and was named Brown's Ford School. Brown grew sugarcane among other crops. In 1886, he reportedly left after work one day without notice. Family members discovered some time later that he had married a woman named Sallie Cinderella Carpenter. He lived the rest of his life in Hardee County. The pass that still bears his name is a popular boat ramp and fishing destination. (Courtesy of Peggy Parrish Sloan.)