
Genealogy Research

A Beginner's Guide to Family History Research



Local History & Genealogy
Bay County Public Library
898 W. 11th St.

Panama City, FL 32401
(850) 522-2132
genealogy@nwrls.com



Steps to Start Researching Your Family History

STEP 1— Plan and Organize

Identify and collect the forms you will need to begin documenting your family. Do you want to store the information electronically, in print, or both? See forms and software section for a list of resources available online.

STEP 2 — Identify available family resources

This includes interviewing relatives and collecting family documents. Items to look for include files, boxes, scrapbooks, photo albums, safe-deposit boxes, marriage licenses, birth or death certificates, family Bible, baby books, address books, autograph books, letters, newspaper clippings, Christmas cards, and anything else with names, dates, or addresses.


STEP 3 — Begin your tree

Start with yourself and work backwards one generation at a time.

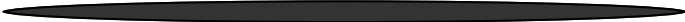


Wormsloe Plantation, GA

STEP 4 — Research



Plan trips to visit cemeteries, courthouses, libraries, places your family lived, churches your family attended, family reunions, and more! Make sure to contact each place before visiting to know the resources that will be available to you.



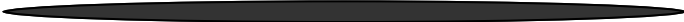
Visit your local library and use the genealogy books, periodicals, microfilm, and databases available to you for free!




Use search engines, such as Google, to identify potential helpful websites. Make sure to scrutinize each website for trustworthiness and accuracy.



Read about the different times and places of your ancestors. Read books about the customs, social life, and history of places your family may have lived.



Join genealogy and historical societies and attend genealogy classes, seminars, and programs.



Don't forget about sources such as newspapers and maps to help you find traces of your family!

Forms and Software

Find printable forms at:

Ancestry.com:

<http://www.ancestry.com/download/charts#familysheet>

Family Tree Magazine:

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/FreeForms>

Cyndi's List:

<http://cyndislist.com/charts>

Mid-Continent Public Library:

<http://www.mymcpl.org/genealogy/family-history-forms>



Find software at:

Cyndi's List:

<http://cyndislist.com/charts/software/>

CNET:

<http://download.cnet.com/windows/genealogy-software/>

Family Tree Builder

<http://www.myheritage.com/family-tree-builder>

Archives.com

<http://www.archives.com/genealogy/free-software.html>

Free Genealogy Websites

Family Search:

<https://familysearch.org/>

***Users must create a free account and sign-in to see the original scanned documents.**

Find A Grave:

<http://www.findagrave.com/>

***Photographs and family connections available in some records. These records are now included in Ancestry.com's database.**

USGENWEB:

<http://www.usgenweb.org/>

***Volunteers work to provide free genealogy websites for research in every state and county in the United States.**

Cyndi's List:

<http://www.cyndislist.com/>

***A vast genealogy directory useful for getting rid of those pesky brick walls.**

Official Land Patent Records (Bureau of Land Management):

<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System:

<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/soldiers-and-sailors-database.htm>

Vital Records:

<http://www.vitalrec.com/index.html>

National Archives Resources for Genealogists:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/index.html>

Florida Confederate Pension Applications:

<http://www.floridamemory.com/collections/pensionfiles/>

AfriGeneas:

<http://www.afrigeneas.com/>

***Site devoted to African-American Genealogy**

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database

<http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database>

Free Genealogy Websites (Continued)

Geneanet:

<http://www.geneanet.org/>

***Mostly free website requiring sign-up. Focuses on French Genealogy.**

Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island:

<http://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/>

Genealogy Trails:

<http://genealogytrails.com/>

GenealogyInTime Magazine List of Top 100 Websites:

<http://www.genealogyintime.com/articles/top-100-genealogy-websites-of-2016-page02.html>

***Includes free and paid websites.**

Bay County Genealogical Society:

<http://www.nwfgenealogy.com>

Florida Hidden Treasures:

<http://flhiddentreasures.com/>

***Includes searchable digitized editions of early Bay County Newspapers, maps, and more!**

Bay County Genealogy Gateway:

<http://www.nwfgenealogy.com/gengate/index.htm>

FLGenWeb Project:

<http://fl-genweb.org/bay/>

RootsWeb:

<http://home.rootsweb.com>

ThoughtCo:

<https://www.thoughtco.com/genealogy-4133308>

***How-to articles on research basics, online searching, and sharing and preserving the past**

Criteria for Evaluating Genealogy Websites

Check for:	Questions to ask of the site:
Purpose	What's the purpose of the website? Is it there to sell something, or to provide genealogical or historical information?
Objectivity	Is the information biased? Is there advertising? (Note: Many genealogy sites have advertising, but that does not necessarily mean the content is untrustworthy.)
Currency	How current is the site? Is there a date displayed on the website? Are there broken or dead links?
Authority	Who's the author? What are the author's credentials? Can the author be contacted? What organization does the author represent? What organization owns the website? Is it a nonprofit (.org), a business or personal site (.com, .net), government, (.gov), or university (.edu)?
Accuracy	Are claims supported with references and works cited? Is the information presented clearly and free from major grammatical errors?
Security and Privacy	Does this site use a secure web URL (i.e. https) (if a password is required)? Does the site have a privacy policy?
Copyright	Do you have permission or can you receive permission to use the information from the website?

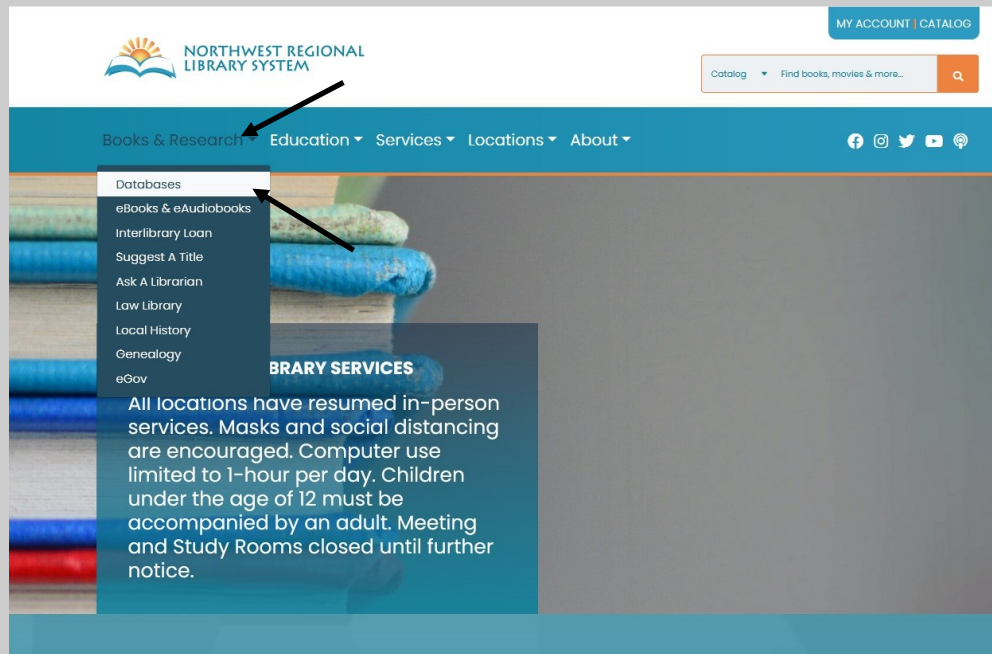
A website does not need to perfectly match all of the criteria to still be a useful and trustworthy source.

Genealogy Resources Available @ the Bay County Public Library

1. Go to www.nwrls.com

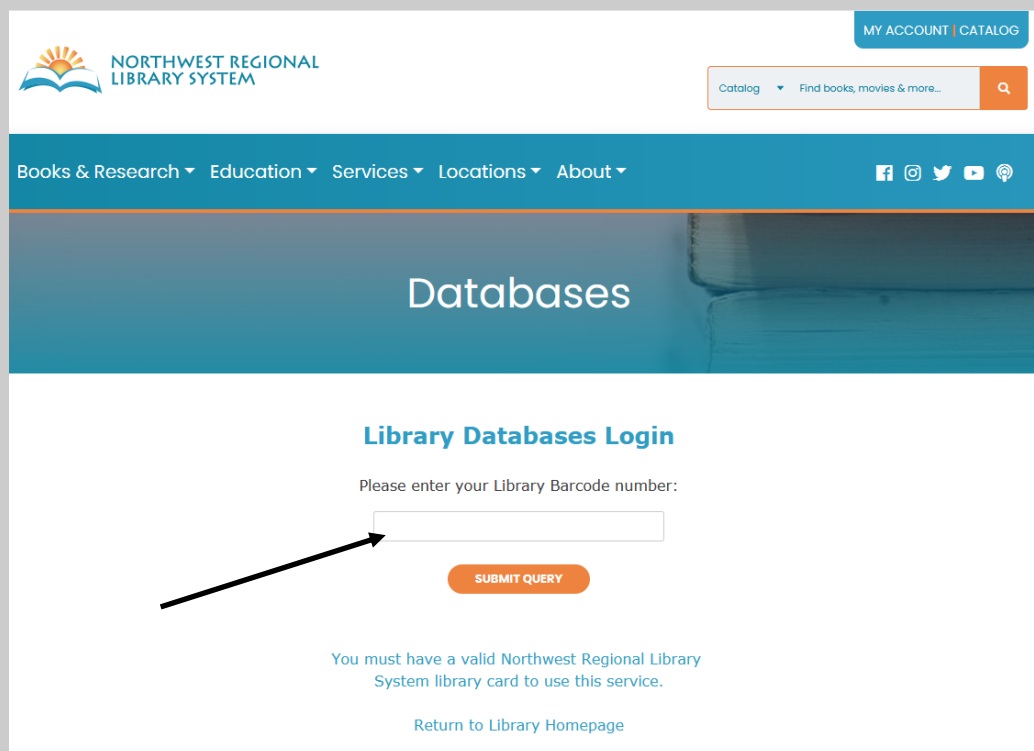
2. Hover your mouse over “Books & Research”

3. Click “Databases”

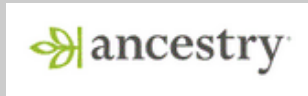


4. Enter your library barcode number

***If you are at an NWRLS library, you will not need a library card**



5. Once redirected, click the icons to explore these resources:



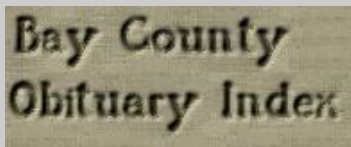
Ancestry.com

***Available only at Bay County Public Library
and Corinne Costin Gibson Memorial Library
in Port St. Joe**



American Ancestors

***Only available on the premises of the Bay
County Public Library.**



Bay County Obituary Index

***Available on the Bay County
Genealogical Society's website.**



FamilySearch

***Bay County Public Library is now a
FamilySearch Affiliate library. You must sign in-
to your FamilySearch account using one of the
library's genealogy research computers to get
access .**



HeritageQuest

***Available for customers at home or in the library.**



Newspaper Archive

***Available for customers at home or in the
library.**



WorldCat

***Available for customers at home or in the
library. Create a free account and search
libraries worldwide for those hard-to-find
genealogy resources.**

Books to Get You Started

*Titles with an asterisk can be checked out. Information in red displays its location in the library. Don't hesitate to ask a librarian for help finding these and any titles!

*Allen, Desmond. *First Steps in Genealogy: A Beginner's Guide to Researching Your Family History*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1998.

Adult Nonfiction 929 ALL

Beidler, James M. *The Family Tree Historical Newspapers Guide*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2018. **GEN R 929.1072 BEI**

Bettinger, Blaine T. *The Family Tree Guide to DNA Testing and Genetic Genealogy*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2018. **GEN R 929.1072 BET**

Bruce, Durie. *Understanding Documents for Genealogy & Local History*. Stroud, 2013. **GEN R 929.1 DUR**

*Carmack, Sharon D. *The Family Tree Guide to Finding Your Ellis Island Ancestors: A Genealogist's Essential Guide to Navigating the Ellis Island Database and Passenger Arrival List*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2005.

Adult Nonfiction 929 CAR

*- -. *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your Female Ancestors: Special Strategies for Uncovering Hard-to-Find Information About Your Female Lineage*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1998. **Adult Nonfiction 929.1 CAR**

- -. *Organizing Your Family History Search: Efficient & Effective Ways to Gather and Protect Your Genealogical Research*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 1999.

GEN R 929.1 CAR

Clifford, Karen. *The Complete Beginner's Guide to Genealogy, the Internet, and Your Genealogy Computer Program*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co, 2011.

GEN R 929 CLI

Combs-Bennett, Shannon. *Genealogy Basics in 30 Minutes: The Quick Guide to Creating a Family Tree, Building Connections with Relatives, and Discovering the Stories of Your Ancestors*. Boston, MA: i30 Media Corporation, 2016.

GEN R 929.1 COM

Cooke, Lisa L. *How to Find Your Family History in Newspapers*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2012. **GEN R 929 COO**

*- -. *Turn Your iPad into a Genealogy Powerhouse (& other Tablets too!)*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2012. **Adult Nonfiction 929 COO**

Croom, Emily Ann. *Unpuzzling Your Past: The Best-Selling Basic Guide to Genealogy*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 2010. **GEN R 929 CRO**

Dollarhide, William. *The Census Book: A Genealogist's Guide to Federal Census Facts, Schedules, and Indexes*. Bountiful, UT: Heritage Quest, 2000.

GEN R 929.1 DOL

Drake, Paul. *What Did They Mean By That?: A Dictionary of Historical and Genealogical Terms Old & New*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 2013.

GEN R 423 DRA

Greenwood, Val D. *The Researcher's Guide to American Genealogy*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2017. **GEN R 929.1 GRE**

The Handybook for Genealogists: United States of America*. Draper, UT: Everton Publishers, 2002. **Adult Nonfiction 929.3 HAN

Hendrickson, Nancy. *Discover Your Family History Online: A Step-By-Step Guide to Starting Your Genealogy Search*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2012.

GEN R 929 HEN

- -. *Unofficial Guide to Ancestry.com: How to Find Your Family History on the #1 Genealogy Website*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2014

*Hite, Richard. *Sustainable Genealogy: Separating Fact from Fiction in Family Legends*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2013. **Adult Nonfiction 929 HIT**

Jones, Thomas. *Mastering Genealogical Proof*. Arlington, VA: National Genealogical Society, 2013. **GEN R 929 JON**

Kennett, Debbie. *DNA and Social Networking: A Guide to Genealogy in the Twenty-First Century*. Stroud, 2011. **GEN R 929.102856754 KEN**

Mills, Elizabeth S. *Evidence Explained: Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2015. **GEN R 907.2 MIL**

*Morgan, George M. *How to Do Everything With Your Genealogy*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012. **Adult Nonfiction 929.1 MOR**

Pfeiffer, Laura S. *Hidden Sources: Family History in Unlikely Places*. Orem, UT: Ancestry, 1999. **GEN R 929 PFE**

Rasmussen, Geoffrey. *Digital Imaging Essentials: Techniques and Tips for Genealogists & Family Historians*. Middleton, ID: Rasmussen, 2013.

GEN R 702.8 RAS

Red Book: American State, County, and Town Sources. Provo, UT: Ancestry, 2004. **GEN R 929 RED**

Rising, Marsha H. *Family Tree Problem Solver: Proven Methods for Scaling the Inevitable Brick Wall*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2005. **GEN R 929.1072 RIS**

***Smith, Drew. *Organize Your Genealogy: Strategies and Solutions for Every Researcher*. Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2016. Adult Nonfiction 929.1 SMI**

***Smith, Franklin C. *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your African-American Ancestors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 2003. Adult Nonfiction 929 SMI**

***The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*. Provo, UT: Ancestry, 2006.
GEN R 016.929 SOU**

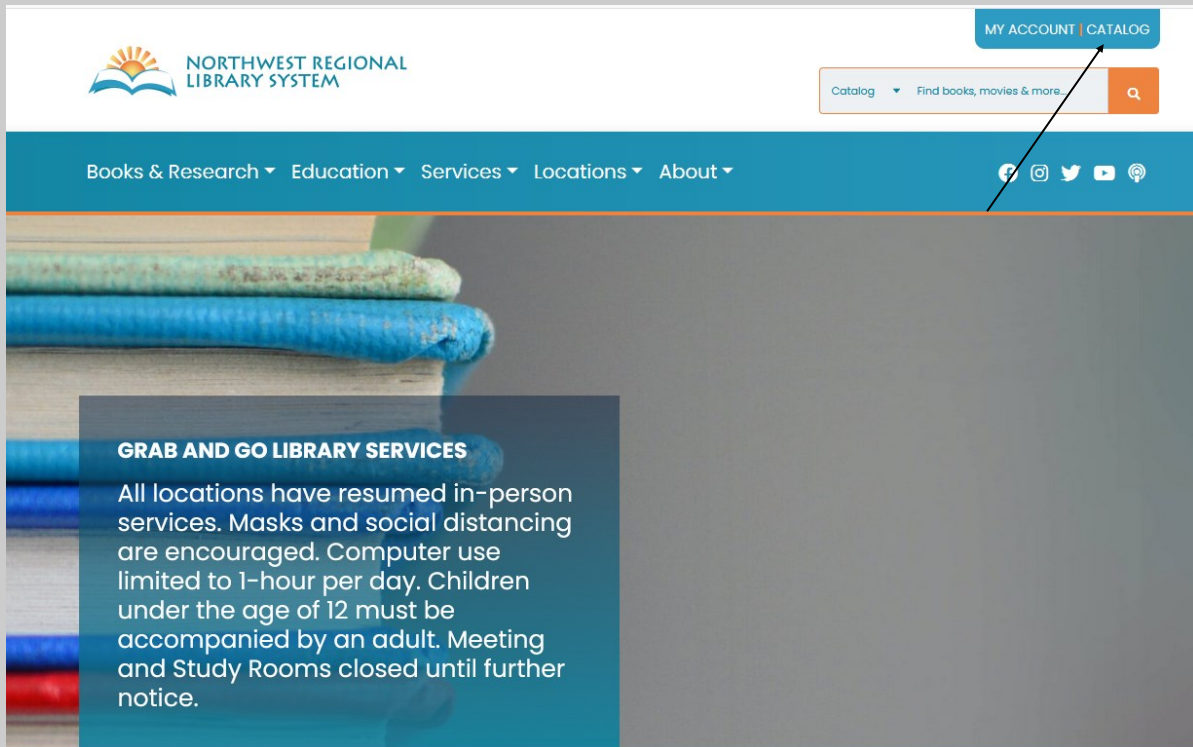
**Sperry, Kip. *A Guide to Mormon Family History Sources*. Provo, UT: Ancestry, 2007.
GEN R 929.1072 SPE**

***Sturdevant, Katherine S. *Bringing Your Family to Life Through Social History*. Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 2000. Adult Nonfiction 929 STU**

Use the library's online catalog to find additional materials

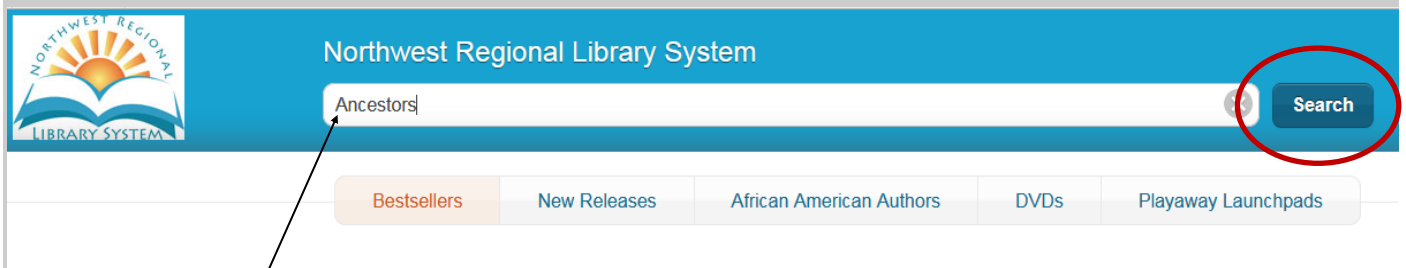
1. Go to www.nwrls.com

2. Click catalog in the top-right corner



3. Type in a keyword such as “Genealogy,” “Alabama Census,” or “Passenger Lists” in the search bar

4. Click “Search”



Use the library's online catalog to find additional materials

5. Filter your search on the left – Click “Collection” and then click on “Genealogy”

The screenshot displays the Northwest Regional Library System's online catalog interface. The header features the library's logo and the name 'Northwest Regional Library System'. A search bar contains the term 'Ancestors'. Below the header, the left sidebar shows filter options. The 'Collection' filter is expanded, and 'GENEALOGY' is selected, indicated by an arrow. The main content area shows search results for 'Ancestors', including book titles, authors, and availability status.

Northwest Regional Library System

Search Results for **Ancestors** (Save Search)

Sort By Relevance

Library Catalog 328
Britannica 1229

Searching
11 Locations Change

Format

- Book 289
- Audiobook 19
- eResource 16
- Book on CD 14
- eBook 10
- Large Print 7
- + Show More

New Titles

Author

Lexile

AR Reading Level

AR Interest Level

Series

Collection

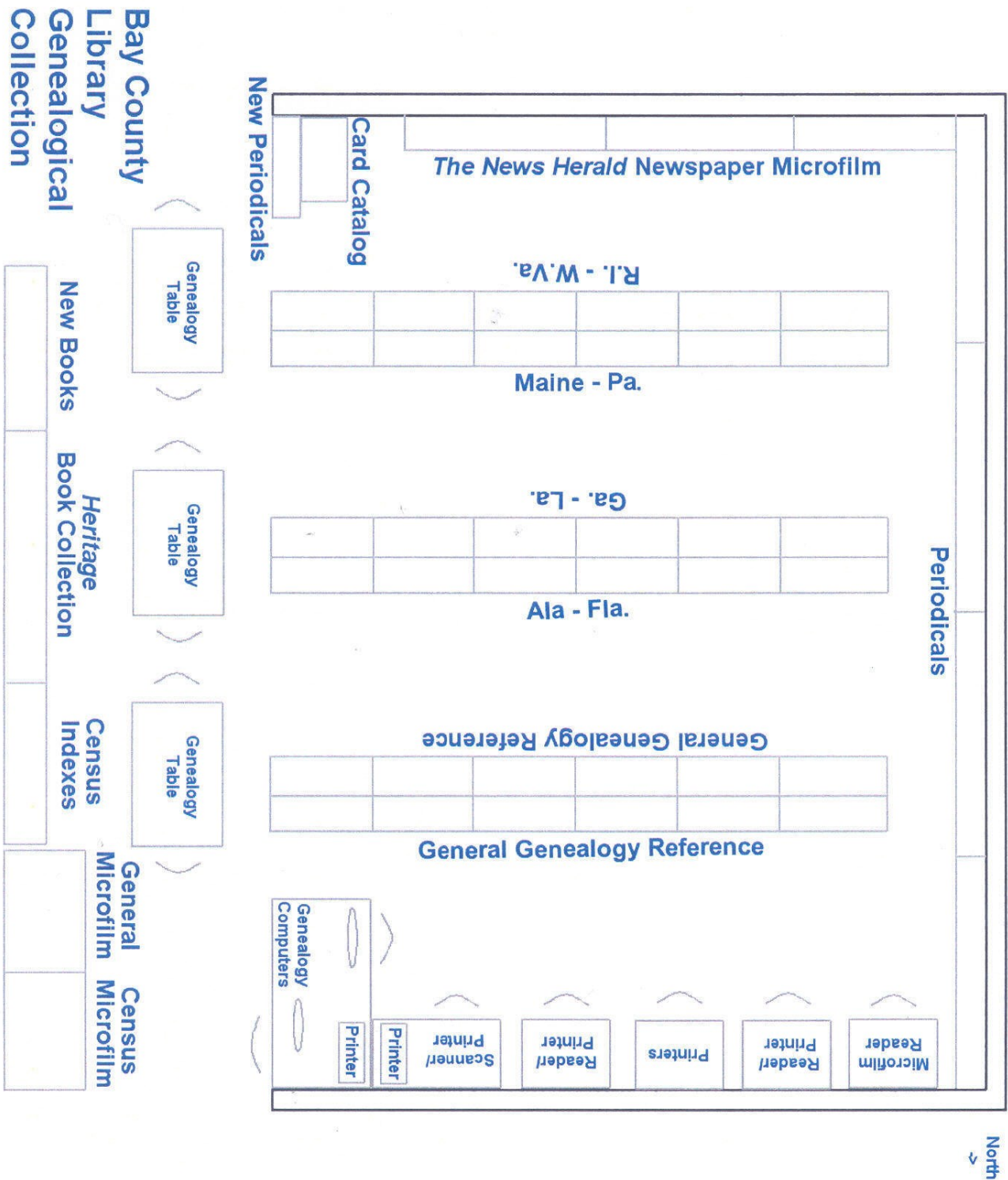
- GENEALOGY** 118
- ADULT NONFICTION 61
- JUV FICTION 23
- ADULT FICTION 20
- ADULT MYSTERY 11
- ADULT SCIENCE FIC 10
- + Show More

Ancestors and kin (1988)
By Coggeshall, Robert Walden
Book
2 Non-Check Out (View Selected Locations)
Place Hold Add To List

The ancestors of Donald Ferdinand Bennett (1930-1999)
By Bennett, Judy.
Book
1 Non-Check Out (View Selected Locations)
Place Hold Add To List

Ancestors in German archives : a guide to fa
Book
2 Non-Check Out (View Selected Locations)
Place Hold Add To List

Map of the Bay County Library Genealogical Collection



NOTES

**Use this space for storing useful sources, websites, and passwords,
or even for brainstorming!**

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