GREAT FALLS GENEALOGY SOCIETY

The Falls Newsletter

APRIL 2026

Established 1975

DID YOU KNOW?

The $35 a year that you pay for your dues covers only a fraction of the expenses for the Society. As of March 1, we have 129 memberships for 2026. Here is a table that illustrates how much our GFGS budgeted expenses are per membership. As you can see, the 129 memberships does not cover the total of our budgeted expenses. If we only relied on our membership for our expenses, it would cost $69.95 per membership. GFGS does rely on donations and more members to help cover our expenses.

EXPENSE ITEMS	Budgeted	Per 129 Memberships
Advertising	$ 600.00	$ 4.65
Computer Software Transfer	$ 500.00	$ 3.88
Copy Machine Expense	$ 650.00	$ 5.04
Equipment Fund Transfer	$ 300.00	$ 2.33
Book Repair Transfer	$ 200.00	$ 1.55
Insurance	$ 525.00	$ 4.07
Library Supplies	$ 1,000.00	$ 7.75
Miscellaneous	$ 25.00	$ 0.19
Parking	$ 748.00	$ 5.80
Postage	$ 750.00	$ 5.81
Research Expense	$ 25.00	$ 0.19
Subscriptions	$ 1,850.00	$ 14.34
State Society Dues	$ 90.00	$ 0.70
Telephone/Internet	$ 1,260.00	$ 9.77
TSL	$ 50.00	$ 0.39
Web Site	$ 450.00	$ 3.49
Total Expenses	$ 9,023.00	$ 69.95

April 2026 Calendar of Events

Thursday, April 2nd—Acquisitions Meeting, 3 pm
Thursday, April 2nd—Board Meeting, 4 pm
Thursday, April 9th—General Meeting, 6 pm
Wednesday, April ?? - Wednesdays at 11, Janet D. Thomson, Facilitator, 11:00 am
Saturday, April 18—Learning Seminar—10:00—12:00 am, -BLM GLO Records, MT Cadastral, NARA Stacey Corcino, Facilitator, Montana Room, RSVP to GFGS to save a seat—only 10 available spots!

Upcoming Conferences

May 27—30, 2026 National Genealogical Society Annual Conference—Fort Wayne, Indiana, In Person and Virtual Registration

September 10—12, 2026 Montana Genealogical Society Conference—Montana Heritage Center, Helena. No Registration Page Yet.

September 24—26, 2026 Montana History Conference—DoubleTree by Hilton, Billings. No Registration Page Yet.

Interested in other conferences? Check out Conference Keeper. Conference Keeper was created as a single go-to website for finding information about genealogy and family history conferences. They list both virtual, hybrid, or in-person events. You can find a conference on almost any topic.

Membership News

Welcome to Our Newest members:

Mariann Sharp, Great Falls
Marilyn Besich, Great Falls

FREE FOR THE TAKING

As we look for additional shelf space to our Montana collection, we have decided to deaccession city directories that are also available in the Montana Room or Online. Directories for Helena, Bozeman, Kalispell, Missoula, Miles City, and Billings are available.

2026 Planned Schedule for Meetings

For planning purposes, here are the 2026 scheduled dates and times for Committees, Board, and General meetings:

Acquisitions 3:00 pm	**Board 4:00 pm**
2 April	2 April
7 May	7 May
4 June	4 June
2 July	2 July
6 August	6 August
3 September	3 September
1 October	1 October
5 November	5 November
3 December	3 December
General 6:00 pm	
9 April	14 May
10 September	8 October
12 November	10 December

Dates and times may be changed if needed through the year. Currently, meetings are hybrid format. The program will be before the meeting and the business meeting will be after the program. The length of the program will be announced if possible so Zoom participants can attend only the General Meeting if they desire.

For the consideration of others, when on Zoom please remember to mute your computer/phone during the presentations and classes.

Watch us on YouTube

We are an affiliated library with FamilySearch

MISSION OF THE GREAT FALLS GENEALOGY SOCIETY

The mission of the Great Falls Genealogy Society is to promote and encourage active interest in genealogy, compile accurate and complete genealogies and collect and preserve genealogical records. Additionally, the Society will foster education and training in genealogy through courses and instruction in genealogy, lectures, forums, seminars, and special work.

Officers:
Stacey Corcino, President (2023-2026)
Janet Thomson, Vice President (2018-2026)
Pegi Palmes, Secretary (2025-2026)
Cheryl Lucas, Treasurer (2014-2026)
Trustees: Donna Winters (2026-2028)
Diana Kirol (2021-2026)
Merle Anne McLeish (2023-2027)

Committee Chairs:
Acquisitions: Larry Spicer
Membership: Stacey Corcino
Publicity: Stacey Corcino
Publications: Cheryl Lucas
Projects: Janet D. Thomson
Research: Diane Green
Technology: Cheryl Lucas

Webmaster: Merle Anne McLeish
Newsletter Editor: Cheryl Lucas,

Society Library Hours:
Monday—Saturday
12:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.
Sunday
1:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

The Falls Newsletter is published monthly by the Great Falls Genealogy Society, 301 2nd Ave. N. Great Falls, MT 59401. Members of GFGS receive the newsletter as part of their membership.

Members and the public are encouraged to submit material for publications. Articles should be sent electronically if possible. Deadline for submission is the fifteenth of the month. Neither Great Falls Genealogy Society nor the editor assumes responsibility for errors of fact or opinions expressed by the contributor. The editor reserves the right to edit material prior to publication. Send articles to the office at the above address or electronically info@gfgenealogy.org.

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Great Falls Genealogy Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit so your donations are tax deductible.

Society Business

New in The Library As of March 2026

- 10th Annual Waking the Dead Tour
- After the Buffalo Days: Documents on the Crow Indians from the 1880's to the 1920's
- An Orphan's Home for Great Falls, Montana
- As Long as the Grass Grows and the Water Flows: An Indigenous Perspective of Blackfoot Land History
- The Boarding School Lagacy: Ten Contemporary Lakota Women Tell Their Stories
- Building Castles in the Air: Andreas Wormer, Immigrant Locator and Land Developer
- Faith, Hope, and Ethnicity: St. Mary's Parish in Butte
- History of Geraldine
- History of Navigation on the Yellowstone River
- History of the Big Hole Valley Vol 1 Index
- History of the Big Hole Valley Vol 2 Index
- A History of Warren, Idaho: Mining, Race, and Environment
- A History of Wolf Point's Public Schools
- Montana School For the Deaf and Blind
- Montana's School Districts Past and Present
- Reminiscings: Dutton, Montana 1909-1976 Index
- "This Is a Case for the Police!" The Butte Police Department 1914-1920
- Ulm Cemetery Listing
- Folklife and Superstition: The Luck, Lore, and Worldviews of Prairie Homesteaders
- Cascade County, Montana Records Inventory
- A Black Woman's West: The Life of Rose B. Gordon
- Aviation Memories (MT)
- First Church of the Nazarene Great Falls Sunday School Class Rolls June 1976 – November 1982
- First Church of the Nazarene Great Falls Sunday School Class Rolls December 1982 – August 1995
- George Wightman of Quidnessette, RI 1632-1721/2 and Descendants
- History of Montana Vol II (duplicate)
- Last Island (LA)
- Utica, Montana
- Gold Butte Cemetery (Sweet Grass Hills) Metis Families
- Down and Out in Scotland: Researching Ancestral Crisis
- Searching for Sisters: A Guide to Researching Catholic Nuns in the United States
- The Northern Montana Division The Milwaukee Road

Check us out on facebook

We are now on Instagram!
Check us out!

Make sure to follow!

greatfallsgenealogysociety

Wednesdays at 11—As you have probably noticed on the front page, we do not have a firm date for the Wednesdays at 11 in April. Jan is having family issues (for over 100 days as she likes to say) that are not letting her plan for days except for one week in advance. She will send out an email when she has been able to firm up her schedule. Thank you.

Society Business

GFGS 2026 SEMINAR & CLASS SERIES

BEGINNING GENEALOGY IV WORKSHOP

All about Land

Where to find those records:

BLM Glo Records
MT Cadastral
NARA

Get ready to add some details to that family chart!

APRIL 18, 2026

10AM - 12PM

GFPL - MONTANA ROOM

Limited to 10 so be sure to RSVP

MORE INFO AND RSVP:

GF Genealogy Society & Library
406-727-3922

Society Business

Society Maps

Great Falls Genealogy Society and Library currently has over 450 maps cataloged in our system. The maps cover the following topics:

- ⇒ Great Falls
- ⇒ Cascade County
- ⇒ Montana
- ⇒ Homestead & Ownership
- ⇒ Cemeteries
- ⇒ Montana Mining & Geology
- ⇒ Montana Counties
- ⇒ United States
- ⇒ Canada
- ⇒ International (Including Indigenous)

A lot of these maps are in sleeves but not all of them are. We are working on getting more in the sleeves for the protection of the maps. If you are interested in looking at any of these maps, please come in. Every computer in the library has a listing of the maps we have cataloged as of February 17, 2026. You can see what we have for maps. If you have any maps that you do not need and would like to donated—we would like that. Recently, we received a copy of a Sanborn map for Sand Coulee—AWESOME!

Maps are a valuable and useful tool for researching genealogy and history. Maps help you locate the places where your ancestors lived and give you context for the records you are using. Maps can identify political boundaries, place names, parishes geographical features, cemeteries, churches, and neighborhoods of your family. Many place names have changed over time. Historical maps help you find where your family lived.

Doing Estate or Income Tax Planning?

Remember GFGS does have a DA Davidson account for future capital or large needs. People can give/donate stock directly to GFGS to lessen their capital gains tax or just because. Also, donations of cash may be designated for this fund if that is what you desire. To donate stocks, etc. to this account you will need the name and number—Great Falls Genealogy Society, 81951477. If you just want to donate cash to this account, you can send the cash to GFGS and we will take if over to DA Davidson if you cannot. We will receive reports on who has donated to this account.

On Thursday April 16th, Gaylord Archival Will be Presenting Advanced Photo Preservation: *Formats, Storage & Salvage* . YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO: • Identify photography formats & understand their structure • Store cased images and albums in appropriate materials • Understand mold, remediation techniques & disaster recovery

News You Can Use

It's Cemetery Season!

By Kate Penney Howard www.katepenneyhoward.com

It's spring! The ground has thawed. The grass is low before it grows tall. The light is good. And you can read stones you might have missed last summer in tall grass and weeds.

Here are some tips to get a better look at stones.

Bring:

Garden shears (to trim weekends) Garbage bag (to remove trash & landscaping debris) Camera
Bright Flashlight and/or mirror (to shine light on the stone from an angle) Water
Spray bottle (wetting stone can help you read it) Makeup Brushes
Soft Toothbrush (to gently remove dirt) Aluminum foil (to take a rubbing) Toothpicks
A nylon pan scraper (to be used very gently and sparingly) Insect spray
Notebook & pencil/pen

Leave home:

Soap, chemicals, shaving cream, pressure washers, stiff brushes, wire scrapers, flour, cornstarch, chalk, and charcoal.

Be prepared. Know your cemetery and the amenities available. Stop for a bathroom break before you get there. Eat and be well-hydrated before you go. Have a first aid kit in the car and a cell phone with you. You may want to print maps if you are going to a remote location or if a grave is hard to find in a large cemetery.

Photography first. Try different angles, times of day, and bouncing or shining light onto the carving at an angle before anything else.

Plain water. Spray or dab it on and photograph both wet and partially dry. Often works, causes no damage.

Gentle cleaning if needed. Soft brush, water only, light touch. No scrubbing, no chemicals, no metal tools. Leave lichen alone or you may chip the stone.

What NOT to use. Shaving cream (acidic), flour or cornstarch (feeds lichen growth), chalk or charcoal (stains permanently). These are old methods still circulating, and all of them cause damage.

What you might want to try: Aluminum foil impression.

This is easier with four hands, so take a friend with you! I'm generally looking for a bargain, but I can say that you want to choose Reynolds Heavy Duty Wide Width over Dollar Tree foil. Hold a sheet of foil against the carved surface, and use a soft brush to gently work the foil into the carving, then photograph at multiple angles. Requires less pressure than traditional rubbings, but the result is fragile and hard to preserve. Check cemetery rules first, and never use on flaking or deteriorating stones. Slate stones are especially fragile and should be avoided entirely. Once you have made the form, you can take it home and pour plaster of paris carefully on the back side, making a copy of the stone (or details from the stone) which you can paint and display. If you cast it in resin, you could even put it outside.

Do not go empty-handed. Bring a notebook, your phone or camera, and a bottle of water. Bring tools suggested above, as well as bug spray, medication, and a first-aid kit. Remember that shortcuts, chemicals, and metal tools can damage limestone and soft marble. The stone you ruin today is someone's ancestor, and it has been there for a century or more.

Walk the whole cemetery. Get a feel for the layout. Family plots often cluster. Children's graves appear near mothers who died young. Unmarked fieldstones may sit beside formal markers. Every arrangement tells you something. Foot stones are small markers placed at the foot of the grave, often bearing just initials. They help you identify the full length of the burial plot. Head stones and foot stones together tell you body orientation, which sometimes has religious significance. Ledger stones are flat slabs covering the entire grave surface, common in 18th and early 19th century churchyards. They often hold the most detailed inscriptions but are frequently cracked or sunken. Cenotaphs look like gravestones, but there is no body buried there. They memorialize someone buried elsewhere, lost at sea, or whose remains were never recovered. And of course, you may have a husband's grave carved with his spouse's cenatograph because she has not died yet. Pay attention to dates. A cluster of deaths in one month often signals epidemic, accident, or war. Three children dying between June and August of the same year? You may be looking at a cholera summer. Two brothers dying within weeks of each other in 1918? Likely the Spanish Influenza. A whole family dying on the same day? Perhaps a house fire. Photograph both the front and back of every relevant stone. Many markers have additional information on the reverse side, and some have been engraved by multiple hands across many years. Check the Find A Grave and BillionGraves databases before you go. Your cemetery may already be indexed, and you may find photographs of stones that no longer exist. Or you may find gaps that you can fill. Good headstone photographs don't just document the dead. They help the living understand who came before, and where.