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Jacksonville Public Library Genealogy Newsletter

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Events

July 14

The Southern Genealogist's Exchange Society, Inc.(SGES) holds their monthly meetings on the second Saturday of each month featuring guest speakers or special topics. The meeting is held at SGES, 6215 Sauterne Drive, Jacksonville, Fl. at 10:00 A.M. For July, the SGES has invited Karen Rhodes to speak on "The Quirks of Researching the Florida STATE Census". Karen is diverse in speaking topics and they have already extended a second invitation for her to return. Attend for tips and tools of researching. Light refreshments served and visitors are always welcome. Need more information? Call (904) 778-1000. Jon Ferguson, SGES President

July 21

The Jacksonville Genealogical Society will hold its monthly meeting at 1:30 p.m., July 21, at the Webb-Wesconnett Library, 6887 103rd St., Jacksonville. Guest speaker is C. Ann Staley, CG, who will present *City Directories - A Line-by-Line Account of Our Ancestors*. For further information, call Mary Chauncey at (904) 781-9300.

New Florida Court Records on Microfilm

This month, we received 124 rolls of Florida court records on microfilm. Among these new items are:

St. Johns County:

Miscellaneous Court files (64 rolls)
Deeds, 1821 to 1897 (34 rolls)
Marriage records, 1824 to 1840 (1 roll)
Marriage licenses, 1927 to 1953 (4 rolls)
Chancery book, 1854 to 1876 (1 roll)
Soldiers and sailors record, 1917 to 1944 (1 roll)
Minutes 1846 –1891, v A–B, B, BJ (2 rolls)
Tax Deeds, 1867 to 1873 (1 roll)
Probate Records, 1840-1933 (1 roll)

Clay County:

Mortgage and Chancery records, 1874 to 1925 (3 rolls)
Deeds, 1871 –1890 (11 rolls)
Tract books 1850 –1860 (1 roll)

Confederates in Brazil

Where can you get the best vinegar pie, burgoo stew, and crackling bread? Why, in Americana, Brazil of course!

At the end of the Civil War, many Confederate families, unwilling to live in a changed South, made their way to Brazil. Ignoring the advice of General Robert E. Lee to remain, these loyal Southerners were recruited by Emperor Dom Pedro II, who was interested in having experienced cotton farmers for his nation. In Brazil, they could continue the customs and community that defined Southern culture, and survive with honor. They became *os Confederados*.

Most of the immigrants were from Alabama, Texas, Louisiana, Georgia, and South Carolina. They settled in various places, ranging from Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, to the northern Amazon region and Parana in the south. They established the first Baptist churches, established public schools for both boys and girls, a college in Campinas and one in Sao Paulo, and educated their slaves and black freedmen.

The first generation of *Confederados* were an insular community, socializing little with native Brazilians. Some returned home, preferring to make their way in the new society of Reconstruction. But, by the third generation, Southern transplants settled down, intermarried with their Brazilian neighbors, and prospered. Rubber, sugar, and an American import, watermelon, became their most profitable crops.

In 1972, then Governor of Georgia, Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalyn, visited the city of Americana. They paid tribute at the grave of Rosalyn Carter's great-uncle, one of the

original *Confederados*. Mr. & Mrs. Carter also visited a famous Brazilian Confederate monument, very much like the one in Kentucky; a replica of the Washington monument, including an obelisk at the top, but engraved with family names of the original Southern émigrés.

Are descendants of *os Confederados* citizens of the United States? According to U.S. law, a child of an American couple is automatically a citizen, no matter where the birth occurred. Members of contemporary Americana, remain loyal to the Democratic Party, engage in Civil War re-enactments, and travel comfortably to the United States. The legal issues of citizenship may be more difficult to determine.

You can read more about *os Conferderados* in [*The Lost Colony of the Confederacy*](#) by Eugene C. Harter.

Spotlight on the Collection: American Genealogical-Biographical Index

One of the most important genealogical indexes ever collected is the [*American Genealogical-Biographical Index*](#) or AGBI. This collection of over 6.25 million names, contained in 200 volumes, is one of the largest published sets ever undertaken in genealogy publishing.

The AGBI was the brainchild of Fremont Rider, the librarian at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. Rider was an avid genealogist with a vision to create an every name index to hundreds of published genealogical works. Beginning his work in 1936, he personally borrowed and collected records of all sorts, including published family histories, local histories, church records and vital records, and began a subscription index. Volunteers combed through nearly six hundred volumes to create the index, and between the years 1942 and 1948, the Rider index, as it was known, was published in forty-eight volumes.

Rider added about 220 more sources, naming the work the American Genealogical-Biographical Index. He founded a small, private library, the now famous Godfrey Memorial Library, to support the indexing and publishing. Beginning in 1952, the second edition was issued, and in the year 2000 the final volume was completed.

The AGBI is easy to use, once the format is understood. In brief, each entry has up to six parts –the surname, first names, birth year, state(s) of residence, biographical data, and citation. The surname is not repeated for each entry, but is at the top of the column (two per page), with first names, including middle names or initials beneath. Married women are indexed under their maiden and married surnames. Following the location, a very brief biographical note is given, if indicated by the source, such as military rank or political office. The last entry is the citation, the reference to the source. Each title is abbreviated, usually with two words, such as Currier Gen, which represents the full title

of the work. A Key Index to source titles is in front of volumes 1, 10, 34 and 54, with a supplement in volume 70.

Once a citation to a likely ancestor is identified, the next logical step is to access the material cited. This may seem daunting at first, but is actually not that difficult. Since the AGBI only indexes published sources, many of these can be found at local libraries. Two libraries, the Godfrey Memorial Library holds all of the sources indexed, while the Family History Library has all but fifty-six titles. A copy of the original document or article from the Godfrey Memorial Library or any other holding library, can be requested through Inter-Library Loan from the Jacksonville Public Library or can be photocopied from the FamilyHistoryCenter. We can advise you on how to request photocopies easily from the FamilyHistoryCenter.

Complete sets of the AGBI are only available in less than 200 libraries in the country and have not been available for purchase for forty years. The Jacksonville Public Library is one of the 200 that has the entire set. After the death of Fremont Rider in 1962, new director Nancy Doane, realized the value of extending accessibility of the AGBI more widely. Working with the FamilyHistoryCenter, she arranged to have the volumes microfilmed so they could have access to the index. The microfilm masters can be sold to institutions that had not previously subscribed. In 1998, she also contracted with Ancestry.com to convert the indexed text to an electronic database. It's available today on home subscriptions to Ancestry.com and in JPL on Ancestry Library Edition.

While the AGBI is heavily weighted toward New England states, as the index was created in that region, and in the 19th century those states were the most prolific in publishing genealogical material, there is important coverage of other eastern states as well. In his preface, Fremont Rider said the American Genealogical-Biographical Index "should be the first tool used by every genealogical researcher in seeking an answer to every question." While the incredible world of internet sources was unimagined in Rider's day, the AGBI still remains an amazingly rich stockpile of genealogical information not to be found elsewhere.

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