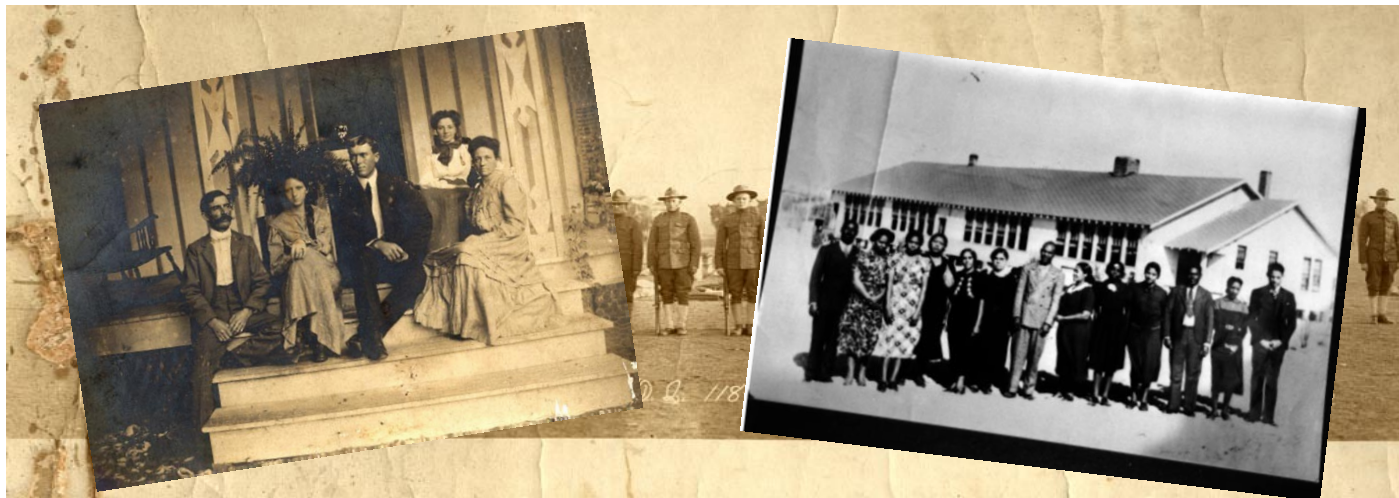# Genealogy Research

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 sign-in to see the original scanned documents.**

Mocavo:
https://www.mocavo.com/
***Owned by Findmypast. Currently free and focuses on international records.**

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.glorecords.blm.gov/

Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System:
http://www.itd.nps.gov/cwss/

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/

Free Genealogy Websites (Continued)

AfriGeneas:
http://www.afrigeneas.com/
***Site devoted to African-American Genealogy**

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database
http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces

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-2014-page02.html
***Site updates this list yearly and includes free and paid websites.**

Bay County Genealogical Society:
http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~flbcgs/

Florida Hidden Treasures:
http://flhiddentreasures.com/
***Includes searchable digitized editions of early Bay County Newspapers, maps, and more!**

Bay County Genealogy Gateway:
http://www.northwestfloridagenealogy.com/gengate/index.htm

FLGenWeb Project:
http://fl-genweb.org/bay/

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

Online @ nwrls.com

1. Go to www.nwrls.com. Hover your mouse over the word "Research." Click "Databases." If you are at an NWRLS library, you will not need a library card. Otherwise, you will be prompted to enter your card number.

2. You will then be directed to the following page:

3. Click the image on the webpage to explore these resources:
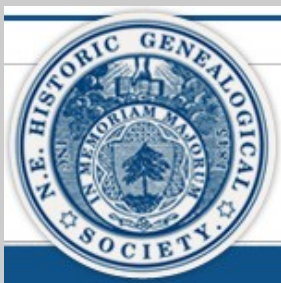
American Ancestors
*Available only at the Bay County
Public Library.

Ancestry Library Edition
*Available only at Bay County
Public Library and Gulf County Public Library.
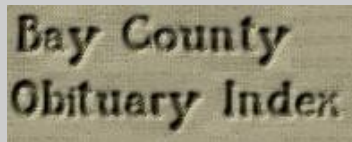
Bay County Obituary Index
*Available on the Bay County Genealogical Society's
website.

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

Newspaper Archive
*Available only at the Bay County Public 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

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

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., 2000. 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**

*Hite, Richard. *Sustainable Genealogy: Separating Fact from Fiction in Family Leg ends.* 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 Cyber space.* Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2007. **GEN R 907.2 MIL**

*Morgan, George M. *How to Do Everything With Your Genealogy.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004. **Adult Nonfiction 929.1 MOR**

Pfeiffer, Laura S. *Hidden Sources: Family History in Unlikely Places.* Orem, UT: An cestry, 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 Inevita ble Brick Wall.* Cincinnati, OH: Family Tree, 2005. **GEN R 929.1072 RIS**

Smith, Franklin C. *A Genealogist's Guide to Discovering Your African-American Ances tors: How to Find and Record Your Unique Heritage.* Cincinnati, OH: Betterway Books, 2003. **GEN R 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.* Cin cinnati, 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. Hover your mouse
over Books, etc.

3. Click on Catalog.

Search Catalog   Home | My Account | Contact Us | Locations & Hours

Northwest Regional Library System
Serving Bay, Gulf, & Liberty Counties

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eMagazines
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Bookstore
Suggest a Title

ember is...
ry Card Sign-Up Month
FIND
BANNED
ours Today!
BOOKS
September 21-27, 2014

Internet access,
ing classes,
y hours, events &
Celebrate the Freedom to Read
Magazines and more!
September 21-27, 2014
Check out some of the frequently challenged titles

The Smartest Card
Get it. Use it.
@ your library

Banned Books Week

<< September 2014 >>

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Library Newsletter

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4. Click on LS2.

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Northwest Regional Library System
Serving Bay, Gulf, & Liberty Counties

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LS2
LS2 is our new catalog upgrade chock full of great features! Allows you to write reviews of items (moderated), add 'tags', create an EZ Log-on (username and password), make lists of books you have read or want to read, and more! Access the new LS2 My Account feature.

Classic
The Classic catalog contains fewer graphics and is a better choice if you are on a dial-up connection. Access "Classic" My Account.

Kids
The Kids catalog provides a child friendly interface for searching titles in our Juvenile collection.

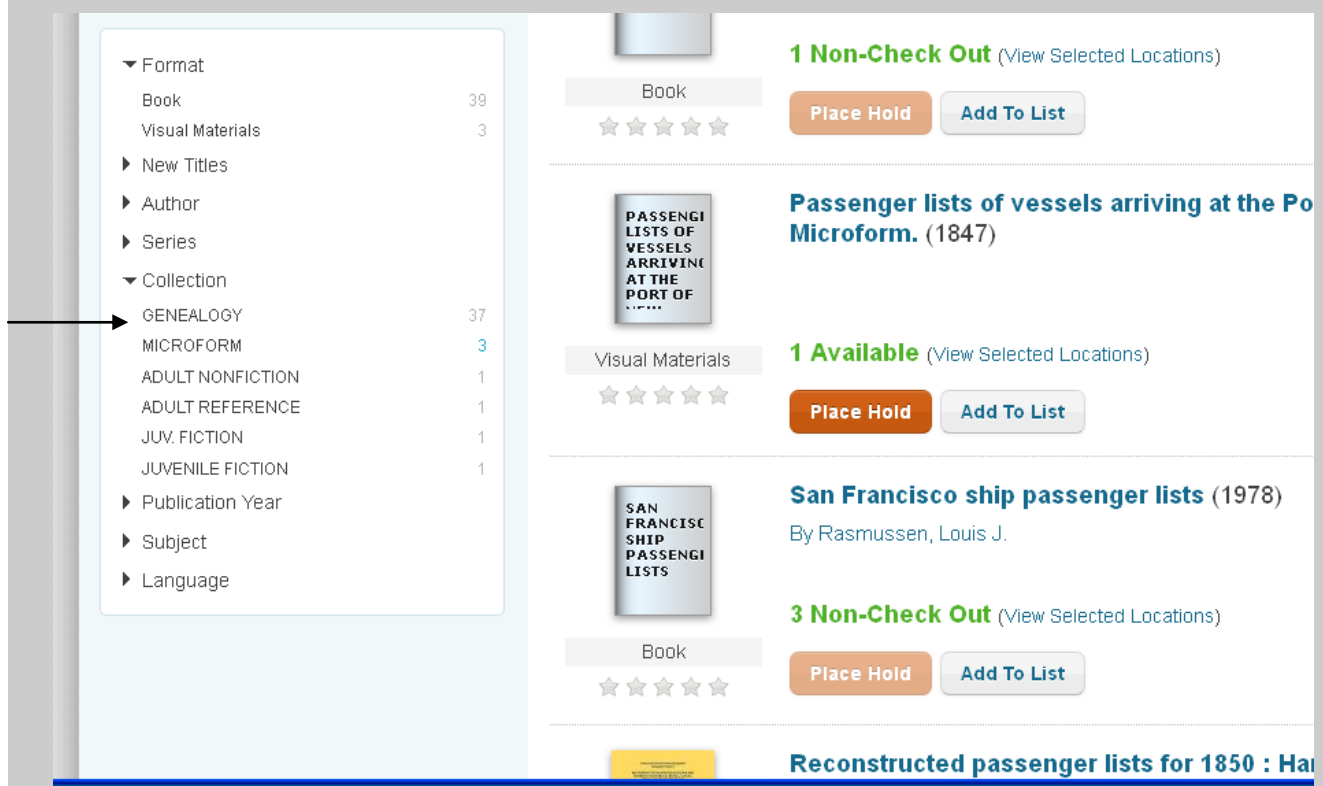### Mobile Catalog App Instructions for iTouch and iPhone
A mobile application is available for iTouch and iPhone users that will search our catalog. An Android application is currently in development, however a launch date is unavailable at this time.

Use the library's online catalog to find additional materials

5. Type in a keyword, author, or title search, such as "Genealogy," "Alabama Census," "Passenger Lists."
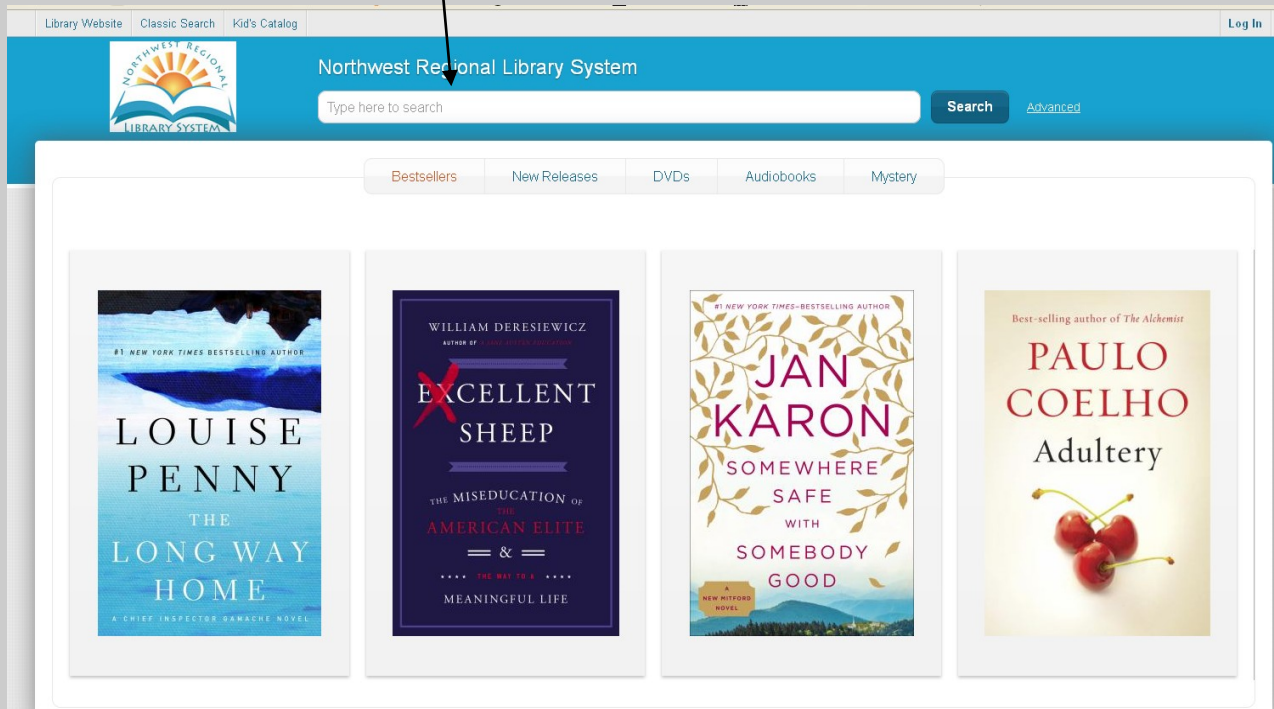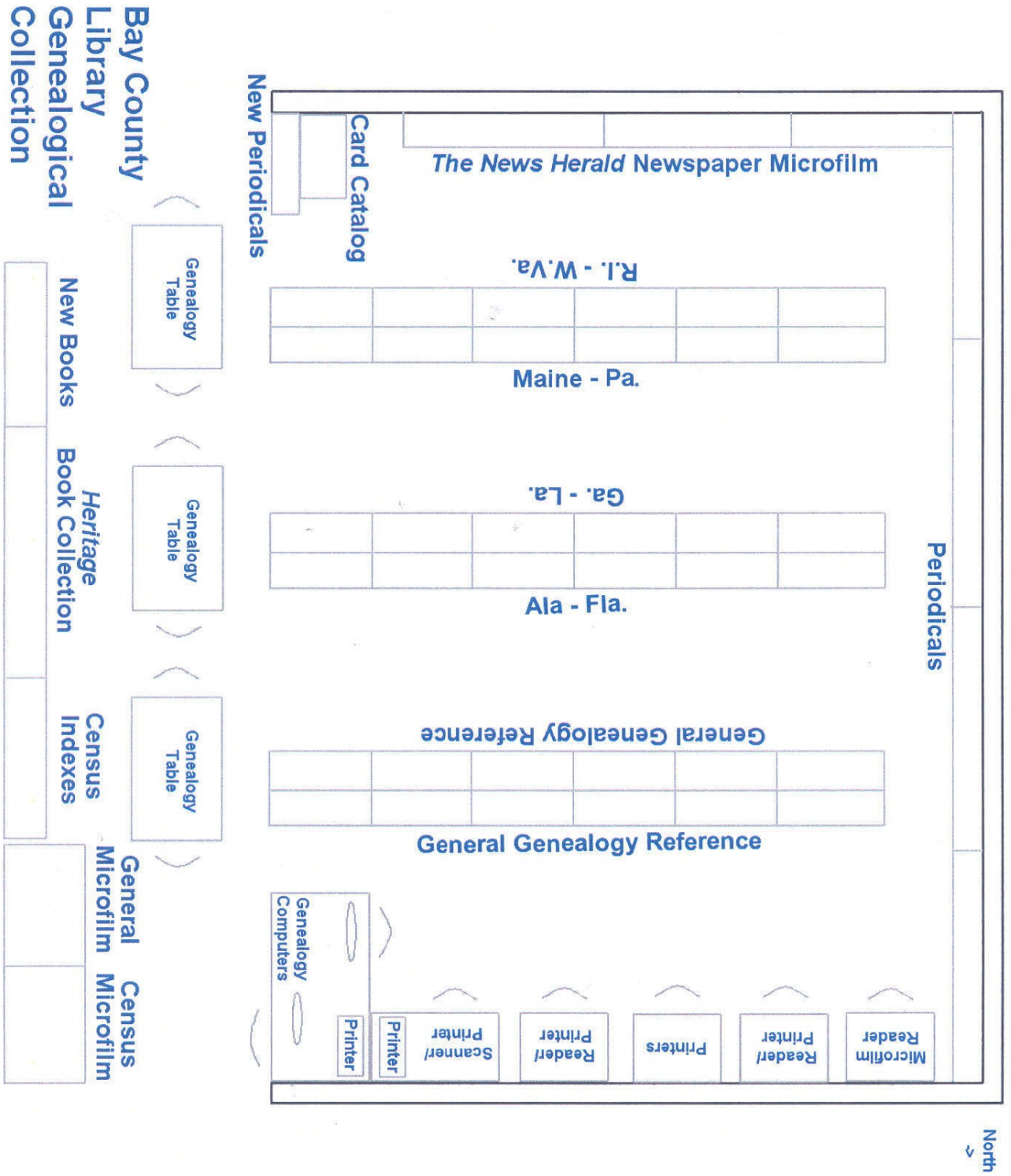

6. Filter your search on the left. Click "Collection" and then click on "Genealogy."

Map of the Bay County Library Genealogical Collection

Bay County Library Genealogical Collection

New Periodicals

Card Catalog

The News Herald Newspaper Microfilm

R.I. - W.Va.

Maine - Pa.

Ga. - La.

Ala - Fla.

General Genealogy Reference

General Genealogy Reference

New Books

Heritage Book Collection

Census Indexes

General Microfilm

Census Microfilm

Genealogy Table

Genealogy Table

Genealogy Table

Periodicals

Genealogy Computers

Printer

Printer

Scanner/ Printer

Reader/ Printer

Printers

Reader/ Printer

Microfilm Reader

North

NOTES

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

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