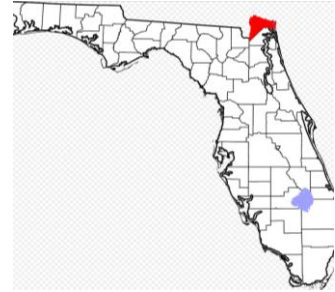


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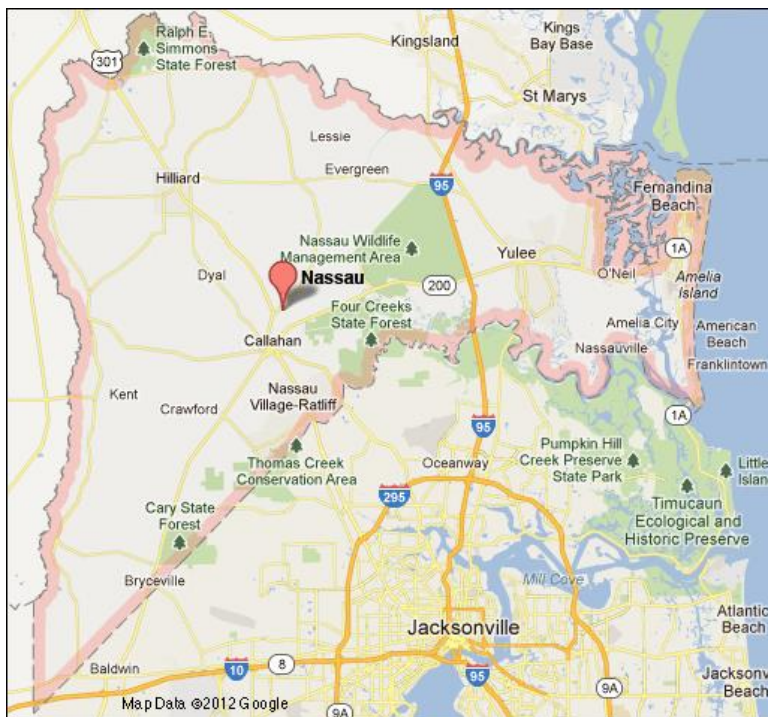
# Research Guide to Nassau County, Florida<sup>1</sup>



## Overview

Nassau County was created in 1824 from Duval County. The county seat is Fernandina Beach, which is located on Amelia Island. The towns in the county are Callahan and Hilliard. In addition, Nassau County has the following unincorporated communities: Amelia City, American Beach, Andrews, Becker, Boulogne, Bryceville, Chester, Crandall, Crawford, Dahoma, Dyal, Evergreen, Franklinton, Glenwood, Gross, Hedges, Hero, Ingle, Italia, Keene, Kent, Kings Ferry, Lessie, Mattox, Nassau Village-Ratliff, Nassauville, O'Neil, Verdie, Yulee Heights, and Yulee.

Adjacent counties are Camden County, Georgia to the north, Charlton County, Georgia to the west, Duval County, Florida to the south and Baker County to the southwest.



**Fernandina Beach** is located on Amelia Island and is the Nassau County seat. It is among Florida's northernmost cities, and is one of the principal municipalities comprising Greater Jacksonville. Fernandina Beach is located

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<sup>1</sup> Information in this guide was found in Wikipedia, Google Maps and on the websites listed in this compilation, accessed in November 2014

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at 30°24'04"N 81°16'27"W, approximately 25 miles (40 km) northeast of downtown Jacksonville. According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 15.7 square miles (41 km<sup>2</sup>), all land. It is the northernmost city on the eastern coast of Florida.

## History

Prior to the arrival of Europeans on what is now Amelia Island, the site of the original town of Fernandina was occupied by Native Americans. Circa 1000, Native American bands associated with the Timucuan mound-building culture settled on the island, which they called Napoyca. They remained on Napoyca until the early 18th century.

In 1736, James Oglethorpe, the governor of Georgia, ordered construction of Fort Amelia at the mouth of the St. Mary's River to house the Scottish Highlanders garrisoned there. The American naturalist William Bartram visited Amelia Island in 1776 and noted the presence of several very large tumuli, or earthwork mounds, which British colonists called "Ogeechee mounts".

The French, English, and Spanish had all maintained a presence on the island at various times during the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, but the Spanish established the first permanent European settlement at Fernandina after the exchange of flags in 1784. During later colonial times the site gained military importance because of its deep harbor and its strategic location near the northern boundary of Spanish Florida. On January 1, 1811, the town of Fernandina, which was about a mile from the present city, was named in honor of King Ferdinand VII of Spain by the governor of the Spanish province of East Florida, Enrique White. On May 10 of the same year, Fernandina became the last town platted under the Laws of the Indies in the Western hemisphere. The town was intended as a bulwark against U.S. territorial expansion. In the following years, it was captured and recaptured by a succession of renegades and privateers.

The proclamation of the Adams-Onís Treaty on February 22, 1821, two years after its signing in 1819, officially transferred Spain's territories in Florida, including Amelia Island, to the United States.

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## Research Resources

### **Nassau County Court House**      <http://www.nassauclerk.com/>

76347 Veteran's Way  
Yulee, FL 32097  
(904) 548-4600

The Nassau County Judicial Annex is located approximately 15 miles west of Fernandina Beach and 15 miles east of Callahan. The building is located near Exit 373 off of Interstate 95. At the exit, go East on Route A1A, then right onto William Burgess Boulevard, which runs in front of the annex.

#### Official Records Department

Phone: (904) 548-4604    Fax: (904) 548-4549

Records can be searched online beginning with 1989, although some earlier records may be available.

The Recording Vault is located on the first floor.  
It contains

- Deed Books (1840s-1959)
- Official Records Books (1960-Present)
- General Index Books (1840s-1982) Reverse and Direct
- Microfilm Rolls
- Tax Rolls (1800s-1984)
- Probate (1800s-1966) *can be viewed with Civil Department employee help*
- Marriage Books (1840s-1978)
- Official Records (1985-Present)
- General Index (1840s-1991)
- Deed Records (various years)
- Clerk's Chancery Docket & Order Books (1912-1980) *can be viewed with Civil Department employee help*
- Civil Action Docket Books (1967-1984) *can be viewed with Civil Department employee help*
- Probate Docket Books (1975-1985) *can be viewed with Civil Department employee help*
- Resolutions & County Ordinance Books (1971-present) *BOCC employees assist with these*
- County Commissioners proceedings and minutes (1903-present) *BOCC employees assist with these*

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- Service Discharge Books (1944-1961)
  - Lands Available for Taxes Book
  - Subdivision Plats (Book O non-reproducible)
  - Coastal Set Back Lines Maps (photographs)
  - Right-of-Way Maps (DOT road maps)
  - Section-Township-Range maps (viewing only)
  - Tax Rolls on microfiche (1985-present, except for 1989, which is missing)  
*BOCC employees assist with these*
  - Deed Books A1-A10 (10 books)
  - Deed Books B1-B10 (10 books)
  - Deed Books N-Z (13 books)
  - Deed Books 11-135 (125 books)

All indexes are on film going back to 1840.

## **Nassau County Florida, Open for Business**

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

This is an entryway website into Nassau County, with web links to local agencies. Of special note for genealogists is the Nassau County GIS Department. Public Records can be requested via this site (look in the How Do I...tab).

## **Nassau County GIS Department** <http://maps2.roktech.net/nassau/#>

Nassau County Property Appraiser/GIS

96135 Nassau Place, Suite 4

Yulee, FL 32097

Phone: (904) 491-7316

Fax: (904) 491-3629

The Nassau County Property Appraiser GIS Department maintains and distributes geographic information, analysis tools, and mapping products for use by the Citizens and County's staff in their daily operations. Data maintained by the GIS Department includes political boundaries, land parcel information, infrastructure systems (street network, water systems), emergency response facilities, recreational facilities, growth management and other associated data pertaining to county operations.

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## Vital Records

### Florida Department of Health [www.floridahealth.gov](http://www.floridahealth.gov)

Before 1899, some Florida cities enacted ordinances requiring the recording of vital events and provided their own system for doing so. The City of Key West has the oldest known records, dating back to 1865. A law was enacted in 1927 providing for the centralization of marriage and divorce records. Currently, the Bureau of Vital Statistics maintains more than 25 million vital records. Florida certificates are issued through the Bureau of Vital Statistics at the Department of Health. Orders may be placed in person, by mail, or online through VitalChek. VitalChek® is the only vendor recommended by the Florida Department of Health.

The Bureau of Vital Statistics is committed to providing the highest quality and most expeditious service possible. Computer generated certifications ordered by mail with a check or money order for birth records (1917-present), deaths records (2007 - present), marriage and divorces reports (1970 - present) are processed within 2 to 3 days after receiving the order.

Our ultimate objective is to provide you, the client, with the needed documents or service at the lowest cost possible in the shortest time possible. Prior to the implementation of our Electronic Registration System, clients were not able to obtain their documents from any location other than the state office or the county where that particular event occurred.

Our electronic systems successfully eliminated that obstacle. Now, clients can obtain their certified copies at ANY county office in the state of Florida or from the state office in Jacksonville.

At this time, credit cards are only accepted at the county vital statistics office and the state office in Jacksonville during a visit by the client in person.

If your circumstances require that you take possession of the document in a short window of time or you wish to order from home with a credit card, the Bureau uses the **VitalChek®** network as our **ONLY recognized vendor** to accept orders billed to a credit card. Go to the **VitalChek®** website or speak with a customer representative at 1-877-550-7330.

### Florida Bureau of Vital Statistics

To order your certificate from the state office, use the navigation pane on the left of the web page to choose your desired certificate, birth, death, marriage or dissolution of

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marriage (divorce.) You may complete the state forms online using your computer, print and mail them to the Bureau of Vital Statistics in Jacksonville for processing. The Bureau is open for walk-in service Monday through Friday, **8:00 a.m.** until **4:30 p.m.** (Eastern Standard Time) and **phone service** until 5:00p.m., excluding holidays.  
**Phone: (904) 359-6900**

## Ordering Vital Record in Nassau County

You may also order a copy of a birth, death or fetal death record through your local County Health Department. Counties have computer access from 1917 to present for birth records for the entire state as well as births that occurred in their county.

Nassau County Health Department      <http://nassau.floridahealth.gov>  
P.O. Box 517  
30 South 4th St.  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32035-0517  
(904) 548-1800  
FAX (904) 277-7286

To order by mail or in person:

- Birth Certificates      DOH-Nassau came on-line with the new State E-Vitals System and we can access birth records for anyone born within the State of Florida from 1930 to the present. Some of the early years have now become available, please check with our office.
- Death Certificates      Currently, our office can only provide death certificates for deaths that occurred in Nassau County. NOTE: In the future, the new E-Vitals system will also provide us access to the death records for anyone who passed away within the State of Florida. Please note that limited Florida deaths were recorded between 1877 and 1917.
- Marriage Certificates can only be issued for marriages occurring in Florida, from June 6, 1927 to the present. Marriage certificates prior to June 6, 1927 are obtainable from the Clerk of Court in the County where the marriage license was issued.
- Divorce Certificates can only be issued for divorces occurring in Florida, from June 6, 1927 to the present. Divorce certificates prior to June 6, 1927 are obtainable from the Clerk of Court in the County where the divorce was granted

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## Local Resources

### Amelia Island Museum of History Archives

<http://ameliamuseum.org/>

233 S. Third Street  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034  
904-261-7378

Research Library hours are Tuesday & Thursday 10 – 4, or by appointment. Call the Curator, Teen Peterson at (904) 261-7378, ext. 104.

Online Archives: <http://ameliaisland.pastperfect-online.com/>

### General Duncan Lamont Clinch Historical Society

This group holds monthly meetings and publishes a quarterly newsletter. For more information, email: [clinchhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:clinchhistoricalsociety@gmail.com)

Amelia Island Genealogical Society      <http://www.aigensoc.org/>

The Amelia Island Genealogy Society web site has an online data base of cemetery records and obituaries, with more data being added as it becomes available from ongoing member projects.

### Nassau County Public Library, Fernandina Beach Branch

<http://read.nassau.lib.fl.us/>

25 N. 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034  
(904) 277-7365

Monday & Thursday  
10:00 am - 8:00 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday  
10:00 am - 6:00 pm

Sunday closed

The Fernandina Beach branch houses the research collection of the Amelia Island Genealogical Society.



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## Newspapers

**Fernandina Beach News Leader:** [www.fbnewsleader.com](http://www.fbnewsleader.com) for current issues; full text with full page images, freely available in the [Florida Digital Newspaper Library](#)

**Fernandina Express:** 1880s historic newspaper freely available with full text and full page images in the [Florida Digital Newspaper Library](#)

## State Wide Resources with Nassau County Holdings

Florida Historical Society Library of Florida History <http://myfloridahistory.org/>

The Society has a long history of collecting historical documents and maps relating to Florida. In 1977, the Library of Florida History was established in Historic Cocoa Village in Brevard County to house the collection. Currently the collection consists of volumes relevant to Florida of which over six thousand have been cataloged, an extensive map collection, manuscripts and photographic holdings. Of note the Library also houses the local *Mosquito Beaters* historical collection and the Alice Strickland collections of *Floridiana*. The collection continues to grow.

Regular hours of business are Tuesday through Saturday, 10-4:30. For research appointments please contact the archivist in advance at [ben.dibiase@myfloridahistory.org](mailto:ben.dibiase@myfloridahistory.org) or (321) 690-1971 ext. 211.

State Library and Archives of Florida <http://dos.myflorida.com/>

R.A. Gray Building, Second Floor  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Regular Hours are Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Closed weekends and state holidays.

### Parking

- Park in Lot E, the parking garage adjacent to the building.
- Patrons can ask for a parking token at the circulation desk to keep from paying the \$5 fee when exiting this garage.



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- Park in any of the metered spaces on Martin Luther King Boulevard at the rear of the building.
  - Bus parking is available at the rear of the building.
  - Additional parking is available at Kleman Plaza (Bronough/Duval Street) and the Civic Center (Pensacola Street).

## Copy Requests

We can photocopy most of the items in the Archives collections if you need us to.

We reserve the right to restrict the copying of any materials that could be harmed by such activity. Preservation is our goal.

Services are rendered on a first come, first served basis.

Large copy orders will be done as quickly as time permits.

We will not loan records for outside copying.

The Archives requires that proper citation be given for any copied item quoted from or reproduced in any publication or public exhibition.

Charges below are determined by Section 15.09, *Florida Statutes*. State law requires that all fees for services be collected in advance (see Attorney General Opinion 77-120).

We accept cash, checks, money orders (payable to the Florida Department of State), government purchase orders and credit cards (Visa, MasterCard and Discover). Please call with credit card numbers.

## Genealogy Reference Materials

Our extensive collection of reference materials for genealogists and patrons researching their family history includes:

- State Census Records
- Miscellaneous Census Records
- County Microfilm Records
- Native American Records
- Florida Pioneer Certificate Files
- Genealogy Bibliography

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## Visiting the Archives

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The State Archives search room is open to the public at no charge during all Archives operating hours. Researchers are encouraged to check with the Archives to verify operating hours and records availability prior to visiting.

### Plan Your Visit

Researchers must be 16 years of age or be accompanied by a responsible adult researcher. On their initial visit to the Archives, researchers will be asked to complete a registration form to obtain a patron ID number. Some form of identification is needed to complete the registration process.

In order to help protect Florida's historical records, researchers are asked to follow standard archival procedures by bringing only pencils, note cards, loose blank paper, spiral notebooks without material in the pockets, ring binders without material in the pockets, and light wraps such as shawls and sweaters into the search room. All material brought into the archives will be examined upon leaving. Researchers may bring cameras (no flash) and wand scanners into the Archives provided the Reference staff determines that the equipment will not pose harm to historical records or fragile books.

The following items are strictly prohibited: any form of ink or ink pens, briefcases, bags, purses, envelopes or other containers, or any material that might be confused with archival holdings. Lockers are available to researchers needing to store these items while visiting the Archives.

Original records must be returned to Reference staff not later than 10 minutes prior to closing. Books and microfilm must be returned not later than 5 minutes prior to closing. All patrons must have removed their belongings from the lockers and have exited the Research Room by closing time.

Tours of the State Archives facility can be arranged for educational and civic groups and interested individuals. All visitors are required to check in and out with the Reference staff.

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## Research Services

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Patrons unable to visit the Archives to conduct their own research may contact the Archives to request the Archives staff to conduct limited research for specific information. Archives staff will search indexed records and books for a maximum of thirty minutes per request. Due to the limited number of staff, the Archives cannot: search records that are on microfilm or that are readily available from other sources (such as census records); conduct detailed genealogical searches; summarize, interpret, or transcribe documents; or provide a list of records for all persons bearing a particular surname. If such research is needed, researchers should plan to visit the Archives in person or make arrangements with a private researcher. A list of researchers will be provided upon request.

## A Guide to Genealogical Research at the State Archives of Florida

Many of the collections of the State Archives of Florida can be used for genealogical research. The following are among the most frequently used. When searching the collections make note of associated names, dates, places, events, and other potentially important information.

Significantly more material is available for in person research at the State Library and Archives (500 S. Bronough St., Tallahassee, FL 32399). Researchers are encouraged to visit our facility to take advantage of the wealth of resources housed in Tallahassee.

## Confederate Pensions in Florida

The first Confederate pensions in Florida were authorized in 1885 and granted to veterans the sum of \$5.00 per month. The next three decades saw a new Confederate pension bill introduced at nearly every session of the Legislature. Residency requirements were added and adjusted, militia members and widows were declared eligible, various financial qualifications



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were added and changed, and the amount and method of distribution were changed many times.

A Board of Commissioners consisting of three members was appointed under the first pension law and it remained essentially the same, despite changes in name and the inability of the legislature to settle on the identity of the third member. The Governor and Comptroller were members of the board from the beginning, although the third seat was passed at various times from the Adjutant General to the Secretary of State to the Attorney General to the Treasurer, back to the Attorney General, and again back to the Treasurer before finally stabilizing in 1915 as the Governor, Comptroller, and Treasurer. The clerical and day-to-day operations of administering the pension laws were carried out under the supervision of the Comptroller.

### **Description of Veterans' and Widows' Applications**

The pension application files include both veterans' and widows' applications interfiled, although approved and denied claims are filed separately. The veteran's application generally includes his full name, date and place of birth, unit of service, date and place of enlistment, date and place of discharge, brief description of service and/or wounds, proof of service, place and length of residence in Florida, as well as other miscellaneous documentation.

The widow's application is filed with that of her husband and includes her full name, date and place of marriage, date and place of her husband's death, her place and length of residence in Florida, and proof of her husband's service. Some early applications also include the widows' date and place of birth. Confederate pensions were awarded to residents of Florida regardless of the state in which their service was rendered.

Most of the Confederate Pension Application Files contain the original application, any supplemental applications, proof of service and residency, and occasional correspondence between the applicant and the State Board of Pensions. Veteran's applications generally include name, date and place of birth, unit dates and places of enlistment and discharge, brief description of service, wounds received, sworn statements on proof of service by comrades, War Department service abstracts, and place and length of Florida residency. Widow's applications generally include, in addition to the above, her full name, date and place of marriage to the veteran, and date and place of the veteran's death.

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The **Florida Folklife Collection** contains thousands of photographs, sound recordings, and research materials collected by state folklorists from the 1970s to the present. The genealogical potential in this collection is twofold. First, researchers can use the collection to find resources on family members who participated in the Florida Folk Festival, or any of the field surveys conducted by state folklorists over the past half century. Second, because the collection touches on a wide variety of topics, researchers can find contextual information on activities or occupations practiced by their ancestors. For example, if your family worked in commercial fishing, you could consult several hours of interviews with fishermen across the state to better understand the rhythms of life in the seafood industry.



Finding ancestors in the **Florida Photographic Collection** can offer details beyond physical appearance. Details and contextual information about their lives can be gathered from clothing, location, and other details, such as buildings or vehicles, in the photographs. A family group photograph may also help to pinpoint family members in a specific point in time, for example if grandparents were present and how many children there were.

The **Spanish Land Grants** contain maps and property records related to the transfer of Florida from Spain to the United States in 1821. The Board of Land Commissioners was established in 1822 to settle all outstanding Spanish land grant claims in the territory. The Board set up offices in Pensacola and St. Augustine to ascertain the validity of all titles and private claims to lands in East Florida and West Florida. The Board either supported or rejected the land claims by studying the documents supplied by claimants.

The series consists of “dossiers” containing papers filed as evidence before the Board of Land Commissioners. The supporting documents include petitions or memorials to a governor for land; surveys or plats; attests; deeds of sale, gifts, wills, bequests, and exchanges; applications; and translations of Spanish documents.



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The genealogical potential of the **Supreme Court Records** collection was revealed by the experience of a staff member who worked on its digitization. During the transcription of a murder case originating in Holmes County, the transcriber, a native of Calhoun County, came across several surnames shared by families in the area in which she grew up. Not everyone has relatives who left evidence of their lives in the records of Florida's highest courts. However, if your family held property, or an interest in banking, in antebellum Florida, these collections would be a potentially fruitful place to search for nuggets on how your ancestors interacted with the legal system.

The **Timeline** provides context for Library and Archives collections within Florida history, and can be a starting point for further research.

The **World War I Service Cards** series consists of a card roster of Floridians who served in the United States Army during World War I from 1917 to 1919. Each soldier has one or two cards giving information on his/her military service, such as name, serial number, residence, place and date of birth, military organizations he/she served in, rank, engagements participated in, wounds or injuries received, dates serving overseas, discharge date, percentage disabled, and additional remarks.



The **WPA Church Records** contain church surveys collected by the Works Progress Administration's Historical Records Survey in the 1930s and 1940s. Each state created a list of known churches and synagogues to be surveyed, organized by county. Survey workers then ventured out into the field to document church histories and record holdings by interviewing clergy and congregation members. This collection contains the documents created by the state of Florida.

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The form used by field workers for the Church Archives Inventory, titled "Form 20HR," included fields for church name (or names), address, name of the pastor, architectural and building details, race and size of the congregation, location of church records, and additional information deemed relevant.

## **Florida Memory Project**     <https://www.floridamemory.com/>

The mission of the Florida Memory Program is to provide free online access to select archival resources from the collections of the State Library and Archives of Florida. Florida Memory chooses materials for digitization that illuminate significant events and individuals in the state's history, and help educate Floridians and millions of other people around the world about Florida history and culture.

The six primary components of Florida Memory are:

1. The Florida Photographic Collection: a searchable image database of 187,794 photographs. The collection spans a wide range of visual images from copies of mid-16th century maps to current photographs.
2. Video Collection: a selection of over 172 full-length films from the Archives' extensive catalog of moving images, including news, political footage, promotional films, interviews, sports coverage, and films produced by various state agencies.
3. Audio Collection: a searchable database of 2,910 audio recordings (approximately 34,000 individual tracks), including the Florida Folklife Festival (1950s-2000s), thematic CDs featuring tracks from the collection, interviews, and ethnographic field recordings gathered by state folklorists.
4. Collections: online access to over 310,000 digitized documents from selected historical and genealogical collections, including the Florida Folklife Collection, Spanish Land Grants, Confederate Pension Application Files and World War I Service Cards.
5. Exhibits: historical essays accompanying digitized examples of documents held by the State Library and Archives, along with related visual materials.
6. The Online Classroom: an educational resource for students and teachers with transcripts and scanned images of primary documents from Florida's past. Materials, lesson plans and online activities are tailored to meet the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards.