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CCGS NEWS

A Publication of the Cape Cod Genealogical Society

Volume 10 Issue 2

May 2023

**Please Join us at our Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, May 16, at 7:00 PM, Eastern Time**

Our meeting will be brought to you via **Zoom**.

Members will receive an email a week before the meeting with an invitation and registration link.

Non-members are asked to email us at info@capecodgenealogy.org
to receive a registration link.

Please Welcome Jeff Schiebe

*Eine Rückreise ins Heimatland
A Return Trip to the Homeland
What a Difference 25 Years Makes!*



This presentation will discuss the challenges of finding and visiting your ancestral towns and villages. It will take you through, by telling a story, the actions taken and tools used to make three different trips to the same town in Germany more successful and rewarding. The presentation will complement the article in the upcoming CCGS Spring Journal, entitled *Third Time is a Charm*.

Jeff Schiebe has a lifelong passion for genealogy and researching his family's history. His current project is "The Great Eight"—writing a story for each of his eight great-grandparents, all from Europe, primarily Germany. He is an active member of the Southborough Genealogy Club, Shrewsbury Genealogy Club, Cape Cod Genealogical Society, Plymouth (MN) Historical Society, and numerous German and Pomeranian genealogy organizations. In his professional life, he has visited more than 50 countries, including several ancestral homelands.

Message from the CCGS President

Judy Fenner



Greetings and Happy Spring!

The Survey is complete and results have been tabulated and now shared with the membership. I found the responses very interesting and informative. The Board and Long Range Planning Committee will be discussing how we might move forward implementing some of the suggestions. Thanks to all members who participated.

Our **Annual Meeting in June** will be hybrid with the in-person meeting at the Brewster Ladies Library. The date will be **Saturday, June 17th, at 10:00 AM** and Zoom information for those who request it will be available a few days before. My

thanks to Bob Oppenheim for taking on the task of setting up the necessary things needed for a hybrid meeting.

My apologies for the lack of a recording of the wonderful meeting we had on April 18th. It has become increasingly clear to me that we need a dedicated co-host to handle the details of the technology aspects. This enables the host (i.e. the President) to concentrate on running the meeting and making sure the agenda is followed, including the presentation by the guest speaker. Doing both does not work out well. Anyone want to volunteer to be the tech co-host? There are those in the Society who would be able to teach and advise you.

The Library volunteers continue to provide help on Thursday afternoons. We could always use more willing helpers on that day or any day convenient for you. The scanner is up and running for your use on Thursday afternoons as well.

Your Nominating Committee is looking for members willing to serve on the Board of Directors. This requires attending the monthly Board meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at 2:00 PM. Please consider being involved in your Society in this way by contacting the Nominating Committee Chair, at patcarolegenealogy@gmail.com. Further on in this Newsletter is a message from Pat with more details.

Dues renewals are still coming in. Please send yours if you have not already done so. We count on these dues to finance the Society projects.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing many of you in person or on Zoom.

Judy
president@capecodgenealogy.org



**Cape Cod Genealogical Society
Board of Directors 2022-2023**

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Judy Fenner	President
Jo Anne Makely	Vice-President
Pat Merriell	Recording Secretary
Bebe Brock	Corresponding Secretary
Nancy Daniels	Treasurer

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Walter Murphy	Immediate Past President
Judy Jones	Director at Large
Pam Eaton	Director at Large
L. Ray Sears	Director at Large
Brian O'Donnell	Director at Large
Carolyn Weiss	Board Member
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Bob Oppenheim	Board Member

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TBD	Library
David Martin	Education
Judy Jones	Membership
Carolyn Weiss	Publications
Pat Merriell	Communications
Jo Anne Makely	Program
TBD	Financial Review
Jo Anne Makely	Youth Services
L. Ray Sears	Technology
Bob Oppenheim	Long Range Planning

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Board Meeting Invitation

Ever wonder what is discussed at the **Board of Directors** Meetings? Board Meetings are open to ALL members of the CCGS, excepting those instances when a motion for an executive session is approved. Usually, the Board Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 2:00 PM and meets via Zoom. President, Judy Fenner, sends out the Board Agenda with a Zoom link to join the meeting. The Board welcomes any member and at the end of the meeting, offers an “open forum” for any attending member to express a thought, an opinion, ask questions, etc. After the meeting and when the meeting minutes are approved, the minutes will be posted onto the Members Tab on the CCGS website for any member to view.

Board Meeting News

Bob Oppenheim is the chair of the new **Long-Range Planning Committee**. Thank you for filling out the survey. The Committee has been busy tabulating the results. We ask you to please read the completed results at your leisure.

Because of the participation of CCGS Directors at NERGC, from 3 – 6 May in Springfield, **the May CCGS Board Meeting will be postponed for one week, now scheduled for Wednesday, May 10 at 2:00 PM.**

Announcement
From Computer SIG Leader, Bob Oppenheim

ChatGPT <https://chat.openai.com/auth/login> is still my number one suggestion for a thing to try out. However, I have used it several times and learned that it is an apologetic liar. So, the trick is to determine where and when are you being bamboozled.

Do not ask what it knows about your named ancestor—it will truly make stuff up if it confesses to know anything at all. Do ask it about the socioeconomic conditions at place in time, but ask where it got each assertion that it made, i.e., its sources. If you don't like the sources that it provides, tell it what you don't like about them and ask if it has any more.

Surprisingly, it claims to be proficient at translating texts and it claims to be able to work with the German Fraktur font. Google's so-called ChatGBT Killer, named "Bard," is coming on line as well. I had a chance to use it and doubt that it is even up to stepping on ChatGPT's toe at this time, but things happen very, very quickly in this theater.

Looking for Candidates

Your Nominating Committee is currently developing a list of candidates for two-year terms.

- 1. Vice-President**
- 2. Treasurer**
- 3. Nominating Committee for 2024 (3 members)**

We encourage members who are interested or know a member who they think might be interested in any of these positions to contact Pat Flaherty directly. We appreciate your assistance in this important matter.

Pat Flaherty – patcarolegenealogy@gmail.com

Writing Opportunities

Write for the Journal!

Do you have an interesting topic to share about:

- A discovery from your genealogical research?
- The story of a valued artifact that has been in your family?
- A story about a great-grandparent?
- Another family-history topic that you would like to share?

The Publications Committee announces opportunities to write for the Fall 2023 issue of the Society's *Journal*. If you answered YES to any of these questions, consider preparing an article, from 250 to 800 words (plus photographs or illustrations) for the Fall issue.

Submissions are needed by **September 30**. Please send in care of Co-Editor Carolyn Weiss, carlysue01@comcast.net and please contact Carolyn with any questions or if you would like to discuss your idea before writing. Thank you!

Do You Have a Revolutionary War Story?

The Cape and Islands Historical Association is planning a publication for the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2026, which will compile narratives about different ways in which Cape Codders were involved in the Revolution – events, individuals, political arguments, and more. If you have a narrative related to Cape Cod and the Revolution and would consider submitting it for consideration, you can discuss the idea with David Martin, who will edit the publication (davidmartindr@aol.com).

Please Welcome New Members

Donna Rickman
Craig Tamash
Robin Kelley
Cyndi Corsaro
Stanley & Kathleen Warren

**Final Farewell
Gerri Ann Hogan
1944 – 2022**

Gerri Ann Hogan, of Plymouth, passed away on July 5, 2022.

Gerri was a current member of the Society,
and along with genealogy, enjoyed
watching her “soaps,” Judge Judy and NASCAR races.
She loved spending time with her granddaughter, going for drives
around town and trying new things.

Our sincere sympathy is extended to her husband, brother, children,
granddaughter and many cousins.



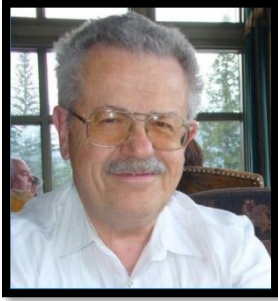
Sunset at Paine's Creek Landing, Brewster

Program Summary

February 21, 2023

Written by *David Martin*

Under-Used Resources in Genealogy with David Martin and Judy Fenner



This monthly program, was presented jointly with emphasis on techniques and resources to use when investigations seem to have come to a brick wall.

First was a recommendation to take advantage of the rich resources of Cyndi's List (*cyndislist.com*). This is a website of websites and consists of many thousands of genealogical websites, all arranged in alphabetical order of the first word of the topic. For example, in looking up "Adoptions," one would go to the home page and click on the "A." One would then be led to a list of topics beginning with "A" and would then scroll down to "Adoption;" clicking on that heading then leads to multiple websites all dealing with different aspects of Adoption Records.

Next was a list of multiple sources that are often overlooked in courthouses. These records include bankruptcy proceedings, slander records, apprenticeship records, and voting records by residents of a community or county. In addition, examine almshouse records, the seating plans of town meetings (which would list a name to establish time and place), names of purchasers of gravestones, and institutional records such as prisons, hospitals, and orphanages.

The question of finding an ancestor who seems to have disappeared was then covered. Strategies for trying to solve this problem would include looking for immigration diaries (possibly housed in a local library or historical society), using known information about neighbors to see where a group might have moved, using the many newspaper websites such as *Newspapers.com*, and checking the membership rolls of professional and fraternal organizations. Additionally, criminal records, draft registrations, foreclosures on properties, and records

of name changes (discussed in more detail below) can also sometimes provide clues.

The all-too-familiar problem of finding women's maiden names was the next topic. After having no success with the obvious sources such as marriage and divorce records, some lesser-used techniques can be tried. One of those is to use the Federal Population Census starting with 1850 (the first Census to list **all** names in a household), and find the name of the groom as a child according to the neighborhood of residence; then check elsewhere in the neighborhood for any family who had a female child with the first name of the woman in question. This technique may suggest a maiden name because many ethnic groups remained in group neighborhoods through the 19th and into the 20th century, and spouses often met when they lived nearby; one can then use that hypothesized maiden name to search for her in other records for verification.

Other maiden-name strategies include looking at wills which name married daughters' surnames, thus indicating the father's or mother's surname—which would be her maiden name. Also, looking at witness signatures in land transactions and wills may be helpful because those signatures could be by a friend or acquaintance who could be the parent of the married woman. Other methods would include looking for marriage intentions or marriage banns, looking for divorce or annulment records, checking tombstones since maiden names are sometimes included, looking at the middle names of first-born or second-born children since mother's maiden surnames are sometimes given as a middle name to a child, and checking a family bible or diary.

Name changes of all kinds was the next topic. Other than marriage and divorce for name changes, other reasons could include adoption, the marriage of a custodial parent, avoidance of the law for some

reason, avoidance of a presumed stalker, religious conversion, and changing a name in order to receive an inheritance. Other reasons for name changes would be simplifying a name in order to blend into society after immigrating (e.g., “Rodriguez” became “Rogers” for some immigrants from Portugal and its possessions), and the desire to disassociate from other family members. A schism in one colonial family resulted in one branch continuing to use the original name “Paine” while the other branch deliberately changed the spelling to “Payne,” yet they are all blood-related. Simple changes in spelling before spelling standardization would be another reason. Some individuals changed their names because they wanted to adopt a famous or fictional character’s surname, or to espouse a particular social cause. Other name changes include the desire to have a name which better fits the person’s gender identity, or the need to participate in a witness-protection program.

The repatriation of women after the beginning of women’s suffrage is a related topic. From 1855 to 1920, if a woman was not yet naturalized but married a naturalized man, she automatically became naturalized as a result.

On the other hand, naturalized women who married an alien, actually LOST their citizenship during that period; they could only regain their citizenship when they either divorced or their spouse died. Records of women’s repatriations exist in the first decade of the 20th century and provide dates and

places of marriage, divorce, or spousal death. The advent of women’s suffrage in 1920 removed this problem.

Municipal employment records are often little-used but may provide useful information. If an ancestor is descended from an elected official, was a lamplighter, or was another kind of municipal employee, information may be available in a town or city hall in ledgers, municipal reports, legislation, election results, newspapers, court cases, or even political convention records.

Finally, the techniques for using a probated will for genealogical purposes was described by using an actual 1799 will from Rhode Island as an example. Wills may sometimes contain information through the signatures of witnesses, the naming of heirs (particularly married daughters as noted earlier), named relationships among the heirs, the debts and assets of the deceased, and the detailed list of her/his possessions in order to reconstruct a picture of what the deceased’s life may have been. In addition, children’s names can be learned as well, and whether an heir’s spouse is living or not. If a will is contested, further information can be found such as the names of those who are contesting it.

A list of Genealogical Resources from *Family Tree Magazine* was recommended as a useful reminder checklist for genealogists to use when they strike “brick walls.”

**To forget one’s ancestors is to
be a brook without a source,
a tree without a root.**

Chinese Proverb

Program Summary, March 21, 2023

Written by *David Martin*

Oral Histories and Genealogical Research with Ari Wilkins



For its March 2023 program meeting, the Society enjoyed a presentation by Ari Wilkins about incorporating oral history into genealogy research. She took a number of examples from slave

narratives in relation to constructing family histories, but the techniques also apply generally to many genealogical contexts.

She began with the narrative written by her mother (1908-2000) about her own life, starting with what her mother learned about the circumstances of her own birth. She was born during a solar eclipse, which meant that she would have good luck.

Oral histories may be found in a number of locations. Those would include local historical societies, libraries, archives, published county records, unpublished manuscripts of interviews, “mug” books published in particular localities, inherited family documents, and personal letters, among other possible sources. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) established by the federal government during the Depression did transcriptions of interviews, especially slave narratives. The Library of Congress also has a collection of oral histories. Using Google sometimes reveals a previously unknown available oral history project.

Once a researcher has obtained transcribed oral histories, the main goal is to then verify the information reported by consulting a variety of sources; personal recollections during an interview

may be exaggerations of different kinds or unconscious distortions of actual facts. These sources for verification could include the Federal Census, town and county records, courthouse information, and church records.

The result of verifying oral histories is valuable information that may not be easily available otherwise; such information could relate to migration patterns, the economics of where and what kinds of jobs were found in a particular location at a certain time, and perspectives on famous events that were either witnessed by the teller or that the teller knew of in her or his life. Telling these facts about an ancestor can then enrich a life story well beyond dates of births, marriages, and deaths.

Sometimes the transcriber of oral interviews can introduce errors of interpretation through either editing or deliberate falsification. If the researcher has concern about possible distortions in the transcription of an oral interview, sometimes state archives have the original interview in some form.

The question of what to do with one’s genealogy was also discussed. Ari recommended not exclusively giving it to a family member, but instead to provide a good copy to a library or other repository in addition to giving it to a family member. Putting the genealogy onto a flash drive before donating it can solve the problem of a repository not having space enough to store the physical documents.

Program Summary, April 18, 2023

Written by David Martin

Beyond Dry Facts: How to Examine Records for Information that Leads to Great Stories with Cheri Hudson Passey & Laura Hedgecock



For its April 2023 Program meeting, the Society enjoyed a two-person presentation by Cheri Hudson Passey and Laura Hedgecock on the topic of “Beyond Dry Facts: How to Examine Records for Information that Leads to Great Stories.” Both presenters provided three in-depth case studies—one with a federal record, one with a state record, and one with a local (county) record.

Before mining these records, the presenters explained an important distinction for genealogists. On the one hand, a **transcription** of a record is a literal copying of everything in the record, leaving a blank for any words that are unclear and using brackets for any interpretation made, and turning off the Spellcheck function because spellings were not standardized. On the other hand, the **abstract** of a record is a summary of the record, but again using the exact words and phrases found in the original.

The Federal example used an excerpt from both the 1900 and 1910 Population Census for Virginia. From the Census, information was gleaned about household status, birth date, race, birthplace of parents, primary language, ability to read and write, type of business, and location. Once one has this information, it was recommended to then gather more information about the time and place through *FamilySearch.org* and also to use the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to determine the value of money reported in the record in relation to its actual value in today’s money. A DNA match can be used to determine whether siblings were really siblings.

Checking to see the names of the informant on the Census can also give clues to possible relationships. Next is to weave in family stories that are known, look at family photographs for additional clues, and try to resolve contradictions (one of the five principles of the Genealogical Proof Standard adopted by the National Genealogical Society). The presenters also alerted us to avoid conflating theories about what happened with the established facts about what happened.

Next was a state example, which used a Pension Application File, in this case the application for a pension from fighting for the Confederate side in the Civil War. Such Files may include the location, income, marital status, age, and children’s names. In addition, the researcher should examine the governmental guidelines for eligibility for the pension. Correlating information given on the application with the contemporary Federal Census can help to verify facts. Sometimes the emotional level of family events can be determined through either stories or letters. The use of historical-event timelines as background will then indicate contextual events of the time which the person may have either known about or even experienced. Such timelines are easily found on Google; one example of a useful website is *ourtimelines.com*.

The local or county-level example used a probate packet. Contained therein are often highly useful items such as an inventory of all of the possessions of the deceased at the time of death, affidavits

which could contain information about residences, the amount of cash owned at the time of death, items of jewelry owned, the death record itself, newspaper accounts such as obituaries, and court records of any civil or criminal proceedings in which the deceased was involved. Thus, a rather comprehensive picture of the deceased's life can be created through all of this evidence. Equally important is then for the genealogist to ask questions such as:

*What information is still missing?

*What historical events happened contemporaneously with the deceased's lifetime?

*What historical developments in scientific inventions and transportation methods happened during the lifetime of the deceased?

The genealogist would then compare newspaper stories about the deceased with the information found in the probate packet, along with reports of world or national or regional events. It was recommended to take advantage of university archives, local libraries, and local historical society records, while creating what is called "niche research."

**Genealogy.
In the end, it's all
relative.**

Interest Groups

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs) are informal member gatherings for the purpose of sharing information, research techniques, data, and references, regarding specific topics or geographical areas.

The following is general information. Please email the SIG leader for further details and/or to be added to their list to receive the email announcements for meetings and handouts.

You may also visit our website at www.capecodgenealogy.org.



Cape Cod Families

capecodfamiliesSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Leader **Bebe Brock** advises that all are working independently, and carefully following the on-going announcements from Sturgis Library, whether open or not (where the group meets) and adhering to any mask requirements. Bebe is currently holding meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:00 PM.

Computer Users

computerusersSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Leader **Bob Oppenheim** holds a meeting on the second Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM (except in July and August). The Group has started to meet in person after our long Zoom-only, COVID-necessitated hiatus. Our in-person meetings will all be hybrid, that is both Zoom and in-person, so we will not lose any of the members that have joined the group from off-Cape locations. Our meeting space is the meeting room at the Dennis Public Library, 5 Hall Street, Dennis Port, except when otherwise announced. We have used facilities at the Brewster Ladies' Library when the room at the Dennis Library is unavailable.

DNA

dnaSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Leader **Walter Murphy** holds a Zoom meeting every other month on the first Tuesday at 1:30 PM. Prior to the Zoom meeting, he sends out both an agenda and a Zoom invitation to register. This is an active group that typically attracts participants of all levels of interest and expertise to each meeting. All sessions begin with a question-and-answer roundtable discussion, divided into two sections: DNA 101 questions/problems followed by time for "old hands." The discussion period is followed by topics of interest.

German

germanSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Co-Chairs **Ann Croston** and **Bob Oppenheim** host a monthly hybrid Zoom meeting on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM (except in July and August). The meeting is held at the Brewster Ladies' Library in the upstairs auditorium when it is available, otherwise in the downstairs meeting room.

In addition, Ann posts notices of events and items of interest on the SIG's Facebook Group, the Cape Cod Genealogical Society German SIG <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CCGS.GermanSIG>. Because the meetings are hybrid, attendees have the option of attending in person or on Zoom.

Irish Research

irishresearchSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Leader **Pat Flaherty** holds a Zoom meeting on the fourth Monday of the month at 10:00 AM, however, gatherings are quarterly. Anyone with an interest in Irish genealogy is most welcome. We have members with lots of experience who can help those with little experience. It is a good combination. Our sessions usually include a presentation from a member on available records (either in the United States or in Ireland). We also share strategies for finding those elusive Irish ancestors wherever they may be lurking. There is always time for good discussions during which questions are answered and experiences are shared. Please contact Pat if you wish to be added to her email list.

Writers

writersSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Leader **Pippa Dodd Ryan** holds a Zoom meeting on the third Friday of the month at 10:00 AM. Anyone with an interest in sharing their writing with the group regarding personal genealogy or about family members (including pets), anything historical, current event topics, articles of personal satisfaction and more are most welcome. We explore many styles of writing and narrative, even poetry and discovered family letters, as well as discuss the possibilities of publication. Everyone is welcome to participate and share their work, writing tips and techniques. If you do not have anything to share, join us anyway. You may become inspired!



CCGS Calendar

Tuesday, May 2

German SIG 10:00 AM

Tuesday, May 9

Computer SIG 10:00 AM

Wednesday, May 10

Board Meeting 2:00 PM

Tuesday, May 16

Monthly Meeting 7:00 PM

Jeff Schiebe

A Return Trip to the Homeland

Friday, May 19

Writers SIG, 10:00 AM

Tuesday, May 23

Cape Cod Families SIG 1:00 PM

Tuesday, June 6

DNA SIG, 1:30 PM

Saturday, June 17

Annual Meeting (Hybrid) 10:00 AM

Brewster Ladies' Library

Bill Griffeth, Author of

The Stranger in My Genes: A Memoir

Strangers No More: A Memoir

Monday, June 26

Irish SIG, 10:00 AM

**Why waste your money looking
up your family tree?**

**Just go into politics and your
opponents will do it for you.**

Mark Twain