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CCGS NEWS

A Publication of the Cape Cod Genealogical Society

Volume 10 Issue 3

June 2023

**Please Join us at our Monthly Meeting
Saturday, June 17, at 10:00 AM, Eastern Time
at Brewster Ladies' Library**

Our meeting will be brought to you via both **Zoom and in-person**.
Members will receive an email a few days 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 Bill Griffeth
The Stranger in My Genes: A Memoir*

How a Simple DNA Test Complicated the Author's Life

Bill Griffeth, longtime genealogy buff, takes a DNA test that has an unexpected outcome: *If the results were correct, it meant that the family tree I had spent years documenting was not my own.* Bill undertakes a quest to solve the mystery of his origins, a quest which will shake his sense of identity. As he takes us on his journey, we learn about choices made by his ancestors, parents, and others – and we see Bill measure and weigh his own difficult choices as he confronts the past.



Bill Griffeth was one of the country's most respected financial journalists on TV until his retirement in 2019. He began covering Wall Street in 1981 on the Financial News Network (FNN). Bill joined CNBC in 1991 and anchored several programs, including *Power Lunch*, *Closing Bell* and *The Nightly Business Report* which CNBC produced for public television. Since 2003, Bill's hobby has been genealogy and he has traveled tens of thousands of miles in the United States and Europe researching his and his wife's family histories. He currently serves as a Trustee of New England Historic Genealogical Society in Boston. Bill is the author of *Stranger in My Genes* and *Strangers No More*.

Message from the CCGS President Judy Fenner



Greetings and Happy Summer!

I am very much looking forward to our Annual Meeting on Saturday, June 17, at 10:00 AM. This will be a hybrid meeting so if you can't get to Brewster Ladies' Library, please look for or request the Zoom information.

We will be voting on Society Leadership and your vote counts (see page 5). We will present a short summary of the past year's accomplishments and outline some goals for the future as prompted by the survey results. You won't want to miss this meeting!

There will also be a great speaker. Bill Griffeth was astounded to learn from a simple DNA test that his father was NOT his biological father. Please take note of the information on the first page.

Following the meeting, some of us will be going to Scargo Cafe for a Dutch treat lunch. We welcome you to join us. Please let me know if you are interested, so we will be sure to have enough spaces reserved.

bfennerpgm@comcast.net

Once again, I am sending out a *PLEASE* for library volunteers and volunteers to assist researchers remotely as well. Can you possibly give an hour a month to YOUR Society?

Wishing a safe and restful summer to all,

Judy

president@capecodgenealogy.org



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

OFFICERS

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

BOARD MEMBERS

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
David Martin	Board Member
Bob Oppenheim	Board Member

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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.

Please Welcome New
Member

Mark Twining

Program Summary

May 16, 2023

Written by *David Martin*

A Return Trip to the Homeland What a Difference 25 Years Makes!

With Jeff Schiebe



CCGS Member Jeff Schiebe, an experienced genealogist, provided the program presentation for the Society's monthly meeting with a program about his visits to the *Homeland*, in this

case, the eastern part of Germany. He recounted his three visits and the types of information gained, as part of his larger project, his *Great Eight*, of identifying all his eight great-grandparents.

The investigation process took twenty-five years to complete, involving personal visits to the town of Wernigerode in 1992, 1996, and 2018. The comparison of the town itself, its facilities, the behavior of the residents, and the availability of genealogical information across the three visits was enlightening.

He started his genealogical investigations with his paternal grandmother, interviewing her in Minnesota when he was in the 6th grade; she provided him with stories that piqued his interest. He found the name of his maternal grandfather, Frank Klemm; during the presentation he shared a photograph of family members outside a barn building in Minnesota, which had an outdoor wall on which the family projected films along with a loudspeaker sound system, so that different people could watch and listen, a kind of outdoor theater.

On this first trip, he carried a church bulletin and a school report card, both in the German language. Arriving in the town, which had been part of East Germany only three years before, he found conditions depressing and reflective of many years of Russian rule, Soviet-style cement-block

buildings, shops in poor condition, small automobiles, and few people fluent in English. He was able, however, to find the church that was mentioned in an obituary from Minnesota. He encountered skepticism of him by those living in the town, but when he shared the historic school report card from his ancestor, doors began to open. He visited the City Archives, and two young men staffers proved helpful to his searches with more original documents (which were fundamentally unprotected from deterioration). A month after returning home, he received a letter from the church, which added more information.

In 1996 on his return visit, he found an increase in the number of people speaking English. He also found much more information to be accessible.

On his third visit in 2018, he found significant differences. He was able to get German documents translated. He also hired a professional genealogist who was very helpful in doing advance work in addition to working with him while he was there.

Documents from the various historical trade guilds from centuries before were revealing about the way business and trades operated in the past in Europe. He was able to obtain documents translated in three steps, starting with the old German script (known as Fraktur) to be translated into Modern German, and then from Modern German into English.

Since nearly a generation had passed since his second visit, he found far more English being available, since now there had been a generation of children of the 1990s who had begun learning English, and who were now adults. Buildings were modern and well built, and transportation, including cars, was excellent. He was able to learn from the

documents why his great-grandfather had emigrated. As a son in Germany, his great-grandfather was not eligible to inherit property because he was not the oldest son, and so emigration to America to start a new life was the best alternative.

Upon returning home from the third visit, his first cousin then shared more documents and items, which filled in even more of the story of establishing the identities of his *Great Eight*.

Coming up at our Annual Meeting,
members will be asked to vote on the following slate to be elected:

Vice President

Jo Anne Makely - 1 year

Corresponding Secretary

Bebe Brock - 2 years

Treasurer

Ed Brown - 2 years

Director at large

Ann Croston - 2 years

Director at Large

Jeff Schiebe - 2 years

Nominating Committee

Pat Flaherty - 1 year

Dave Martin - 1 year

Gina Mullen - 1 year

Special 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 or in-person 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, June 6

German SIG, 10:00 AM

Tuesday, June 6

DNA SIG, 1:30 P

Wednesday, June 7

Board Meeting, 2:00 PM

Tuesday, June 13

Computer SIG, 10:00 AM

Friday, June 16

Writers SIG, 10:00 AM

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

Tuesday, June 27

Irish SIG, 10:15 AM

Dennis Public Library

5 Hall Street, Dennis Port

In-Person

Tuesday, June 27

Cape Cod Families SIG, 1:00 PM

Sturgis Library

3090 Main Street, Barnstable