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CCGS NEWS

A Publication of the Cape Cod Genealogical Society

Volume 11 Issue 2

April 2024

**Please Join us at our Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, April 16 at 10:00 AM, Eastern Time
Brewster Ladies' Library**

Our meeting will be brought to you via **Zoom and in-person**.
Members will receive an email with the registration link five days before the meeting.

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

*Please Welcome Anastasia Welsh Perrino, Esq.
Barnstable County Register of Probate and Family Court*



Anastasia Welsh Perrino, Esq., Register for the Barnstable Probate and Family Court will speak about the types of cases that are filed at the Barnstable Probate and Family Court and some of the common court forms that may be of interest to genealogists. She will provide an update on the scanning project with *FamilySearch* and the Cape Cod Genealogical Society volunteers.

Prior to being elected to the position, she served as Assistant Register/Assistant Judicial Case Manager at the Barnstable Probate and Family Court for five years. Before her work at the Court, Perrino practiced law for fourteen years on the Cape, primarily in estate planning and administration, real estate, guardianship, mental health and elder law.

She has served as Chair of a group of Registers and Attorneys who teach at the Massachusetts Bar Association Probate Law Conference for the past eleven years and has been a guest lecturer at many continuing legal education courses on Probate and Family Law as well as a guest speaker at many local organizations on the Cape.

Register Perrino received her undergraduate degree from Boston College and her law degree from Suffolk University Law School. She has lived on Cape Cod for virtually all her life. She graduated from Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School and has lived in the Town of Dennis for over thirty years with her husband. Her two adult sons also graduated from Dennis-Yarmouth High School, now finished with college and working in Boston.

Message from the CCGS President Judy Fenner



Paine's Creek Landing Sunset
Brewster, MA

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy Spring! I think sometimes winter returns for a while (especially here on Cape Cod)! But the daffodils are in bloom so there is hope!

The **Book Scanning Project** is finally underway. Thanks to David Martin, Kim and Pam Eaton, Stan Warren and Bobby Parr, along with the able assistance of members of the LDS Church in Cataumet, we were able to move a goodly number of boxes of books right to their door, where they were taken away by 10 to 12 strong, young men to a storage room and will soon be scanned. We will eventually move them back to Hyannis and then take the final load over for scanning. Thanks goes to new CCGS member Betsy Cross for her assistance as the FamilySearch liaison.

The **Probate Project** continues, and we are processing probate packets dated 1935, so we are making progress! My heartfelt thanks for the faithfulness of our volunteers. We have a great time together, so join us if you wish.

Please plan to attend the **April Monthly Meeting** and meet the Barnstable County Register of Probate, **Anastasia Perrino**, herself, who will help us untangle the probate process. Please bring your questions, as she would like to have an interactive presentation. Anastasia and her staff work hard to keep us busy over at the Courthouse and she and her staff are excited that they can now access these records online.

We will have our usual **Dutch Treat Luncheon at Scargo Café** after the April 16 meeting. Please let me know if you would like to join us. It's a great way to get to know each other better!

We need a volunteer for the position of **Director at large** on the Board of Directors to be elected in June. Please contact David Martin if you are willing to serve (davidchina_2000@yahoo.com).

We have **two workshops planned, on April 10 and April 26**. See details elsewhere in this newsletter and join us, as we share our areas of expertise with each other.

Judy
president@capecodgenealogy.org

Spohr Gardens, Spring Daffodils
Falmouth, MA



**Cape Cod Genealogical Society
Board of Directors 2023-2024**

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Judy Fenner	President
Jo Anne Makely	Vice President
Pat Merriell	Recording Secretary
Bebe Brock	Corresponding Secretary
Ed Brown	Treasurer

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Ann Croston	Director at Large
Jeff Schiebe	Director at Large
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Bob Oppenheim	Board Member

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TBD	Library
David Martin	Education
TBD	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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Harwich, MA 02645
www.capecodgenealogy.org

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.

Did You Forget?

The due date for payment of your **2024 membership dues** was January 1st. Don't miss a single issue of the Newsletter or the Journal! If you haven't already done so, please send your check and completed renewal form today. (You may also pay via PayPal if you prefer.) Both the renewal form and the PayPal option may be found on the "Join CCGS" page of the CCGS website.

For our May 21 Meeting



Do you have a rake, rogue, renegade, criminal, shocking, horrible, nasty and an undesirable, offensive, obnoxious SKELETON you would rather keep deep in the closet of your family tree?

The Program Committee at CCGS would like to dedicate a meeting to salute these ancestors who just cannot stay hidden. Do not be afraid to come forward to share your bad guy or moll with us. I have one who is so despicable that I have come to admire his ability to go from place to place without leaving a trace.

We would welcome a mini-presentation! Please share your ancestor with us. Let's make this a fun meeting and bring these folks alive again, at least for a few hours.

Please contact Jo Anne Makely or Dave Martin and we will add you to our list of presenters.

Jo Anne: jmakely@gmail.com David: davidchina_2000@yahoo.com

Irish Research SIG Announcement

Leader **Pat Flaherty** is currently earning a Master's Degree in the History of Family at the University of Limerick, Ireland, so will not have an **Irish SIG meeting until Fall 2024**.

The Irish SIG group is comprised of a combination of people with lots of knowledge about Irish Genealogy and some with very little. This seems to work well toward the goal of everybody learning something from each other. The agendas have been varied based on the interests of the group.

Meetings, since and during COVID, have been on Zoom. This will most likely continue, except in the summer months when the Dennis Port Public Library is the host. Pat usually sends out a follow-up sheet from the meetings and occasionally an information e-mail between meetings. Please let Pat know if you would like to be added to the mailing list. The next meeting is expected to be in **October 2024**.

Volunteer Call-Out to All Members

CCGS needs a technical volunteer to help with our monthly hybrid meetings (Zoom and in-person). We are looking for someone with audio/visual experience, along with computer skills to monitor a remote speaker and assist with the Zoom meeting features. If you do not have full tech experience, would you be interested? You can be trained by our very own Bob Oppenheim. We welcome any interest!



**Please drop a line to Bob, at our website info line:
info@capecodgenealogy.org.**

Write “Bob O.” in the subject box.

CCGS Workshops

Navigating Search Engines

**Wednesday, April 10, 2024
10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**

**Dennis Public Library
5 Hall Street
Dennis Port, MA**

**Join us for an informal gathering, hosted by
experienced CCGS genealogists.
Bring your questions, along with your
laptop or iPad if you have one.**

We'll teach one another, ask questions and help others!

Research Rendezvous

**Friday, April 26, 2024
10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**

**Dennis Public Library
5 Hall Street
Dennis Port, MA**

**Once again, experienced CCGS genealogists
will host the gathering.
Bring your research questions, along with your
laptop or iPad if you have one.**

Help is on the way!

**Please Welcome
New and Returning Members**

**Katherine Peace
Lisa and Michael Riley
Cheryl Levy
Edgie Donakey
JoAnne and Stephen Wallace
Miriam and David Kodl
Mary Elizabeth Majkut
Bonnie Mucia
Cynthia Doherty
JoAnn and Dennis Marshall**

**The CCGS Genealogy Library
is located in the Dennis Public Library
5 Hall Street, Dennis Port**

**Hours:
2nd and 4th Tuesdays and all Thursdays, 1 to 4 PM**

Access to Ancestry.com, AmericanAncestors.org, FamilySearch.org.

**Walk-ins welcome.
Reservations also welcome and questions too!
librarian@capecodgenealogy.org**

**Please note that sometimes we are not open due to an
unforeseen issue and we apologize for this.**

Final Farewells

**Vivian Emma Cushing
1925 - 2023**

The CCGS Board Members send their sympathy to the family of Vivian Cushing, a longtime member of CCGS and a founder of the Marstons Mills Historical Society. She also served as treasurer at MMHS for many years.

**Benjamin Beale Baker
1939 – 2024**

Husband to longtime CCGS member Deborah Baker; the Board sends its condolences to Deborah and her family.

Ben Baker's legacy is one of service, passion and commitment, touching the lives of many.

Probate Project

Remember, we have a volunteer Probate Project going on. A group has been meeting at the Barnstable County Courthouse and scanning in old probate records (for FamilySearch). They are having a lot of fun, as they work on their tasks, chatting and laughing. It's only for a few hours here and there. Think about joining us! Contact President Judy Fenner for more information:

president@capecodgenealogy.org

Program Summary, February 20, 2024

Written by *David Martin*



AI and Genealogy – Trouble Ahead? with Thomas MacEntee

The Society enjoyed a presentation by Thomas MacEntee on the relationship between Artificial Intelligence and genealogy, a current topic of great concern in the genealogical community. He pointed out that, in fact, genealogists have been using forms of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for many years. Some of the previously used aspects of AI-type programs have included spellcheck and grammar checker; also, the 1950 Census transcription and translation of the enumerators' handwriting has been a recent application.

An AI definition would be a computer-based system which mimics human intelligence to perform human tasks.

Four platforms exist for AI: (1) *Google Gemini* (formerly known as *Google Bard*) has both a free and a pay version; one goes to Google to ask it questions. (2) The *ChatGPT* program, also with a free and a pay version, can be subscribed to on a month-to-month basis or longer; Thomas recommended at first going to the month-by-month approach until one is certain that one wants to continue using it; <https://chat.openai.com> is the web address. (3) *Perplexity* is another program, obtainable at www.perplexity.ai. (4) *Copilot* is the fourth option, owned by Microsoft and included in Windows 11 at <https://copilot.microsoft.com>.

New applications of AI include:

- Estimation of dates for photographs, on *My Heritage*
- Animation of photographs
- Transcription services through *familysearch.org*
- Suggestions of records to use in one's search
- DNA matches via DNA genotyping
- Researching social history on *ChatGPT* to create the story of an ancestor in terms of the context in which she/he lived
- Record sets, showing available sources, on *Perplexity*
- Transcription of written documents on Gemini; one can select either "summarize" or "transcribe exactly," but one needs to check the transcription for accuracy
- Finding relationships between individuals in a family tree

The user should be sure to start a new "chat" for each new query, rather than building on an existing query. AI continues to improve if users provide feedback to the particular program, in effect, "training the AI platform." If a response seems inadequate or suspicious, one should re-initiate the same query at a later time.

Copyrighting is a question which occurs in AI usage. The AI content itself cannot be copyrighted because there has been no HUMAN involvement; but one can rewrite the result oneself, and then that

rewrite can be copyrighted. A court case is currently in process on the question of an AI program “scraping” the Internet for more data and whether those results can be copyrighted. When citing sources in a narrative about a genealogical finding, one must say that AI generated a part of the narrative.

A source citation should include: the query itself, the AI platform used, the date or version of the platform used, the name of the AI company, the date of the query, and the URL of the platform.

For the future, a number of possibilities can be foreseen:

- Gradual acceptance of AI as a method (15 years ago, we saw resistance to using social media, but that has now abated)
- DNA triangulation for rapid determination of relationships
- Conversion of handwriting into searchable text
- Discovery of correlations among Friends, Associates, and Neighbors (FAN) using AI with historical newspapers
- Identification of ancestors in old photographs through physical traits
- Suggestions of records for the researcher to use in expanding research.

To summarize, we can see both positive and negative aspects of AI:

Positive:

- Ability to deal with vast amounts of data
- Block chaining for determining prices for buying and selling
- Translation, replacing Optical Character Recognition
- Transcription, replacing Optical Character Recognition
- Creation of timelines and mapping

Negative:

- Lack of transparency for where the AI program sourced its information
- Bias; currently the bias is in favor of white males
- Copyright challenges
- Providing false information (one must always verify what has been found by AI)
- Privacy violations
- Higher costs for running the technology than without AI

Attendees were encouraged to investigate and experiment with AI applications.

Why waste your money looking up your family tree?
Just go into politics and your opponents will do it for you.
Mark Twain

Program Summary, March 19, 2024

Written by *David Martin*



Researching Sideways, Using the FAN Club (Friends, Associates, Neighbors) with Diana Crisman Smith

The Society featured a presentation by Diana Crisman Smith on various techniques and resources to use in moving around the inevitable “brick walls” which many genealogists encounter at various times. As an alternative to the “brick wall” concept, she also used the metaphor of a “bubble” in which the genealogist may be trapped temporarily. Her focus was on using what Elizabeth Shown Mills invented several years ago, *The FAN Club*.

The **F** represents not family, but FRIENDS; the **A** represents ASSOCIATES; and the **N** represents NEIGHBORS. A combination of these three sources, recorded systematically on a spreadsheet, can reveal added information which is not possible to obtain only from family connections. Information from these sources can also “put meat on the bones” of ancestors in the sense of developing a fuller and richer picture of them as individuals and even as personalities. Making a horizontal time-line for individuals, on which one places events as points on the line, can provide a visual representation of a person’s life.

We can start by asking such questions as:

Who were they?

What did they do?

Where did they go to church?

Where did they go to school?

In addition to the various types of friendships a person develops that could be used as a source of information by the genealogist, we should also explain what is meant by “associates.” These are perhaps a church pastor, a salesperson, a co-worker, etc. And what we mean by “neighbors” could include information from a census,

people living in the same community or building, and people living nearby or “up the street.” The neighbors category may also reveal a maiden name of a spouse, since in previous centuries and especially in rural areas, one often could not travel far when looking for someone to marry. Of course, the information from these sources would be documented after recording it in some kind of research log.

A rich variety of sources is available to the researcher in using the FAN approach, such as old newspapers (for birth, marriage, death, obituary, baptism, funeral, burial, social, and travel information about the person). In going into further detail on associates, one can look for those with similar occupations to shed light on the person’s work life, church records, meeting minutes, business-dealing records, and fellow school students as written up in high school yearbooks.

For further investigation of neighbors, in addition to the Census which provides nearby residence information, one can also use land records, tax records for nearby properties, and listings of businesses with which the neighbor might have dealt.

Other sources for finding FANs would include *WorldCat.org* for items such as diaries, *HathiTrust.org*, military muster rolls (National Archives), military service records (*Ancestry* and *FamilySearch*), National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC), records of government land grants to the ancestor if given government land at some point (see the Bureau of Land Management), local historical societies, and doing a Google search on the ancestor’s name.

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. Bebe is currently holding meetings on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:00 PM at Sturgis Library, Barnstable.

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). Although the Group has started hybrid meetings (Zoom and in-person), there have been some instances that meetings are only Zoom, depending on unforeseen circumstances. We do not wish to lose any of the members that have joined the group from off-Cape locations, so our meetings will continue to be hybrid meetings or only Zoom. We gather in 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 meeting (Zoom and in-person) 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>.

Irish Research

irishresearchSIG@capecodgenealogy.org

Leader **Pat Flaherty** holds a Zoom or in-person meeting every three months. Gatherings are currently on hold as Pat Flaherty is in Limerick, Ireland, studying for her Master's Degree. Irish SIG members are advised via email on specific dates and times. 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

Leaders **Sherill Baldwin** and **Lee MacDonald** hold a Zoom meeting on the third Friday of the month at 10:00 AM. Anyone interested 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 is most welcome. We explore many styles of writing and narrative, even poetry, 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! For more information, contact Sherill Baldwin.



CCGS Monthly Meeting Calendar

Tuesday, April 16, Monthly Meeting 10:00 AM

**Anastasia Welsh Perrino, Esq., Barnstable County Register of Probate
and Family Court**

Genealogical Information Found in Probate Records

Tuesday, May 21, Monthly Meeting 10:00 AM

Members Share

Rakes, Rogues, and Renegades in the Family

Tuesday, June 18, Annual Meeting 10:00 AM

Thomas MacEntee

After You're Gone; Future Proofing your Genealogy

Tuesday, August 20, Monthly Meeting 10:00 AM

Andrew Spooner, Author

Bathsheba Spooner: A Revolutionary Murder Conspiracy

Tuesday, September 17, Monthly Meeting 10:00 AM

NEHGS, Awaiting Speaker

Using and Evaluating Mug Books (County Histories) for Family Research

Tuesday, October 15, Monthly Meeting 10:00 AM

Susan Feinberg, CCGS Member

Topic TBD

Saturday, November 16, 10:00 AM

Joint Meeting with Falmouth

Speaker TBD

Tuesday, December 17, Monthly Meeting 10:00 AM

Members Share