



[www.capecodgenealogy.org](http://www.capecodgenealogy.org)

# CCGS NEWS

*A Publication of the Cape Cod Genealogical Society*

**Volume 11 Issue 6  
December 2024**

**Please Join us at our Monthly Meeting  
Tuesday, December 17 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 a week before the meeting.

Non-members are asked to email us at [info@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:info@capecodgenealogy.org)  
to receive the registration link.

We hope you will join us for *Our Members Share* informal meeting. We will have mini-presentations by members who will share their genealogical gems with us. We welcome anyone who has something fun, informative, or interesting to share regarding their family history or process of research. Stories, memorabilia, and photos related to your family roots will motivate all of us to continue our own journey of discovery. Please consider a five, ten or fifteen-minute presentation.

You may spontaneously come forward during the meeting, but if you would like to contact us beforehand to discuss a presentation, please email Board Member, David Martin, at [davidmartindr@aol.com](mailto:davidmartindr@aol.com). You can also contact the Society at [info@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:info@capecodgenealogy.org).

As per tradition, please consider bringing a treat we can all share during our social time prior to the meeting (come at 9:30 AM). Finger-food, such as sweets or savories are welcome. COFFEE will be provided. If you are sharing a family ethnic snack, perhaps add a small sign telling us what it is and why it is significant to you.



## Message from the CCGS President Judy Fenner



Dear Members and Friends,

**Season's Greetings to all!**

It is hard to believe that it is already December and that we are all busy with holiday preparations. It's a time for family traditions: Great Grandma's chocolate cake recipe, Grandma's cheese dip, Mom's Santa and Reindeer display, a Menorah that has been passed down through the generations and on and on.

As genealogists we understand how important these traditions are and how they connect us to our past. What are some of your traditions?

My heartfelt thanks to all of you that have volunteered for the various long-and short-term projects we have undertaken so far this year. We have accomplished and are continuing to accomplish much.

Is there a project you would like to see us do? Some of our SIGS are thriving and some not so much. Please let us know what you would like to focus on.

I confess that sometimes attending the Computer SIG is the only 2 hours I get to focus on genealogy and besides learning a lot, I enjoy seeing so many of you on the "Squares."

My new resolution is to focus on my genealogical research at least two hours a week. How about you?

I am glad for family traditions and the remembrance of those who gave them to us.

Happy Holidays! May 2025 bring us peace, joy and research success!

**Happy researching!**

Judy  
[president@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:president@capecodgenealogy.org)



**Cape Cod Genealogical Society  
Board of Directors 2024-2025**

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**Mailing address:**  
**Cape Cod Genealogical Society**  
**P.O. Box 1394**  
**Harwich, MA 02645**

[www.capecodgenealogy.org](http://www.capecodgenealogy.org)

[info@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:info@capecodgenealogy.org)



# CAPE COD GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

P.O. Box 1394, Harwich, MA 02645



Dear Member:

2024 is winding down and it's CCGS renewal time once again. Attached is an invoice for your 2025 annual dues. **Payment is due no later than January 1, 2025.**

To ensure accurate member information as well as proper processing of your payment, please complete the following renewal form and return it with your check to CCGS at P.O. Box 1394, Harwich, MA 02645. Dues for U.S. residents may also be sent through PayPal. The PayPal button may be found on our website on the "Join CCGS" page. If you do pay using PayPal, please also complete and return this renewal form either by U.S. mail or via email to: [membership@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:membership@capecodgenealogy.org).

CCGS introduced two new membership categories this year: Supporting Member (\$100 / year) and Contributing Member (\$150 / year). Both memberships include a printed copy of the semi-annual Journal as well as acknowledgement in Society publications. Amounts paid in excess of \$55.00 are tax deductible too. We are grateful to our first class of Supporting and Contributing members and hope that all members will consider Supporting or Contributing membership when renewing for 2025.

We appreciate your support of CCGS and look forward to your ongoing involvement with the Society. Continue to enjoy the great speakers, the Special Interest Groups, the Journal, and all the other benefits that come with membership. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Madelyn S. McHugh  
Membership Committee  
[www.capecodgenealogy.org](http://www.capecodgenealogy.org)  
[membership@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:membership@capecodgenealogy.org)

# Cape Cod Genealogical Society, Inc.

## 2025 Membership Renewal

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Primary Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone (C) \_\_\_\_\_

If joint membership:

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone (C) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Seasonal Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

When will you be at your seasonal mailing address? From: Month \_\_\_ Day \_\_\_ To: Month \_\_\_ Day \_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL (for the 2025 calendar year):

Basic Membership \_\_\_\_\_ \$35.00 (\$40.00 outside U.S.) (includes digital Journal via the website)

Printed Journals \_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 / year to add printed copy of the Journal to Basic Membership

Supporting Membership \_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00 (includes printed copy of the Journal) (see Note)

Contributing Membership \_\_\_\_\_ \$150.00 (includes printed copy of the Journal) (see Note)

Note: Supporting and Contributing members will be acknowledged in Society publications. Amounts paid in excess of \$55.00 are tax deductible under IRS Section 501 (c ) (3).

**DONATIONS:** I am adding \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as a donation to the **Library Fund** \_\_\_\_\_  
**General Fund** \_\_\_\_\_ **Education** \_\_\_\_\_.

The Donation button (if you are using PayPal) is on the **Home** page of the website.

Donations to CCGS are tax deductible under IRS Section 501 (c ) (3).

### TOTAL PAID:

Dues \_\_\_\_\_ Journal \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Total paid \_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed \_\_\_ PayPal \_\_\_\_\_

The PayPal button is on the website: [www.CapeCodGenealogy.org](http://www.CapeCodGenealogy.org) on the "**Join CCGS**" page.

I understand that CCGS depends on volunteers. Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.

Communications Technology \_\_\_ Conferences \_\_\_ Education \_\_\_ Hospitality \_\_\_ Journal \_\_\_

Library \_\_\_

Membership \_\_\_ Programs \_\_\_ Publicity \_\_\_ Research Trips \_\_\_ Misc. Projects \_\_\_

Please send your completed Membership Renewal form to:

**Cape Cod Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1394, Harwich, MA 02645**

or email it to us at: [membership@CapeCodGenealogy.org](mailto:membership@CapeCodGenealogy.org)

**The CCGS Genealogy Library  
and Research Center  
is located at the  
Dennis Public Library  
5 Hall Street Dennis Port, MA**

**Research Center Hours:  
1 to 4 PM on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays and all Thursdays  
(Please note that, on occasion, the CCGS Research Center  
may not be open due to unforeseen events.)**

**We are a FamilySearch Affiliate Library!  
We have access to many records not available through public means.  
Our holdings include a wealth of resources  
relating to genealogical research.**

**Two computers are available for your research  
with access to:**

*Ancestry.com*  
*FamilySearch.org*  
*AmericanAncestors.org*  
*Newspapers.com* (NEW !!!)

**Please contact  
[librarian@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:librarian@capecodgenealogy.org)  
to reserve a space or for more information.  
Walk-ins are welcome if space is available.**

**Can you spare three hours on one  
Tuesday or Thursday afternoon a month?  
We are *always* looking for new volunteers!  
Please use the above link to ask for more details.**



**Please Welcome  
New Members**

**Jodie & William Hodsdon**

### **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](mailto:president@capecodgenealogy.org)**

**Job Requirements:  
the ability to fold and unfold paper.**



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

**Chinese Proverb**

**Final Farewell  
Cynthia Jean Battis  
1947 – 2024**

**Cynthia Jean Battis of South Yarmouth, passed away on November 7, 2024.**

**Cindy was a member of the Society and a participant,  
attending monthly meetings and special education sessions.**

**She was employed by the Town of Brookline as a librarian  
for over forty-one years.**

**An avid amateur genealogist, Cindy was amused to find that she was  
descended from twenty-eight Pilgrims!**

**She is buried at her family plot at the  
Mayflower Cemetery, in Duxbury, Massachusetts,  
nearby to Pilgrims John and Priscilla Alden and Myles Standish.**





## Program Summary, November 16, 2024

Written by *David Martin*



### Part I: Probate Records and Beyond by Michael Leclerc

Professional genealogist Michael Leclerc, who has previously given presentations to the joint meeting, first provided an overview of how best to carry out analysis of Probate Records.

He made a distinction between “last will,” which means the final version of a person’s will, and “testament,” which describes the person’s personal estate as distinct from land. He used the example of the 1789 practice in Massachusetts and pointed out that knowing the then current laws is a key to interpreting a will accurately. At the present time, Massachusetts laws have changed, as have all the states, since their origins when they ceased to be colonies. In the early years, every county had its own probate court. A judge would decide on the administration and execution of a will, appoint guardians, and examine the accounts of individuals.

He distinguished “executor” from “administrator”—the executor is usually named by the deceased, is named by the court and administers the will, while the administrator administers the will in the absence of a previously designated executor for an intestate (dying without a will) deceased person.

The Register of Probate records the will, lists the accounts of assets and debts, and follows the orders of the judge on specific decisions. Michael also distinguished between that portion of a will which relates to ownership of land and buildings, versus the personal estate (possessions).

An intestate decedent’s possessions can only be given to the next-of-kin, and a percentage of the estate must, by law, be sent to the state. Literacy has been a requirement of heirs—literacy includes both the ability to read as well as write. Nuncupative wills—given orally just prior to the time of death by the deceased—often apply to soldiers or sailors who have suffered mortal wounds.

An important term to understand is a widow’s “dower right,” which refers to her inheritance of one-third of the land of her deceased husband. An intestate estate gives shares of the land and buildings to the children; if there are no children, the state receives half of the estate.

When a will needs to be examined in some way, the Court of Common Pleas is the venue. When there is a protest about the manner of distribution of the estate, the State

Supreme Judicial Court becomes the appellate court. (In Massachusetts, now the Court of Common Pleas is known as the Superior Court.)

Michael strongly advised anyone involved in interpreting or administering a will, to become familiar with the relevant state laws.



Happy Holidays 2024

## Program Summary, November 16, 2024

Written by *David Martin*

### Part II: Reading and Understanding Old Documents by Michael Leclerc

A second presentation was given by Michael Leclerc. He pointed out that there are five components to the process of reading and understanding old documents.

The first component relates to the nature of the documents. It could be civil, such as a land document, a probate record, or a will. It might be ecclesiastical, such as a sacramental document or a church court record. Or it could be a private document, such as a document about unregistered land, a contract, or a business record.

Another component relates to the language of the document. In the United States a document might be in English, Latin, Spanish, Dutch, German, or French (the language of the law until after World War II) because of immigration trends.

A third component is the handwriting. The analyst should look at the “hand” used at different times of history. In 1570, the Catholic Church required church records to be in Latin (Chancery Hand); other key dates of changes were 1592, 1637, and 1670 when the “round hand” of most American documents became prominent. The style of making individual letters can vary within the same document, sometimes depending on where the letter was located within a word (beginning, middle, or end).

Spelling is another important component. A useful resource is the book *Spell It Out*, by David Crystal. Spelling did not become uniform in the United

States until the twentieth century. The analyst should think about the way that a word was pronounced—its phonetic sounds sometimes governed the spelling of the word.

Also, some letters were used interchangeably; “i” and “j” were interchangeable, and both could be either consonants or vowels; similarly, “u” and “v” were interchangeable; “e” was often added to the end of a word; and the “y” sound was sometimes added as “ie.”

Finally, the meaning of marks and abbreviations is important. Commas and periods were inconsistently used, and colons were more often used than today. The symbol *./././.* was put at the end of a document to indicate that it was the end.

When transcribing a document, it is important to NOT look first for names, but instead to just begin reading word by word; it often happens that when one gets to the end of reading the document this way the pattern of the old writing becomes familiar, and then words not understood on the first reading can become understood. When a letter is missing, underscore the word; when one is unsure of what the word is, use brackets.

Artificial Intelligence is not a useful tool in this process. Documents written after 1801 actually became harder to read than before because the writing was no longer done with a quill pen (which is precise), and instead was done with an ink pen.

## 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. While membership in the SIGs is restricted to members of the Society, guests just wanting to see what the Society is all about or who are interested in a particular topic are always welcome. Use the email links below to request a link if you want to attend a Zoom meeting. Any meeting held at the Brewster Ladies' Library is open to the public.

*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](http://www.capecodgenealogy.org).



### Cape Cod Families

[capecodfamiliesSIG@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto: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](mailto: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. Out of consideration for the members that have joined the group from off-Cape locations, our meetings will continue to be hybrid meetings or only on Zoom. Hybrid meetings are held 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. If it involves a computer and it can benefit your genealogy, it's a topic that we are likely to discuss. The SIG has a rich collection of meeting handouts, website listings and other resources available to its members.

In addition, items of interest are routinely posted on the Computer SIG's Facebook Group site. Find it at the Cape Cod Genealogical Society Computer SIG <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CCGS.ComputerSig>. Members of the Society are invited to join.

## DNA

[dnaSIG@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto: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](mailto:germanSIG@capecodgenealogy.org)

**Bob Oppenheim** hosts a monthly hybrid meeting (Zoom and in-person) on the first Tuesday of the month at 10:00 AM (except in July, August and September). The meeting is held at the Brewster Ladies’ Library in the upstairs auditorium when it is available, otherwise in the downstairs meeting room. Members discuss their genealogy with an emphasis on methodologies for gathering information about the life and times of their German ancestors, along with a smattering of tales about what they have learned.

In addition, items of interest are routinely posted on the German SIG’s Facebook Group site. Find it at the Cape Cod Genealogical Society German SIG <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CCGS.GermanSIG>. Members of the Society are invited to join.

## Irish Research

[irishresearchSIG@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:irishresearchSIG@capecodgenealogy.org)

Leader **Pat Flaherty** holds a Zoom or in-person meeting every three months. 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](mailto: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.

The Society has recently added two new SIG groups.



## Family Tree Maker (FTM) Users Group

[computerusersSIG@capecodgenealogy.org](mailto:computerusersSIG@capecodgenealogy.org)

**Bob Oppenheim** hosts a meeting of users of this popular genealogical software application on the fourth Tuesday of each month, from 10:00 AM to 12 Noon. At this time, it is a Zoom-only meeting. Members of the Group have the option of joining a session or not, depending on whether they have questions to ask or techniques to share. The Group also shares a growing library of FTM solutions to common problems, links to helpful videos, and videos of its past meetings.

## Roots Magic Users Group

[davidmartindr@aol.com](mailto:davidmartindr@aol.com)

**David Martin** hosts the meeting toward the end of the month. This is a Zoom-only meeting. Discussion includes sharing challenges, solving problems, and discussing new developments produced by the Roots Magic company.