



## JEWISH GENEALOGICAL AND ARCHIVAL SOCIETY OF GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Date: Sept 15, 2025

We were very lucky to have two fabulous speakers at our meeting yesterday! **Dan Rottenberg**, a pioneer and visionary, spoke about the history of Jewish Genealogy and our society. It all started with a meeting of the minds in a NY public library. He mentioned Alex Haley and “Roots” and it’s influence for the future launching of genealogy societies, amateurs, professionals, books, conventions, etc. The changes have been very exciting from their first meeting in that library. Now with the internet, DNA, and AI, who knows what discoveries are out there for us. He concluded with “The best is yet to come”.

**Benjamin Nathans** gave a lively talk about **Selective Integration: The Evolving Legal Status of Jews in Imperial Russia, 1795-1917**. By the middle of the nineteenth century, more Jews lived in the Russian Empire than in any other country in the world. Eager to modernize their relatively backward agrarian kingdom, Russia’s rulers enacted a series of laws designed to integrate “useful” Jews, mimicking the results of emancipation in Western Europe without creating a society of equal citizens.

He talked about the privileged Jews who could travel outside of the Pale of Settlement, social unrest, and discontent. He said most Jews did not leave because of pogroms or military conscription, but because of poverty and the poor living conditions. We learned a lot from him and hope he returns.

Benjamin is the author of the multiple award-winning books, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter With Late Imperial Russia*. His latest book, *To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause: The Many Lives of the Soviet Dissident Movement*, tells the story of dissent in the USSR from Stalin’s death to the collapse of communism.

We remember *Steve Schechter* fondly and know he would have been honored to hear these two gentlemen speak! Below is the recording link.

[https://downloads.bboxcast.com/2025-09-14-175001-h4qdpzhz6gxcfgg0lbg9-1080p-b0s-e8191.63s.mp4?response-content-disposition=attachment%3B+filename%3D2025-09-14-175001-h4qdpzhz6gxcfgg0lbg9-1080p-b0s-e8191.63s.mp4&Expires=1760810842&Signature=ic9PLOS0s7DrYMAolpUwwUgw6Z2aVYyCRKB0dBZHAHf-jVZY1ZokDPGzZBnWRZ8dPV6Oc07AxVp-bu0YE~EsG9L0giGdnjwwtig~8jFcxit3D9Xphoz1i10wmayXoci5cpYQ0hAk-3N35qxdsU1pcxJkhQY1sIXTVZ4zdhsptPJ7dQwhe99UH9V4KsFs8fnc6p5D4XmnTHPLYrSgdFzXE74d5kP2tNJok-pxzl0tf8dqfH9IPSMTNFGOSwFWvRYby1M15Vy9QgfRx-MsGWJJTNLX8st7XI7mVrzt1WEgChvNz3WZYvira~1PnZkx-TUfQESchix-SpjaVXbCH0XGw\\_\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJ7GUCBQUK6NTWZCA](https://downloads.bboxcast.com/2025-09-14-175001-h4qdpzhz6gxcfgg0lbg9-1080p-b0s-e8191.63s.mp4?response-content-disposition=attachment%3B+filename%3D2025-09-14-175001-h4qdpzhz6gxcfgg0lbg9-1080p-b0s-e8191.63s.mp4&Expires=1760810842&Signature=ic9PLOS0s7DrYMAolpUwwUgw6Z2aVYyCRKB0dBZHAHf-jVZY1ZokDPGzZBnWRZ8dPV6Oc07AxVp-bu0YE~EsG9L0giGdnjwwtig~8jFcxit3D9Xphoz1i10wmayXoci5cpYQ0hAk-3N35qxdsU1pcxJkhQY1sIXTVZ4zdhsptPJ7dQwhe99UH9V4KsFs8fnc6p5D4XmnTHPLYrSgdFzXE74d5kP2tNJok-pxzl0tf8dqfH9IPSMTNFGOSwFWvRYby1M15Vy9QgfRx-MsGWJJTNLX8st7XI7mVrzt1WEgChvNz3WZYvira~1PnZkx-TUfQESchix-SpjaVXbCH0XGw__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJ7GUCBQUK6NTWZCA)

***Ethan, we are very proud of you!***

**Future Leader of the Year: Ethan Parmet, JGASGP Member 😊**

In recognition of his demonstrated leadership and leadership potential within the Jewish genealogical community and in support of his local society and its goals. Ethan has organized events, mentored peers, and contributed to groundbreaking research. He has taken an active role in the Har Jehuda cemetery restoration and digitization project. In addition to his active work in the cemetery clean-up, he has taken over 10,000 photos, many of which have been uploaded to JOWBR. He has also connected with other young people through various genealogical sites, provided research assistance, and engaged with them in genealogical research projects.

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**Beginner's Corner and Research Tips**

Two fabulous resources are available on our website:



Thank you to Ed Flax for this information:

**FYI: Here is an overview of the Center for Jewish History in NYC in a 27 minute video.**

It may encourage some of our members to make use of their collections for genealogical research and study of our shared history.

Center for Jewish History

A couple of our well known friends in the genealogy community are featured in the video, Moriah Amit an archivist at the CJH who has presented at one of our meetings and Christa Cowan, the corporate genealogist at Ancestry, who many of us have met and learned from at IAIGS conferences.

See below for programs to attend at CJH!

## Book Club Update



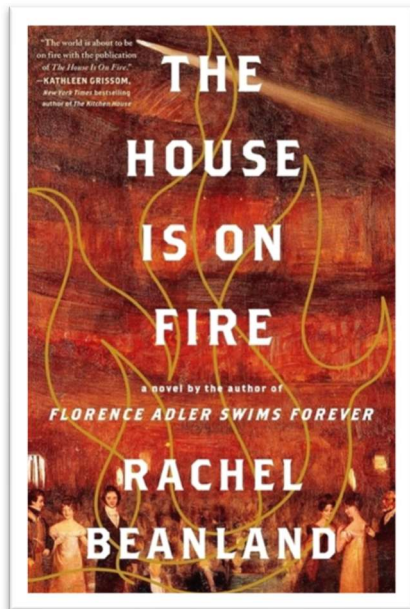
Hope to see many of you at our Book Club meeting. All are welcome any time! Our books are either written by an author with Jewish heritage or is one who writes about a Jewish theme. The link will be sent out to all on the morning of each meeting. See our website under Events for updated Book Club titles and descriptions. Meetings are the 4th Wednesday of the month unless there is a holiday. PLEASE RSVP to [membership@jgasgp.org](mailto:membership@jgasgp.org).

We had a lively and pleasant review of **Florence Adler Swims Forever** by Rachel Beanland. Thank you for everyone who attended and helped reminisce about our Atlantic City summers.

**\*SUMMER BREAK: Our Book club resumes on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 PM.**  
**If you'll be joining us, please RSVP to [membership@jgasgp.org](mailto:membership@jgasgp.org).**

The dates have been adjusted to accommodate for holidays.

1. **The House is on Fire** by Rachel Beanland  
Wednesday, Oct. 8, 2025, 7:30 (\*Eileen)



**Richmond, Virginia 1811.** It's the height of the winter social season, the General Assembly is in session, and many of Virginia's gentleman planters, along with their wives and children, have made the long and arduous journey to the capital in hopes of whiling away the darkest days of the year. At the city's only theater, the Charleston-based Placide & Green Company puts on two plays a night to meet the demand of a populace that's done looking for enlightenment at the front of a church.

When the theater goes up in flames in the middle of the performance, Sally, Cecily, Jack, and Gilbert make a series of split-second decisions that will not only affect their own lives but those of countless others. And in the days following the fire, as news of the disaster spreads across the United States, the paths of these four people will become forever intertwined. Based on the true story of the Richmond theatre fire. (\*Recommended by Eileen)

2. **The Family: Three Journeys into the Heart of the Twentieth Century** by David Laskin Wednesday, Oct. 29, 2025, 7:30 (\*Enid)
3. **Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity and Love** by Dani Shapiro Wednesday, Nov. 19, 2025, 7:30
4. **Lilli de Jong** by Janet Benton Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2025, 7:30

**FYI:** Book club at *Society Hill Synagogue*

*If you are interested, one of our members runs a book club at her synagogue.*

This is the third year of the Society Hill Synagogue book club. When possible we try and have authors zoom or visit with us. Our picks for 2026 include **The Secret Chord** by Geraldine Brooks; **The Family: Three Journeys into the Heart of the 20th Century** by David Laskin and **The Panther in the Basement** by Amos Oz. We generally meet the second Friday of the month however that can change to accommodate an author. David Laskin will be in Philadelphia and will be at the synagogue on Oct 27th at 1 pm.

Please let me know if you plan to attend or want our book picks from January to June, 2026. I can be reached at [dtartasky@gmail.com](mailto:dtartasky@gmail.com). Society Hill Synagogue is located at 418 Spruce St, Philadelphia 19106. Anyone in your book club is welcome to attend and I am wondering if you can announce this at today's meeting or your next book club meeting. I just request that anyone interested contact me by email as we need a head count to plan the space.

Thank you.

Donna Tartasky (JGASGP Member) and Judith Axler (Coordinators)

# Chronicles

Dear JGASGP Members,

We are working on the next issue of "Chronicles" and need your help. If you attended the IAIGS Conference in Fort Wayne, Indiana, please write an article about your favorite lecture and/or experience. We'd love to hear from you.

Do you have a story to tell? Did you meet any new relatives through your research? Have you made any unusual finds in your attic? We'd love to hear from you!

Please send your draft articles to [editor@jgasgp.org](mailto:editor@jgasgp.org). We hope to receive materials in early September.

With our thanks,

Ed Flax, Acting Editor [editor@jgasgp.org](mailto:editor@jgasgp.org)

Debbie Terman, Associate Graphic Editor [dcterman@jgasgp.org](mailto:dcterman@jgasgp.org)

## Contributions: UPDATE

We would like to thank members and friends who have made generous donations to our society. Your continued kindness is greatly appreciated. Please let us know if you want to donate in honor of or in memory of someone special. Tom will be informing Evan's family of all donations received in his memory.

**Evan Fishman (z'l)** was beloved by the JGASGP community, and the outpouring of love has been a testament to that. Many have asked about making donations in Evan's memory, and the JGASGP will be making donations to some organizations that were important to Evan:

JRI-Poland, <https://www.jri-poland.org/>

Ukraine SIG, <https://www.jewishgen.org/>

Alex Krakovsky, (Ukrainian: Олександр Краковський) is a Jewish-Ukrainian archivist, activist, and genealogist. He is a leader in the Jewish genealogical community in efforts to legalize the digitization of Jewish records from Ukrainian historical government archives.

HAMEC, Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center, 8339 Old York Rd, Elkins Park, PA 19027, <https://hamec.org/>

In addition, we will be planning a day-of-learning in memory of Evan. If you would like to contribute to JGASGP in Evan's memory you can use PayPal under the Membership Tab or mail a check to our mailbox address.

Please make sure to write that it is to be used in memory of our beloved Evan Fishman.

Any problems, contact Jim, [webmaster@jgasgp.org](mailto:webmaster@jgasgp.org)

Jewish Genealogical and Archival Society of Greater Philadelphia

1657 The Fairway, #145  
Jenkintown, PA 19046

## Everything Genealogy

Thank you to everyone who joined us on September 8<sup>th</sup>. We had 15 members sign in to our discussion. Everyone was helpful. We have cancelled the meeting in October due to the Jewish holidays.

**We will continue to meet on Zoom on **November 3<sup>rd</sup>** at 7:30 PM.**

***Bring you questions, brick walls, and suggestions! You never know what you'll learn!***

### JGASGP Meeting Schedule and Updates



The Zoom link or Livestream link will be posted on the HOME page of our website on Sunday morning before each meeting. There will be no chat and shmooze on Livestream, only when we use Zoom. Most of our programs will be recorded with the permission of the guest lecturer. Using Zoom, if anyone does not wish to be recorded, please do not participate in the live program Q and A. All microphones and cameras will be turned off during the lectures.

**See our website for more details about the speakers and the topics.**



**Date: Sunday, October 19, 2025**

**Time: 1:30 PM (1 pm for Schmoozing and Mentoring)**

**Location: Zoom Meeting Only**

**Speaker: Phyllis Berenson, Director of JewishGen's Ukraine Research Division**

**Phyllis Berenson** serves as JewishGen Ukraine Research Division Director, which has added 4 million records to the JewishGen database in the last 2.5 years. She founded the Mogilev Podolskiy and Shargorod town research groups and is a Town Leader for both. Her checkered employment history includes social worker, bookstore owner, carpenter assistant, professional harpist, trust, estates and tax lawyer, as

well as symphony orchestra manager. She is thrilled to finally have the opportunity to use her Russian language background in her Ukraine work at

## **Topic: Ukraine Genealogy Research in 2025: New Sources and Tips**

Opportunities for finding ancestral information in Ukraine records are increasing, even as war continues in Ukraine. The Ukraine Research Division of JewishGen expects to double its transcription rate and the resulting output for researchers, beginning in the second half of 2025. Phyllis Berenson, Director of the Ukraine Research Division will discuss the newly available records, how to access them, and research tips.



**Date: Sunday, November 16, 2025**

**Time: 1:30 PM (1 pm for Schmoozing and Mentoring)**

**Location: Hybrid Meeting – In Person Venue Reform  
Congregation Keneseth**

**Israel, 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park, PA 19027 (Corner  
of Old York Road and Township Line Road) Elkins Park, PA**

**Speaker: Sydney Cruice, Professional Genealogist**

**Sydney F. Cruice** is a professional genealogy researcher, writer, teacher and international lecturer with over 25 years of experience. She has lectured at many Institutes and conferences including: IAJGS, IGGP, SLIG, IGHR, RFIPA. For over seven years she developed the curriculum and taught the genealogy courses at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. She also served

as the President of the Association of Professional Genealogists for the Greater Philadelphia Area Chapter for the past 6 years. Sydney's article, "A Family Secret: Desertion, Scurvy, and President Lincoln" was the featured cover story for NGS Magazine in October of 2018.

**Topic: Utilizing Probate Records to Solve Family Mysteries**

Probate records can solve many of the toughest genealogy mysteries. They often describe family relationships and can give you clues to the relationships in multiple generations. We will discuss the probate process and the best ways to access these records. We go through case studies to show how you can maximize their information by using them with other genealogical sources.



**Date: Sunday, December 21, 2025**

**Time: 1:30 PM (1 pm for Schmoozing and Mentoring)**

**Venue: Zoom Meeting only**

**Speaker: Robinn Magid, President, Jewish Records Indexing Poland**

**Robinn Magid** is the head of JRI-Poland.org and serves as the project manager of the NextGen project which has already succeeded in replacing the old website and is now focused on converting JRI-Poland to a more modern database and search results system with extended features and abilities. Robinn is a past chair of two landmark IAJGS conferences: the 2018 Warsaw Conference and 2020 First Virtual IAJGS Conference. She is a recipient of the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award and a member of the SFBA-JGS. Robinn lives in Berkeley, California.

**Topic: 18th, 19th and 20th Century Research with JRI-Poland**

The JRI-Poland data collections can help genealogists draw a more complete picture of their ancestors' lives. Come learn how we are exploring whatever traces we can find of our ancestor's presence in the current or former territories of Poland. This official JRI-Poland session will highlight the breadth and depth of the JRI-Poland database including vital records population and legal records surviving from the Kingdom of Poland, the Russian, Prussian and Galician Empire. Join us for a glimpse into the past! A question-and-answer session will be included in this lively session.



**Date: Sunday, January 18, 2026**

**Time: 1:30 PM (1 pm for Schmoozing and Mentoring)**

**Venue: Zoom Meeting only**

**Speaker: Deborah Long, Professional Educator and Author**

**Deborah Long** has been researching her family history and searching for surviving family members for more than 60 years. She started as a ten-year-old, writing to the International Red Cross. Both of her parents were Holocaust survivors and were in some of the worst places imaginable:

Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen, Buchenwald and more.

Deborah is a professional educator and speaker, though typically her audiences are licensed professionals who are required to attend real estate continuing education programs. She has written more than 20 books, including a memoir about growing up as a child of survivors titled *First Hitler, Then Your Father, and Now You*. She earned her doctorate in adult education. She is the founder and first president of Triangle JGS of North Carolina (Chapel Hill/Durham/Raleigh).

### **Topic: Out of the Whirlwind: Resources for Holocaust Research**

The daughter of two Holocaust survivors, Deborah Long reviews the best (as well as some of the obscure) resources and methods for determining the fate of those involved in the Holocaust, including survivors and victims. Deborah will use examples from her own research to demonstrate the documents and artifacts she discovered to determine her family's fate.

## **SPECIAL EVENT**

### **A Day of Learning – In Memory of Evan Fishman Z” L Speakers/Teachers: TBA**

**Date: Sunday, February 22, 2026**

**Time: 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM**

**Venue: Zoom Meetings only**

**Topics: TBA**

*JGASGP will offer to members only at no cost a full-day virtual seminar covering two topics of great importance to members no matter their level of experience. There will be two workshops in the morning geared to less experienced genealogists, a break at mid-day, and two workshops in the afternoon geared to more experienced genealogists. Members can choose to attend any or all of these four workshops. JGASGP will contract with two of the best minds in the two chosen fields.*

## **H A M E C**



Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center  
Preserving History to Learn From the Past | Est. 1961

## Tours And Exhibitions

### In-Person And Virtual Tours

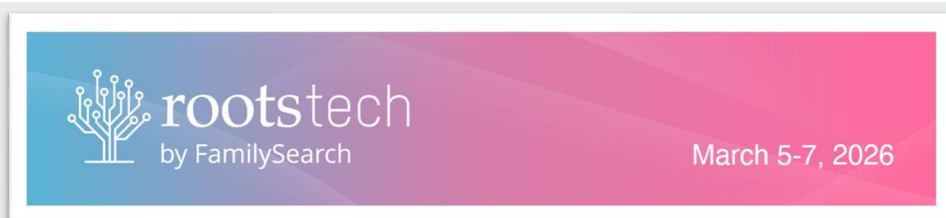
Our museum houses the largest public collection of personal Holocaust artifacts in Philadelphia belonging to survivors, liberators, resisters, and their families. Virtual tours are currently available and open to the public. The artifacts tell individual stories of pre-war European life, ghettos and concentration camps, resistance, liberation, resettlement, and transitions to Philadelphia. These precious artifacts, documents, and photographs help to share the tragic and inspirational stories of our local survivor community.

We offer personalized in-person or virtual tours for individuals, families, and classes during the week by appointment. These can last anywhere between thirty minutes to more than two hours. Please contact us beforehand to schedule a tour or you can perform a self-guided tour below. See the website.

<https://hamec.org/>

HAMEC's annual Gala and Silent Auction, honoring Abby Gilbert, Anna Okropiridze-Cassidy, and Kira Gulko, will take place on Saturday, December 6, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel (2400 Old Lincoln Hwy, Trevoise, PA, 19053).

## In the News



**RootsTech Registration  
is coming soon!**



## JGASGP Membership

**You may renew your membership anytime for 2026.**

The new membership form is on our website.

Our prices are a bargain! \$30 individual. \$15 for Chronicles hard copies

**\*MAKE SURE YOU REGISTER ON OUR WEBSITE!**

***It is NOT automatic because you are a JGASGP member. Jim needs to activate you individually. Don't delay. All members become inactive on Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> unless Jim has a current membership for you.***

***Only paid-up members have access to all areas of our website, JGASGP Newsletters, Chronicles, and meeting notices. Members have access to our members-only portal. Tell your friends!***

***Contact Marilyn (me) ([membership@jgasgp.org](mailto:membership@jgasgp.org)) if you have any dues-related questions.***

***Contact Jim ([webmaster@jgasgp.org](mailto:webmaster@jgasgp.org)) with web access questions or receiving hard copy problems.***

***Contact Ed Flax, - [ejflax@gmail.com](mailto:ejflax@gmail.com) or Debbie Terman - [dcterman@jgasgp.org](mailto:dcterman@jgasgp.org) with Chronicles article questions.***

***Our new fiscal year runs from January 1st - December 31st, 2026.***

## Mentors

***THANKS to [Alicia Weiss](#) and [Beth Steiner](#) who have joined our Mentor Team! They have been very helpful to those who have contacted them.***

***If you need a mentor or would like to volunteer to be one, let me know!***

***New members request help all of the time.***



*We love our volunteers!*

## Programs from other societies

### The L'Dor V'Dor Foundation (LDVDF) Announces Worldwide Jewish Event Calendar.

The calendar, called JDays, was unveiled at the 44th IAJGS International Conference on Jewish Genealogy. Read more including FAQ's at: [JDays - L'Dor V'Dor Foundation \(LDVDF\)](#) This is a real "game changer" in the posting and discovering Jewish educational events 24/7/365 from around the world. A single place to post and a single place to view Jewish events!

You can have the programs sent to your calendar, so you don't miss anything. See instructions on their website!

#### \*Live Chat\*

Did you know that [American Ancestors](#) has a free 'Live Chat' feature on their website, available Monday through Saturday 9am to 5pm ET? Just enter your question in the chat box during the times listed, and one of their expert genealogists will respond. You can access the feature directly [here](#), or find it on the home page of the [American Ancestors](#) website, scroll down just a bit to the "Stay in Touch" section, where "Ask a Genealogist - Live Chat!" is one of the options. Click on Chat Now and ask away.

\*See the calendar of genealogy events posted on the Bucks County Genealogy Society website.  
<https://www.bucksgen.org/index.php/bcgs-programs>

Sign up for Newsletters too: JewishGen.org Discussion Group - Daily Summary <https://groups.jewish-gen.org/g/main> and Eastman's online genealogy newsletter [Eogn.com](http://Eogn.com).

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### The Center for Jewish History's Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute is proud to present:

**Family History Today: Researching Your LGBTQ+ Ancestors**

**Featuring Michael J. Leclerc**

**Live on Zoom!**

**September 30th, 5 PM ET**

Discover the rich legacy of the LGBTQ+ community through examples from the centuries-long history of LGBTQ+ people in the United States, including excerpts from historical court cases and newspapers. Tune in to learn about these important stories, especially considering the increasing prejudice against this population today. This is an educational program about genealogical resources, tips, and techniques that can be used to research your LGBTQ+ ancestors. This program is sponsored by the Ackman & Ziff Family Genealogy Institute and Ancestry.

#### About the Speaker

**Michael J. Leclerc** is a popular genealogical presenter, teacher, author, and editor around the world. For more than a decade he has been a facilitator and instructor in Boston University's Genealogy Studies Program, where he currently teaches research and writing skills. He has edited a number of books, including *Genealogical Writing in the 21st Century: A Guide to Register Style and More*, Second Edition, with Henry Hoff, and the fifth edition of the Society's seminal guidebook *Genealogist's Handbook for New England Research*. He was a contributing editor for *American Ancestors* magazine, and a consulting editor for the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*.

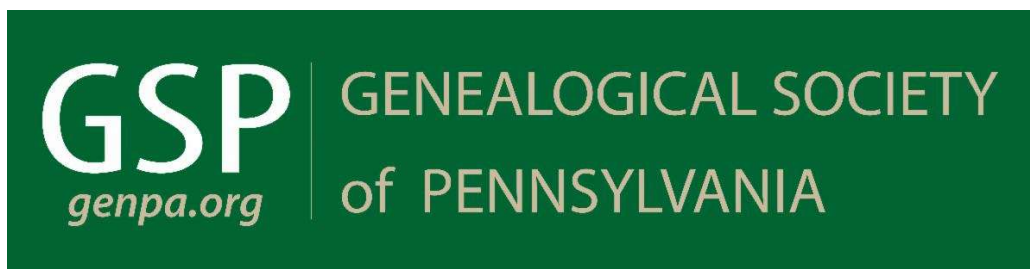
Michael wrote the "Crafting Family Histories" chapter for *Professional Genealogy: Preparation, Practice, & Standards* (Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., 2018). He is former managing editor of the *Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly*.

**Ticket Info:** Pay what you wish; [register here](#)

Jenny Rappaport (she/her)  
Head Genealogist  
Center for Jewish History  
New York, NY

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Check out their website for ongoing programs.



Third Thursday Webinar

## Leveraging Pennsylvania Maps in Your Research

“Leveraging Pennsylvania Maps in Your Research” discusses map resources for Pennsylvania genealogy research. The uses and advantages of various types of maps and map finding aids complement other genealogical research. Important Pennsylvania map web sites and resources are discussed. Actual research examples illustrate the use of various map types.



**Presenter:**

Gerald  
"Jerry" Smith, CG

**Cost:** FREE

**When:** Thursday,  
Sept. 18, 2025 at  
7 p.m. ET

**Where:** Zoom

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### About the speaker:

Gerald (Jerry) Smith is a retired professional researcher who specialized in Pennsylvania families. He is the IGHR, SLIG, and GRIP course coordinator for the week-long land platting course; he also coordinates the week-long GRIP institute on Pennsylvania Proprietor Land Records. He also lectures on various topics in the military, maps, and land record courses at those institutes. He has published a

number of books and articles, including abstracts of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, Court of Quarter Sessions records. While he resided and researched for many years in Pennsylvania, he recently moved to Illinois to make sure his granddaughter grows up appreciating her family history.

[Register Now](#)

GSP Members will have access to the recording until November 17, 2025.

The content of the lecture and handout is copyrighted by the Speaker, and may not be further published, reproduced, sold, displayed online, or distributed to non-registrants without the written permission of the Speaker.

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[Become a GSP member](#)

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**The Santa Cruz Jewish Genealogy Society has changed our name  
to Global Jewish Genealogy Society!**

<https://www.globaligs.org/>

See their website for many other interesting programs.

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Speakers: Johannes Schwarz and Sara Mansutti

Sunday, October 26, 11 am Pacific Part 1: Working with Tabular Data  
in Transkribus

Description: This workshop is a must! Join us to discover how Transkribus can help you unlock documents in tabular format and take your genealogical research to the next level with AI.

*Transkribus* is the leading online platform for the automatic recognition of text and the extraction of information from historical documents. Used by thousands of researchers, archives, libraries, and genealogists worldwide, it combines powerful AI tools with a user-friendly interface designed to make the transcription, searching, and processing of historical materials accessible to everyone, with no programming knowledge required. Originally developed as part of the Horizon 2020 “READ” EU project, it is now maintained and further developed by the non-profit-oriented READ-COOP European Cooperative Society.

This workshop focuses on one of Transkribus’ most advanced features: table recognition. Genealogists and historical researchers often work with materials such as census records, parish registers, tax rolls, or other sources arranged in tabular format. These documents usually consist of numerous pages, making manual transcription a time-consuming process. In addition, standard text recognition workflows fail to capture the row/column relationships, which are crucial to understanding this type of data.

During the session, experts from Transkribus will guide you through the full process of training your first table model. You will learn how to draw tables in the Transkribus editor, create training data, train a model capable of automatically detecting similar tables, and evaluate its performance. Once recognized, the data can be searched for key information, such as names, dates, or places, or exported into a spreadsheet for further analysis and use in genealogical databases.

Lastly, the workshop will introduce the collaborative features available in Transkribus, such as sharing collections, working in teams, and reusing trained models across projects. It will end with a Q&A session, offering participants the opportunity to ask questions and receive advice from Transkribus experts.

The workshop is document-driven and tailored to the materials participants submit in advance, enabling you to apply each step of the workflow to your own sources.

Email us your documents with tabular data that you would like to process with Transkribus by October 5, 2025. Email: [membership@scjgs.org](mailto:membership@scjgs.org)

Please note that this is an advanced-level workshop designed for users already familiar with the basics of Transkribus. To ensure the best learning experience and acquire all the essential knowledge about Transkribus, we kindly request the participants to complete some preparatory steps:

Registrants will receive preliminary materials and introductory videos.

If you are new to the platform, register at <https://app.transkribus.org/>, upload a few pages, and test the basic text recognition feature using one of our public models (for more guidance, read the Beginners' Guide to Transkribus on our Help Center).

This workshop will be followed by a second one in January focused on training custom text recognition models.

Non-members pay \$5.00 Zoom link will be sent the week of the event. Members automatically receive a Zoom link.

[Register](#)

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## **"Indexes and Databases: What Indexers, Proofreaders, and Genealogy Researchers Should Know" presented by Ken Ryesky, Esq. (MBA, JD, MLS):**

October 27, 2025 7:00 - 8:00 pm Israel time

**[NOTE that this occurs between the Israel reversion to standard time and the USA standard time reset, so the time for the Eastern US would be 1:00 PM].**

This presentation will uncover the hidden challenges to accurate genealogical research, focusing on the critical role of indexes. Using real-world examples, you'll learn how indexes are created, quality-controlled, and used effectively. Understand their capabilities and limitations to enhance your research skills and make more reliable discoveries.

The presentation will be in English; although many of the examples are from the presenter's experiences as an indexer and proofreader on certain IGRA projects, the presentation covers issues that pertain to ALL genealogical research.

{There will be some Philadelphia stories in the "real-world examples," including one implicating the JGASGP website}.

Live attendance is at no cost for those who register in advance at

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/OhvOB0zXQIm7c5OIMlnKkg#/registration> ;

Recording of the presentation will subsequently be available on the IGRA website [<https://genealogy.org.il>] to IGRA members.

If you are unable to attend (and even if you are able to), please inform other genealogy-minded people of this.

--KHR

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### Suggestion Box



Do you have any ideas for our society? We want to hear from you. Please send your ideas or thoughts to me. Subject: Suggestion Box! I appreciate the program offerings and Youtube videos I've been receiving.

### Condolences

We were saddened to learn of the death of Gary Mokotoff z'l, a dear friend, mentor, and Jewish genealogy pioneer. Gary was a strong supporter of JewishGen since its inception.

Through his leadership in many organizations (Jewish and non-Jewish), his creativity and genius, Gary helped to establish the Jewish genealogy field. He was a founder and president of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies, Co-Chair of the Board of Governors of JewishGen, and leader of many other organizations. He professionalized the field with the publication of the academic journal, *Avotaynu*. He was the first recipient of the IAJGS Lifetime Achievement Award.

Among his many contributions, a few stand out. Gary used two divergent yet complementary modalities to help people explore their Jewish roots.

From one perspective, he recognized the value of technology. In his professional life, he developed the IBM 1401 programming system in 1959. But it was the application of this technology to his personal passion that was impactful in two everlasting ways.

Many years ago, people would attend genealogy meetings and conferences not only for expert guidance, but to discover family members. There were books that societies maintained with the surnames and ancestral towns of genealogists who submitted this information, in the hope that someone scanning the names in the book would recognize a connection.

Gary saw how inefficient this method was, and how leveraging technology could exponentially expand the real-life impact of this tool. As a result, he created an electronic family finder which was ultimately donated to JewishGen and placed online – an invaluable resource that today has over one million names: The JewishGen Family Finder.

In addition to the Family Finder, Gary developed a tool to accommodate the many variations of translation and transliteration of names. Known as the Daitch-Mokotoff Soundex, this tool has

enabled people to identify relatives with spelling configurations they may not otherwise have searched for.

The entire Jewish genealogy community extends sincere condolences to Gary's family, friends, and colleagues.

Karen S. Franklin, Director of Outreach for JewishGen, Museum of Jewish Heritage  
Paul Radensky, Senior Director of the Peter and Mary Kalikow Jewish Genealogy Research Center at the Museum of Jewish Heritage  
Avraham Groll, Former Executive Director of JewishGen, Museum of Jewish Heritage

*If you know of the illness or passing of a past or current member, please email a link to the obituary or provide the information for me to share.*



**Disclaimer:** The purpose of our group is to help foster research and education, collect family records, and make family connections. No political comments or advertising for services or merchandise are permitted.



***Wishing you a sweet and happy New Year!***