



# PIONEER TRAILS

**Newsletter of the Birmingham Genealogical Society**



**May 2023**

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## **May is Jewish American Heritage Month and Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month**

Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) is an annual recognition and celebration of American Jews' achievements and contributions to the United States of America during the month of May. President George W. Bush first proclaimed the month on April 20, 2006, as a result of cooperation with Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), as well as the Jewish Museum of Florida and the South Florida Jewish Community. Since then, annual proclamations have been made by Presidents Bush, Obama, Trump, and Biden. --- (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

May is also Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. A rather broad term, Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island). --- (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

## **BGS Meetings - April/May**

The Board held an unofficial Zoom Meeting on April 22, 2023, at 1:00 PM. Four Board Members were present so we did not have a quorum. Items discussed were: future programs, the 2022 Annual Report, and the IRS 990 form.

No General Meeting or Program was held in April. Members were invited to attend the Birmingham Public Library presentation on April 22.

No General Meeting or Program will be held in May because of the Memorial Day weekend. Please check our Facebook, Instagram, and website for information about June Meetings.

### **--- Asian American and Pacific Islander Presentations ---**

#### **A Tale of Three Chinatowns**

AT PBS.ORG

A TALE OF THREE CHINATOWNS explores the survival of urban ethnic neighborhoods in three American cities: Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Boston. Through the voices of residents, community activists, developers, and government officials, the film looks at the forces altering each community and the challenges that go with them, including the pressing issue of urban development and gentrification.

#### **Family Records: The Story of China's Largest Genealogy Collection**

**By Huang Wei**  
**[Sixthtone.com/news/1012694](https://sixthtone.com/news/1012694)**

In the 1960s, a city librarian went rogue and saved thousands of priceless documents.

The Shanghai Library is home to arguably the world's top collection of Chinese genealogies, including more than 300,000 volumes of nearly 40,000 different genealogies, totaling 456 surnames. With thousands of years of history at stake, a Shanghai librarian named Gu Tinglong took a risk and organized a team to rescue as many genealogies as they could from being chemically pulped or thrown into landfills. Their work accounts for two-fifths of the Library's current collection, with the rest coming from acquisitions made since the 1960's.

## **--- Jewish American Presentations ---**

### **Family Tree Webinars.com**

#### ***Ethnicity & DNA: History, Migration, Genetics***

**Schelly Talalay Dardashti**

Native New Yorker Schelly Talalay Dardashti has lived in Teheran, Tel Aviv, Miami, Los Angeles, Las Vegas and now New Mexico. A journalist and genealogist, she is the US Genealogy Advisor for MyHeritage, and has traced her Ashkenazi, Sephardi and Mizrahi families across Iran, Spain, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine.

An early proponent of DNA for genealogy, Dardashti co-admins several DNA projects at FamilyTreeDNA. The former genealogy columnist for the Jerusalem Post ("It's All Relative," 1999-2005), she created the award-winning "Tracing the Tribe – The Jewish Genealogy Blog" (2006; now on hiatus), and "Tracing the Tribe – Jewish Genealogy on Facebook" (36,000+ members in 101 countries). Her articles have appeared on JTA, Reform Judaism, Hadassah, NGS Quarterly, Avotaynu and numerous Jewish and general genealogy publications, newspapers, and more. Affiliations: Social media coordinator, board member, Society for Crypto-Judaic Studies; president, JGS of New Mexico (sponsors annual Jewish Genetics and Jewish DNA/Genealogy conferences); founding member, Centro Sefarad NM (New Mexico).

#### ***Finding Jewish Records in the MyHeritage Search Engine***

**Daniel Horowitz**

MyHeritage Search technology has been thoroughly updated recently. Join MyHeritage expert genealogist Daniel Horowitz in a fast-paced session on this new technology. Learn how it works and how it can benefit your Jewish research. Learn how to effortlessly cover thousands of important repositories in a single search.

Daniel Horowitz is a Genealogy Expert at MyHeritage, providing key contributions liaising with genealogy societies, bloggers and media, as well as lecturing, and attending conferences around the world. Dedicated to Genealogy since 1986, he was the teacher and the study guide editor of the family history project "Searching for My Roots" in Venezuela for 15 years. Daniel is involved in several crowdsourcing digitization and transcription projects and holds a board level position at the Israel Genealogy Research Association (IGRA).

## --- Other Presentations in May ---

### National Archives Museum Genealogy Series

#### ***Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division on the Reservation***

Wednesday, May 31, 2023 - 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. EDT (12 Noon to 1:00 PM CDT)  
View on YouTube --- Go to [museum.archives.gov/events](https://museum.archives.gov/events)

Researchers may overlook the Civilian Conservation Corps Indian Division (CCC-ID) as it was largely overshadowed by the much larger regular CCC, but it was a landmark program during the 1930s. It employed thousands of Native Americans and brought material aid and conservation efforts to their reservations. The records of those Native American enrollees, what they worked on, and how they lived can be found in the holdings of the National Archives.

#### ***Basic Military Records at the National Archives: Revolutionary War to 1917***

Wednesday, May 10, 2023 - 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. EDT (12 Noon to 1:00 PM CDT)  
View on YouTube --- Go to [museum.archives.gov/events](https://museum.archives.gov/events)

John Deeben outlines basic military records held at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC. The records cover the "Old Military" period from the Revolutionary War to 1917 and are characterized by different types of service, including volunteer service (state regiments and militias) as well as the Regular military (Army, Navy, and Marine Corps). Each type of service was documented differently, but there are also basic records common to all types of service.

#### ***Civilians at War: Records of Participation in U.S. Military Conflicts***

Wednesday, May 3, 2023 - 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. EDT (12 Noon to 1:00 PM CDT)  
View on YouTube --- Go to [museum.archives.gov/events](https://museum.archives.gov/events)

Claire Kluskens discusses ways in which civilians supported a war or were directly affected by it, with a focus on the American Revolution to World War I. These wars provided opportunities for employment by civilian or military agencies to provide goods, services, or loans. Other individuals sought reimbursement after suffering property loss. We'll show examples of online records that document these relationships with the federal government (ca. 1776–1918) and Confederate States government (1861–1865).

# **"They Died of What? Understanding Historical Causes of Death"**

Speaker: Karen Fortin, Professional Genealogist  
Attend at the Oklahoma History Center or via Webinar

May 1, 2023 at 6:00 PM CDT

Karen Fortin is a professional genealogist and a member of the Association of Professional Genealogists and the Genealogical Speakers Guild. Karen received a Bachelor's Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from the University of South Florida. She worked at the Barbara S. Ponce Public Library in Pinellas Park, FL for 30 years before deciding to focus on genealogical research.

Her topic for the evening will be "They Died of What?! Understanding Historical Causes of Death". Death certificates are important resources when researching the lives of our ancestors. However, due to outdated terminology and the limits of medical knowledge in the past, it can be hard to interpret the causes of death given. This presentation examines these limitations and other factors and provides resources that can help you to better understand what your ancestors might have died from.

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**Newsletter Editor: Caroline Thomas**

## **2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Membership Dues: \$20 Individual \$25 Family**