



SENATOR JOHN HEINZ

HISTORY CENTER

IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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History Center to Launch Blue-Collar Ancestry Series

-The Detre Library & Archives will introduce a new genealogy series that focuses on blue-collar ancestry-

PITTSBURGH, July 28, 2025 – The Detre Library & Archives at the Heinz History Center will launch a new series of genealogy workshops focusing on the family histories of blue-collar workers – from the steel mills to glass factories and beyond.

The History Center will host the first installment of the series, **Blue-Collar Ancestry: Tracing Your Steelworker Roots**, on Tuesday, Aug. 12 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Each segment will explore a specific industry, with a focus on locating key genealogical records to illuminate the working lives of blue-collar ancestors. The first session will focus on Western Pa. steelworkers and the rich, often underutilized, historical sources that can help reconstruct their lives.

Professional genealogist Kate Townsend, CG® will guide participants through essential records and research strategies, including how to find employment files, union records, company newsletters, historic photographs, and more. Plus, local archivists will deliver lightning talks showcasing lesser-known resources within their collections that hold significant genealogical value related to the steel industry.

The program will also highlight the History Center's multi-year partnership with Ancestry.com to digitize over 100,000 employee files from the Jones & Laughlin Steel Pittsburgh Works. A significant portion of these records is now searchable online, offering a rare opportunity to explore the individual experiences of steelworkers across generations.

Admission is \$5 for History Center members and \$10 for non-members.

This is a hybrid program. Attendees can participate either online or in-person at the History Center. For more information or to purchase tickets, please visit heinzhistorycenter.org/events.

About Kate Townsend

Kate is a Certified Genealogist® and former professional investigator specializing in Pennsylvania research, with additional expertise in Ohio, West Virginia, New York City, and immigration and court records. She owns Family History Investigations LLC and has presented at national conferences like RootsTech and the National Genealogical Society.

Kate completed Boston University's Certificate in Genealogical Research in 2020 and continued her education through IGHR, GRIP, SLIG, and ProGen 58. Her career began at the National Archives, where she assisted researchers and worked with 19th-century records.

The **Senator John Heinz History Center**, an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution and the largest history museum in Pennsylvania, presents American history with a Western Pennsylvania connection. The History Center was voted as the #1 history museum in America by readers of USA TODAY (2024, 2025) and “Pittsburgh’s Best Museum” by Pittsburgh Magazine (2022, 2023, 2024). The History Center and Sports Museum are located at 1212 Smallman Street in the Pittsburgh’s Strip District. The History Center’s family of museums includes the Sports Museum; Fort Pitt Museum in historic Point State Park; and Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, a National Historic Landmark located in Avella, Pa., in Washington County. More information is available at heinzhistorycenter.org.



The History Center’s Detre Library & Archives will host the Blue-Collar Ancestry: Tracing Your Steelworker Roots program on Tuesday, Aug. 12 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

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