



## From Soil to Soul: Farm-to-Table Across the Ages in Israel starts online Wednesday evening, Upcoming Programs and More – January 26, 2026

### FROM SOIL TO SOUL: FARM-TO-TABLE ACROSS THE AGES IN ISRAEL



#### **Ancient Practices – Agriculture of the Ancestors**

Wednesday, January 28, 7:00 pm ET (online)



We begin by traveling back in time to explore how ancient Israelites cultivated the land using terracing, spring-fed irrigation, and the Seven Species —figs, grapes, olives, pomegranates, dates, wheat, and barley. Featured are two important heritage sites: Neot Kedumim, the biblical landscape reserve, and Sataf, where ancient techniques are still visible in the hills outside Jerusalem. We'll also trace the development of wine from biblical times to today's boutique vineyards, examining how ancient viticulture inspired Israel's booming wine industry and how wine remains both a ritual and a symbol of rootedness in the land.

**Gila Levitan** moved to Israel in 2005. She decided to become a licensed tour guide in order to pursue her passion for exploring and travelling around Israel. Gila is very curious and likes to know all the little details and being a guide enables her to teach people about a place that she loves. Gila loves to add touches of local culture to her tours, off the beaten track places and local delicacies - the best way to travel she believes is to taste new flavors and make new friends. Gila is proud to have been awarded the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for the past five years in a row.

**Register here** - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-soil-to-soul-series-ancient-practices-agriculture-of-the-ancestors-tickets-1978938462212?aff=oddtcreator>

**Part 2 - Cultural Traditions – The Flavors of the Land**, February 4 at 7:00 pm ET (online) **Register here** - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-soil-to-soul-series-cultural-traditions-the-flavors-of-the-land-tickets-1978941112138?aff=oddtcreator>

**Part 3 - Modern Innovation – Tech Meets Tradition**, February 11 at 7:00 pm ET (online) **Register here** - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-soil-to-soul-series-modern-innovation-tech-meets-tradition-tickets-1978941333801?aff=oddtcreator>

**Part 4 - Farm to Community – Food Justice & Urban Agriculture**, February 18 at 7:00 pm ET (online) **Register here** - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/from-soil-to-soul-farm-to-community-food-justice-urban-agriculture-tickets-1978941771109?aff=oddtcreator>

Learn more about the series here - <https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/from-soil-to-soul/>

## IDEALS OF FREEDOM SPEAKER SERIES



**“Filthy, Un-American, and Often Dangerous:” Antisemitism and the Emergency Quota Act of 1921**  
Wednesday, March 4, 7:00 pm ET (online)

After the destruction of World War I, hundreds of thousands of European Jews sought to escape violence and poverty by emigrating to America. American consuls in Europe viewed these desperate Jews through a deeply antisemitic lens, fearing that they were radicals trying to enter and destroy the country with help from an international Jewish conspiracy. Acting on these fears, officials at the State Department worked with Congressional leaders to release reports that publicized the dangers of Jewish immigrants and ultimately led to the passage of the 1921 Emergency Quota Act. That legislation was instrumental in establishing the quota system that would keep desperate European Jews out of the country only a decade later, as they attempted to flee the Holocaust.

**Kirsten Fermaglich** is Professor of History and Jewish Studies at Michigan State University. Her most recent book, *A Rosenberg by Any Other Name: A History of Jewish Name Changing in America* (New York University Press, 2018) was awarded the Saul Viener Book Prize by the American Jewish Historical Society in June 2019. From January 2022 through June 2023, she served as a National Archives Distinguished Fellow, tasked with studying antisemitism in the United States federal government. Fermaglich is also the author of *American Dreams and Nazi Nightmares: Early Holocaust Consciousness and Liberal America, 1957-1965* (Brandeis University Press, 2006) and the co-editor of the Norton Critical Edition of Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (2013), with Lisa Fine. From 2016 through 2021, she was co-editor of the journal, *American Jewish History*, along with Daniel Soyer and Adam Mendelsohn. She currently serves on the board of the Association for Jewish Studies. *Community partners – Wyner Family Jewish Heritage Center at American Ancestors, Massachusetts Antisemitism Synagogue Task Force (MAST), Orange County Jewish Community Scholar Program (CSP)*

**Register here** - <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/antisemitism-and-the-emergency-quota-act-of-1921-tickets-1977620146093?aff=oddtcreator>

Learn more about the series here - <https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/ideals-of-freedom/>

## CSP

We are pleased to be a partner congregation of the Orange County Jewish **Community Scholar Program (CSP)**. Please join us at an upcoming program!



### **Twain and the Jews: Defying Antisemitism in the Gilded Age**

Wednesday, January 28, 1:00 pm ET (online)

*(online in partnership with the Orange County Jewish Community Scholar Program)*

Mark Twain is not usually filed under “Jewish allies.” But maybe he should be. Join Professor Jonathan Sarna for a special and exclusive CSP event exploring a largely untold story—and the subject of Prof. Sarna’s forthcoming book: how Mark Twain, writing during a surge of global antisemitism in the late 19th century, befriended Jews, came to respect Jewish life, and publicly denounced prejudice when doing so was neither popular nor convenient. Twain’s ties to the Jewish community even became personal—eventually familial—yet this chapter has been largely overlooked by Twain’s biographers. Witty, surprising, and timely, Prof. Sarna’s talk reveals Twain’s forgotten role as a critic of antisemitism and asks what his example can teach us in our own troubled times—because allyship has a history, and words still matter.

**Jonathan D. Sarna, PhD**, is the University Professor and Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and one of the world’s leading scholars of American Judaism. He also serves as Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History and has been named to Newsweek’s list of “America’s 50 Most Influential Rabbis” (as a scholar). A graduate of Brandeis University (BA) and Yale University (PhD), Prof. Sarna has authored or edited more than 30 books, including the award-winning *American Judaism: A History, When General Grant Expelled the Jews, Lincoln and the Jews*, and *Jews and the Civil War*. Prof. Sarna is widely recognized as the preeminent interpreter of how Jews have shaped—and been shaped by—the American experience.

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/XX6LVG3pTuCx9jRYcm\\_fsg#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/XX6LVG3pTuCx9jRYcm_fsg#/registration)

### **Sidelines to the Ballot Box: The Political Evolution of American Jews**

**Part 4 – A House Divided surveys Jewish politics since the 1960s** - Thursday, January 29, 1:00 pm ET (online)

American Jews went from a cautious, politically invisible minority to one of the most influential political communities in the country, and this four-part series traces the surprising—and often dramatic—story of that transformation.

**Part 4 – A House Divided surveys Jewish politics since the 1960s** — realignment, Israel and social issues, the emergence of a growing Republican wing, generational divides and identity politics, and what 2026 might reveal about the next era of Jewish American political life.

Jonathan D. Sarna, PhD, is the University Professor and Joseph H. & Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History at Brandeis University and one of the world’s leading scholars of American Judaism. He also serves as Chief Historian of the National Museum of American Jewish History and has been named to Newsweek’s list of “America’s 50 Most Influential Rabbis” (as a scholar). A graduate of Brandeis University (BA) and Yale University (PhD), Prof. Sarna has authored or edited more than 30 books, including the award-winning *American Judaism: A History, When General Grant Expelled the Jews, Lincoln and the Jews* and *Jews and the Civil War*. Prof. Sarna is widely recognized as the preeminent interpreter of how Jews have shaped—and been shaped by—the American experience. *This program is fully funded by a grant from the Jewish Community Foundation Orange County.*

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/dwHWpCu3SvuajoHeLjE-Sw#/registration>



Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh. In 2014, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency named him one of the “ten most inspiring global Jewish leaders,” and he previously served as the political advisor to the deputy foreign minister of Israel and worked for the Israeli Ministry of Defense.

**Register here** - [https://www.eventbrite.com/e/understanding-the-middle-east-s-changing-landscape-tickets-1978830152254?aff=oddtcreator&utm\\_source=substack&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/understanding-the-middle-east-s-changing-landscape-tickets-1978830152254?aff=oddtcreator&utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

## GIVING

Please visit our Giving page to send tributes, recognize yahrzeits and make other general donations to support the Walnut Street Synagogue and help us preserve, maintain and secure our 116-year-old building. Donations can be made online or through the mail. Tributes and other donations may be recognized on our Giving Page unless otherwise requested.

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/giving/>



Yad Chessed helps Jewish individuals and families who struggle with financial hardship pay their bills and buy food. As a social services agency rooted in the Jewish values of kindness (chessed) and charity (tzedakah), they are committed to helping those in need navigate a path toward financial stability while preserving their privacy and dignity. They provide emergency financial assistance, grocery gift cards and compassionate advice for those trying to make ends meet. Hundreds of families and individuals throughout the state rely on Yad Chessed to provide for their essentials, and even at times, a Jewish burial for a loved one. Members of our community, as well as others in the Jewish community, who need assistance may contact Yad Chessed by phone at 781-487-2693 or by Email at [intake@yadchessed.org](mailto:intake@yadchessed.org) for a confidential conversation. Questions can be directed to [info@yadchessed.org](mailto:info@yadchessed.org).

**Support Yad Chessed** - <https://givebutter.com/yadchessed>

## VISIT US ONLINE

Website

<https://walnutstreetsynagogue.org/>

Facebook Page - Walnut Street Synagogue

<https://www.facebook.com/WalnutStreetSynagogue>

Facebook Group - Jews of Chelsea, MA Then and Now

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ChelseaJews>

*The Walnut Street Synagogue is the center for Jewish history, education and culture serving Chelsea, Greater Boston and beyond and is the historic home of Congregation Agudas Sholom. (added to National Register of Historic Places in 1993)*



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