

Finding Your Kaplans:

How to Research Common Names

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Looking for "Harry Glassman" in NYC? How do you know that you found the right ship manifest? This session will present case studies of how to research common names in different cities and time periods in the U.S. and how to confirm your findings with traditional methods, as well as new ones such as DNA.

Selected techniques for finding the right name:

1. Track all misspellings and mistranslations
 - a. Think about how a name sounds (particularly with a thick accent) and how it looks when written in cursive.
 - b. KAPLAN could also be spelled Caplan, Capalin, Coplin, Koplan, Koplín, Kaplin, Kaplon, Katlan, Kaplam, Haplan, Kapalan etc.
 - k -> c or h
 - a -> o or i
 - l -> i, t, or h
 - n -> m -> r
 - s -> z
2. Be aware of name meanings/origins, common nicknames, relationships between Yiddish/Hebrew/English, and differences in pronunciations and alphabets especially when dealing with your immigrant generation
 - a. For example, "Joseph" could be Joe, Jos, Jossel, Yossel, Yoseph, etc.
3. Create timelines to help locate sources and identify gaps
4. Go around to get ahead
 - a. Your person might be mentioned in the context of a record about another relative or neighbor
 - b. Look for a possible neighbor in a census where you can't find your missing person
5. Don't let success stop you!
 - a. Different versions of the same information can lead to amazing discoveries.
6. Cast a wide net
 - a. Every online resource has a unique index
 - b. Don't ignore sources that aren't digital (or free)
 - c. Follow the trail of social relationships
7. Document and evaluate your sources and thought process
8. Verify with three different sources whenever possible
9. Be prepared to be wrong.

Suggested Resources:

Books

- *How to Do Everything: Genealogy, 4th Edition* by George G. Morgan
- *Advanced Genealogy Research Techniques* by George G. Morgan and Drew Smith

Other Resources

- Google. Searching for "[city name] genealogy resources" can get you a long way.
- Libraries - many libraries have digital collections that can include city directories, etc.
 - <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/>
 - City Directories at <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/collections/new-york-city-directories#/?tab=about>
- Genealogy sites such as FamilySearch, Ancestry, MyHeritage, JewishGen
- <http://www.jewishgen.org/infofiles/tombstones.html>
- U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index
- Newspapers
 - [Newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)
 - <http://www.fultonhistory.com>
- [Findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)
- [billiongraves.com](http://www.billiongraves.com)
- JewishGen Online Burial Registry at <http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/>
- Steve Morse One Step Pages at <http://www.stevemorse.org>
- [Fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com)