



NEWS RELEASE

• Apr. 29, 2022 •

- **Battle of Homestead Foundation hosts May 19 program on
“Death of a Jewish Radical in Erie, 1922: Echoes from a Century Ago”**

WHAT: The Battle of Homestead Foundation presents an online panel, “**Death of a Jewish Radical in Erie, 1922: Echoes from a Century Ago**”, featuring commentary by Pittsburgh historians Kipp Dawson and Lou Martin

WHEN: Thursday, May 19, 2022 from 7:30-9:00 p.m. via Zoom

WHERE: Program is free but viewers must register at www.eventbrite.com

HOMESTEAD, PENNSYLVANIA — Even in small towns, The Roaring 1920s often revealed the darker side of the American Dream.

On April 5, 1922, an Erie, Pennsylvania postman discovered the lifeless body of Polish-born Herman Martius at his dry goods store on West 18th Street. Martius’ head had been bashed in, purportedly by an axe.

Police initially suspected the shopkeeper’s wife, Beatrice, who had been briefly out of town ... or was he a victim of escalating Red Scare tactics by local law enforcement ... or targeted by the Ku Klux Klan, whose harrassment of immigrant businesses was rampant during the period?

A century later, the murder of Herman Martius remains unsolved. But many of the dangerous political currents in the divided America of his time that swirled around his death have resurged in our own.

On Thur. May 19, 2022, the [Battle of Homestead Foundation](http://www.battleofhomestead.org) presents a free Zoom program featuring historians **Kipp Dawson** and **Lou Martin** detailing their research on the crime, investigation and community aftermath of a murder that came to symbolize the civic and social turmoil besetting American Democracy in the 1920s.

Ms. Dawson is a granddaughter of Herman and Beatrice Martius and has integrated her family’s unique story with the historical events of the day. **Dr. Martin** is an associate professor of history at Chatham University specializing in American labor and working-class history.

The program includes **Zoe Levine** and **Claire Rhode**, two Chatham University graduates who [created a website](#) providing a timeline and cultural backdrop of the Martius murder.

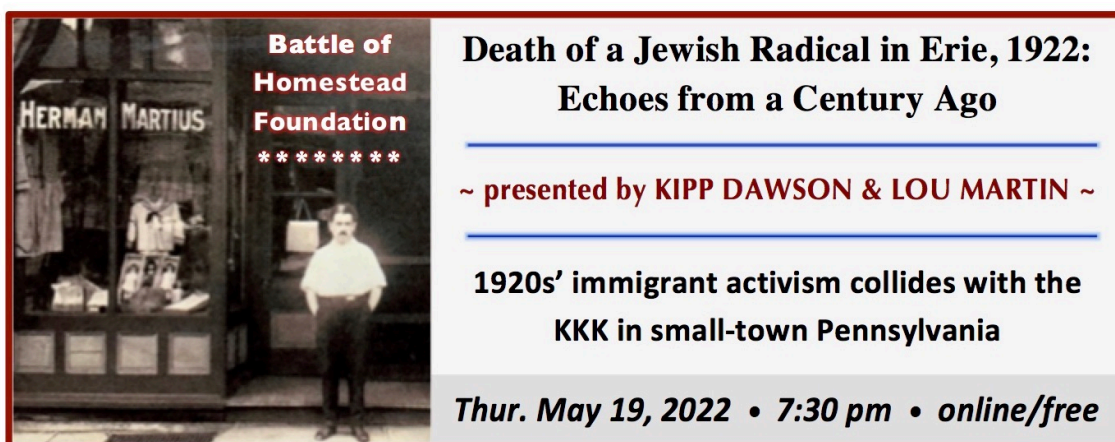
“You can view history as a spiral,” says Ms. Dawson. “It repeats itself and at times appears to be going backwards but is ultimately moving forward. However, as we see every day in our current political controversies, there is still so much that can be learned from the past.”

The program is free but viewers must register at www.eventbrite.com.

* The **Battle of Homestead Foundation** is an educational nonprofit promoting Western Pennsylvania’s vibrant industrial and labor history starting with the 1892 Homestead Steel Strike and connecting with current labor issues involving economics, the environment, healthcare, racism and other social concerns.

PANELISTS — Death of a Jewish Radical, Erie, PA, 1922: Echoes from a Century Ago

- **Kipp Dawson** is a retired Pittsburgh Public Schools teacher and, before that, worked as a UMWA coal miner in Washington County, PA. Along with her family roots research, she is an avid student of People’s History.
- **Lou Martin, PhD** is associate professor of history at Chatham University and founding board member of the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum. He teaches a course at Chatham titled Digital Local History. His books include [Smokestacks in the Hills: Rural-Industrial Workers in West Virginia](#) and [Culture, Class, and Politics in Modern Appalachia](#).
- **Zoe Levine** is a native of Erie, PA and graduated from Chatham University with a B.A. in History and Political Science. She is Social Justice Springboard Fellow for Oberlin College Hillel, engaging students about the importance of social action within Judaism, and also serves as an Emerging Leader Fellow for the Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee.
- **Claire Rhode** graduated from Chatham University with a B.A. in History and Creative Writing. Currently, she is studying for her Master's in Information Sciences at University of Tennessee.



Battle of Homestead Foundation

**Death of a Jewish Radical in Erie, 1922:
Echoes from a Century Ago**

~ presented by **KIPP DAWSON & LOU MARTIN** ~

**1920s’ immigrant activism collides with the
KKK in small-town Pennsylvania**

Thur. May 19, 2022 • 7:30 pm • online/free