

Elias Goldensky: Wizard of Photography  
Presentation by Gary Saretzky

**Abstract**

Nineteenth century Philadelphia was justifiably renowned for its photographic portrait studios; there were more than 130 when Elias Goldensky opened for business in 1895. A cosmopolitan emigré from the Pale, he was one of the first Russian Jewish photographers to work in the city and his best photographs were considered works of art. By 1900, the high end of the portrait market was ripe for an artist/photographer like Goldensky who could combine the technical quality of the professional with the aesthetic trends in photography developing among the most advanced amateurs, known as the Pictorialists, who exhibited in the salons of the 1890s. This lecture traces Goldensky's career from his early years in Russia to his heyday in the early 1900s to his well-earned status as a respected veteran by the 1930s, when he made the official portrait of Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Hyde Park.

**Bio**

Gary D. Saretzky, archivist, educator and photographer, worked as an archivist for more than 50 years at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Educational Testing Service, and the Monmouth County Archives. Saretzky taught the history of photography at Mercer County Community College (1977–2012) has served as coordinator of the Public History Internship Program for the Rutgers University History Department (1994-2016). Saretzky has served as a consultant on archives and photographic conservation to more than 60 archives, libraries, and museums and has taught numerous workshops in the field of archives and records management and photographic conservation for the Society of American Archivists, MARAC, the New Jersey Library Association, and other organizations. He lectures regularly on the history of photography and other topics across New Jersey, and has published more than 100 articles and reviews on the history of photography, photographic conservation, and other topics, including "Elias Goldensky: Wizard of Photography," *Pennsylvania History* (Spring 1997).