

Memories of Migration:
A Case Study of Reminiscing and Documenting
Chinese Immigrant Experience at Queens Public Library
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Abstract

Documenting marginalized ethnic groups has been a recent development of memory institutions. Community archives and libraries in recent years attempt to document marginalized groups within their community and to democratize their archival collections in order to give a voice to the underrepresented groups. To explore what community archives and libraries can do to preserve the narrative and culture of immigrants, this case study aims to evaluate the different types of programming activities conducted during the Memories of Migration project by looking at how effective it was in encouraging Chinese immigrants to preserve their migration narratives at the local public library's digital archive. This study uses unstructured participant observation as a method to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. The research finds that programming with story sharing and community digitization are capable of directly helping Chinese immigrants in reflecting on their migration past and in preserving their personal narratives, while outreach activities and stage programming attracts the general public to learn more about the project. The limitation of this research is that the results are mostly based on the subjectivity of its qualitative analysis. It also lacks generalizability and can only serve as a local examination. However, practicing librarians and archivists can use findings from this practice-based research to rethink how they can use their resources wisely to design programming activities best suitable for immigrants.

Keywords:

Public Libraries, Community Archives, Outreach, Participatory Archiving, Immigrants

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CHAPTER ONE: THE PROBLEM

Introduction & Background

New York City is home to the nation's largest Chinese American population. The borough of Queens is known as the most ethnically diverse county in the country. The Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrant population in the borough of Queens encompasses any other boroughs in New York. According to the Queens Public Library Statistics, Asian demographic change in Queens went from 391,500 in 2000 to 511,787 in 2010 with a 23.5% increase over the ten-year period (New Americans Program, Queens Library, 2010). The 2010 Census Redistricting Data compiled by the New Americans Program at Queens Library shows that the Flushing branch alone provides services to 56,355 Asians, and that is 70.35% of the population within the service area (New Americans Program, Queens Library, 2011). The total number of births to Chinese Mothers in 2006 was 2,185 in the borough, and 555 in the neighborhood of Flushing-Murray Hill (New Americans Program, Queens Library, 2008). According to the profile published by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center (2013), it states that "40 percent of Chinese New Yorkers lived in Queens, 37 percent in Brooklyn, 19 percent in Manhattan, 2 percent in Staten Island, and 2 percent in the Bronx. The percent of Chinese in Brooklyn rose from 34.5 percent in 2008, while the percent of Chinese in Manhattan fell from 22 percent in 2008". With the growing population of the Chinese Americans in New York, it is necessary that archival institutions and their collections also reflect the demographics of the areas that they serve.

There are some institutions with materials on the Chinese American experience in New York City: Museum of Chinese in America (MOCA), New-York Historical Society (NYHS), and Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS). The collections at the NYHS concentrate on the

narratives of early Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants arriving in New York City's Lower Manhattan from 19th century to the present. Similarly, MOCA's collection is mainly on the earlier Chinese American community which settled in Manhattan, but it also includes a small collection of materials documenting growing Chinese American communities in Queens and Brooklyn. However, the museum is located in Manhattan which makes it difficult to have a local grasp of the Chinese community in both Brooklyn and Queens. In addition, the BHS has an oral history collection of Chinese American residents living in Brooklyn documented in 1993. These institutions have some materials documenting the Chinese American experiences in New York, but they lack representation of new Chinese immigrants residing in other boroughs aside from Manhattan.

These new demographic changes are not reflected in archival collections in museums or local archives. As demographics slowly shift in the boroughs, the experience of recent Chinese immigrants in Queens have not yet been documented in the local archives. John Hyslop, the archivist at Queens Library, said in 2005 that he "acknowledges that the archives are weak in their documentation of the new immigrants to Queens in recent years, particularly the experiences of Chinese and Indian newcomers to the United States." He also said "we are going to start an informational campaign to reach out to community groups; we want to emphasize how important it is that people preserve their records and help them learn how to store their historical material" (DC37, 2005). The acknowledgement of weakness in the archives is the first step to improving the library's archival collections on the recent demographic changes within the borough. Not only is that change important to document, but conducting outreach with the goal of convincing everyday people that their cultural heritage materials and narratives are worthy of being archived is also necessary.

To act on Queens Library's agenda to expand its archival collection perimeter to include documentation of residents in Queens as well as new immigrants and to encourage them to preserve their family heritage and history, Queens Memory was launched in 2011. The project started out as an independent project by Natalie Milbrodt at the Queens College Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. It became the stretching arm of the Queens Library Archive supported by Queens Library and Queens College. The program conducts community outreach throughout Queens with the mission of collecting archival documents and interviews relevant to life in the borough of Queens from the borough's residents. It empowers residents from diverse backgrounds to document and share the personal histories that together tell a more complete story of life in the borough (Queens Memory, 2016).

Memories of Migration

In 2016, the Queens Library joined Santa Ana Public Library along with West Hartford Public Library (CT), the State of New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs and New Mexico Highlands University (NM) on the Institute of Museum and Library Services grant-funded project called Memories of Migration. The grant aimed to support projects that address challenges faced by libraries across the US that have the potential to create programs and practices that can improve the quality of library services nationwide.

As part of the grant, the Memories of Migration project offered immigrant communities a voice in sharing their unique migrant stories of living in a new country. As one of the four model programs, Queens Library focused specifically on immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and mainland China in Queens to help preserve the histories of local community groups and to strengthen the library's current archival collections on recent immigrants. This project can improve the archival collections at the Queens Library archive while establishing a mutual

relationship with the local community. The project also aimed to provide engaging programming and to develop set of unique tools to help libraries and archives work with communities to document and celebrate their diverse background and histories.

From February to October 2016, Queens Memory, serving as the outreach arm of the Queens Library, facilitated and hosted about 28 events in conjunction with local Community groups. The programs and events took place at various locations in Queens with a focus in Flushing as it is the main hub for Chinese immigrants. The library hosted various types of programming including cultural events, workshops, story sharing, and digitization sessions to help community members preserve their materials for their personal purposes.

The events opened up an intergenerational and cross-cultural dialogue within Queens' large diverse community. The audience at some of the events was well-informed of past and ongoing issues and struggles within the Chinese community as well as prejudice against people of Chinese heritage in New York. Some of the events also facilitated and fostered a discourse on what ought to be changed within the community. While cultural events were enjoyable and pleasant, they can empower the community and encourage them to share their unique experience. Studies also show that collaborative cultural programs can create stronger communities and reduce implicit prejudice (Van Duyne & Jacobs, 1992; Varheim, 2011, 2014; Maloney, 2012).

One of the main goals of the project was to welcome the Chinese immigrant community to tell their migrant stories and preserve them culturally and digitally in the Queens Library Archive. Preserving the memories of immigrants, their culture, and the way they live their life in a new country means to be part of the local history, to have a voice in the future, and to leave footprints behind for the future generations to learn about where they came from and who they were. To achieve this, story sharing and digitization sessions were held in collaboration with

local community organizations at the Flushing library and other venues to provide an open space for Chinese immigrants to come in and share their story as well as getting their materials digitized and preserved in the Queens Library Archive.

The Memories of Migration project followed the Queens Memory's outreach-oriented archival post-custodial model. When contributors bring in their materials to be digitized and preserved in the archive, the donors retain their original photographs and documents as well as a digitized copy of their materials. In addition, the digital surrogates become part of the collection at the Queens Library digital archive with the donor's permission. During the digitization process, Queens Memory staff works with the donor one-on-one to collect dates, names, locations and other contextual information of the items to be donated. After the event, Queens Memory staff catalogs each item on the library's digital archives and publishes it online for visibility and accessibility.

Statement of the Problem Situation

There are many articles written about the wonderful work that community archives do to bring visibility to marginalized groups and democratize archival materials in institutions. Some articles discuss the extent to which community archives projects have social impact on their communities (Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez, 2016). Archivists can definitely benefit and learn from existing literature regarding the value and importance of community archives. While many of the articles are about community archives with a digital component, along with museums that are open to community discourse, not many existing articles or model projects mention how community archives and public libraries can collaborate with local community organization to provide space and services to help preserve the history and culture of immigrants in general, and specifically in this case, Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens.

Moreover, no article has yet discussed how to document memories of immigrants in communities and to preserve their history on the grassroots level, especially in public library settings. There is also no research about what kinds of programming activities can encourage immigrants to preserve their personal narrative and culture at local archives. It is also noted that there is a lack of documentation specifically on the recent generation of Chinese immigrants in New York's local memory institutions. In addition, while these memory institutions mainly tend to serve those who are fluent in English, new immigrants from various backgrounds who have not yet become fluent in the language or have not yet been fully assimilated in the US are often overlooked in both services and archival documentation. Some speculative reasons for this omission include archives' resource limitation, immigrants' knowledge about archives, and other barriers between institutions and immigrants.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study is to explore and evaluate programming activities that public libraries and archives can conduct to introduce traditionally underrepresented communities to archives. It also attempts to explore how memory institutions can collaborate with local community organizations and how participatory opportunities at events can help immigrants preserve their stories and narratives. This study aims to evaluate the different types of activities conducted during the Memories of Migration project and determine whether they are effective in their functions. It looks at the challenges community archives face during the course of the project. This study will offer community archivists practical recommendations in their outreach initiatives. Some challenges that archivists might encounter in their mission to reach out to ethnic groups will also be identified in this case study.

The results of this case study are local and might not be applied universally unless given similar or identical circumstances and resources such as those in this case study. However, the results of this case study can provide practical information on what programming activities are more engaging for immigrants from diverse backgrounds and what challenges community archives might encounter when attempting to document and preserve migration stories and cultures of ethnic groups in a multicultural society. In addition, the results can also help institutions to rethink how they can use their existing and future resources wisely when deciding suitable programming for immigrants if they want to preserve cultural diversity in their community and democratize their institutions' archival collections.

Research Questions

After an analysis of published materials on the topic of community archives and programming in public libraries to preserve immigrant memories, the following research questions were formulated to provide context for the case study:

1. What types of programming activities can community archives and public libraries provide to educate Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens about the value of their history and cultural heritage and to further preserve them?
2. How effective are story sharing and community digitization events at encouraging interpersonal interaction and preservation of personal narratives?
3. What are some factors that can affect the turnout rate at events?

Importance of the Study

Public libraries are capable of creating enormous social capital within the community they serve while community archives are important assets to our society in which local history can be preserved for future researchers. However, there has not been a study on how community

archives can utilize the advantages of public libraries to bridge ties with underrepresented communities. This case study can provide some insights into what public and memory institutions can do to preserve the culture and history of Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants since there is a lack of research within the field regarding this topic.

Even though the results from this case study might only apply locally, it has the potential to establish some basic ideas on what public libraries and community archives both can do to document the history of immigrants in the community they serve. If institutions duplicate the conditions in this study, it is very likely that they will produce similar results. It will also provide archivists ideas on what other factors they have to consider if they want to further pursue their agenda in preserving cultural diversity within their community. Librarians and archivists can use the findings from this practice-based case study to rethink how they can use their resources to design programming that is best suited for the local immigrants whose history and culture they are interested in preserving. The results will also contribute to the lack of examples and literature on the collaboration between community archives and public libraries to collect migration stories from immigrants.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

There have been studies on the history of diversity and ethnicity in archival collections as well as the effects of community archives on the community they serve. As technology advances and socio-political perspectives continue to shift, the number of community archives continues to grow in recent years. These community archives strive to document previously underrepresented or marginalized groups by giving them a voice and a sense of belonging in the community. Community archives and libraries involved in reminiscence work also have social impacts on the community level and individual level. There are model projects dedicated to preserving the narratives of marginalized groups which can reflect some of the best practices in conducting documentation and reminiscence work with previously underrepresented communities.

Definitions

For better understanding of this study, definitions for major terms used throughout the paper will be provided. These terms include community archives, participatory archiving, and share authority. The definition of the terms provides clarifications on the concepts utilized in this case study.

Community archive. Andrew Flinn, a leading scholar with focus on community archives, points out that the terms “community” and “archive” can be defined based on the interpretation of the terms which can vary according to the “locality, notions of shared beliefs, and/or shared values producing a common purpose” (Flinn, 2007, 153). The terms can be defined depending on how broad or narrow one desires to limit it. However, Flinn defines community histories or community archives as “the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the

project is essential” (2007, 153). In another paper, Flinn, et al. (2009) refer to Flinn’s article in 2007 and restate that definitions can vary, but nonetheless they define community archives as “collections of material gathered primarily by members of a given community and over whose use community members exercise some level of control” (73). Overall, while the terms—“community” and “archive”—can be defined in their own way, the community archives terminology is based on the involvement, ownership, and control by the members of a “community” that define and shape the core principals of a community archive.

Participatory archiving. There is currently no concrete definition to this term. However, the term is generally used in association with community archives. According to Woodard (2016), he notes that in “participatory communal archiving, the citizens of the area are the ones charged with documenting and describing their own communities, the archivists serve as the facilitators, and the institution or repository serves as the archives or virtual archives for the digital collection” (378). Thus, participatory archiving is the process in which citizens are directly involved in the documentation and description of their own contents and the archivists are the custodians of the records. Huvila (2008) also emphasizes the advantage of a participatory archive, which is that it “pursues transparency through participation and not its opposite” and that this “inclusion and greater participation are supposed to reveal a diversity of motivations, viewpoints, arguments and counterarguments, which become transparent when a critical mass is attained” (25). While traditional historical narrative can be skewed in its representation, participatory archiving allows for a diverse set of narratives through the pursuit of transparency and openness to inclusion and participation.

Share authority. This term can be generally defined as sharing the ownership of archival content and the open interpretation of history. Sharing historical authority also allows for the

general public's open interpretation of history instead of simply offering the traditional historical narrative to the public. According to McLean (2011), she identifies the concept of authority as the "power conferred by authorship or socially recognized knowledge" and this concept "inherently confers authority and power" (72). With authority, it implies a power structure and does not sound very inviting to an open conversation, but share authority means sharing the ownership of records and interpretation of history, which is more welcoming and inviting.

McLean also emphasizes the importance of conversation in share authority which requires "reciprocity and a mutual respect among participants, mutual interest, and a balance of contribution" (72). She notes that the notion of conversation is "the most essential of human interactions", which "can help museums create more meaningful relationship with their visitors" (70). Through share authority, community members can also be "experts" and "scholars" in interpreting programs and exhibitions, this encourages engagement and open exchange of social knowledge and information in the libraries, archives, and museums.

Growth of Community Archives

Community archives are different from traditional archives because they allow community participation in the creation of records for the archive which can challenge and rectify existing historical or political narratives. Daniel (2014) argues that the main reasons for the rise of ethnic archives in the US are "the development of social history, the civil rights movement and the rise of ethnic politics, new immigration flows, and the evolution of immigration and ethnic studies" (176). Traditional archives have paid much attention to social and cultural elites but have long neglected the history of the other ethnicities.

The number of community archives has been growing worldwide as it has gained popularity since the 1990s. One of the reasons for its boom is due to the "the impact of new

technologies on both the formation of communities and on the processes of community histories or community archives” (Flinn, 2007, 158). Moreover, Daniel (2010) adds that “a new political context increasingly responsive to minority rights and cultural diversity, rising interest in social history, and the influence of postmodernist thought on archival theory, and new digital technologies have also facilitated the expression and archiving of ethnic voices” (82).

Advancement in technology and change of interest in social history and politics led to the growth of grassroots community archives. As interest in minority and cultural diversity increases, community archives document and fill the gaps that traditional archives are missing.

In addition to the increasing interest in ethnic diversity, Flinn (2007) also points out that “another important incentive in stimulating interest in community history comes when communities go through rapid and significant change and feel that they are in the process of losing their identity or having that identity marginalized or ignored” (159). He argues that community archives “play an important role in reconnecting or rooting communities which have gone through dramatic and perhaps traumatic change... [such as] the experience of migration and diasporic living, or other cultural, demographic and generational shifts within an area” (159). Thus, community archives are important in documenting marginalized ethnic groups and impose challenges or rectifications to history.

Effects of Community Archives

As community archives are increasingly growing, there has been some research on the effects and impacts community archives have on communities. Some effects of community archives are the social justice impacts in the society (Duff et al., 2013) and the visibility of underrepresented groups in traditional archives, which can become an empowerment tool for the

community as well as marginalized individuals. Flinn (2007) claims “community archives and participation in community archive activity clearly have a social value in themselves” (166).

Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez (2016) also found that community archives have epistemological, ontological, and social impact on the communities they represent. By adopting the semi-structured qualitative interview methodology in their research, the results generated a theory about the impacts based on the South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA) project. Their research builds its theory by asking the big question of how can archivists think about the impact of community archives on members of communities that have been marginalized by mainstream archives. The results of the research created a new theoretical concept in archival studies that the authors call “representational belonging” which can serve as “a counterweight to symbolic annihilation and describes the affective responses community members have to seeing their communities represented with complexity and nuance” (34). The theory resulting from this research can help archivists think about how marginalized communities can benefit from community archives’ commitment in collecting and preserving their heritage and what impacts community archives can have on their communities.

From a practical perspective, the research results can encourage and motivate community archives to start or continue its task in documenting marginalized communities in archives as a way of creating representational belonging for Marginalized groups. Research on the impact of community archives is difficult but it can also advocate for empirical and qualitative assessment of community archives. Caswell, Cifor, & Ramirez (2016) emphasize that their research provides an early attempt to understand the personal and social impact of community archives in the US, at the same time, they raise the question of whether other community archives have the same or similar impact on the community they serve, and whether there are other types of impact such as

political, financial, and social justice. This research not only opened the dialogue to qualitative assessment of community archives but also raised questions of what other impacts community archives can have on the society.

To answer the questions posed by Caswell, et al. and Duff, et al. elaborate on the relationships between archives and social justice. They argue that “archives reinforce and fortify existing power relationships and concomitantly justice and injustice” (343). The authors also wrote that various literature from within the field note that “archives can also support healthier communities, lifelong learning, educational attainment, [and] employability” and that “archives impact social development by preserving culture, strengthening family and community identity, providing learning opportunities and supporting administrative and business activity” (333). Even though scholars see that archives can potentially have social justice impacts on the society, not much research has been done on the extensive effects of archives. Additionally, they also note that it is important to study impacts of archives because there is an increasing emphasis on assessment and accountability and that the results can be a “powerful advocacy tool used to generate hard evidence of the value of the institutions, whether to convince funders or public opinion” (Duff, et al, 2013, 330).

Duff, et al (2013) also highlight the actions and efforts that archives have made to achieve social justice impact. These actions and efforts include “1) proactively enabling participation in and access to the archive; 2) being [mindful] of the exclusions, absences, and silences in the archives and consider how these gaps can be remedied, including consideration of additional cultural mnemonics; 3) understanding how archives can facilitate restorative-reparative-transitional justice through protection, supplementation to and promotion of the record; and 4) resisting exclusions and marginalization from archival institutions” (Duff, et al,

2013, 330). Efforts such as those made by archives can have social justice impact on the society overall.

In addition, to encourage professionals working in community archives, Flinn (2007) notes that “if as a profession we do not commit to engagement with community archives, we risk losing an opportunity to connect with a wide range of people who rarely use our services and more importantly we pass up on the opportunity to work to ensure that the national archival heritage (inside and outside the archive walls) reflects the whole of society” (170). Thus, it is important for archivists to understand that community archives are capable of affecting the society as a whole as well as individuals on a personal level.

Best Practice Models & Challenges

There are many exist community archives projects aiming to collect and preserve materials from marginalized ethnic groups. Collaboration and partnership are important factors to an archive’s outreach and acquisition process. Some community archives are also beginning to use digital archives to encourage participation and access. They are willing to work with other library and museum institutions. Even though the model projects are different from each other, all of them intend to meet one similar goal: to provide space for marginalized population in their institutions. These models also demonstrate some challenges community archives might encounter.

My Baryo, My Borough. This collaboration project between Queens Memory and My Baryo My Borough intended to document the Filipino and Filipino-American communities in Queens, New York. During the course of the partnership, Queens Memory hosted public events at branch libraries and community members can bring in photographs and documents to be digitized and added to the Queens Library digital archives. Community members also learned

how to conduct oral history interviews. These interviews contributed to the Filipino-American collection on the library's digital archive. Following the post-custodial model, the community members retained the original and the digital copy which became part of the library's collection to be accessed digitally.

Schreiner & de los Reyes (2016) note that the collaboration allowed “the Library to responsibly collect and serve as the long-term custodian for the oral histories and digitized family photographs generated during [the] partnership” (5). The authors conclude that this collaboration was “a successful partnership included cultivating mutual legitimacy and trust, building skills, and centering the leadership for the project within the Filipino-American community” (6). Thus, this partnership between the community group and an archive established that share authority and collaboration is crucial and beneficial for the well-being of marginalized communities as it helps to democratize the archives' scope of its collection.

Yo Soy Colorado. This collaborative oral history project between the Center for Colorado & the West at Auraria Library (University of Colorado Denver), the Southern Colorado Ethnic Heritage and Diversity Archives, and the Voices of Protest Oral History Project (Colorado State University-Pueblo) also utilized the post-custodial model. The project demonstrated joint ownership of archival materials by both the archive and the community. The archive hosted outreach events and participated in local celebrations. These events were efforts made to educate the community about the project. Some of the main recommendations proposed in this article for other community archives to consider were the following (Allen, et al., 2012, 49-50):

- 1) Collaborative relationships among libraries, archives, and museums can fruitfully engage cultural community members in collaborative construction of digital knowledge.

- 2) Traditional practices of appraisal, arrangement, and description can be rearticulated as participatory, community-oriented processes.
- 3) Inclusive community-generated digital knowledge activities can shape interpretations and narratives of the past and present, thereby influencing construction of the future, as community members express their contexts, concepts, and truths.
- 4) Libraries, museums, and other cultural memory organizations must seek ways forward that engage and feature, rather than dismiss or append, cultural and local meaning.
- 5) Student learning can be furthered through interactions with cultural community members who offer significant curation details and authentic interpretation.

This project not only offers reflections on best practices principles that other cultural heritage institutions can follow, it also addresses some of the challenges the collaborating institutions faced during the course of the project. One of the challenges that the archives staff encountered was “gaining the trust of community members” because the archivists were seen as outsiders to the community (Allen, et al, 2012, 45). In addition, as Flinn (2007) notes, “even if the community archive groups are not distrustful of the mainstream sector, many groups are often worried that the deposit of their collections with a formal record office may result in reduced access for themselves, their families and their communities, especially if the record office is a considerable distance from the community” (166-167). It is suggested by Flinn that access and geographical distance of an archive can also affect the community’s participation and trust.

PLACE Project. While most projects are created for museums and online digital archives, the PLACE project in Oslo, Norway is similar to the Memories of Migration case study. Ulvik (2010) points out that there is not many research in the field using “libraries as an

arena for reminiscence work among immigrants” and that the PLACE project resulted in “networking building, increased language skills, stronger feelings of belonging, increased trust and self-confidence” among the immigrant participants (154). This research is resulted from a library services oriented project. The project at the Norwegian public library created a multicultural memory group to gather memories from immigrants but the research did not mention about the collection of the memories and the products from the project.

Ulvik also addresses one of the challenges the researcher faced in the beginning of the project was the language barrier between the facilitators and the immigrant participants. However, the facilitators overcame this problem by “borrowing” a class from a local language school. The advantage of inviting a class from a local language school is that it provides not only social practice but as well as language practice for language learners. During the class, the “leaders” in the group also “share their own lives, experiences and memories with the group, a real exchange is taking place” (Ulvik, 2010, 159).

In addition, there has been other research on how other library programs for immigrant populations have helped immigrants to integrate into their new country and this process also created trust and social capital between the institution and the communities with which it worked with (Varheim, 2011, 2014). According to Varheim (2011), integration programming such as ESL programs and memory-gathering programs at libraries for immigrants in Norway can generate social capital such as trust within the community. Thus, using public libraries as a space for local immigrants to conduct reminiscence work deepens the bond between immigrants and the library.

Gaps in Literature & Restatement of Study Value

Community archives can shed light on marginalized groups through grassroots archival documentation. Most grassroots community archives are built through networks, connections, and collaborations with other organizations and these relationships create strong bonds between the parties involved. There is much research on best practices for how community archives can engage the communities they serve. However, no research has been done on community archives in public library settings working to document and help preserve the memory of immigrants.

This case study can generate knowledge regarding what kinds of programming activities can engage immigrants the most. It also attempts to evaluate community history activities and programs conducted during the project and how effective each activity is. Librarians and archivists can therefore reconsider how to use their resources wisely if they intend to document the experiences and narratives of immigrants within their communities.

Again, this case study can provide some insights about what public library and memory institutions can do to preserve the culture and history of Chinese immigrants since there is no research within the archive and library field regarding this specific topic. This case study can help to recommend some best practices for community archives in documenting the history of recent Chinese immigrant and immigrants in general. It can provide researchers with ideas on what other factors and challenges archivists should consider if they want to further their agenda in preserving diversity within their community. The results can also contribute to the archives field, which is lacking in examples of collaboration between community archives and public libraries to collect migrant memories from different immigrant groups.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this case study was to evaluate programming activities that have the objective of getting Chinese immigrants to engage in preserving their migration stories and cultural heritage at their local libraries and archives based on best practices. To best illustrate how effective each activity was at engaging participants during the events, the patterns in the turnouts of each event, how participants were interacting with their peers or staffs, and how they were involved in the participatory archiving process will be analyzed. The main focus of the study will concentrate on the following research questions:

1. What types of programming activities can community archives and public libraries provide to educate Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens about the value of their history and cultural heritage and to further preserve them?
2. How effective are story sharing and community digitization events at encouraging interpersonal interaction and preservation of personal narratives?
3. What are some factors that can affect the turnout rate at events?

Scope

This case study was conducted in the borough of Queens, New York. Because Chinese immigrants tend to live in enclaves where they have access to the resources and environment best suited for their lifestyles and culture, most of our events were facilitated at the Flushing branch library as well as other branches tend to have more Chinese immigrant patrons.

Participants were adults who came to the events. These events were conducted mostly in English and occasionally in Chinese depending on whether there are Chinese-speaking participants. The

event participants and contributors to the project will be the sample population included in this study.

This case study looked at the twenty-eight community events that the project had conducted from February to October in 2016, the activities at the events are divided into five categories: 1) story share, 2) stage programming, 2) community digitization, 4) workshops, 5) outreach. Most of the time, events are conducted with one or more of the five activities. Participants at the events were not aware of being informally observed. Only a selection of participants was asked to fill out a feedback form about the event they attended.

Research Methodology

In order to understand how different types of programming at community archives and public libraries can preserve the migration memories of Chinese immigrants in Queens, a case study was used for this research. Even though the findings from case studies cannot be generalized as universal truths, the results from this case study allow practitioners to reflect on what kinds of community archives events and activities in public libraries Chinese immigrants are more likely attracted to participate in, while considering other circumstantial factors such as demographics and resources provided in this case study. Using a case study as the methodology in this research allowed the study to test different types of programming activities with the designated population in order to evaluate the outcomes of this project.

Since this is a case study, participant observation was used because the researcher was both an observer and a participant in the events. As a participant, the researcher was involved in the planning and conducting of activities during the programming and the activities. As an observer, the researcher can provide a point of view from an outsider perspective. Wildemuth (2016) points out that “such participation leads to a better understanding of the people and social

processes that occur within that setting, and this understanding can lead to better theories about social processes in that setting and similar settings” (219).

Wildemuth (2016) also mentions some advantages of using participant observations as a research instrument. One advantage is that the participant observer is aware of what is happening in the setting, while the other participants routinely employ “selective inattention” (55). Because the participant observer is an outsider as well as an insider, she records notes on what is observed and reflects on what is observed, and these activities are not generally undertaken by the other participants in the setting (Wildemuth, 2016, 220). Another advantage is that the participant observer tends to define the setting more broadly in an attempt to understand how the culture’s context influences the culture itself. These advantages allow the participant observer to see and understand more about the setting and the culture in this case.

Research Design

The statistics and information gathered in this case study have the potential to be manipulated and staged since the researcher was a participant and also one of the project staff directly interacting with the participants and donors professionally during the course of this project. However, feedback forms were anonymous and they have no effect on the relationship between the researcher and the participants. Statistics and observation reports were also gathered and written after each event without the participants’ knowledge. Only general statistics and information were recorded in the report and so the identity of the participants and donors are protected. Each donor was given a number in the findings and results so their identity and privacy is not revealed in any way.

Research Instruments and Data Collection

Observation. Observations were recorded in event reports which include field notes and the total headcounts of each event. Each event reports included the name of the event, date, number of participants, all activities conducted during the program, comments and/or concerns regarding the event, as well as an analysis of the event. Together with the statistics of materials donated by participant donors and feedback forms collected, they revealed how involved the participants were, what kinds of programming are more popular, which programs with what activities had more focus on individual participants. Statistics can be extracted from the recorded information while event reports can supplement a detailed qualitative analysis on the evaluation of each event.

Feedback forms. The consent forms were filled out and gathered from the participant donors who decided to contribute to the Queens Library Archive. All private information collected during the events were secured and protected by the Queens Library. The feedback forms were anonymous and optional. They were submitted by donors who wanted to fill them out at the end of events. The feedback questions were originally compiled by the host library. Participants and donors can provide their opinions and comments on the feedback forms. The following were the basic questions in the feedback forms:

Q1. How much did you enjoy this event? Rate 1-5

Q2. What did you enjoy the most about it?

Q3. Why?

Q4. Would you come to an event like this again?

Q5. Other comments?

Sampling

From twenty-eight events hosted during the course of the project, qualitative analysis supplemented observations and insights into how engaging each type of activity was, how each event was planned, what were their strengths and weaknesses in capturing the participants' attention based on the data from event reports. Additionally, three digitization and story sharing events were evaluated based on the following factors RQ#2: How effective are story sharing and community digitization events at encouraging interpersonal interaction and preservation of personal narratives?

Interpersonal Interaction. This factor determines the interaction between the participants, the staff, and their peers. It looks at how participants engaged with the activities and to what extent the participants' interest grow during the event. This factor is significant as it allows for sharing authority with the general public as noted in the literature review section. Interpersonal interaction allows for conversations and discussions among the participants and staff. This becomes a learning process for everyone involved. In addition, the Yo Soy Colorado project emphasized that "learning can be furthered through interactions with cultural community members who offer significant curation details and authentic interpretation" (Allen, et al., 2012, 50). Thus, interpersonal interaction among participants and archives staff is essential to the open conversation and discussion of variety of narratives in archives.

Participatory Archiving. This factor determines how contributors participate in the appraisal, arrangement, and description of materials participants contributed to the archive. This can be the stories participants shared at the events, the oral history interviews they were part of or the descriptions participants shared about each item. The participants' direct involvement in the description of their materials can be seen as part of share authority. While the archive takes

on the role of the custodian of the digital surrogates, participants are directly involve during the archival description process.

Additionally, to answer research question #3, quantitative data collected about the turnout were analyzed based on the following fields as suggested in the models in the literature review:

Collaboration. Partnership between institutions and local community groups and organizations is essential to successful events. The significance of this factor is to see whether partnership collaboration can help increase the number of participants at events and further promote cultural awareness and the idea of archival documentation and preservation to a broader population. As recommended in the Yo Soy Colorado, My Baryo, My Borough, and the PLACE project, collaboration is crucial and essential when libraries and archives are creating successful programs.

Participatory Opportunities. Whether participants have the opportunities to contribute their stories or materials or to voice their concerns and ongoing issues with their community is an important part of this case study. This field is significant to this study because it determines whether our programming can provide an open space for locals and immigrants to freely express themselves. Participatory opportunities open up to conversations with the community. It allows the attendees' voices to be heard while others can listen to different viewpoints and narratives instead of only looking at one sided interpretation of a topic at discussion. This factor is similar to participatory archiving, but in this case, it is an opportunity as it does not necessary requires the participants to contribute to the archive. The concept of providing an open space to the general public to discussion and converse among themselves or with experts allows for exchange of information and knowledge.

Selection of Sample

The sample for this case study is a convenience sample because the participants and contributors at events are the focus of this study. The project has hosted twenty-eight events throughout six months. Many of the participants came from different ethnicity backgrounds and everyone was encouraged and welcomed to join our events. However, because of the scope of the study, some parts of the findings and results will specifically concentrate on participants who are of Chinese heritage. This exclusion criterion intends to improve the representativeness of the study sample.

Data Processing

At the end of the study, statistical data will be organized in tables, diagrams, and graphs for easier understanding. The total number of participants will be put in a table in order to explore their patterns. Each activity type's characteristics, effects, strengths, and weaknesses will be evaluated based on the event reports. Two events with specific activities such as story sharing and community digitization and one event with story sharing and outreach was selected for detailed qualitative analysis based on factors such as interpersonal interaction and participatory archiving.

Limitations

Findings from a case study such as this one have limitations in the lack of generalizability and can only serve as a local examination due to the uniqueness of the geographical location the study was conducted in. Another limitation is that because not all institutions have the same quality and amount of resources provided in this case, it limits the ability for others to duplicate the results from this research. However, this research is meant to test and evaluate the practical aspects of conducting community history activities with Chinese immigrants.

Another research limitation regarding the methodology of this case study is its participant observation method. Wildemuth (2016) notes that participant observations tend to have the following effects on research: (1) the effects of the observer on the setting being observed, (2) the possibility that members of the culture will lead you to incorrect conclusions, and (3) the barriers that characteristics of the setting and method can place in the way of collecting data systematically. However, some of the pitfalls are limited by the scope and the research design offered in this case study. It is possible that the participant observer could influence the conditions of this case study, but the possibility that members of the culture leading the observer-researcher to an incorrect conclusion and barriers of collecting data is eliminated as the observer is part of the community and speaks the same language as the surveying population, thus having unique access to the community that the project serves.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND EVALUATIONS

Overview

To better illustrate how community archives and libraries can help Chinese immigrants to learn more about preserving their migration stories and culture in Queens, New York through a variety of programming activities, data was collected on the turnout of each event and what activities were conducted at the events that the project hosted. The statistics regarding the patterns in participation and collaboration are organized into tables. Additional observations and analysis will reveal the findings for each of the research questions. The strengths and weaknesses of each type of activities will be analyzed for better understanding in which specific types of activities can directly help reach a large audience or specifically Chinese immigrants to preserve their history and personal narratives on an individual level. In-depth analysis of three events will also provide some insightful evaluation of how the activities at each of the three events encouraged interactions involving reminiscence and preservation of migration narratives.

Restatement of Problem

There is an abundant amount of literature on what community archives can do to help achieve diversity in institutional archival collections, but not so much on what types of programming activities libraries and archives can provide to help immigrant communities learn about the value of their culture and personal narratives and how to preserve them. By looking at different kinds of activities libraries can provide to help Chinese immigrant preserve their culture and personal stories in the local community archive in this case study, archivists and librarians can rethink how to use their resources and wisely choose the most suitable kinds of programming for their immigrant community in public libraries. This case study focuses on the following major research questions.

1. What types of programming activities can community archives and public libraries provide to educate Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens about the value of their history and cultural heritage and to further preserve them?
2. How effective are story sharing and community digitization events at encouraging interpersonal interaction and preservation of personal narratives?
3. What are some factors that can affect the turnout rate at events?

Findings

Types of Programming Activities

Research Question #1: What types of programming activities can community archives and public libraries provide to educate Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens about the value of their history and cultural heritage and to further preserve them?

This case study utilized five types of activities including story sharing, community digitization, workshops, outreach, and stage programming to help Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens learn about the value of their cultural heritage and their personal narratives and to further preserve them. To fully explore this research question, general observations and outcomes about each type of activities conducted during the events are explained in the following section along with each activity's strengths and weaknesses.

Story sharing. There were a total of seven events involving story telling activities. These events were conducted in local library conference rooms and in the space provided by collaborating partners. This activity relied a lot on the partners' role in gathering people who were interested in sharing their stories. Participants at the events gathered to reminisce and to share their migration stories with each other. Participants felt this kind of activity is meaningful as they get to share their story and hear other's stories.

The main strength of story sharing events is that everyone has a chance to participate, share, and listen to other people's stories. This type of event is also very engaging and allows participants to meet other people and talk to each other about their migration experience. How many people get to share their story depends on how long the session is. Sometimes project staff followed up on the participants if they are interested in an oral history interview. The attendance rate is moderate at these events. One challenge during the story sharing events is that people can get sentimental when they are telling their story, but other participants would encourage and support each other.

Community digitization. There were a total of 11 events with digitization sessions involved. There were a total of 19 donors, 15 of whom were Chinese Americans or Chinese immigrants. Community digitization events often require collaboration with a local community partner where they have people who wish to bring in materials to be digitized. The service mainly focuses on those who wish to digitize and to preserve their materials. Participants also have an option to contribute their digitized materials to the Queens Memory/Queens Library digital archive. When participants wanted to contribute to the archive and preserve their materials digitally, staff would sit with them to take down the metadata required for each item. Contributors seemed to enjoy recalling and telling our staff about the memories linked to the item. Participants could also contribute by scheduling an oral history interview with us if they were interested.

There were a total of 15 Chinese immigrant donors and some were also interviewees of oral history interviews. Each donor contributed a different number of items to the archive. Some donated more while some donated a few. From the observations, time was the main factors in the variance of items contributed by the donors. Digitization can be time consuming and due to the

limitation of how many items staff can digitize and record information within two hours per session. From the data shown, the maximum number of items scanned during one session was 42. At the same time, the variance in the number of items donated also demonstrated the contributors' preference in story telling through oral history interviews, photographs, or both. In addition, because donors were not required to bring in a certain number of photographs or items for digitization, they were at freedom to bring as many or as little as they want. The following are the tables of how many items each donor donated to the archives during each digitization event and the total number of items digitized and donated to the archive per event.

Table A: Donors and # of digital objects donated

Event #	Donor #	# of items
1	Donor #01	2
11	Donor #11*	1
13	Donor #02	5
13	Donor #03	34
14	Donor #04	4
14	Donor #05	4
14	Donor #12*	31
16	Donor #06	1
16	Donor #07	7
16	Donor #08	34
17	Donor #14*	2
19	Donor #09*	1
23	Donor #10*	11
23	Donor #15	13
24	Donor #13	5
TOTAL		155
AVERAGE		10

*=with oral history interview

Table B: # of digital objects donated per event

Event #	# of Donors	Total # of items
1	1	2
11	1	1
13	2	39

14	3	39
16	3	42
17	1	2
19	1	1
23	2	24
24	1	5

There are also some strengths and weaknesses to community digitization activities. The strength of community digitization events is that reminiscing and recalling the memories about the items can help both the staff and our participants to find the event more meaningful. Other strengths of these events include helping participants preserve their materials. Their contributions to the archive also shaped the larger narrative of the history of the borough, and it allows residents to have representation through their visibility in the archives. However, a weakness of this activity is that it requires participants to prepare their materials ahead of time prior to the event and it can be a challenge as people can have privacy concerns. It also relies a lot on local community groups that partnered with the project on promoting the events to the local network of people.

Workshops. The project conducted three workshop events. The workshops aimed to equip participants with skills to document other people's stories or their own stories. Two of the workshops were oral history workshops where participants learned oral history interviewing techniques and also practiced what they learned with their peers as a way to preserve personal narratives through spoken words. Another workshop was a story sharing workshop led by a practicing English teacher. She led the workshop with a series of writing exercises involving images from the archives along with other sample writings. The stories from the workshop were published on a digital platform. Participants were also encouraged to bring their own photographs to complement their stories.

The strength of the workshop is that participants learn a set of skills that they can use to preserve their own history or their family's history through written or spoken words. The workshops were very engaging and participants had a chance to share their stories with their peers, similar to story sharing, and also write about their experience. Similar to the other activities, some of the challenges in planning workshops include the need for collaboration and gathering people who are interested.

Stage programming. Stage programming generally has the biggest turnout. The guests and experts are invited to talk about a specific topic regarding Chinese Americans in America. Programming can consist of a panel discussion, guest talks, screening, and author talks. Q&A sessions generally follow after the featured programming. The audience has a chance to express themselves and ask the guests questions during the Q&A session. Stage programming is good for grabbing the attention of the general public who might be interested in learning more about the topic.

The strengths of this type of activity include the ability to spark interest in the audience and to generate publicity for the project. By inviting special guests to the stage and talk about specific topics, it captures the interest of the larger audience. One of the weaknesses is that there are not many chances to have individual conversations with each participant, but this type of programming serves its purpose in attracting the attention of the general public.

Outreach. Outreach and tabling at community events allows the project to spread information to a wider audience and the local community. Having a general presence at local community events also allows staff to learn more about the community and local residents it serves. It can potentially attract people who are interested in coming to future events. Brochures and information were given out to inform the public about the project and the digital archives.

Old photographs of the neighborhood were also shown on tablets to get people look at the past, talk about their connection to the neighborhood, and their knowledge of the neighborhood. It also helps them think about their family history and the historical value of the neighborhood and community they live in.

The strength of outreach is that it helps to get people looking and thinking about the past and possibly increases their interest in preserving local community history. Outreach can also help the project to disseminate information about upcoming events. However, a disadvantage of outreach is that there can be an overwhelming amount of people at certain large scale local forums and events so that project staff cannot reach everyone on an individual level.

Combination of activities. A combination of activities was conducted most of the time at an event to engage participants. Higher participation rate was anticipated when the event was a large scale programming collaborated with a partner. The data showed that the total of participants at events with only outreach activities was 261, and stage or talk programming with 374 attendees. However, the attendance also tended to be lower when we have digitization events but a combination of activities can attract more people to join. Additionally, it can also be distracting if not planned well as multiple activities might be happening at the same time. The observations revealed that outreach and staged events can often help attract more people to the library and spread the word about the project. Smaller scale events with a lower number of participants such as story sharing and community digitization events can encourage interpersonal interaction among participants and contribution to the archive.

Table C: Number of events for each type and number of participants

Event Types	# of events	# of participants	Average
digitization, outreach	6	72	12
digitization, outreach, staged	1	35	35
digitization, storytelling	2	25	13
digitization, workshop, storytelling	2	33	17

Outreach	7	261	37
Outreach, storytelling	3	62	21
Workshop	1	13	13
Stage/Talk	6	374	62
Total	28	875	26

Event Analysis

Research Question #2: How effective are story sharing and community digitization events at encouraging interpersonal interaction and preservation of personal narratives?

Based on observation, interactions between participants and project staff as well as their peers can encourage Chinese immigrants to share their stories with each other and to further their interest in preserving their narratives. Through interaction, participants begin to understand the value of preserving their own stories as well as their materials in order to increase their voice and representation in the community. When participants contribute to the digital archive, it demonstrates that they entrust their materials to an institution.

To fully explore how story sharing and community digitization can encourage Chinese immigrants to share their narratives with others and the archives, three specific events are chosen for in-depth qualitative analysis based on how well these events were able to engage participants on a personal level, and how their participation in the process of participatory archiving allows for share authority and democratizes archival collections. Each event also involved multiple categories of activities described in research question one.

Event #16 Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and Military Appreciation Month Celebration in Forest Hills

This event was collaborated with the Forest Hills Asian Association, a local community group of Asian Americans in the Forest Hills neighborhood. The event mainly focused on digitization and outreach with a featured presentation by Michael Dunne, an Asian American US

Army Retired Veteran who live in Forest Hills and served in Afghanistan from 2005-2006, along with a pop-up exhibition by Corky Lee, who is known as the Asian American Photographer Laureate. These two special guests were featured as part of the celebration for Asian Pacific American Heritage and military appreciation.

This event took place in the small auditorium of a neighborhood branch library in Forest Hills. The digitization team set up its station on the left side of the stage with some chairs for the participants. The pop up photo exhibition was set up on the tables on the right side of the stage. In the middle was the stage where our guests could make their remarks. The project staff set up about 40 chairs in the middle of the auditorium for the audience to face the stage.

The event began with the opening words by the Forest Hills Asian Association president, Edwin Wong, and the branch library manager. The event then followed by special remarks by Major Dunne. Major Dunne presented the photographs of his journey from Queens to Afghanistan and also his experiences and stories from during his service. There was also a pop up photo exhibit on the topic of political activism in New York by the Asian American Photographer Laureate, Corky Lee. Participants each had a chance to vote on their favorite piece of photograph with a post-it note. Corky explained the back story of the ten photographs with the most votes. There was also a voter registration drive in partnership with Organization of Chinese Americans-New York Chapter-Asian Pacific American. The Queens Memory team also scanned photos brought in by participants. There was also complimentary popcorn from Kettle Corn NYC and the giveaways from the Ridgewood Savings Bank Forest Hills Branch.

The total number of participants at the event was twenty-three. Everyone seemed to enjoy Major Dunne's photos and stories as well as Corky Lee's pop-up photograph exhibit of political activism in New York. This partnership event celebrated Memorial Day as well as the APA

month. Participants brought in a lot of photos and some seniors from the neighborhood were very enthusiastic in telling their migration stories, and they were interested in an oral history interview follow up. The digitization team collected information from interested parties for photo contributions and follow up interviews.

Interactions. The highlights of the event were Major Dunne's story and photographs documenting his experience and service in Afghanistan, Corky Lee's pop-up photograph exhibition and the digitization session. These activities were very engaging for the audience. Hearing Major Dunne's story can make one appreciate the service that he has done for the country. Listening to other people's story also made the audience want to share theirs with others. The photograph voting activities made the audience walk to their favorite piece and the participants ended up talking to each other about the photographs. Overall, the interaction between the participants and their peers as well as with the staff increased the understanding of the value in sharing their personal narratives.

Participatory Archiving. In addition, the digitization session allowed for participatory archiving. In our process of digitizing materials for the contributors, the metadata staff sat with the donor to write down important information about each item the donor wants to donate to the digital archive. The information includes date, location, name of photographer, name of persons in the photo, name of occasion/event taking place, organization represented, model of camera used, measurement, and the context/description of the photo. These are important metadata when the team catalogues the items in the system. Participatory archiving allows donors to share and illustrate a piece of their personal history in the digital archive. The donated materials can also help to bridge an intergenerational dialogue in the future when researchers look at information

about the community. This process also allows for share authority of the donated records where contributors are directly involved in the description of the items in the archive.

No feedback forms were collected from the event to estimate how much the participants were empowered by the activities. However, the event appeared to be very meaningful for both participants and staff. The event also helped people understand each other and encourage them to share their stories with others as well as helping to preserve the memories of those who digitized their materials.

Event #19 Outreach and Story sharing Session at Self-Help

This event involved outreach and story sharing at a local senior center with senior citizens who are Chinese immigrants. The event was conducted mainly in Chinese with some English. The event was coordinated with the manager at the senior center, who knew members at the center that are interested in sharing their migration stories at the event. The presentation and story session took place in a small conference room at the senior center. The participants sat around the conference table, with additional people who sat on the side. The manager at the senior center was very helpful in gathering the seniors to share their stories at the event.

The event started with a presentation of the project from the outreach coordinator. The presentation included family photos of Chinese Americans from the archives at MOCA and Queens Memory. They were used with permission from the institutions. Many people enjoyed looking at the photos. After the presentation, project staff conducted a story sharing session. There was no particular order; participants take turns talking about their journey to America and their experience as immigrants in New York. The seniors from the center share the struggles they encountered and overcame after arriving here. Most of the seniors at this event came during the

1980s. They worked low wage jobs and gradually achieved success through years of hard work and persistence.

Interactions. The total number of participants was 20. Many people seemed to be willing to share their stories. About 7 people shared their journey to America in detail. Everyone listened patiently and quietly to each other's story and made comments after each other's story. People also get to meet each other and talk to each other after the event. Some participants were also willing to be interviewed for detailed oral history recordings.

Participatory Archiving. Because this was mainly an outreach and story sharing session to get the seniors familiar with the project, no community digitization session and participatory archiving was planned at this event.

Again, no feedback forms were collected from the participants to estimate how much the outreach and story sharing session at the senior center had impacted their perspectives or value regarding their history and experience as Chinese immigrants. However, the seniors were enthusiastic in telling their personal story and listening to others' stories.

Event #23 Memories of Migration in New York

This event involved story sharing and community digitization activity. It was conducted in a large conference room in the Flushing branch library. The story telling activity was made to initiate in-depth conversation with participants. Topics discussed focused on exploring Chinese immigrant's hidden struggles and their interpretation of "home." Participants could also digitize their family photos. The digitization team was also present to help participants scan their photographs and save them to a thumb drive that participants can take home for preservation. This session also incorporated 3D scanning provided by Amy Cheung, Alan Kwan, and Maggie Hui - a team of artists/researchers from Hong Kong. They were also collecting data, stories, and

memorable objects from participants to scan for their 'Migrating Memories into Virtual Architecture" project.

The first two hours of the event was a story sharing session. Participants sat around the table and introduced themselves. Participants then took turns around the table to answer each of the following questions regarding their migration experience. The questions were taken from a list of oral history interview questions about the memories of migrations. List of the questions include:

- Why did you decide to migrate to New York?
- What was your impression of New York before and after you came here?
- As an immigrant, how do you define “home”?
- How was your journey to New York? What is your most unforgettable memory?
- What do you think about living in Queens as an immigrant?

The event had 15 participants in total. The turnout was not as large as the crowd in outreach events but it was a moderate group for story sharing. After that, the digitization session began. Amy and Alan 3D scanned the participants seated with their objects. Amy and Alan 3D scanned the participants holding their photos. It took about 3 minutes for each participant. The Queens Memory also helped to digitize the photographs participants brought in and saved them to a thumb drive for the participants who brought in their materials.

Interactions. Within the two hours of the story sharing session, the staff and the participants learned a lot about each other. Everyone had a chance to share their stories and listen to other’s story as we went around, taking turns to share. When someone spoke of an experience or a thought shared by someone else, the other person would comment at the end and they would exchange thoughts about that experience. Some people also got very emotional as they were speaking, but everyone encouraged each other.

During the digitization session, participants were looking at each other's photos and talking to each other about their photographs. The staff and participants also took pictures together after the story sharing event. The staff gave tips to contributors on how to better preserve the materials. Overall, the event was a semi-informal gathering of people who wish to share their migration stories. People at the event met each other through story sharing. The interaction between the participants, their peers and staff helped participants understand each other through the activity in sharing their similar but different experience.

Participatory archiving. Similar to event #16, contributors shared the information of the items they wish to donate to the digital archive they enjoyed recalling the memories associated with their objects. The cataloging staff used the information to share the context of the photographs. This process helps to bridge an intergenerational dialogue in the future through their contribution to the archive.

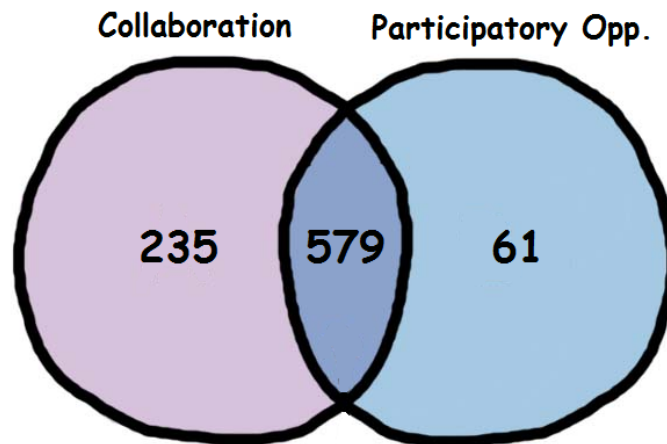
Some participants filled out our feedback forms and were interested in conducting an extensive oral history interview with us. Four feedback forms were received from this event. The general comments from the feedback forms for the question "what do you like about the event and why": one participant commented that she liked the event because she learned about other people's stories from this event; another participant commented that she "feels grateful for the staff that spend time helping [her] and caring about local immigrants"; another comment was that "reminiscence is my happiness." In addition, all feedback received indicated that the participants were likely to join similar events like this one. Based on the feedbacks, we can conclude that the event was rewarding and empowering for some of the participants.

Collaboration and Participatory Opportunities

Research Question #3: What are some factors that can affect the turnout rate at events?

Quantitative data were collected at each event. There were a total of 235 attendees at events organized in collaboration with a local community organization but no participatory opportunity at the events. For events with only participatory opportunities, the turnouts were a total of 61 participants in 28 events, which are substantially less than events hosted with a community organization. For events with only collaboration with partners but no participatory opportunities, the total turnout of 28 events is 235 attendees, more than the totally turnout of events with only participatory opportunities. However, events with a combination of community organization collaboration and allowing participatory opportunity received 579 attendees. The findings from this case study support that collaboration at community archives with participatory opportunities tend to be more successful as illustrated from the model projects examined in the literature review.

**Diagram 1: # of Participants at Collaborations Events
& Events with Participatory Opportunity**



Overall, the turnout rate was higher when events have community partners to collaborate on activities and opportunities for attendees to raise questions or contribute their thoughts, and personal materials and stories during the events. As explained in RQ1, large scale events such as stage programming and general outreach were good for attracting the general public. These

events were conducted in collaboration with other community partners. Small scale events with activities such as story sharing, community digitization, and workshops were better at getting people to participate in reminiscence and preservation activities. However, small scale events also required collaboration with a community partner in order to receive a fair amount of participants as the collaborating partner took on the responsibility of promoting the event and gathering participants for the event. If the intent of the project was to help immigrants to preserve their narrative on a grassroots level, small scale events would be more successful as the activities focus mainly on the individuals.

Collaboration. Collaborating with local community organizations at events lead to greater turnouts at events. Twenty-three out of twenty-eight events were organized in collaboration with community organizations to establish a connection with the local community. Six events were not collaborated with local community organizations. There were more participants when we partnered with a community organization, but those events tended to be mostly large scale outreach or staged events. Collaboration can be crucial when we attempt to spread the word about the project to the general public. Being able to reach the general public allows people to learn more about the project and for us to be involved in the community. Collaboration can be necessary for events such as digitization, story sharing, and workshops in order to have a better turnout. Meanwhile, when attendance turnout is low, those events tend to be digitization sessions with attention focused more on individual level.

Participatory Opportunities. There were twenty-three out of twenty-eight events which allowed participatory opportunities where participants could ask questions, input their opinions, share their stories, or contribute to the archive. When participants contributed to the project, they were involved in the traditional practices of archival appraisal, arrangement, and description,

which can be rearticulated as participatory archiving and share authority. Their contribution to the archive demonstrates that they have a voice and a representation in the archive. However, there were five events, 21 percent of the events, where participants did not have a chance to participate in the project. These events tended to be general outreach sessions where participants spoke to the staff to learn about the project.

Table C: Presence of Collaboration with Partners and Participatory Opportunities

Event #	Activities	Attendance	Partners?	Part. Opportunity?
1	Digitization, Workshop, Story sharing	18	Y	Y
2	Outreach	100	Y	N
3	Stage/Talk	61	Y	Y
4	Stage/Talk	38	Y	Y
5	Digitization, Outreach	3	N	Y
6	Outreach	34	Y	N
7	Stage/Talk	60	Y	Y
8	Outreach	23	Y	N
9	Digitization, Outreach	7	N	Y
10	Outreach, Story sharing	16	Y	Y
11	Outreach, Story sharing	26	Y	Y
12	Workshop	13	Y	Y
13	Digitization, Outreach	10	Y	Y
14	Digitization, Outreach	8	Y	Y
15	Outreach	45	Y	N
16	Digitization, Outreach, Staged	23	Y	Y
17	Digitization, Outreach	21	Y	Y
18	Outreach	18	Y	N
19	Outreach, Story sharing	20	Y	Y
20	Outreach	15	Y	N
21	Stage/Talk	65	Y	Y
22	Digitization, Workshop, Story sharing	15	Y	Y
23	Digitization, Story sharing	15	Y	Y
24	Digitization, Outreach, Staged	35	Y	Y
25	Stage/Talk	85	Y	Y
26	Outreach	26	N	Y
27	Digitization, Story sharing	10	N	Y
28	Stage/Talk	65	Y	Y
Total		875		

Additional Findings: Challenges

We were able to host twenty-eight events from February to October in 2016. Many of the events were successful and we received contribution and support from local Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants to preserve their materials in the digital archive. However, we also met some challenges over the course of the project. These challenges include getting community organization partners to collaborate with us, participant's lack of interest in contributing, privacy concerns from possible contributors, and the community's general understanding of archives.

Getting organization partners to collaborate at events has been a challenge in the beginning due to the lack of interest of the Chinese community to participate in the project. Collaboration requires community partners to promote events and digitization services to their community members. It also lays a burden on the partner to gather community members who are actually interested in preserving their family materials. However, some community organizations are knowledgeable in the network of people who might have interest in the project. These organizations are helpful in our outreach initiative. Digitization sessions also require participants to prepare their materials ahead of time and share their materials at certain locations and time which might be inconvenient for them.

Another big challenge is overcoming participant's privacy concerns and their general understanding of digital archives. Community archives and digitization services for local communities are new initiatives not many people are aware of. Particularly in this case, some immigrants from China are not used to the political and cultural difference between China and the US. Because the political system in the US tends to be more open than China, immigrants often need some time to adjust to the level of openness in the new country, especially in the case when they come from a different setting before. For cultural preservation, it can take some time

and effort for a person who has never encountered anything related to archives or preservation of cultural heritage to understand what it does and how it works. Ultimately, this factor can be summed up as a trust issue with an institution. As immigrants coming from another country, some could be wary of an institution's political objective and prefer not to share their materials with others.

In addition, Chinese immigrants are often reluctant to contribute to the archive because participants often want to keep their family photos private and not publicize them. The main reason could be the cultural difference between Chinese and American culture as Chinese are more sensitive and conservative when it comes to family matters and prefer not to tell others. They could be afraid of sharing any of their information with others. From observations, many participants prefer the role of audience over the role of a storyteller and other simply are not interested. Thus, community archives are facing some challenges when it comes to documenting and preserving immigrants' narratives and history which would require archivists more time, effort, and patience to resolve.

Summary

There are a few institutions currently housing archival collections related to the experience of Chinese immigrants in New York. However, not many are working to document the personal narratives and migration stories of recent Chinese immigrants in Queens. Not only Chinese immigrants but immigrants in general are underserved both in services and documentation at memory institutions due to language barriers and other challenges. As local demographic changes in the Queens borough, memory institutions are aware that it is necessary to document these changes. Because public libraries and community archives are local community-based institutions, it is good strategy for these institutions to collaboratively provide

engaging programming activities to the general public as well as Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants to help them preserve their cultural heritage and personal narratives.

In this case study, a variety of activities have been tested and evaluated based on their effectiveness in promoting the value of preserving cultural and personal migration stories of Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens, New York. The data collected in this case study shows that different types of activities that libraries and archives deliver in its programming can yield different outcomes and effects. Collaboration and participatory opportunities tend to attract more participants to certain events. Large scale events with outreach and stage programming activities had the most participants compared to events with other activities. The mission of preserving the migration stories of local Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants tend to be more focused at smaller scale events such as story sharing, community digitization and workshops. These events have a smaller turnout compared to large scale events, but they focus more on the individual level. Interaction between participants, their peers, and staff increase people's knowledge about migration and the value of sharing and preserving their personal narratives. Preservation through digitization is more viable at smaller events while large events are mainly for publicity and educating the general public on specific topics.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Documenting and preserving the personal narratives of recent Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrant in Queens, New York has been a long needed task for local memory institutions. While this case study has room for improvement and has the potential to serve its community better, this project started an initiative in Queens to establish and to maintain a local relationship with its community for the purpose of cultural heritage preservation. The goal of this case study is to explore how archives and public libraries can help Chinese immigrants preserve their culture and history and to find whether memories programming such as story sharing and community digitization activities at libraries are effective at instilling a sense of belonging in the community which they were underrepresented in the archive before the project.

The Memories of Migration project utilized the services and resources already provided by the Queens Public Library to offer a variety of programming to the general public and specifically Chinese Americans and Chinese immigrants in Queens with the mission of preserving their cultural heritage and personal narratives. The findings of this study reveals different types of activities can yield different outcomes under certain conditions. Outreach activities and stage programming attract more participants, while smaller scaled activities like story sharing, community digitization, and workshops focus more on the individual level. Collaboration and participatory opportunities at events can also encourage more people to attend. Programming with specific activities such as story sharing and community digitization is capable of directly helping Chinese immigrants to reflect on their migration histories and in preserving their personal narratives while democratizing local archival collections. These activities are

capable of developing a sense of belonging in the communities as participants find events rewarding and engaging.

This case study contributes to best practices for archives as well as public libraries because it shows how different activities in programming can get underserved local immigrants engaged in preserving their cultural heritage and migration stories through services provided by their local community archives and public libraries. The findings in this case study might not be generalizable, but practicing librarians and archivists can replicate and modify certain factors for a community they want to reach out to for archival services and documentation in hopes of observing similar results. By implementing programming activities as suggested in this case study, librarians and archivists can achieve their agenda of helping to preserve the stories and culture of immigrant groups within their community and to embrace the ethnic diversity aspect in their digital archival collections.

Recommendations for Case Study Improvements

To further improve the quality of this case study, additional data can be collected to better illustrate the effectiveness of the activities conducted at future events. One problem in this case study was that not many feedback forms were distributed and collected during the events. Results of this case study might be skewed due to insufficient evidence to prove extensive effectiveness or the impact the project has on participants. If more feedback was received, results might not be as subjective. Additional questions can be added to the feedback forms to specify what effects the events have on the participants. If possible, structured follow up interviews about the impacts of the project should be conducted with a reasonable number of participants.

Recommendations for Practical Implementation

Based on the findings, active and continuous long-term partnership with various local community groups is recommended. Archival documentation of local communities and demographic changes is an ongoing task for archivists, especially in community archives. Community archives are archives of the community and for the community. They depend on the community they serve in order to thrive. Continuous communication with local community organizations is essential as community archives' mission is to provide a space for individuals, families, and communities to preserve their diverse narratives and culture.

Participatory archiving is necessary as shared authority can validate the documented history and narratives in community archives. In addition, collaboration with adult English learning programs at public libraries is recommended as programming such as story sharing can encourage immigrants to share their cultural differences with others. It also allows for the exchange of ideas and the development of cultural tolerance. Story sharing workshops can also be used in ESL classrooms as a way to help English learners practice conversational English. Programming ideas featured in this case study can also be promoted to other underrepresented ethnic groups or communities.

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Appendix A

Memories of Migration
Event Report

Partner:
Staff Name:
Event Name:
Event Date:
Event Description:
Memories of Migration Activities:
Number of Participants:
Comments and/or Concerns:
Analysis of Event:

Appendix B

Complete this Submission Information Form for EACH file you submit to Queens Memory. Files without complete information will NOT be eligible for preservation.

For internal use:
Photo # _____

Queens Memory
Submission Information Form

Photographs:

Date photograph was taken: _____

Location of photograph (specific address if possible):

Name of photographer: _____

Name(s) of person/people in the photo: _____

Name of event taking place in photo: _____

Organizations represented in photo: _____

Make / model of camera and software used: _____

Measurements (height x width) ex: 5 ¼ x 8 ¼ inches _____

Additional Notes: any or all of the following information:

- Context for this photo
- Relationship between photographer and the event taking place in the photo
- Description of events in the photo

Burn your photo and/or audio files to a blank CD along with (1) this completed form, (2) a Contributor Agreement and (3) a Donor Consent form from your interviewee (if applicable) and mail to:

Queens Library, Library Services Dept., Attn: Natalie Milbrodt, 89-11 Merrick Blvd., Jamaica, NY 11432

For More Information, Contact: Director, Natalie Milbrodt (Natalie.Milbrodt@queenslibrary.org)

Appendix C

Memories of Migration Participant Survey

What age group are you in?

- under 16
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75-84
- 85+

Are you:

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Place of birth

Country of Citizenship (Please include any country where you possess legal status of citizenship)

Ethnicity

How much did you enjoy this event?

Not at all 1 2 3 4 5 A great deal

What did you enjoy most about it?

Why?

Would you come to an event like this again?

Yes No

Any other comments?
