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/ **Queens Memory Project, Collecting Untold Stories Of The Borough, Wins State Archives Award**

Queens Memory Project, Collecting Untold Stories Of The Borough, Wins State Archives Award

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These shoppers look happy to be on Jamaica Avenue during the Jamaica Day sales (<http://queensmemory.org/jamaica-day-sales>) in October 1957. This is one of the many images available from Queens Memory.

Queens Memory (<http://queensmemory.org/>), a project supported by Queens Public Library and Queens College, and focused on collecting personal histories, photographs, and other records, has been awarded the 2019 Debra E. Bernhardt Annual Archives Award for Excellence in Documenting New York's History by the **New York State Archives** (<http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>) and the **Archives Partnership Trust** (<https://www.nysarchivestrust.org/>).

The annual Archives Awards program, which takes place every October during American Archives Month, recognizes outstanding efforts in archives and record management work in New York State.

Since its inception in 2010, the Queens Memory project has collected more than 500 oral histories of residents, ranging from teens to people in their nineties and hailing from over 50 Queens neighborhoods, digitized over 17,000 items, including photos and various documents, and produced a podcast (<https://soundcloud.com/queens-public-library/sets/season-one-memories-of>) featuring the highlights from its oral collections.

Thanks to Queens Memory and other projects awarded this year, "New York's documentary resources will be well managed, appropriately preserved and effectively used for generations to come," State Archivist Thomas Ruller said in a **statement** (<http://www.archives.nysed.gov/news/new-york-state-archives-announces-2019-annual-archives-award-winners>).

Browsing the Queens Memory collections is like time-travelling through the vital and diverse neighborhoods of the borough and personal stories of their residents.

They include interviews with immigrants (<http://queensmemory.org/memories-migration-0>) from more than 23 countries who have found their new home in Queens, such as a story of an Indian woman struggling to adjust to a new culture (https://queenslibrary.aviaryplatform.com/collections/105/collection_resources/4597) or an interview with two brothers coming from generations of jewelers in Uzbekistan (<http://digitalarchives.queenslibrary.org/search/browse/%22Ralph%20and%20Yury%20Almaz%22>). A separate section is dedicated to food and culinary traditions in Queens (<http://queensmemory.org/embracing-nostalgia-retracing-queens%E2%80%99-culinary-traditions-through-immigrants%E2%80%99-voices>).

The project also documents how Queens has changed over the years, featuring memorabilia from two historic World's Fairs (<http://queensmemory.org/worlds-fair-memories>), and pictures of rural Queens from the early 20th century

(<http://queensmemory.org/rural-queens>) and of Bayside, home of the U.S Army base at Fort Totten (<http://queensmemory.org/bayside-queens-wwii-homefront-history>), during World War II.

It shows Long Island City decades before its skyline has lled with newly built residential towers (<http://queensmemory.org/long-island-city-history>) and photos of shoppers in Jamaica in the 1950s (<http://queensmemory.org/jamaica-day-sales>), when the neighborhood had three department stores and was a booming commercial hub.



The legendary 5Pointz mural space at Davis Street in Long Island City. This picture was taken in July 2013, four months before the building was whitewashed, and can be found in the Erwin Ma Photographs Collection

(http://digitalarchives.queenslibrary.org/search/browse/erwin%20ma?f%5B0%5D=sm_creator%3AErwin%20Ma).

Site visitors can learn about the rich history of hip hop culture in the borough from QPL Hip Hop Coordinator “Uncle” Ralph McDaniels and other DJs (<http://queensmemory.org/hip-hop-queens>), and see a series of photos taken by photographer Ken Harris (<http://queensmemory.org/ken-photographer>), a Queens resident documenting various historic events.

It also includes an extraordinary collection of oral histories dedicated to the LGBTQ community (<http://queensmemory.org/lgbtq-history-queens>), including an interview with Council Member Daniel Dromm who discusses what Jackson Heights' gay culture was like in the 1970s.

In most cases, the program relies on local residents to submit their materials that hold important personal meaning and tell significant stories about their lives.

During community scanning events, held at branch libraries and other community spaces, residents can have their materials scanned. They take the original material back home, while its digital copy becomes part of the **Digital Archives at Queens Public Library** (<http://digitalarchives.queenslibrary.org>), with collection highlights displayed on the **Gallery page** (<http://queensmemory.org/gallery>) of QueensMemory.org. The oral histories and videos are posted to queenslibrary.aviaryplatform.com (<https://queenslibrary.aviaryplatform.com/>).

In 2017, the program developed a smartphone app for **iOS** (<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/queens-memory/id1207342518>) and **Android** (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.queenslibrary.QueensMemory&hl=en>) allowing anyone to submit images and audio recordings from their mobile device directly to the project. And as Queens Memory approaches its tenth anniversary, the program will expand its activities organized in 10 community libraries, training their staff to identify historical topics of local interest and making them a theme for public programs and oral history collecting.

"This award is truly an honor. It brings attention to the extraordinary lives of everyday New Yorkers whose personal histories have become part of the historical record we keep for future generations of Queens residents," said Natalie Milbrodt, QPL's Coordinator of Metadata Services and the founding Director of the Queens Memory Project (seen below receiving the award on behalf of Queens Memory).

"It is also a tribute to the hard work of our staff at QPL and Queens College, our dedicated volunteers, and our generous community partners," she continued. "Without this large and diverse team, Queens Memory would never be possible."



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