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Memory Project: Stories of Queens, Told by Queens Residents

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PHOTO: 'I grew up across the street from Dugan's Bakery, so I was familiar with their trucks, as well as their delicious products. But I never saw a photo of one of their older trucks. This is wonderful!' wrote Anne Howe on the Queens Memory Project page highlighting the famed Ozone Park bakery. Photo Courtesy of Frederick J. Weber/Queens Memory Project

The Queens Library and Queens College are reaching out to borough residents to help them tell the history of their home.

The Queens Memory Project combines historical and contemporary photography, maps, news clippings, and other documents with oral history interviews of current “World’s Borough” tenants. The Memory Team needs you to help create and maintain the projects digital archives by contributing memories, photos and stories.

According to the Library, project coordinators want to know about your life in Queens now and in years past, so it can be documented and preserved for future generations. Did you emigrate from another country? What did you experience? Do you have photos of your neighborhood from years ago? What was your school or your children’s school like?

Additionally, the Memory Team has free “history events” scheduled at Library branches, including Woodhaven, 85-41 Forest Pkwy. on Monday, Sept. 14 from 4-6 p.m., and Thurs. Sept. 17 from 6-8 p.m. They will also be at the St. Albans branch at 191-05 Linden Blvd., on Monday, Sept. 21 and Thurs. Sept. 24 from 6-8 p.m.

Library customers are invited to bring in their family photos, documents and other memorabilia. Staff will digitize the materials on-site and return them the same day. Customers will receive a free flash drive containing the digital copies of their materials. The scanned images become part of the Queens Memory website and will be shared with the Digital Public Library of America.

“Many items that can help add to the history of Queens are sitting in closets and basements all over our borough,” said Joanne King, director of Communications at the Library.

The Memory Project is billed as a collaboration of the archives at Queens Library and Queens College Libraries' Department of Special Collections and Archives. Among its goals are to record borough history as it happens and empower residents from all ethnicities and walks of life to document their lives in the borough.

The Queens College and the Queens Library collaborative was one of four partnerships in the New York/Westchester region to receive a Collaborative Digitization grant from the Metropolitan New York Library Council for the 2010/2011 grant cycle. These grants are designed to expand access to important collections of historical and rare materials.

If you are interested in participating, or would like to know more about how the project operates, including technical standards and educational resources, visit the Memory Project blog at queensmemory.qwriting.org.

For additional information, log on to queenslibrary.org or queensmemory.org.

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After earning bachelor and master of arts degrees at Fordham University, borough native and resident Michael V. Cusenza has been covering the county that helped raise him for the better part of the last decade.
