



A Farewell Letter from the Queens Memory Director, Natalie Milbrodt

After 13 years in my role as director, I will depart the Queens Memory Project for a new role as the [University Archivist for CUNY](#), an inaugural position spanning CUNY's 25 campuses in New York City. Only an endeavor as creative and ambitious as the Queens Memory Project could have prepared me for such a challenge. One of the first of its kind in the nation, the Queens Memory Project is a laboratory for inclusive archival practices developed amongst the Queens Public Library, Queens College CUNY, and our dozens of community partners. The program has so far produced over 1,000 oral history interviews and many hundreds of public programs.

Over the span of Queens Memory's existence, we have grown to a core staff of nine and a deep roster of community partners and volunteers. Our neighbors in Queens who participate in our live programs, conduct interviews, and spread the word about our activities, are the very heart of our work. They have produced an award-winning podcast, organized scanning days, edit-a-thons, and recorded dozens and dozens of personal narratives with local residents whose stories would otherwise be lost to time. Our partners' interests shape our collecting and take us down fascinating paths. Just this month, we have projects underway exploring culinary traditions, gentrification, local climate crisis impacts, and jazz history - wow! I feel proud when I think of the texture and complexity of the historical narrative we are building in partnership with our neighbors in Queens.

Meral Agish, currently Queens Memory's beloved Community Outreach Coordinator, will step into the role of Interim Director. Earlier this month, Meral's family welcomed their new baby, Leo, so for the next couple of months, please reach out via our [general inbox here](#). Meral will return this summer.

Our team, currently led by Digital Archives Manager, Dacia Metes, has never been stronger, which is why I feel confident that this is the time for Queens Memory to enter a new phase as an established program with new leadership, ready for a new set of challenges and achievements.

I am deeply grateful to my talented and kind colleagues who have dedicated themselves to this work with me over the years. Being the Queens Memory Project Director was my first library job, an independent study project with a kind of life force of its own, consistently growing to the limits of my capacity to manage it. The work has always felt personal and always somehow yielded multiples of whatever time and love and energy I've sown. Though I will be stepping away at the end of this month, my work fostering community-led archiving continues. [Join me](#) and our partners in a monthly Community Archiving Happy Hour on the first Tuesdays from April to September, at 4pm ET, on Zoom.

Thank you for building something special with me.

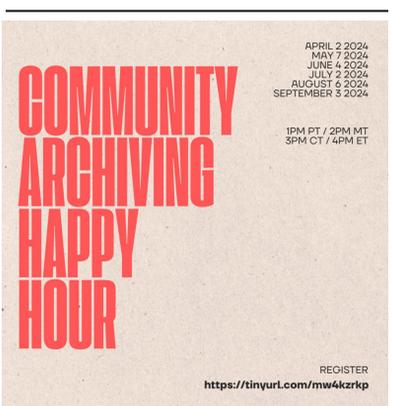
Natalie

Queens College Digs Into Borough's Past

By: Angela Chen



NY1 VIDEO: A new project at Queens College is helping to archive both the contemporary historical records of the borough.



And That's a Wrap on Name Explorer Edit-A-Thon + Remembering the First Wave

Over 50 people participated in our Open Data Week program, Queens Name Explorer Edit-a-Thon, on Saturday. Anyone who was there can attest that the lab was buzzing all 5 hours of the event!

As a result, we have **29** new submissions to the [Queens Name Explorer site](#). We matched **126** existing Wikidata items and created **974** new Wikidata items... Wow 🤩

A reminder that we will continue this work and invite you to join us and spread the word. All tasks will remain available on our [event page](#).



Also on March 16, we co-hosted a "Remembering the First Wave" COVID anniversary event at Elmhurst Library with our partners at Queens World Film Festival, Socrates Sculpture Park, and Elmhurst Hospital Center. Over 20 audience members showed up to remember and reflect 🙌

We're sharing here a reflection from one of them:

"I felt for the people who spoke. We are all pretending that there was a normal to return to and that we have actually returned to it. I don't feel normal. But... We feel connected when we work with you, that is for sure. There is something about libraries... It seems like it is an ok place to not have all of the answers, because we are surrounded by the work of others trying to figure it out also.

Being close to their voices, their thoughts, sort of comforts me. I didn't really know that until Saturday."

Learn more about the Queens Memory COVID-19 Project [here](#).



At Home With Queens College Presents the Musical Heritage of Queens: A Virtual Walking Tour

What do classical composer **Karol Rathaus**, jazz great **Louis Armstrong**, hip-hop pioneers **Run-DMC**, and punk paragons **The Ramones** have in common? They all lived in Queens! And they all have public places named to honor them in their home borough. **Join Lori Wallach, Queens Memory Outreach Coordinator at Queens College**, for a virtual walking tour that explores a sampling of the diverse musicians who've practiced their art in our borough! Register [here](#).

This tour is co-sponsored by the Queens College Library and Queens College Office of Alumni Relations and is part of Queens Memory's [Queens Name Explorer](#), an initiative to uncover the stories behind the borough's named streets, schools, buildings, parks, and monuments. Major funding for the Queens Name Explorer project was provided by a grant from the Mellon Foundation.

Queens Name Explorer Spotlight On

In the spirit of Women's History Month, Our March Name Explorer spotlights Dr. Marie Maynard Daly of [Dr. Marie M. Daly Academy of Excellence \(P.S. 360Q\)](#), located in St. Albans.

Dr. Marie Maynard Daly (1921 - 2003) was a groundbreaking American biochemist who shattered barriers in science.

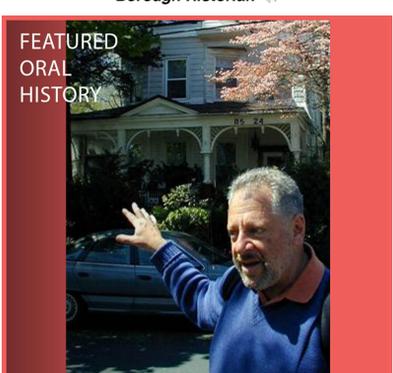
Born in Corona, Queens, Daly's father immigrated from the West Indies and began studying chemistry at Cornell. However, he faced financial hardship and had to leave his studies to become a postal clerk. Daly's mother, a Washington D.C. native, fostered her daughter's love of learning by reading to her extensively. This instilled a strong value in education and inspired Daly to pursue her own passion for chemistry.

Read more about the life and work of Dr. Daly [here](#).



Photo, [Wikimedia Commons](#)

March Oral History Spotlights the Queens Borough Historian



Jack Eichenbaum was appointed as the official Queens Borough Historian in 2010 by Queens Borough President Helen Marshall. Eichenbaum, who earned a Ph.D. in urban geography and became well known as a tour guide who led walking tours throughout Queens, passed away on December 30, 2023 at the age of 80.

Eichenbaum recorded two oral history interviews with Queens Memory, one in 2012 and another in 2021.

[Listen to his interviews here](#).

Upcoming Events

May 2 – Sharing Memories of Queens College Days with DOROT – Travel back in time to your student years at Queens College and connect with your fellow alumni! Queens Memory outreach coordinator (and QC alum) Lori Wallach will offer a short presentation of Queens College history, featuring archival photos of campus life and clips from interviews with retired faculty members and other alumni. Have photos you'd like to share for inclusion in the program or college archives? Please submit them [here](#). Register for the Zoom program [here](#). (3:30 - 5pm EST)

May 4 – Flushing: Its People and Immigrant History – Join us for this 90-minute walking tour of Flushing, Queens. The tour will explore the significance of this diverse Queens neighborhood and celebrate the immigrant communities who have left their mark there. This walking tour will be led by Yuanjing Lin, a CUNY Cultural Corps intern who spent one academic year working with Queens Memory in 2023. The tour is limited to 15 participants. Registration details coming soon. (10:30am - 12pm EST)

