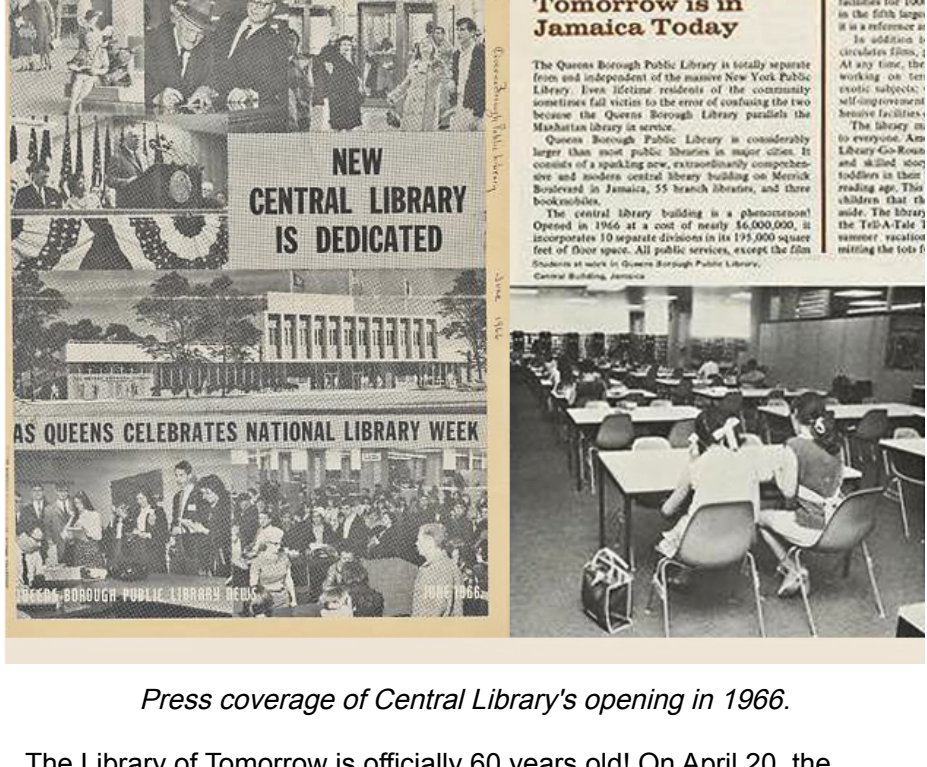




Queens Central Library Turns 60!



Press coverage of Central Library's opening in 1966.

The Library of Tomorrow is officially 60 years old! On April 20, the Queens Public Library (QPL) celebrated the 60th anniversary of its Central Branch on Merrick Boulevard in Jamaica. This location replaced the 1930 Renaissance Revival building on Parsons Boulevard, which had been expanded by the Works Progress Administration in 1941 but was quickly outgrown. Photos in the archives show that overcrowded reading rooms were one of the main reasons for constructing the new Merrick building only two decades later.

On display in the Archives at Queens Public Library are 3D architectural models from 1966 showing the interior and exterior of the "new" building on Merrick – complete with figures making their way to the library on foot and by car. These models display purpose-built sections that differ from today's configuration, including a "Popular Library," a "Student Room," and dedicated wings for Language, Social Science and Art.

Central Library has continually evolved alongside the Queens community, introducing computers for public use, the Children's Library Discovery Center and a teen center, and of course it is home to QPL's local history reference and research resources. While not shown in the archival models, Milton Hebeald's two bronze relief sculptures on the exterior facade remain a highlight of the building – a wonderful reason to visit Central today and explore the amenities it has to offer.

This story was researched and written by Ailbhe McDonnell, an ML/SLMA student at Queens College who is researching the role of critical family history in archives and libraries, as well as queer, Irish and immigration histories. This semester, Ailbhe is at QPL, completing the Citi Center for Culture and Queens Public Library fellowship.

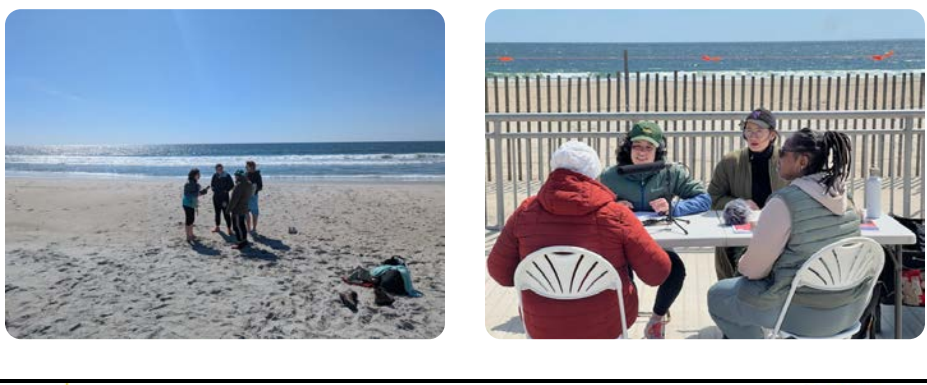


(Left to right) A 3D model of the "new" Central Library; patrons using early computer checkout stations in the 1980s; the overcrowded reading room at the prior building on Parsons Boulevard.

Save the Date for a Rockaway Memories Listening Party!

Join the Queens Memory Project for a community listening party, celebrating the premiere of episode 5 of our climate podcast, "Memories of Water." This episode features community stories from the Rockaways that explore how water has shaped everyday life, memory and neighborhood history. The evening will include a behind-the-scenes presentation about the making of the episode and community relationships with water facilitated with our partner, [New York Sea Grant](#), followed by a group listening session and conversation with podcast producers. Participants are also invited to bring photographs, documents or other items related to life in the Rockaways for a community scanning activity that helps preserve local history. Attendees are also invited to bring personal documents they would like to have digitized for their own records. The listening party will be held on Thursday, May 28, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm ET at the [Far Rockaway Community Library](#).

Production on the episode is underway, and we recently dropped in for a pop-up recording session on the boardwalk with the New York Dippers Club, Edgemere Alliance and The Garden on the Bay (see photos below).



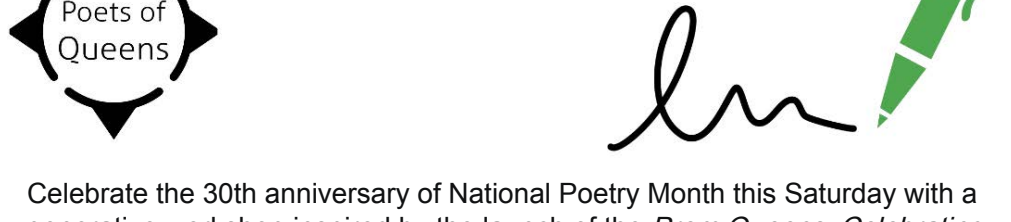


Prom Queens: Poetry Workshop

April 25, 2-4 PM

Queens Public Library at Broadway

Celebrate National Poetry Month with the editors of the *Prom Queens: Celebrating Prom Poems & Stories* by *Queens Writers* anthology from Poets of Queens Press.



Celebrate the 30th anniversary of National Poetry Month this Saturday with a generative workshop inspired by the launch of the *Prom Queens: Celebrating Prom Poems & Stories* by *Queens Writers* anthology from [Poets of Queens Press](#).

Attendees will engage with poetry from the anthology and prompt-themed *PROMpts* to write poems and share their own coming-of-age experiences. Plus, there will be a reading from the anthology and Q&A with the *Prom Queens* team: Pichchenda Bao, Kelly Jean Fitzsimmons, Olena Jennings, Tim Lindner, Zach Rothman-Hicks and A. King McCarty.

Free with [RSVP](#).

Craft Your Own Mini-Memoir Zine!



MAKE A MEMOIR! A HYBRID ZINE-MAKING, COLLAGE & STORYTELLING WORKSHOP



In this 3-hour workshop, participants will join author, illustrator and teaching artist Jonell Joshua to learn about her approach to writing and crafting her hybrid memoir, while crafting their own mini-memoirs in zine format.

Using on-site printers, teens will be able to incorporate personal photos from their phone, or bring photos from home to scan, re-print, and incorporate into their collage! Our collage station will be filled with art supplies and scrapbooking materials for students to explore a classic approach to personal storytelling.

Jonell will guide participants through the process of memoir development with memoir best practices, writing prompts to support their process, and a zine-making tutorial to kickstart participants' ideas for how they will craft their own stories!

At the end of the session, participants will engage in a share-and-tell circle to share with other participants their crafted mini-memoir.

Thursday, April 30 3pm

RAVENSWOOD (Room 21)
30-32 21 Street • (718) 784-2102

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In this 3-hour [workshop](#), participants will join author, illustrator and teaching artist Jonell Joshua to learn about her approach to writing and crafting her hybrid memoir, [How Do I Draw These Memories?](#), while crafting their own mini-memoirs in zine format. Using on-site printers, teens will be able to incorporate personal photos from their phone, or bring photos from home to scan, reprint and incorporate into their collage! Our collage station will be filled with art supplies and scrapbooking materials for students to explore a classic approach to personal storytelling. Jonell will guide participants through the process of memoir development with memoir best practices, writing prompts to support their process, and a zine-making tutorial to kickstart participants' ideas for how they will craft their own stories! At the end of the session, participants will engage in a share-and-tell circle to share with other participants their crafted mini-memoir.

The workshop will be held on Thursday, April 30, from 3 to 6 pm ET at the [Ravenswood Community Learning Center](#) in LIC.

Preserve Your New York Story With Queens Memory and the NYG&B

Family history is a fascinating and personal way for everyone to better understand who they are and how our past has shaped us. Genealogy also helps reveal and strengthen connections between individuals and communities. But how do you get started?

Join the [New York Genealogical & Biographical Society](#) (NYG&B) and Queens Memory Project for a free in-person event to preserve your own family story. The program will feature two parts:

- Oral historian Ambar Wortham will invite participants into the thoughtful, tender practice of holding the voices that form who we are. We will cover topics such as what to consider when interviewing living relatives, memorable questions to ask, and methods to create a generative archive to supplement your family history and genealogical research. Whether you're new to family history or ready to go deeper, participants will leave with practical skills, a more intentional approach, and a renewed sense of why this labor of love is worthwhile.

- A 30-minute session will help participants digitally preserve their own family history documents. Participants will receive a confirmation email when they register for this program that includes a sign-up link to choose a time slot before the presentation by Ambar Wortham. Bring a folder of portable family history documents (e.g., birth certificates, family religious records or photographs), and NYG&B staff will digitally scan these documents on site. Participants will then receive Dropbox access to their stored digitized records. Please email digitizeny@nygbs.org if you have questions about this aspect of the program.

This is a free in-person event held May 7, from 3 to 7:30 pm ET, at the [Ravenswood Community Learning Center](#) in LIC; [registration](#) is required. This event will not be livestreamed, but a free recording will be available about a week afterwards.

This Month's Oral History Describes Growing Up in the World's Borough



In our featured oral history this month, Aryaana Khan reflects on growing up in Queens after immigrating from Bangladesh as a child, moving from Jackson Heights to Jamaica and navigating New York City public schools along the way.

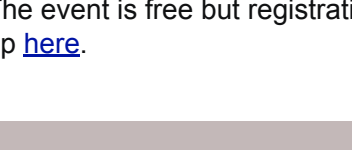
In this interview with Caroline Abisio, recorded as part of Prof. Alana Lee Glaser's Spring 2024 anthropology class at [St. John's University](#), she shares how Queens shaped her into a polyglot, her observations of gentrification and neighborhood change, and the everyday places and traditions, like Eid celebrations, Baisley Pond Park, and biking through the borough, that continue to anchor her.

Listen to Aryaana's interview [here](#).

Two Upcoming Walking Tours to Greet Springtime in Queens

On Saturday, May 1, join Queens Memory Coordinator Meral Agish and Prof. Emily Verla Bovino, coordinator of the Art History program at York College, for [Museum in Motion: Art History in Jamaica](#) – a walk reflecting on 50 years of art history in Jamaica. The walk will be led by Damali Abrams, Sherese Francis, and Rejin Leys, local artists and members of the Southeast Queens Artist Alliance. Starting at the York College campus, home to a significant public art collection, including works by Houston Conwill and Martin Furryear, the tour will proceed to York's Health and Physical Education building, previously the site of artist Tom Lloyd's Store Front Museum, from 1971 to 1988 as a museum of Black history, culture, and art and community space. The walk will begin at 1 pm ET. Registration is required; sign up [here](#).

On Saturday, May 16, the Long Island City [LaGuardia Community College](#) Wiki Photo Tour will take place from 12:30 to 5:30pm. The walk will include a tour around the campus and the wider [Long Island City](#) neighborhood, to photograph undercovered places for [Wikimedia Commons](#), then upload and post them on relevant Wikipedia articles. The event is free but registration is necessary for building entry; sign up [here](#).



Last call for applications!

There are just a few days left to apply for Columbia University's Oral History MA program! Applications for the Fall are accepted until May 1; click [here](#) for details.

Other Upcoming Events

April 26 – In case you missed it, this is your last chance to view our ["Queens Women in Action" exhibit](#) at Culture Lab LIC! Viewing has been extended to this Sunday, April 26.

April 28 – Come to our [Queens Memory Lunch and Learn](#) for a quick lunchtime presentation. Hear about new projects and ongoing collaborations with our community partners. Learn how you can contribute to Queens Public Library's Archives and help out at upcoming programs. Each month we'll present new material and feature special guests; the topic for April will be **Springtime Program Updates**. Register [here](#). We will follow up with a confirmation and event link. (12 pm ET)

May 8 – Join us online for [Community Archiving Happy Hour](#) – a social and resource sharing space organized by a few folk who work on inclusive archiving projects. This get-together is for people who work on behalf of their own communities, or in partnership as community allies. So, whether you're "community-based," "community-driven," or just "community-curious," we hope you'll show up to share who you are, what you're working on, and what you're trying to figure out right now. There's weirdly not a lot of community amongst people working in these spaces so we hope to start some conversations and mutual support. To receive updates and to attend the virtual event, [join the Google group](#) for monthly updates. (3 pm ET)

May 12 – Join us online for an [Introduction to Oral History Interviewing](#) workshop and learn how to record an interview. The Queens Memory team will share tips on getting started, including how to prepare for an interview, how to ask questions that encourage people to share, and how to record in person and remotely. Register [here](#). We will follow up with a confirmation and event link. **This program is not recorded.** (12 - 1 pm ET)

May 19 – Our digital declutter series continues with Audiovisual Archivist Marie Lascu. This month's topic is **"When, Where, What, Why, and Who."** Now that the basics are in place, we will focus on a collection of files you want to spend more time on. What extra information is important to pass on with your files, and generally make it easier to look through and understand what you have? Sign up [here](#). (12 pm ET)

Queens Memory in the Professional Community

QM staff are frequently invited to discuss our innovative programs with our colleagues in the library and archives communities. On April 28, Queens Memory Curator J. Faye Yuan will be part of a panel discussion, "The Unwritten Word: Voices, Verses, and the Living Archive of Oral History," at NYPL's Countee Cullen Library. The conversation will focus on how the act of listening allows us to recover stories that might otherwise be lost to time. The event is free and can be attended in-person or via Zoom; register [here](#). (6:30 pm ET)

