QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

# QUEENS MEMORY

NEWS FROM QUEENS MEMORY PROJECT

## *Celebrating the Independent Thinkers of Queens*

What does Independence Day mean to you? In addition to commemorating the birth of the United States, it is also a day for celebrating values of freedom, self-determination, and civic courage. For Independence Day this year, we created a Name Explorer collection that highlights 10 individuals from Queens who embodied the spirit of independent thought. They were artists, educators, activists, and advocates who pushed against convention, spoke truth to power, and helped shape their communities in lasting ways. Many are not widely known, but their legacies live on in the streets and plazas named in their honor. Through their stories, we celebrate not just national independence but the everyday acts of vision, resistance, and creativity that define a truly free society.

One such groundbreaking individual is Det. Mary "Mae" Foley (1886-1967), who shattered gender barriers within the NYPD as one of its first female plainclothes detectives. Her pioneering work inspired more than 2,000 women to join the force. She served from 1923 to 1945. A resident of Jackson Heights, Foley worked in many areas of police investigation, playing a crucial role in the successful conviction of Italian-born gangster Charles "Lucky" Luciano and exposing the pro-Nazi organization, the German American Bund.






*NYPD Detective Mary "Mae" Foley was honored with a street co-named for her in Long Island City in 2024.*

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## *Astoria Native Is Featured Oral History Interview for July*




Our featured oral history this month spotlights Debra Salgado, who grew up in Astoria from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. Salgado, whose parents are from Puerto Rico, recalls feeling at an early age that she struggled to fit in with people around her. She was one of the few Latinos in her neighborhood and at her elementary school (Most Precious Blood School), plus when she visited cousins who lived in a Latino neighborhood in Brooklyn, they identified her as "trying not to be Spanish" in order to be more accepted by her predominantly Greek and Italian peers in Astoria. In contrast, Salgado explains that she flourished at St. Jean Baptiste High School, where she was among peers who looked more like her, and later as an undergraduate and graduate student at St. John's University.

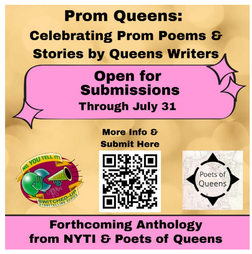
Now a teacher with the New York City Department of Education and a longtime Bronx resident, Salgado reflects on her experience teaching and learning more about her first grade students who come from all over the world, plus her continuing affection for the borough of Queens. Additionally, Salgado speaks about her grandmother's success as a small business owner, her parents' lives in the United States after emigrating from Puerto Rico at age 7, and her memories of riding the subway as a child.

This interview was conducted by Justin Salgado; listen to the full interview here.

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## Calling All Prom Queens!

There's still time left to submit your prom stories and poems for the anthology *Prom Queens: Celebrating Prom Poems & Stories by Queens Writers*, to be published in spring 2026. This anthology is part of an ongoing storytelling series sponsored by Poets of Queens and No, YOU Tell It!. To learn more or submit your work, visit Poets of Queens or scan the QR code below.




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## Meet Us In Ridgewood

Queens Memory is happy to be among the many participants in the Friends of Ridgewood Library's 2nd Annual Community Day on Saturday, August 9.

Attendees will meet neighborhood organizations, learn how they can access available resources in the area and get involved in local causes. Activities including crafts, book giveaways (while supplies last) and a chance to win some prizes will be held throughout the day, from 11 am to 3 pm. See flyer below for more details!




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## *Field Trip to Newtown Creek*





*On June 20, several Queens Memory staffers joined other community participants for a meetup at the Newtown Creek Alliance's Kingsland Wildflowers educational space. The facility is located in the midst of a 25,000-square-foot green roof pollinator garden atop an active film studio in Greenpoint, Brooklyn's industrial zone, overlooking Newtown Creek. Queens Memory is partnering with Newtown Creek as part of the ongoing Melting Metropolis project.*

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## Other Upcoming Events

**August 5** – 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 August will be podcasting and audio projects. Register here. We will follow up with a confirmation and event link. (12 pm EDT)

**August 12** – At our oral history interviewing workshop, you will learn how you can contribute to Queens Memory by helping us record interviews with fellow Queens residents. Together we will review tips for oral history interviews, from initial outreach to recording to transcription. Register here. We will follow up with a confirmation and event link. **This program is not recorded.** (12 - 1 pm EDT)

**August 14** – Join us online for Community Archiving Happy Hour – a social and resource sharing space organized by a few folx 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. Register here; you will receive an email the day before the event and on the day of the event with information about accessing the program via Zoom. (4 pm EDT)

### 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 June 13, Queens Memory Community Coordinator **Meral Agish** and Name Explorer researcher/writer **David Engelman** presented "The People Behind Named Places: Getting Creative with Civic Data" at the 2025 New York Archives Conference.