Civil Rights Archive Acquires
James Forman Library

The Civil Rights Archive of the Queens College Special Collections and Archives is pleased to announce the acquisition of the library of civil rights leader, journalist, and scholar James Forman (1928-2005). The library complements other materials in the archive that provide a snapshot of the Northern perspective of the Civil Rights Movement. Forman is best known for his work as the Executive Secretary of SNCC (1961-1966), but he was also involved with the Black Panthers and led the non-profit Unemployment and Poverty Action Committee (1970-2003). A writer of half-a-dozen books and many articles, including the “Black Manifesto,” a work that called for slavery reparations in 1969, Forman earned a Masters degree from Cornell and a Ph.D. from the Union of Experimental Colleges. The collection contains roughly 2,000 books, over 2,100 pamphlets, academic journals, and printed ephemera, as well as a variety of audio and moving image material. Of special interest is the evidence of use and reading contained in the materials, including marginalia.

METRO Grant Funds Launch of
The Queens Memory Project

The Queens Memory Project, a collaboration of the Queens College Libraries’ Department of Special Collections and Archives and the Archives at Queens Library, will serve as a site of collective memory. Among its goals are to record borough history as it is happening and empower residents from all ethnicities and walks of life to document life in the borough. The digital archive will combine neighborhood-specific historical and contemporary photography, maps, news clippings, and other documents with oral history interviews of current residents.

Participants include 92-year-old Annalou Christensen (née McQuilling), whose parents purchased the lot for their home (pictured left) in the early 1900s and Nilda Tirado, who moved to the neighborhood in the 1970s. Tirado discusses her family’s efforts to be accepted as the first Puerto Rican family in the area. Interviews and photographs also document events held by organizations in Flushing such as The Ganesh Hindu Temple and St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Church.
On November 4, 2010, the Queens College Chapter of The Society of American Archivists hosted a lecture by Jason Steinhauer, who serves as an Archivist and a Liaison Specialist for the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress.

Mr. Steinhauer discussed his work with the Veterans History Project (http://www.loc.gov/vets), which “collects, preserves, and makes accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war.” He also addressed the role of public historians and their impact and influence on audiences, as well as their ability to cultivate historical interpretations.

To his credit, Mr. Steinhauer’s work in the field includes projects at institutions including the Center for Jewish History, Yeshiva University, the Rock n’ Roll Hall of Fame, and Museum of Chinese in the Americas. Additionally, while employed as Associate Curator and Research Historian at the New-York Historical Society, he significantly contributed to the “Lincoln and New York” exhibition, which was heralded as “compellingly informative” by the New York Times.

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Treasures from Our Shelves: Special Collections & Archives Exhibit

In September the Department of Special Collections and Archives unveiled “Treasures from Our Shelves,” an exhibit in the Rotunda of the Benjamin S. Rosenthal Library featuring selections from each of its primary collections.

The display includes printed materials, photos, artifacts, and personal papers from the Civil Rights, Performing Arts, Rare Books, and Menu Collections.

Highlights include civil rights activist James Forman’s FBI file, rare manuscripts such as the first printing of Capote’s “In Cold Blood,” printed in serial form in The New Yorker, Broadway playbills from the newly acquired Carol DeLuise Collection, and correspondence from renowned German opera director Leopold Sachse.

The exhibit, curated by Archives Assistants Annie Tummino and Natalie Milbrodt in conjunction with Special Collections Fellows, will remain on display until February, 2011.

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Jason Steinhauer of the Veterans Oral History Project Lectures at Queens College

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