Seamen’s Church Institute Archives Receives International Press Surrounding Titanic Centennial

Materials from the Seamen’s Church Institute archives (www.seamenschurch.org/archives) related to the Titanic disaster and the reaction in New York City were recently featured in several press outlets, including the New York Times, Huffington Post, NY1, and the Brazilian television station RedeTV! The records, part of the Institute’s 178 year history as a maritime ministry organization in the port of New York, came to the Queens College Libraries Department of Special Collections and Archives on permanent loan in June 2011.

Much of the story revolves around the Seamen’s Church headquarters at 25 South Street, which was scheduled to be dedicated on April 16, 1912, one day after the Titanic sank. The dedication ceremony transformed into a somber public gathering, prompting the Huffington Post to describe it as “likely the first memorial for those killed in the Titanic tragedy.” The records also document the story of Titanic’s crew, and the struggle for maritime labor reform that took place in the years after the ship’s sinking.

New Digital Site

The records of the Seamen’s Church Institute span nearly 300 linear feet and include manuscript, chaplains’ journals, minutes, scrapbooks, and thousands of photographs of the New York City waterfront dating back to the 1890s. Seamen’s Church staff is close to completing a new Digital Archives site for the collection which will showcase thousands of items and feature several curated digital exhibits.

Thank You Fellows

Special thank you to our Archives Fellows from the Graduate School of Library and Information Studies Program, Jenny Frémont and Rebecca Weintraub, for their work processing the Seamen’s Church photograph collection.
Queens Memory Project: Development and Expansion

New Acquisitions

The QMP (www.queensmemory.org) continues to collect new oral history recordings and donated personal papers and photographs from Queens residents and Queens College alumni. This past March, Jay Williams sat down with QMP Director, Natalie Milbrodt, to share his family’s history in Flushing, going back to 1867 when his Great Grandfather settled in the area with help from the Parsons, a prominent Quaker family.

Donations from QC Alum include 1950’s Sceptre, the Freshman handbook published by the Student Activities Organization Board, from the Constance Waters Papers. This pocket-size resource offers helpful instructions for freshmen including rules for proper campus decorum and cheers to learn in preparation for sporting events.

Queens College Cafeteria

The Student Cafeteria is provided as the place for eating; for reasons of sanitation and decorum students are asked to refrain from eating elsewhere on the campus. The cafeteria tables are meant for all the students and are not to be monopolized for social purposes, studying, or card playing. In an effort to keep the cafeteria as clean as possible, the students are requested to carry all trays and soiled dishes to the tray room counter located on the left side of the room. Students will find that the food counters follow the usual cafeteria pattern with a tabulating machine at the far end; the cashier will hand the student a check which he pays at the adjoining table.

QUEENS COLLEGE SONGS AND CHEERS

Queens College Cheers

1. T-E-A-M YEA TEAM!
   T-E-A-M YEA TEAM!
   T-E-A-M YEA TEAM!

2. COME AVEEVA
   COME AVIVA
   COME AVIVA-VIVO-VUM
   COME A SEVEN
   COME ELEVEN
   COME A RICKETY RACKETY
   SHANTY TOWN
   COME ON QUEENS LET’S GO
   TO TOWN
   QUEENS! QUEENS! YE-E-A
The Civil Rights Archive Celebrates the Life and Papers of Activist Robert Rygor

On April 18th the Department of Special Collections & Archives teamed up with the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Alliance and the Society of American Archivists QC Student Chapter to celebrate the life and papers of Robert Rygor. The event featured an exhibit, film screening, and discussion of lessons from Robert’s life for today’s generation of students. We were honored to be joined by Robert’s parents, Stanley and Kathleen, as well as Brendan Fay, director of the film Remembering Robert.

An inspiration to many, Robert Rygor worked tirelessly to improve the world around him until his untimely death from AIDS in 1994. He served as workspace manager for the pivotal organization ACT UP, testified at the 1992 Democratic Platform Committee Hearings to advocate inclusion of AIDS awareness and funding into their platform, and travelled to Cameroon for the 7th International Conference on AIDS in Africa. He organized around sex education in schools, diversification of the NYC school curriculum, and urban planning issues in the West Village. An Irish American, Rygor protested the NYC Saint Patrick’s Day parade for excluding GLBT groups as early as 1978.

The collection, processed by Special Collections Fellow Corinne Klee, is comprised of 20 boxes (10 linear feet) of correspondence, photographs, flyers, pamphlets, newsletters, posters, and personal ephemera, and will serve as a valuable resource for activists, students and scholars for years to come.

Civil Rights in the News

The Civil Rights Archive was pleased to be featured in several publications and news outlets for Black History Month and Martin Luther King Day:

- Head of Special Collections & Archives Ben Alexander and alumnus and civil rights donor Phyllis Padow-Sederbaum were featured on the WNBC show Positively Black on Jan 14th
- Alumnus and civil rights donor Mark Levy was interviewed for CNN on February 14th, with photographs from his collection featured in the background
- Images and information from the archive were used for a special feature Queens College’s Place in Black History in the Feb 7th issue of the student paper the Knight News

Above: Filmmaker Brendan Fay, Archives Staff Member Annie Tummino & Graduate Fellow Corinne Klee on April 18th.
Below: Sticker from the Robert Rygor Collection.

The James Forman Library and Dean Savage Papers

Thanks to the diligent work of Graduate Student Fellows Andy McCarthy and Jessica Fisher, the James Forman Library, our largest Civil Rights Collection, has made a huge leap forward. Researchers will soon have access to periodicals, printed ephemera, FBI files and multi-media components of this important collection.

Thanks to the wonderful work of Fellow Robin Potter, the Dean Savage Papers are now open to research. Additionally, 16 photos from the collection documenting Savage’s experiences with the SCOPE voter registration project of 1965 are posted at www.archives.gslis.net, our digital archive.
Artists’ Books Integrated into Course Curriculum

This spring, the Department of Special Collections and Archives invited Deborah Tint, Assistant Professor at the New York Institute of Technology, and her Digital Graphics class to Rosenthal Library for a hands-on workshop with the Queens College Artists’ Books collection.

“I have always assigned an artist's book as the final project for this class,” says Deborah. “This is the first time I had the chance to bring the students to meet real examples of these eccentric objects. We were given a welcoming tour and short history of the archives and then gathered around an enormous table to see the books artfully arranged for the students to explore. Artists' books are objects that can only be understood by handling. I love them because they eloquently make the case that there are some experiences that cannot be virtualized.”

“The students had the chance to open, handle, read and then share with each other the books that piqued their interest. They were clearly engaged by the materials and the lively discussion that ensued.”

Don Quixote Site Part of Graduate School of Library and Information Studies Capstone Project

Continuing work on a project they first started as Archives Fellows in the fall of 2011, Christine Parker and Justin Manchini recently completed a semester long research paper to be submitted as their GSLIS 709 capstone project. The paper focuses on methods for making access to rare book collections more effective and meaningful for users. As part of the project, the duo built a prototype site using Omeka open-source software that showcases the Queens College Don Quixote Collection, featuring 14 editions that span nearly 400 years of publishing history.