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Newark Public Library's New Jersey Information Center Celebrates Its 70th Anniversary with New Exhibit

Newark, NJ, September 30, 2021 – Need information about a long-demolished factory, or detailed map of Newark's wards? Looking for your great-grandfather's obituary to help develop your family tree? Curious about what stylish women wore in the 1890s? Want to know just about anything about Newark or New Jersey from last week or 100 years ago? You'll get the answers if you visit the [Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center](#), known informally as the New Jersey Room, found on the third floor of the [Newark Public Library](#).

For decades the New Jersey Room has been the resource for city residents, historians, and authors researching hundreds of subjects. Now there's an overview exhibit, [Newark's History Keepers: 70 Years of the New Jersey Room](#). The exhibit is on display through March 2022. On October 14, a reception will be held at the library to mark the New Jersey Room's 70th anniversary. It will provide an opportunity to view the exhibit and visit the NJ Room for refreshments and to learn more about the resources offered during a short program in Centennial Hall. **For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/2Wh9XjX.**

The exhibit was co-curated by New Jersey Room Librarians Thomas Ankner, Beth Zak-Cohen, and Gregory Guderian. They focused on the founding and expansion of the collection and on the significant groups of Newarkers who helped shape the city's history, including African American, Latinx, Jewish, immigrant and LGBTQ people. The exhibit also explores the work of community groups and critical events that shaped the city, including the 1967 Newark Rebellion – the subject which attracts the most questions. One display, Current Collections and Digital Archives looks at the issues of lead in the city's water and COVID-19.

Miriam Studley was the first director of the information center, when it was founded beginning in 1951. She had been managing the collection since 1943. Charles F. Cummings joined the library in 1963 and became director of the New Jersey Information Center in 1966. His expertise on local history grew as did the center. He was recognized as the Newark City Historian, served as an adjunct professor at Rutgers-

Newark, wrote a column on Newark history for the *Star-Ledger* and was later named Assistant Director of Special Collections and Statewide outreach at the Newark Public Library. The famous novelist and native son Philip Roth frequently consulted with Cummings when he was writing his books set in Newark. A month after he died in 2005, the room was named the Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center, to honor his contributions to the library.

Ankner, who says he was interested in history from childhood, calls his job ideal. “I get to learn more each day about my home state, and the city where I’ve lived for more than 15 years,” he said. “I’m also able to honor Charles F. Cummings’ legacy through our work and make a real contribution to the city by helping those who need assistance, whether on a job application, looking for housing or writing a paper.”

The New Jersey Room offers both physical and digital archives, such as audio recordings, PDFs and state/county records. This [website](#) enables users to preview available archives and schedule an appointment with a librarian for specific inquiries. To learn more about the New Jersey Room, check out its social media platforms on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

[Newark Public Library](#), home of the [Philip Roth Personal Library](#), is located at 5 Washington Street in downtown Newark, NJ. Built in 1899 with a design inspired by a 15th century Florence palazzo, the library also includes an interactive art gallery, large-scale event space and an auditorium. The library’s major departments include its [Reference Center](#); [Special Collections](#) which includes graphic and visual arts; the [Charles F. Cummings New Jersey Information Center](#); the [New Jersey Hispanic Research and Information Center](#) and the [James Brown African American Room](#), noted for their collections of books and archives; and the [LGBTQ Resource Center](#).

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