

GreekNews

Η ΔΙΓΛΩΣΣΗ ΑΝΕΞΑΡΤΗΤΗ ΕΛΛΗΝΟΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΙΚΗ ΕΦΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ ΤΗΣ ΔΕΥΤΕΡΑΣ

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HERITAGE FLOWERS WHEN IT'S PRESERVED



New York.- Vicki James Yiannias

In order to understand our Greek American heritage, to reclaim and to celebrate our lost history of the last 120 years, we must move swiftly to save and preserve our historic material. “So much of our cultural material has been lost over

time or is now at risk—including our historical newspapers, books, photographs, and music,” historian and archivist Meletios Pouliopoulos told the GN, “Our cultural heritage is at risk. There is nothing more precious and nothing more important. If we don’t act now, there will

be nothing left for future generations.”

St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Manchester, NH, whose community was established in 1905, is presently taking action to preserve its past, establishing the St. George Memory Pro-

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Meletios Pouliopoulos: Heritage Flowers When It's Preserved



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ject (Library Organization and Oral History) a free ZOOM event on March 7, titled, "Greek Heritage - The Road to Preservation," launched the project with a screening of the just-digitized film, "St. George Memory: The Historic March to the New Church (1966)". The digitization of the 16mm film, which is the first part of the St. George Memory Project is an example of what is needed for the preservation of Greek American cultural heritage.

Without interest and attention, this 1966 film documenting the community's historic procession from the old church to the new would have languished, undigitized, in its round tin, not seen and unappreciated, in the church's library archive, because the 16mm format is obsolete. "Who would have such a projector?" said Pouliopoulos, who proposed the St. George Memory Project and digitized the film.

For many, it was a charged emotional experience to see that day in 1966 when, according to an article of the time in the Hellenic Chronicle, headed by Rev. George Papaioannou, a silent procession of more than 500 pa-

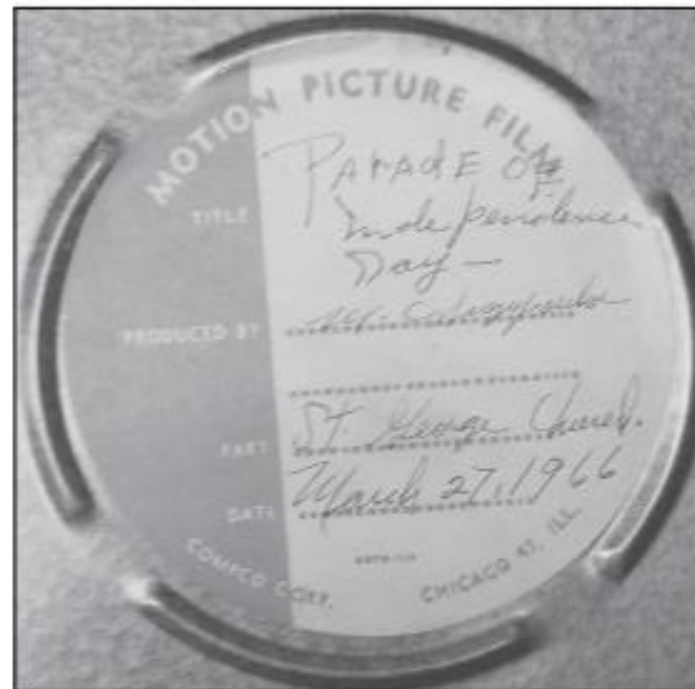
rishioners walked more than a mile from the parish's old community center to the new church, where Metropolitan Emilianos of Selucia, exiled Grand Chancellor of the Patriarchate, met them and conducted the first Divine Liturgy in the new church.

The St. George Memory Project, specifically the Oral History part of the project, is designed to actively involve the younger generation in the special mission—at which the young excel, because their persuasion matters—of reaching out to engage all past and present living members, the church organizations and entire community to pull together their histories.

Two parts of the St. George Memory Project, the library and history room, were

created in the basement of the cathedral some years back by George Kitsis, who has been teaching Modern Greek languages classes there for over 40 years. Over time, many historic books, photographs, and journals have been donated to the library, which also houses icons dating to the early 1900s brought from the old church, as well as historical artifacts of Greek American Culture.

A project like the St. George Mem-



ory Project requires taking action on a serious desire to preserve Greek American culture. Two years ago, Pouliopoulos presented to Phil Liakos, Chair of the Education Committee at St. George, a proposal to create a proj-

ect to catalog and organize all of the library holdings and to conduct an oral history project, beginning with the senior members of the community, seventy-five years old and over. Following a review by the current president,

George Skaperdas, the project was presented to the Parish Council and was unanimously accepted. The St. George Memory Project has been in the works for some time but was recently kickstarted by the interest of the Sophia Anagnostos Rantis family, who donated generously to the project in her honor.

Sophia was the Sunday School Supervisor in the early 1960s, and it was during her tenure that the Sunday School grew from 50 to 450 pupils and from five to thirty-five teachers. Importantly, the lectures, articles and manuals that she prepared were so recognized that the Archdiocese adopted some for use in the classroom.

The founder of Greek Cultural Resources, a cultural non-profit preserving Greek heritage, Meletios Pouliopoulos has documented and archived thousands of Greek recordings for over 30 years. Born in Manchester, NH, Pouliopoulos lived in the St. George Greek Orthodox Cathedral community until 1980. He chose St. George because of the church's vibrant community, and his deep personal connection there. For more information on preservation: Meletios@GreekCultureResources.org.