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New England Archivists Bring StoryCorps to Worcester

Worcester (MA), March 21-23, 2013, New England Archivists (NEA) will celebrate their 40th anniversary with a three-day meeting on the campus of the College of the Holy Cross. The meeting will offer a variety of special activities including sessions on regional collaborative projects, notable keynote speakers, and a partnership with local Worcester community groups to collect local oral histories through nationally recognized StoryCorps.

In an effort to engage the public around the importance of collecting and preserving local history, NEA is partnering with the Lutheran Social Services, Worcester Historical Museum, the Worcester Cultural Development Office, and the Worcester Women's Oral History Project to collect the oral histories of Worcester's vibrant and diverse immigrant community, specifically those who have made the city their home within the last five years. The project, *Why Worcester?*, generously funded by Mass Humanities—a foundation supporting programs that use humanities disciplines to enhance civic life throughout Massachusetts—invites two participants into an intimate recording space to ask one another questions and reveal the story behind their journey to Worcester.

As a companion program, NEA is offering a **free public oral history workshop** conducted by the Worcester Women's Oral History Project to teach the basic skills of recording and preserving family stories, Saturday March 23rd from 2:00pm-4:00pm in the Hogan Center at the College of the Holy Cross.

Conducting onsite interviews on March 21 and 22 at Worcester's Lutheran Social Services Center is StoryCorps, an independent nonprofit whose mission is to provide Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs with the opportunity to record, share, and preserve the stories of their lives. A trained StoryCorps facilitator guides the participants through the 40-minute recording session.

"Oral histories are an ideal medium for capturing and preserving the first-person recollection that we crave to inform our understanding of time and place," said Alyssa Pacy, incoming president of New England Archivists. "Our goal as archivists is to document the diverse communities in which we serve, and partnering with Worcester's vibrant immigrant community ensures all the voices from our community are present and heard. As New England Archivists celebrates its 40th anniversary, we are thrilled to engage the public around the importance of collecting and preserving local history."

The interview and photographs of participants will be deposited at the Worcester Historical Museum, the New England Archivists' archives, and the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC. By working with StoryCorps, NEA is inviting Worcester residents to participate in one of the largest oral history projects in America. StoryCorps has conducted and preserved over 40,000 interviews since 2003. Millions listen to the weekly broadcasts of stories from its archive on both NPR's *Morning Edition* and the StoryCorps website.

For more information, please contact Lisa Feldmann at lfeldmann@isgm.org, or visit the New England Archivists website at www.newenglandarchivists.org. For more information on StoryCorps or to listen to previous interviews, please visit www.storycorps.org. Funding for this project was provided by Mass Humanities, which supports programs that use history, literature, philosophy, and the other humanities disciplines to enhance and improve civic life throughout Massachusetts. Visit Mass Humanities at www.masshumanities.org.

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About New England Archivists

Founded in 1973, New England Archivists is the premier professional organization in the field of archives and special collections in the New England region. Archivists are professionals who collect, arrange, describe, and provide access to historical documents. With approximately 600 members, the organization connects the archival community through meetings, workshops, and online resources. NEA facilitates professional development by offering a number of workshops and meetings per year.

NEA is committed to increasing public awareness of archival work and to informing historians, genealogists, students, and journalists, among others, about archival resources that might be of use to them. NEA also works with individuals in related professions, such as records managers, librarians, and town clerks, to promote the sharing of information among the larger community of information professionals.