

Municipal Library Notes March 21, 2025

COVID in NYC, Five Years On

It was five years ago this month that the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, and our city (and much of the world) shut down. Official NYC publications from that era available through the [Government Publications Portal](#) and [Social Media Archive](#) provide a window into a tumultuous time, and shed light on the City's response to a pandemic that ultimately claimed the lives of over 45,000 New Yorkers.

The Health Department's [first press release](#) on the subject, issued January 19, talked about "an outbreak in China caused by a novel coronavirus," and announced the screening of all passengers arriving from Wuhan. On February 1, the Health Department announced the [first person in New York City under investigation for the virus](#), though the first positive case was not identified until March 1.

nycHealthy @nycHealthy

We are announcing the first positive case of **#COVID19** in New York City. We have already identified close contacts of the individual, who may have been exposed, and will take appropriate measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19: on.nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Case Count in NYC

Testing to determine whether the pending cases are confirmed as positive or negative will take at least 36 to 48 hours.

People Under Investigation in NYC

As of March 1, 2020:

	NYC Residents	Non-NYC Residents*
Positive	1	0
Negative	8	1
Pending	1	0
Total	10	1

9:22 PM · Mar 1, 2020 · [Twitter Web App](#)

The City's [Stop the Spread Campaign](#) launched on March 12, with flyers exhorting New Yorkers to take precautions to prevent the transmission of the virus. Notably, the flyers and social media posts did not mention masking, in a phase in which masks were not widely available. Just weeks later, on March 30, the [Social Distance Campaign](#) required all New Yorkers to wear a face covering "when outside their home and unable to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others."

City of New York @nycgov

The elbow bump is replacing the handshake in New York City until further notice! Learn more common sense tips to reduce the spread of COVID-19: nyc.gov/coronavirus pic.twitter.com/ZMSfSpN8IM



at 22:10:57 on 3/09/2020 UTC

On March 8, Mayor De Blasio issued an [executive order banning all non-essential foreign travel](#), and followed up with a [Declaration of a State of](#)

[Emergency](#) on March 12. Between March 15 and March 20, a series of additional Executive Orders ([100](#), [101](#), and [102](#)) banned large gatherings, ordered the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation to postpone all elective procedures, prohibited shared rides and in-person dining at food establishments, and mandated the closure of entertainment venues, commercial gyms, and older adult centers, followed by retail malls, barbershops, hair salons, tattoo parlors, nail salons and other personal care providers, as well as indoor and outdoor places of public amusement, with the exception of public parks. On March 25, [Executive Order #103](#) directed all non-essential businesses and not-for-profit entities in the City to implement work from home procedures and banned "any non-essential gathering of individuals of any size for any reason."



[NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene](#)

21:22 on Mar 31, 2020 UTC (hidden)

Healthy or sick, all New Yorkers must stay home unless they are essential workers or need urgent health care.



[Slow the Spread of Coronavirus](#)

NYC: Stay home!

In this early COVID phase, when basic consumer goods like paper towels and cleaning products were scarce, the Department of Consumer and Worker Protection [announced an emergency rule that made price gouging illegal](#) for "any personal or household good or any service that is needed to prevent or limit the spread of or treat the new coronavirus." The City also warned citizens about scammers who claimed to offer COVID testing in order to access personal information or steal funds.



NYC Health + Hospitals @NYCHealthSystem

Scammers are calling New Yorkers to set up [#coronavirus](#) testing. This is not the City. Directly contact your health care provider, or call [@nyc311](#) for real information. You can also text COVID to 692-692 for the latest accurate updates. [pic.twitter.com/5D1H847cQb](#)



at 16:15:05 on 3/29/2020 UTC

Within one week, NYC schools went from canceling overseas trips on March 8 to shutting down entirely on March 15. Originally slated to end on April 20, the closure ended up lasting [through the fall](#), though the phased reopening plan was interrupted by later surges of the virus, and full in-person instruction did not resume until fall of 2022.



NYC Public Schools @NYCSchools

Beginning tomorrow, students will not report to school buildings for instruction as we transition to Remote Learning and Regional Enrichment Centers. More information is available at [schools.nyc.gov/coronavirus](#).

NYC Mayor's Office @NYCMayorsOffice

BREAKING: [@NYCMayor](#) announces [@NYCSchools](#) will be closed until Monday, April 20th:
at 21:40:59 on 3/15/2020 UTC

at 21:47:55 on 3/15/2020 UTC

Just weeks after the first positive case, medical equipment shortages became apparent, and the City started soliciting donations and acknowledging our healthcare workers as [heroes](#). It was in this period that the nightly clapping and banging of pots and pans began, which would become such a hallmark of early pandemic life in New York City.



Our amazing health care workers remain on the front lines battling the coronavirus in NYC. You can help support these real-life heroes.

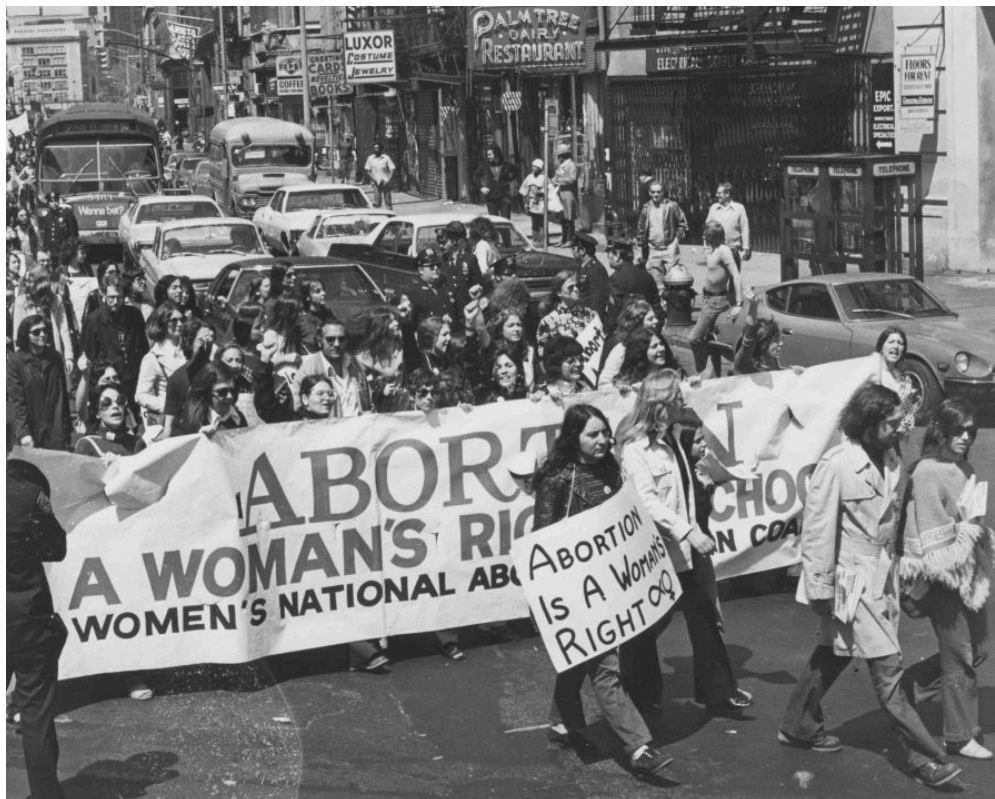
Donate here: <https://nychhc.networkforgood.com>



Thank You Health Care Heroes!

Celebrating Women's History Month

Pop-Up Exhibit Showcasing Records Related to Abortion in New York City Between 1828 and the Present Day



March held during Abortion Action Week, May 6th, 1972. REC0044: New York Police Department Intelligence Unit Records.

Starting in 1828 when New York made it a misdemeanor to perform an abortion after "quickening" (when a pregnant woman starts to feel fetal movement), the exhibit traces the history of reproductive rights to the present day, highlighting the City's current reputation as a national leader. Using historical documents to demonstrate the evolution of the City's stance on abortion from criminality to full access, it features court records, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) charts, and photos of locations where illegal abortions were performed. Additionally, it illustrates how increasing penalties for providing or receiving abortions or birth control drastically affected women's health. The display shows the impact of the New York State's 1970 law decriminalizing abortion on both a national and city level and highlights the February 2024 [Sexual and Reproductive Bill of Rights](#) which further enshrined reproductive rights in New York City. *The exhibit is free and will run through April 30 at 31 Chambers, Room 103, New York, NY 10007, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.*

Discover the Untold Stories of NYC's Women Leaders



In honor of Women's History Month, the New York City Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS) is excited to share new educational resources that bring history to life using the collections of the Municipal Archives and Library. Our latest curriculum aid, [Paving the Way for the Next Generation of Women Leaders: Post-World War II Women Serving NYC](#), explores the remarkable women who reshaped the City's government in the wake of World War II. Through archival audio clips, videos, documents, and photographs, students will uncover the stories of trailblazers like Anna Hedgeman, Dorothy Height, and Constance Baker Motley—women who defied societal expectations to lead and innovate in public service. This resource also highlights later pioneers like Shirley Chisholm and Eleanor Holmes Norton, whose work in the 1960s and '70s pushed the boundaries of gender and racial equality.

This is just one of the many educational resources available on our agency's [education page](#). Whether you're an educator, student, or history enthusiast, we invite you to discover new ways to engage with primary sources and uncover the rich history of NYC. Celebrate the contributions of these extraordinary women and get inspired today!

News from the Archives



Basketball at Mount Morris Park (now Marcus Garvey), 1941

This month, the Municipal Archives is working with DORIS Records Management and the Department of Parks and Recreation to transfer a collection of historic photographs and large-scale renderings that depict parks across all New York City boroughs. The collections date from 1885 to the late 20th century and vary widely, from construction photographs to images of public events. Once the collections are received by the Archives, the Collections Management and Conservation and Preservation Units will thoroughly review and appraise them and plan for future preservation needs and access.

Recommendations from the Records Management Division



Organizing your personal records

The Municipal Records Management Division works with city agencies to ensure that physical and digital city records are organized, accessible, and safe. New Yorkers can learn from basic principles of records management to apply good practices at home as well!

- **Classification** – Categorizing records helps ensure that the right items are easily accessible when needed, while also providing clarity on how long records in each category should be retained. Create categories for your records such as financial, medical, property, etc. Then organize the category by date or alphabetically to ensure speedy retrieval.
- **Retention** – All City records have a life cycle, and a required retention period. At the end of a retention period records can either be approved for disposal or transferred to the Municipal Archives. You can follow a similar process at home, sorting records into items you must keep, those that are ready for deletion/shredding, or those that are important and need to be preserved for the long term.
- **Security** – Protecting sensitive information is a fundamental element of good records management. Whether you store items digitally or physically, make sure your records are protected from unauthorized access, loss or destruction, and plan how you will maintain access to important records in case of disaster. Be especially cognizant of how you handle Personal Identifiable Information (PII) like social security numbers or account numbers.

- **Maintenance** – DORIS Records Management staff and NYC agency records managers collaborate on records management tasks and ongoing projects – there is always some aspect of records management to advance. At home, set aside regular time to manage your records, and over time, you'll see the results – organized, accessible, and secure records!

Did someone forward you this email? Sign up [here](#) to receive the monthly Municipal Library Notes.

This is the NYC.gov news you requested for:

Municipal Library Notes

March 21, 2025

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Preferences](#) | [Comments](#)

Stay Connected



PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE!