

Recall This Book
Episode 170: McKane and Jacques on Building Collective Resilience
(JP) May, 2026

John Plotz

Hello and welcome to Recall this Book where we invite scholars and writers from different disciplines to make sense of contemporary issues, problems and events. I'm John Plotz and I'm joined today, delightfully by two Brandeis colleagues in this very special, very local episode. So our topic today is twofold. First, it's about community resilience in the face of environmental challenges associated with climate change. Second, and I think here we come more into this podcast territory, it's about committing to conversation. That is once we identify a danger, in this case, flooding and water management right here in Waltham, how do concerned folks act and organize to build structures of resistance and repair, or, as the organizers we meet today call it building collective resilience via collective memory? As they explain "the overarching goal of this project is to contribute to a more resilient, just and equitable future for all Residents of Waltham by emphasizing the importance of resident voices in discussions about flood risk assessment and mitigation strategy." So we're going to hear today both about the threat and about the community response. And on top of all that, as an added treat, we have some of those community voices themselves, a foreshadowing of what the planned website is going to offer to locals when they go there for information, or also to listeners from afar who go there for inspiration as to what they might think about organizing in their own towns against other looming climate change threats. Danielle Jacques is a PhD candidate in the sociology department at Brandeis. Her dissertation explores the social and spatial dynamics of the renewable energy transition, focusing on land use conflicts between the solar and agricultural industries and rural New England. So Danielle, welcome,

Danielle Jacques

hi, thank you.

John Plotz

Hey, it's great to have you. And Rachel McCan is Assistant Professor of Sociology and the Jack Meyerhoff chair in American Environmental Studies at Brandeis University. Their research interests include environmental justice, spatial inequality, urban political economy and mutual aid. And Rachel, welcome.

Rachel McKane

Thanks so much. John, happy to be here.

John Plotz

Great. I'm so happy to have you guys here. So let me invite you to start us off by maybe briefly describing this "building collective Resilience Project" and maybe telling us a little bit about the original impetus behind it.

Rachel McKane

Yeah, absolutely. You know, at its core, the project is about creating a more resilient and equitable Waltham, you know, amidst the realities of climate change that we're all living through, so preserving and sharing flood narratives not only creates a lasting and accessible resource, but we also hope that it cultivates social cohesion and community solidarity in our larger community here. And part of what really motivated our research is the recognition that tools community densities currently rely on, FEMA flood maps, for example, are built from technical data and probabilistic models, and they don't necessarily account for how a neighborhood has changed over time, and they weren't designed to capture the kind of granular, like street level knowledge that residents carry. So there's a real gap between what the maps say and what people actually experience. Most areas in Waltham are state designated environmental justice communities based on like their high concentrations of either low income residents, people of color or linguistic isolation among residents. And as sociologists who study inequality and access in various forms, we know that the voices of residents are rarely fully harnessed in climate mitigation adaptation planning, and so we really wanted to co create a resource that puts the vast amount of wisdom and expertise and insight that these residents have into a tangible resource. And we're also really committed interested in Waltham generally, because we all work at Brandeis, and even if we don't all live here, Waltham is our professional home. So as a team, we deeply believe in the responsibility that universities have to their surrounding communities, and we see this as an opportunity to continue building a positive and reciprocal and just relationship between Brandeis and the larger Waltham community.

John Plotz

Cool, this is a big question, but can I ask if you began with original research questions that sort of led you to the conclusion about the importance of centering local voices?

Rachel McKane

Flood mitigation is an important consideration in a state like Massachusetts, given the number of coastal communities that are here, but non-coastal mitigation in places like Waltham can sometimes take a back seat and climate adaptation conversations. And so we wondered, how is climate adaptation, particularly around water, given the worsening of both typical and extreme rain events happening in non coastal locations in the greater Boston area, aside from these coastal communities? So that was really our starting point, I'd say. And then, like any good research project, our questions have since evolved from that starting place. And so one question that we've been particularly interested in exploring is: how do oral histories and participatory maps reveal the social production of environmental knowledge? And that kind of led us down a road of two more specific questions, I'd say. So first, whose experiences of flooding are rendered visible or invisible through official risk assessment tools like FEMA maps and what gets lost when technical modeling is treated as the only valid form of evidence? And then second, how does centering residential knowledge, particularly in historically marginalized communities like much of Waltham, change what we understand about flood risk and climate vulnerability?

John Plotz

Rachel, I'm so sorry, but can I just follow up on that? Because you mentioned the industrial pressures that would have altered the landscape. But can I just sort of confirm a sense that the reason we have that old mill building in the first place is that people were drawn to this place as a as a cataract or as a as an energy source because of water flow to begin with?

John Plotz

Can you talk a little bit about the distinctiveness of Waltham as a place to ask this kind of question?

Rachel McKane

Waltham has two neighborhoods, right? There's one called the bleacher and the chemistry. Both of those are sort of industrial. Both of those are industries that heavily rely on water and need to be built next to a water source.

Rachel McKane

Daniel, I'll like start us off, and then you can jump in as well, because I know we both are have been deeply interested in sort of the history of Waltham lately, but Waltham is a really great fit for this kind of research. I mean, it has a complex geography. It also has this long history of industrialization, development, landscape

modification. It's also home to numerous organizations that are focused on environmentalism, stewardship as well as history, and so Waltham's flooding problems like they didn't come from nowhere. The city was a powerhouse in the American Industrial Revolution. It was home to Boston Manufacturing Company, the Waltham Watch Company, Raytheon and others, and the industrial development physically transformed the landscape. The flow of water was drastically changed in the process of industrialization and the flooding that people are experiencing. It's not just a weather problem, it's partially from the inherited geography of industrial decision making. So if folks want to understand the industrial history, we have a really great resource, actually, the Charles River Museum of industry and innovation that's right here in Waltham. It's actually housed in the original mill building on the river, and it's just like, really a wealth of knowledge there. If anyone wanted to check it out.

Danielle Jacques

Yeah. I mean, this is something that we learned from Steve at the Museum of industry and innovation, but they have maps and art that sort of walks you through the history the industrial history of Waltham, and he talked about how, originally, there was some kind of, I think it was a paper mill located in that in that mill building, where that mill building is now. And the reason that it was located right there was because there was like a 10-foot drop, like a natural waterfall, that folks could capture to use in the mill, and that's where the dam is now the dam that is part of the Moody Street Bridge area. So there was this sort of aspect of the natural landscape that early industrialists were able to take advantage of and harness, and then the whole city actually kind of was built around that industry, those companies, built a lot of the infrastructure that is Waltham now. They built housing, they built the hospitals, and then, more recently, obviously, there's been in the 20th century a decline in industry that's had, like, lots of implications for contemporary environmental issues and challenges that Waltham is facing today. It seems, I think, to some folks, pretty unremarkable that there is flooding on like a small scale in people's basements. And folks are used to seeing these like small streams running through the city. And I think that you know, the history of flooding in Waltham is related to the history of flooding in Vermont, which we have seen over the last couple of years, has been pretty catastrophic, because much of the landscape in New England was wetlands, and we settlers tried to corral the landscape to do what we wanted it to do. We straightened streams and tried to divert water so that, like, we could build housing, and our houses wouldn't be swamped all the time, but at the same time, the water is going to flow where it's going to flow. In a lot of ways. That's

one of our air interviewees says something like... that's Mother Nature. That's like, something that humans can't actually control as much as we think we can.

John Plotz

I really appreciate you putting it that way. I mean, I have a very local response, which is that, like, I live in Brookline, in a neighborhood that doesn't have a ton of flooding, but if you look at the old maps, you can tell like there's a river that went through our backyard, in the backyard of all of our neighbors. And sure enough, in that March of 2015, or whatever, it was like, that's where the flooding came. And I really take your point about corralling in that context, and then the other point that I was thinking about, and I'm sure this sort of gets to this question of like, what does your sort of local project have to say on a kind of more global level, is, you know, I spent a good bit of time in New Zealand recently, and that as a settler colonial state, it has a lot of beautiful, natural agrarian land, which is not beautiful or natural at all. It's the agrarian product of taking what used to be called i and then turning it into sheep land. And you can absolutely see the traces of the kind of attempts to corral where water really wanted to flow. And that is a fascinating project, which is, it has kind of, I feel like it has settler colonial written all over it, even though, of course, there's there's a human, more general human trajectory. But in New England, it definitely seems like it's a settler colonial project of the 18th and 19th century,

Rachel McKane

Also kind of like an ongoing settler colonialism process. Also, I think is important to recognize it's not just sort of like the past of Waltham. I mean, industrial industry plays a long part of it, but it's like ongoing development, which is happening in urban areas like around the globe, right? Sort of the constant building up of urban spaces and adding more impervious surface, and then just kind of seeing what happens when we add more concrete into places that already have so much concrete, like, Where is the water going to go?

Danielle Jacques

This is a very niche interest of mine, but it's funny that you, like made the connection to New Zealand, where the the like grazing and pasture land is still like a present and viable industry, because that is actually how like that. That's we share a similar industry or history in New England, like a lot of the forests that were felled here were for grazing sheep, specifically, which is history that did not continue in this area, but yeah, that there was a wool industry here that fed into early clothing mills. That was where sort of that industry started, until cotton took over because of the slave trade. All of that kind of history, that history, I think, gets kind of buried,

but like, that's one of the examples, another sort of connection here. We're talking about settler colonialism, but also New England's connection to slavery is like that sort of industry around clothing which which began with a sort of nascent wool industry, which began with like felling forests for pasture land.

John Plotz

So maybe if we could pivot now to the sort of specific methodology that emerged for you guys in terms of collecting the local voices. And I really, I heard you say there's a methodological advantage here. It's not simply a moral imperative to do more, but also kind of an epistemological one, that you can gain things in this sort of project that you would not gain from, like GIS mapping or satellite imaging.

Rachel McKane

We see our project is sharing some fundamental components of one might call citizen science. I think our approach, methodologically, is a bit more nuanced from that that approach. So, like Citizen Science, though, we mobilize community members to gather data that scientists or planners might not capture with their methods. You know, residents are observing, documenting and reporting flooding events in a systematic way, and that does contribute to a larger knowledge base. And we definitely have that participatory data gathering element to our project as well, like through our oral histories, as well as doing some community events as well, where we've kind of set up shop at the farmers market and have this huge map blown up, and people kind of put these points on the map as well to show us where they've seen flooding happen

John Plotz

Amazing. Do those, do those events actually work? Like you get enthusiastic community participation or,

Rachel McKane

yeah, I think it took the Farmers Market event. I think it took a little bit for people to warm up to us, sure, once they kind of started coming through, it was kind of a it was a good way of like community building and hearing some stories from folks as well. Danielle what do you think about those community events?

Danielle Jacques

Yeah, I feel like one of the memorable interactions that I had multiple times at those events is we would explain that our project is about flooding, and people would say, Oh, I didn't know that Waltham floods. And then we would keep talking about it, and

they would say, well, oh, my basement floods. So the way that people it's there was almost like a mismatch. And I think this, I mean, this is part of the knowledge creation around flooding that we're trying to get at, which is, like, the way that people think about floods, or define floods is usually these, like, really large scale or the sort of events that make the news and not the kind of everyday nuisances and the mold in their basement that follows after, like, they've had an especially damp spring or whatever. So yeah, there was some interesting interactions around just the definition of flooding and, like, what it was that we were trying to capture in these maps. And so there was quite a bit of back and forth and explaining like that counts too. That's actually exactly what we want to document here. Is these small, smaller scale floods that people sort of take for granted.

Rachel McKane

Yeah, I remember being at one of the events, and someone was was talking to Sara Shostak, is also on this project, and they were kind of explaining. They were like, well, I've noticed this here. And then sort of looks at her and says, Does this count as a flood? And Sara says back, well, does it count as a flood to you? Does this have meaning to you? And this person responded, Well, yeah, it does, you know, so sort of an experience that I had, and you know, that's the kind of data that we are harnessing with this project, right? We're saying that residential the residents knowledge and their memory, their memories are the data. So rather than just being like helpers in a research protocol, right? The stories themselves and this experiential knowledge of where and when flooding happens, and also the intergenerational memories of it as well, are also kind of important, have been an interesting part of it. It's not really just translating resident residents observations into some kind of scientific framework, right? It's asserting that the kind of lived experience that they have, it's its own valid form of evidence. We're perhaps placing in conversation with technical data like FEMA maps at times, not saying that it is like adding to those, but more like, it's kind of something different or complementary, perhaps. But we're not subordinating these memories to technical data, right? Like they have something they have, like a value other than that technical part of it.

John Plotz

That seems like a really good segue for us, maybe to listen to. Do you guys want us to listen to the peaches story? Now, is that a good moment for that? Or

Danielle Jacques

Sure? Okay, let's listen to the peaches story. So I think this story is amazing. So this is, this comes from Colleen. She and her husband bought the home. Their home, in

part because it had a finished basement. They were really excited to have that space. It like doubled the square footage of the house. And within months of buying the house, the basement flooded and everything was ruined. And it happened a second time too. So there's, there were, like, two instances of pretty severe flooding in the basement. She lives on a steep hill near Hardy pond, and had no idea that there was a flooding issue on her street before she moved there. She has good friends who live just down the hill from her, and one of her neighbors, every time it rained at all, essentially anytime it rained, any any amount, he would basically have to go out into the street and check on the drains, because if the drains were clogged, then the water would run down the hill into their driveway and then into their basement. And so this was like, she's describing him, sort of going out and checking on things all the time, and seeing him drenched in rain, walking up and down the street. So that's sort of the context of where this story comes from.

John Plotz

Okay, and so let and let's listen to Colleen herself tell it.

Colleen

This is another like, funny, but not funny. Side note is this house here, he used to have a grove, like a literal Grove, of peach trees in front of his house, but all the peaches would fall off and they would clog, like, you can't make this up. And like, the two neighbors would get so mad at each other because they'd be like, like, we appreciate the peaches. Like, it's beautiful. Love the peaches, great thing. But also, can you harvest them so that they don't end up in the drain? And I viscer viscerally, remember being out there with Justin, my husband, Justin Liz, all of us, just like pushing all these peaches out of the drain.

John Plotz

God, I gotta say, that really resonates. I mean, I we have friends in Vermont who got flooded in Cabot, and that was a story of a culvert that just stuck, you know, and everybody on the main street lost their basements, basically because this culvert couldn't be cleared in time.

Danielle Jacques

yeah. I think that this is exactly so that this is an example of flooding that was happening regularly because of the infrastructure on the street was not up to snuff. It wasn't capable of handling the storm water, and so she, I mean, you can, I don't know if you can hear me laughing in the background. She's cracking me up because she's very animated as she's telling the story. And it sort of makes it a little bit light

hearted, in a way. But at the same time, the story behind that story is that her neighbor is stressed out every time it's raining, and going and walking around in the rain to clear the drains. And actually, immediately after she tells the story about the peaches, she talks about how her neighbors actually decided to leave Waltham, and this was a big part of the reason why, because their property, yeah, they were essentially displaced because of the impact of this flooding on their street. So hearing Colleen talking about this experience, it is a different kind of knowledge and a different kind of understanding of flooding than sort of seeing on a map like this street floods or doesn't flood.

John Plotz

Great, That might be a good time to invite you guys to talk about the website. I mean, the practicalities, like how what you envision the website doing. So can you talk about how that's going to work?

Rachel McKane

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So the website is in process right now. We're still working on some parts of it, but I think, you know, we envision this website is having a few different components. First, having this map that has kind of layers of information on it. We have, like, the FEMA flood zone data that's on it, as well as some census data as well, but also overlaid on that is, sort of the resident identified areas of flooding. And they're not just points on a map, it's the visuals were incredibly important to us with this given, sort of what we're trying to show here, but embedded is also like, you click on one of those points and it's part of a story, right? It's a quote from one of the residents who told the story about this place that it has experienced flooding. So that's part of the process. And then there's going to be a whole, a whole other focus of it that's more on sort of the themes that we've noticed as well through these oral histories. And Danielle's done a lot of the coding on this, and we've been working together to kind of identify some of these identify some of these things we want to highlight on the website as well. But the cool thing about the website is that it's, you know, it's going to be a resource for community members. We're excited to get sort of feedback as we go along in creating this website as well. And the underlying code for the website, it's all done in R that I've been working on, and it's going to be available for folks who want to create a similar kind of model to create this kind of website for themselves. Since building a website costs so much money and you don't always own the components of the website, if someone else builds right, but in this in this way, it'll serve as a model for that.

Danielle Jacques

So the sort of the oral history piece of it we've set our goal is to interview 40 people. We've, we've reached 32 interviews so far.

Rachel McKane

I talked a little bit about the website, but obviously the oral histories are a really big part of that. And so we've done all of this interviewing of these oral histories, and they'll, those will actually be housed at the Brandeis library in an archive there as well, and we'll have sort of links on the website that go back to those full length interviews.

Danielle Jacques

So this is obviously a project that's about climate related flood issues in the city, and thinking about like future actions that Waltham residents can take to address this challenge. So one of the stories that Sara Shostak has shared in a couple of contexts is that when we started this project, we were told that there isn't environmental activism in Waltham, essentially, like that's not something that we would be able to sort of tap into and we found that that was not the case at all. One of the really important threads or stories that emerged from doing this project is that we were also, on the one hand, we were documenting these flood stories of residents who had experiences with flooding of all different scales across many years, we've stumbled into these, these histories of folks working together to preserve land, to take care of and steward wall fans, natural resources like the Hardy Pond area. A lot of those organizations have sort of amalgamated into what is now the Waltham Land Trust. They've been a really wonderful partner, and we've interviewed lots of folks who organize, who volunteer with the Waltham Land Trust. There's a lot of social infrastructure that exists in Waltham. The community is organized that they have been thinking about these problems for much longer than we have been doing this research for many, many decades. And so that was, yeah, not what, not what we expected, but it's been a pleasure to to find that and make those connections.

John Plotz

Methodologically, one of the big questions, the way I framed it for you guys is like, what is the sort of portability of this as well as the granularity? And that really reminds me of one of my favorite history books, which I sometimes recommend. We have a little section at the end of the podcast called recallable books, in which we ask you, like, what books might relate to this conversation? Do you guys know this book called Local People by John Dittmer, which is about civil rights organizing in Mississippi and Alabama in the 30s, 40s and 50s? And his point is, everybody knows that civil rights organization began like with some of you know this Freedom Riders,

and you know northern activists in like 1961 but actually civil rights activism in Mississippi and Alabama began locally in the 30s, 40s and 50s, but people whose stories just weren't told, but were sitting there in the local archives. And then, once you go looking for it, it turns out, the reason the freedom Riders were able to show up and like, have something to do, is because of this infrastructure that was laid down earlier. So that's super inspiring to think about: that Waltham, that invisible element of Waltham labor that you can kind of rotate and make visible in a context like this. That's the positive side. Can I actually ask the version that's kind of the flip side of that, which is like, you know, imagined objections to your approach, or what you might say in response to people who didn't get the virtues of this way in?

Rachel McKane

That's a great question. And I've learned from my my colleagues that, you know, anytime you have a qualitative data project, do you questions about generalizability and representation, and we're pretty clear that our project is not a representative sample of Waltham city residents, but the value of oral histories is in the stories that residents share, and local residents do possess these valuable insights about flood risk and the impacts of the neighborhood level. And again, that's like not going to be captured by more probabilistic maps. So humanistic methods like oral history can really uncover these community specific vulnerabilities that we've just heard about, like with the story from Colleen, for instance, as well as coping mechanisms and also, like cultural and historical factors that really influence how these residents perceive and respond to flood events. These stories really do matter. They bring humanity to large scale problems or ideas, right, like climate change, and they bring that humanity to the front of the conversation, rather than just having them be after thoughts or sort of a technical problem. And I think a second objection that we've heard is that residents memories are subjective or unreliable and I think we've really pushed back pretty hard on that one, right? I mean, subjectivity is not the same as inaccuracy, and the question isn't whether resident knowledge is perfect, because no data sources, not even the probabilistic models that FEMA puts out right? It's really about whether it captures something that other methods miss. And you know, we think the answer is really clearly yes, with this kind of participatory mapping and oral history technique that we're using, and we actually had a moment at a community meeting that really has stuck with me. And there was an engineer that was in the room, and he admitted that he'd been skeptical about this approach, and honestly, skepticism from someone with technical background that's that's expected with these kinds of projects. But when we showed the map that we've been working on the website right with these narratives layered in, he said that he could really see the value in that now, and that the project had convinced him that

these stories do matter. And I think that moment really stands out to me, because it wasn't really us convincing him, right? Was actually the resident's knowledge that was really doing that work and showing him that this does matter, his own neighbors.

John Plotz

So I think you guys have one other clip.

Danielle Jacques

Yeah, we're thinking about flooding over time and people's lived experiences of living in Waltham for their whole lives in some cases, and seeing these for many these problems for many decades, but also thinking like, I think like spatially, and thinking a little bit differently about scale and how, and also like the connectivity of all of this. And so this is, as you know, we started this conversation with laying out a little bit of the history of why wall fans waterways are shaped in this way. They are all connected, and that matters in how we address flood mitigation strategies in the future and so. So this is this clip is from Mark. Mark is one of the many activists that we met in the course of the research, he's been working on environmental challenges in Waltham for basically the whole time that he's lived here, which is several decades. He lives in the Hardy Pond area as well, and so earlier in the interview, he's talking about a flooding situation in his neighborhood that was exacerbated, exacerbated by a culvert that was built for a housing development that's downstream that seems sort of unconnected to his area, but because that culvert was not maintained very well, a whole other area of Waltham essentially experienced pretty severe flooding.

John Plotz

Sounds great. Let's have a listen.

Mark

I guess the point I'm trying to make there is even I who had a lot of consciousness about this, didn't think that through the idea that, you know, you make an improvement now you have to maintain it. And that's clearly our cultural mindset is, you know, I'm going to build Windsor village, but I am not going to take care of the land that I've destroyed all around me. I'm not going to be responsible about my culvert, and I don't care if all the homes around me flood because I did the thing I wanted, which was to build this in the first place, so that increasing awareness of the importance of maintaining infrastructure seems to be a big part of the crisis that

we're in as a state, as a nation, whether it's crumbling road bridges or culverts that are failing or dams that don't belong there anymore.

Danielle Jacques

Yeah. I like this clip. I think it does a good job of sort of demonstrating. So again, if we were to look at a map, maybe Windsor village doesn't flood, but upstream it does flood, and those things are happening in relation to each other. So that's sort of a piece of it. I think it's also really striking to hear this. This activist, somebody who has a whole career, has built a career around bringing people together and organizing collectively around problems like this, and for him to sort of identify the problem of this impulse of, sort of like protecting private property, as if, like, we can just build the walls and keep the water out of our own area. But obviously that's, again, not how water works.

John Plotz

Awesome. That's great. Well, so I kind of want to toss this question of recallable books out to you guys. I wanted to invite you if you have a thought about you know, is there a book that really framed things for you in a beautiful way, or a book you relied on, or maybe just something that resonates with the work that you've been doing on this Collective Resilience Project.

Rachel McKane

There have been so many folks that have kind of been on my mind lately made me rethink this project that we've been doing for quite some time and if I had to pick a recent one that's been on my mind, it would be Yuki Kato wrote this book. It's called gardens of hope. It's actually about, like, urban farming and post disaster New Orleans, like, after Katrina. It's really beautiful ethnography. And she, because she she goes back to the same residents to interview them, like, over the course of like, a decade, it's, it's incredible, you know, to interview people that many times. And the thing that stuck out to me about this book is, like, there's kind of a lot of individual good actors, kind of taking these lots and they're turning these like community gardens, but it's mostly like an individual that's like, kind of going in and doing it for their motives sometimes are kind of unclear, but, and there wasn't really a collective movement, right? They weren't necessarily talking to each other in this process. They just wanted to do something to help and then kind of time goes by, and a lot of these properties, a lot of these farms, end up kind of closing. And I think the narrative, or the lesson for me from that book was, you know, the importance of of the collective of doing things in community, and the importance of sort of talking to

your neighbors through that process and being a part of something bigger than just like the individual, if we really want to enact some kind of change,

John Plotz

Can I just say that really resonates as a 19th centuryist? You know, a lot of the mapping of London in the mid 19th century, some of it was done to make class divisions visible, but others, a lot of the point of the Maps was to make people realize that working class and wealthy neighborhoods were right next to one another, so that a disease was spreading in a working class neighborhood, just on a very pragmatic, selfish level, the wealthy residents of London should be worried, because it was their world as well. Like, if you have the physical proximity, doesn't always translate to social proximity, but in some ways, it really does. And therefore, you know, there's a kind of political imperative that emerges out of the geographical proximity, I guess. So, yeah, so it's super helpful to think about how your map is going to work to help people see that. Okay, all right, Danielle, did you, did you pick one?

Danielle Jacques

I picked one. So it is a book by Bill McKibben, now an environmental activist. It's one of his older ones called "Oil and Honey." And the reason it's been on my mind is because I recently went to a talk about honey, and I was like, Why do I know all of this? And it's because he's talking, it's, it's part memoir. And so he's talking about his career as an environmental activist, but he's also talking about returning home to Vermont and returning home to his bees, and how joyful that that is, to be able to come home and, just like, spend time with his bees. So that's one of the things that I have been thinking about, just like the, I don't know, kind of going out into the world and facing the challenges that are out there, especially around climate change, but then also, like coming home to your bees. That just feels really important right now. The other thing that is connected, I think, to what you were saying earlier about the sort of history of activism that is not always front and center. A big another sort of big piece of that book is talking about the long history of activism around the Keystone pipeline. And he was obviously very present in the protests that were happening, I think in 2016 I think was when it was like really exploding in the media. But, yeah, there's also a history there of long decades and decades of organizing that went on uncovered.

John Plotz

Yeah, thank you. Thank you for unpacking the major key positive version of that too. Because I agree. I mean, I understand why you can see it in a pessimistic way, but

ultimately, I do think, I mean, Hannah Arendt has this whole thing in Eichman in Jerusalem about the fact that stories don't actually die. There is a way to hold on to these stories. They can get covered over, but just getting covered over is not the same as being lost. So, yeah. Well, so Danielle, Rachel, thank you so much for coming and talking. And I don't know if you have a URL address to share already, or will it. I mean, it's very, it will be very Google-able when it comes out, but great. So the project is called Building Collective Resilience via collective memory. And it's wonderful to hear about it. It's great to hear about this Brandeis wealth M collaboration. So you know, on behalf of of us at the podcast and the listeners, thank thank you so much.

Rachel McKane

Yeah, thank you so much, John. And as soon as we have a link to the website, you'll hear from us

Danielle Jacques

This was amazing. Thank you.

John Plotz

Recall This Book is the creation of John Plotz and Elizabeth ferry. Sound Editing is by Khimaya Bagla, and music comes from a song by Eric Chasalow and Barbara Cassidy. We gratefully acknowledge support from Brandeis University and its Mandel Center for the Humanities. We always want to hear from you with your comments, criticisms or suggestions for future episodes. Finally, if you enjoyed today's show, please forward it to five people or write a review and rate us wherever you get your podcasts. Thanks for listening.