

The Kutsche Chronicle

Kutsche Office of Local History is part of Brooks College of
Interdisciplinary Studies at Grand Valley State University

www.gvsu.edu/kutsche
Fall 2018



Photo courtesy: Bird + Bird Studio



Photo credit: Janet Brashler

Connections Along the Grand River

The Kutsche Office received a Third Coast Conversations grant from the Michigan Humanities Council to support our project "Connections Along the Grand River," which captures the histories of the communities and towns along the Grand River—how they came into being—and the role of the river in their survival and revitalization. This project involves working with local history organizations whose communities runs alongside the river. These organizations will share the histories of their communities as it relates to the Grand River's impact on industry, agriculture, fishing, and recreation as well as the community's growth from its founding to present day.

Join us in March for our day-long symposium where communities will share their histories of the Grand River. The symposium coincides with our tenth anniversary roundtable on Thursday, March 14, 2019. Later in October 2019, we will continue these conversations. If your organization serves a community along the Grand River and would like to learn more about this project, please contact Courtney Sherwood (kutsche@gvsu.edu; 616-331-8099).



Photo credit: Bird + Bird Studio

Contemporary Stories of Saugatuck

Launched this month "Contemporary Stories of Saugatuck" will capture the voices of the Class of 2019 at Saugatuck High School. Central to "Contemporary Stories of Saugatuck" is a deep commitment to encouraging area youth to see themselves as participants in history. Often history is considered to be something that happened in the past. Yet, the Kutsche Office recognizes how history also includes stories, ephemera, and photographs, for example, of the present. Youth are a key component to understanding a community and what daily life is like. Instead of asking them to reflect on their teenage years when they're adults, this project centers their voices and their experiences as active participants in shaping the history of their community. Empowering youth through local history is a core component of the work of the Kutsche Office.

This project will culminate in an exhibition at the Old School House in Douglas, MI in May 2019. The exhibition will feature portrait boards of the Class of 2019 with excerpts of oral histories and photographs of each student. The project reflects a partnership between the Kutsche Office, the Saugatuck Douglas History Center, and students enrolled in the 2018-2019 journalism courses of Christina Lewis at Saugatuck High School.

Stories of Summer

Stories of Summer documents the Saugatuck-Douglas area's rise to become a lakeshore destination that welcomed diverse communities in the mid-twentieth century, and other contemporary stories as a way to foster dialogue and a great sense of community among all area residents. The Kutsche Office in partnership with the Saugatuck Douglas History Center held two history harvests on June 2 and July 21 at the Old School House in Douglas, MI.

The history harvests resulted in the digitization of more than 1,100 objects of ephemera including postcards, photographs, and brochures. Three additional dates to collect oral histories occurred in June. A total of 22 oral histories have been collected to date.

Throughout this academic year, our special projects graduate assistant Mollie VanOrsdol and undergraduate research assistant Kendra Garcia will support the oral history transcription and metadata collection processes. We are working with GVSU's Special Collections and Archives to make these materials available online to the public.

In February 2019, the Kutsche Office will unveil our first exhibit from the project in the Mary Idema Pew Library. Please stay tuned for more details concerning its opening and reception. The exhibit will also be installed at the Old School House in June 2019.

This project is supported by a National Endowment for the Humanities Common Heritage Grant. For more information about this project and its upcoming exhibit, please contact Courtney Sherwood

(kutsche@gvsu.edu; 616-331-8099). For more information about sharing your story, please contact the Saugatuck Douglas History Center (info@sdhistoricalsociety.org; 269-857-5751).



Photo credit: Bird + Bird Studio



Special Projects Graduate Assistant



Mollie VanOrsdol is a proud first generation 2015 Michigan State University Graduate. After finishing her undergraduate degree in Secondary Education, she spent three years serving with

various AmeriCorps programs around the country focusing her work on low income, historically marginalized youth, and increasing college readiness. She is enrolled in GVSU's School Counseling Program.

Undergraduate Research Assistant



Kendra Garcia is a junior double majoring in History and Spanish with a minor in Latin American and Latino/a Studies. She was part of REACH Scholars Program with her research on the historiography of

Afro-Mexicans and the resurgence in interest in their history and culture in the 1980s and 1990s. Kendra is involved with the Peter C. Cook Leadership Academy, Phi Alpha Theta, and is president the student organization Women in Humanities.

Upcoming Events....

Wednesday, October 10, 2018, 11:00am-1:30pm

Lunch with the Kutsche Office

2215 Kirkhof Center, GVSU's Allendale campus

Monday, November 5, 2018, 12:00-1:30pm

So You Want to do a History Harvest

2270 Kirkhof Center, GVSU's Allendale campus

February 5, 2019, 1-2:15pm

Stories of Summer Exhibit Opening

Mary Idema Pew Library Multipurpose Room

Exhibit runs February 5-March 4, 2019

March 14, 2019

10th Annual Local History Roundtable

L. William Seidman Center, Grand Rapids

For more information, or to register for these events please visit us at: gvsu.edu/kutsche, email kutsche@gvsu.edu or call: 616-331-8099.

So You Want to do a History Harvest

Monday, November 5, 2018, 12-1:30pm

2270 Kirkhof Center, GVSU's Allendale campus

The Kutsche Office partners with local communities to collect, preserve, and make accessible their unique histories. Our history harvests include collecting oral histories, archiving photos and historic documents, organizing exhibitions, developing curriculum, and partnering with libraries, schools, and community groups. This workshop will discuss how to run your own history harvest from start to finish and share best practices. We also encourage participants to bring their oral history collection experiences and questions they have regarding how to preserve and make accessible the histories of their community members. Organizations interested in potentially working with the Kutsche Office on a history harvest are encouraged to attend.

*For more information, or to register:
email kutsche@gvsu.edu or call: 616-331-8099.*

3rd Annual...

Lunch with the Kutsche Office

Wednesday, October 10, 2018

11:00am-1:30pm

2215 Kirkhof Center

GVSU's Allendale campus

We hope you will join us for our 3rd annual fall luncheon. This event grows every year and is a great opportunity for local history organizations including societies, museums, libraries, as well as individuals interested in local history, an opportunity and connect and learn from one another.

This year our keynote speakers will explore best practices for intergenerational history storytelling and community engagement. Please join Matthew Daley and Paul Wittenbraker as they discuss ways to make historical ephemera and artifacts relevant to the rich human experience of today. Daley and Wittenbraker will focus on experiential learning as they reflect on ways to approach history that does not rely on a single story. The following questions will guide the conversation: How do encounters, celebrations, and events between people link us to the past? In what ways do people make history through customs, habits, and traditions? How does the imagination link us to the historical past and present? And, how does place, environment, and location set conditions for the encounter with history?



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