



# Kutsche Chronicle

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

Fall 2020

## In This Issue

- Director's Report: History in Changing Times
- Programming preview for 2020-2021
- Coffee with the Kutsche Office
- Local History & COVID-19 survey results
- 2020 Gordon Olson Award
- Connections Along the Grand River magazine and digital launch

## Upcoming Events

Wednesday, August 26, 2020 / 2 pm

Wednesday, October 21, 2020 / 2 pm

Coffee with the Kutsche Office

Monday, October 19, 2020 / 7 pm

"What the Eyes Don't See" live talk  
with Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha

Check [gvsu.edu/kutsche](http://gvsu.edu/kutsche) for updates

[www.gvsu.edu/kutsche](http://www.gvsu.edu/kutsche) | 616-331-8099 | [kutsche@gvsu.edu](mailto:kutsche@gvsu.edu)

Cover image courtesy of Ada Historical Society



# Director's Report

Kimberly McKee

The Kutsche Office is going digital for our 2020-2021 programs, following federal, state, and university guidelines. For more information concerning GVSU's response to COVID-19, please visit the Lakers Together website: [gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/](https://gvsu.edu/lakerstogether/). Our programs will be a mix of prerecorded and live online events. They will cover unique historical topics just like our past programs, along with addressing concerns for history organizations adapting to the year's rapid changes.

We also recognize the historic protests sweeping the nation. With a mission to "give voice to diverse communities through history," we believe it is vital to incorporate the realities of Black, indigenous, and people of color in West Michigan history. The Kutsche Office is here to support organizations, evaluate approaches to local history, recognize contradictions that telling an inclusive story may bring up, and incorporate more comprehensive histories into existing community stories. Please reach out to us by phone (616-331-8099) or email ([kutsche@gvsu.edu](mailto:kutsche@gvsu.edu)) with questions or concerns.

## Let's Talk: Coffee with the Kutsche Office

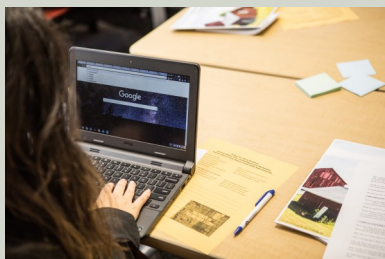
Local historians thrive on sharing stories, and use the act of sharing them to keep our communities strong and grounded.

We are hosting an informal "coffee hour" via Zoom twice this fall, on August 26 & October 21. Whether you have news, questions, or just want to check in, we want to hear from you!

Register today at <http://gvsu.edu/s/1qF>



## NEW! Digital Programs Hub



Adapting to a year of digital programs requires flexibility. We are all adjusting to different formats and new approaches to keep in touch with our partners and continue to serve our communities.

**The Kutsche Office of Local History has created a single central hub for accessing our new and upcoming online materials.**

The Digital Programs Hub will have live updates, links to register for online programs, uploads and resources for pre-recorded programs, and links to helpful materials.

visit [www.gvsu.edu/kutsche](https://www.gvsu.edu/kutsche) to see what's next

## Survey Results

# Local History & COVID-19

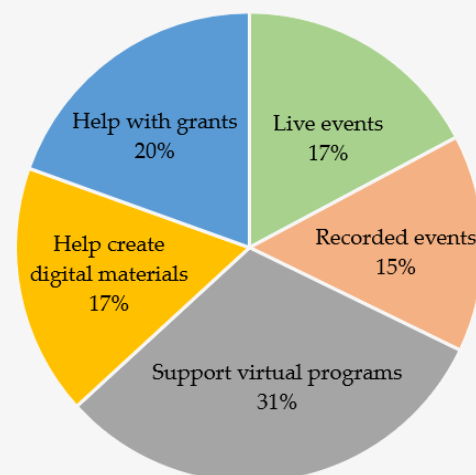
### What We Learned

53 respondents highlighted the pandemic's impact on West Michigan history. Common issues create a cyclical problem: **low resources → no new materials → no new resources.**

- Admission, fundraisers, and programs are down. Staff and volunteers are less able to fill their roles. Many members and core audiences are especially vulnerable.
- About half of groups have ideas for special projects and digital offerings, but they all require more or different resources.

**There is a lot of inspiration looking for execution.**

*"What support would be most helpful from the Kutsche Office?"*



### What is Available Right Now

GVSU Special Collections & Archives launched a COVID-19 Journaling Project: [gvsu.edu/s/1qs](https://gvsu.edu/s/1qs). It provides guidance and a repository for collecting experiences, to preserve stories of this unusual time.

Many national and global organizations have compiled lists. A few of our current favorites:

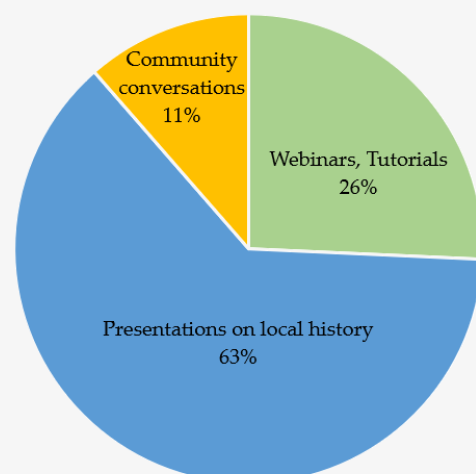
- The International Council of Museums' Reopening 101 checklist: <https://bit.ly/3kmtptCO>
- The Institute of Museum & Library Services' robust list of free resources: <https://bit.ly/3kjxub0>
- Wisconsin Historical Society's page of free and paid assistance: <https://bit.ly/3idJtow>

### Next Steps

In response to this survey and conversations within our university community, the Kutsche Office is substantially redirecting our resources for the 2020-2021 academic year.

- A new slate of (online) West Michigan history talks
- Informal Zoom gatherings to share strategies
- Adapting past programs for classrooms, lectures
- Sourcing financial and human resources for local projects

*"What type of online content would you like to see from the Kutsche Office?"*





## 2020 Gordon Olson Award

# Connie Navarro

The Gordon Olson Award of 2020 recognizes Connie Navarro's commitment to using history to give voice to Latino communities in west Michigan. For decades, Navarro has been a powerful force for documenting, sharing, and celebrating local Latino life and culture.

She and her family founded the Muskegon-based nonprofit Latinos Working for the Future in 1991. The organization promotes collaboration and education in support of the city's Latino population, most recently hosting the inaugural Muskegon County Latino Festival in 2019.

Navarro has worked closely with the Kutsche Office since its inception. Much of her work culminated in her 2010 co-authorship of *A New Home in Michigan: The Mexican-American Experience in Muskegon*, published with support from the Kutsche Office.



## New Digital Debut — Magazine — Videos — Virtual Tour

# Connections Along the Grand River

Over the past year, the Kutsche Office has worked with more than 20 local history organizations and independent historians to pay tribute to the state's longest river.

This summer, we are proud to complete this hard work with

- A full-size tourist guide & magazine
- A self-guided virtual tour for all digital platforms
- A new website with videos, links, and other resources

**visit [gvsu.edu/s/1qE](https://gvsu.edu/s/1qE) to access everything**

*This was all made possible with robust support from the Michigan Humanities Council's Third Coast Conversations: Dialogues about Water in Michigan grant, the VanderVeen Center for the Book Fund of the Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation, and the Grand Rapids Historical Society.*

