

The Kutsche Chronicle

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Gí-gíkinomaage-mín : Defend Our History, Unlock Your Spirit

"Gi-gikinomaage-min: Defend Our History, Unlock Your Spirit" is a project in its planning stage that ultimately will seek to interview American Indians to collect their experiences about living in Grand Rapids during the federal relocation period.

While much emphasis has been placed on the federal relocation program that brought American Indians to urban settings such as Chicago, Denver, San Francisco and Los Angeles, Grand Rapids was city many American Indians migrated to from tribal lands in Michigan and other states during the mid-1900s.

The project committee wants to hear the stories of those who arrived in Grand Rapids expecting a new way of life.

Born out of conversations started between the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) Native American Advisory Board and the Grand Valley State University Kutsche Office of Local History in the Spring of 2014, the goal of the project is to create the first archival collection focusing on urban American Indian experiences in West Michigan.

"It is a group effort leading this project and our intent is to serve the urban Native population and to create something that they can own and have pride in. We have hard working Native individuals all working towards this same goal," said Belinda Bardwell, a tribal citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, who is serving as project coordinator for project.

Another member of GVSU Native American Advisory Board, Steve Naganashe Perry (Ottawa) and GVSU lecturer commented:

"As a university lecturer of contemporary Native American issues, I find it important to see projects that record history by those who lived it, not those who chose to create it."

Perry's statement was echoed by Levi Rickert (Potawatomi), GVSU Native American Advisory Board member and consultant to the project.

"I am a strong believer that it is time for American Indians to tell our own stories," stated Levi Rickert (Potawatomi), publisher/ editor of Native News Online, based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "Whether our stories are happy or sad, this project will provide a rare opportunity for our Native community to tell our stories of what it was like to live in the urban setting and still maintain our identities as American Indians."

This project has received funding from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.



Teacher from Cesar Chavez Elementary School with Cook Library Scholars at the "Portrait of My Community," Exhibit Opening, Cook Library Center, 1100 Grandville Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI. September 18, 2014.

Photo by Bri Luginbill, GVSU News and Information

Kutsche Office of Local History Celebrates "Portrait of My Community" Exhibit

The young scholars and GVSU interns who worked for a year documenting the history of their Grandville Avenue neighborhood celebrated the successful conclusion of their project at the Cook Library Center on September 18, 2014.

"Portrait of a Community" includes a video documentary and archive materials collected by Cook Library Scholars (CLS), 31 students who are in grades K-8. Melanie Shell-Weiss, director of Grand Valley's Kutsche Office of Local History, facilitated the project with Cook Library Center staff members. The Cook Library Scholars Program is a part of the Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities.

Grand Rapids Mayor George Heartwell and other area leaders joined CLS scholars and their families for the celebration.

View the exhibit at the Cook Library Center, 1100 Grandville Avenue SW. It will remain up through the end of the year.



Sixth Annual Local History Roundtable

The Local History Roundtable is an annual conference that brings together community members, librarians, curators, preservationists, educators, students, and others to network, share resources and a passion for local history. Our sixth annual meeting will be held March 26-27, 2015 at the Grand Rapids Public Library.

Each year, the meeting focuses on a different theme. This year's topic, "Food, Farm, and Table," provides a chance to celebrate the diversity of West Michigan through its food. Register now to reserve your seat at: www.gvsu.edu/kutsche

Starting December 1, 2014 we will begin collecting recipes, food-related photographs, and memories from West Michigan residents. These will be published in a book focusing on the region's diverse foodways and food history. We encourage you to share your favorite recipe, accompanied by a brief memory or story about why this dish is important to your family's history. Contributions may be emailed to the Kutsche Office of Local History at kutsche@gvsu.edu or dropped off at the front desk of the Local History Room at the Grand Rapids Public Library.



Need a student intern to assist your organization?

Are you a student interested in preserving history?

Contact our office at kutsche@gvsu.edu or 616-331-8099

Preserving Your Family History Event at Holland Museum

The Kutsche Office's first "Preserving Your Family's History" workshop was hosted by the Holland Museum on Tuesday evening, October 21. Led by Holland Museum archivist, Catherine Jung, the session offered participants guidance on how to preserve photos, textiles, paper materials, and other historic artifacts. Considerations about how to start collecting, identifying, and saving contemporary materials for future generations were also addressed.

We hope to continue to offer such workshops in locations across West Michigan throughout the year. If you are interested in having a similar workshop held in your community, please let us know! Write to kutsche@gvsu.edu or call us at: (616)331-8099.



Start With Why: Creating a Collaborative Youth Leadership Project

How do you design a project that has true, mutual benefit for university and community partners? This was the focus of an October 17 workshop organized by the GVSU Office of Community Engagement. Led by Kutsche Office Director, Melanie Shell-Weiss, Cook Library Scholars Founding Director, Melissa Baker-Boosamra, and Cook Library Center Family Outreach Coordinator, Monica Zavala.

Focusing on lessons gleaned from the pilot year of the Youth Leadership Initiative, a collaboration among the Kutsche Office of Local History, Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities, and the Grand Rapids Public Library, the session provided participants with some suggestions about to how build mutually beneficial partnerships, including benchmarks for assessing these efforts and strategies for fostering more open communication across cultural and class lines.

This meeting was part of the GVSU Community As Classroom Colloquia, which continue all year and are open to the public. More information about the colloquia series can be found at www.gvsu.edu/community

Please visit our website to find more information on:

- **Upcoming events**
- **Internship opportunities**
- **Collaborative endeavors**

www.gvsu.edu/kutsche

Please feel free to contact our office at:

616-331-8099

or by email: kutsche@gvsu.edu

Membership Campaign

Grand Valley State University is Proud to Announce the Kutsche Office Membership Campaign!

The Kutsche Office of Local History is home to the Local History Roundtable as well as different projects helping local groups and people preserve, protect and retain history that is important to them. This is accomplished through oral histories, supervised internships and fellowships, faculty directed projects and the work of experts in their specific fields.

Together these programs support the mission of the Kutsche Office in fostering an appreciation of the common challenges, common destiny, and common humanity of all of us. This is accomplished in part by bringing members of the West Michigan community, students and faculty together to share knowledge and resources about topics of common interest, building an understanding of history that is both exciting and relevant in today's challenging times.

You can be a part of this exciting initiative by becoming a Friend of the Kutsche Office of Local History by making a gift of \$45. Your gift will give you **free admission to the Local History Roundtable and discounts on other programs.**

To make your gift online, please go to www.gvsu.edu/giving/givenow. Or you may mail a check to:

**Grand Valley State University,
Kutsche Office of Local History
PO Box 2005
Grand Rapids MI 49501-2005**

You will receive an acknowledgement and receipt for your gift as your gift helps to preserve local history in our communities.

