

## Project Overview

This three-year manuscript preparation project, titled *20<sup>th</sup> Century Indigenous Michigan: An Oral Tradition*, will involve collecting, editing, and publishing oral histories from Indigenous communities across the state of Michigan. The resulting multi-authored monograph will bring new light to Indigenous lifeways, covering the themes of Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture. The project will forefront traditional oral lifeways by using an Indigenous-centered methodology. The manuscript will be completed and submitted for publication to Wayne State University Press by September 2026. Intended for both an academic and public audience, the monograph will make a significant contribution to the canon of Michigan and Indigenous history. By placing Indigenous voices at the center, this project gives scholars, practitioners, and activists the opportunity to engage with Native history as it was truly lived and experienced by the Native people of Michigan.

## Significance and Impact

Historians and postcolonial theorists have long recognized the ways in which silences in the histories of colonized peoples serve to replicate colonial harm.<sup>1</sup> In the literature of Indigenous history, an enduring silence persists in the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indigenous life. Most literature on Indigenous history deals with the history of colonial contact and colonization prior to 1900. Of the literature that extends into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, historians of Indigenous life have overemphasized Indigenous cultural elements, such as ceremonies, religion, spirituality, traditions, folklore, and the arts, perpetuating notions of Indigenous essentialism.

By telling stories of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indigenous Michigan, this project argues that Indigenous communities not only persisted into the 20<sup>th</sup> century but grew and flourished into the present-day. As a direct result of the activism of Indigenous communities throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Michigan became home to 12 federally recognized tribes and even more state recognized tribes. Indigenous communities maintained sovereignty through tribal government and took agency of their own future as they organized, protested, and fought numerous legal battles to protect the rights of the Indigenous community; established businesses throughout the state; advocated for the land and water of Michigan; protected Indigenous hunting and fishing rights; built schools and colleges for Indigenous students; made efforts to the revitalize the Anishinaabemowin language; and established museums and cultural centers.

By sharing voices from Indigenous communities on their own terms, this project argues that scholarship can do much more than tell the stories of Indigenous tradition. Research that truly values Indigenous life must be conducted with Indigenous traditional lifeways in mind. This project honors Indigenous oral tradition by: compensating oral history participants for their time and knowledge; giving gifts to Native elders participating in the project; inviting participants choose their interviewer; giving participants the choice to be recorded (or not); providing participants the option to be interviewed in their native language; making space for oral history participants to share according to oral traditions of song and dance; traveling to meet oral history participants; making space for smudging and other necessary practices before oral history listening sessions; giving oral history participants the opportunity to share in community groups; and giving oral history participants the opportunity to review and make changes to their shared knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition (New York City, NY: Penguin Random House, 2015); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

## Substance and Context

This monograph is the first text to explore 20<sup>th</sup> Century Michigan Indigenous History through Indigenous oral histories. Most literature on Indigenous history focuses on the period of colonial contact prior to 1900, and Michigan's Indigenous literature is no exception. Richard White's *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics of the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (1991) is a canonical text about Indigenous Michigan during the period of colonial contact.<sup>2</sup> Michael Witgen's *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (2011) is a study of the relationship between Anishinaabeg and Dakota people and the fur trade, while Witgen's more recent book, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (2021), is an exploration of Anishinaabeg political and economic history during the period of colonization.<sup>3</sup> James McClurken's *Our People, Our Journey: The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians* (2009) makes a conscious effort to center Indigenous sources of knowledge from the Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, but is limited to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup>

Of the literature on Indigenous history which ventures into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, very few monographs center Indigenous oral history, and none center Indigenous oral tradition. These texts are limited in scope and focus on one specific Indigenous community in Michigan. Pamela Dobson's *Tree That Never Dies: Oral History of the Michigan Indians* (1978) is an informal study of the Grand Rapids Indigenous community.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Gertrude Prokosch Kurath, Jane Ettawageshik, Fred Ettawageshik, and Michael David McNally's *The Art of Tradition: Sacred Music, Dance, & Myth of Michigan's Anishinaabe, 1946-1955* (2009) is a cultural history of the Ojibwe and Odawa people of Michigan during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>6</sup>

With the establishment of federally recognized tribes across the state of Michigan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a few Indigenous communities in Michigan have been able to publish their own histories. Charmaine M. Benz, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, and the Ziibiwing Cultural Society's *Diba Jimooyung, Telling Our Story: A History of the Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek* (2005) is a cultural history of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe spanning thousands of years.<sup>7</sup> Howard Webkamigad's *Ottawa Stories from the Springs: anishinaabe dibaadjimowinan wodi gaa binjibaamigak wodi mookodjiwong e zhinikaadek* (2015) is a cultural history of the Little Bay Band of Odawa Indians. Again, these texts are limited in scope and heavily focused on Indigenous cultural history.<sup>8</sup>

Our *20<sup>th</sup> Century Indigenous Michigan: An Oral Tradition* monograph will present oral histories from Indigenous communities throughout the state of Michigan. This project will move away from Indigenous

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<sup>2</sup> Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650 1815* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Michael Witgen, *Seeing Red: Indigenous Land, American Expansion, and the Political Economy of Plunder in North America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> James M. McClurken, *Our People, Our Journey: The Little River Band of Ottawa Indians* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Pamela Dobson, ed., *The Tree That Never Dies: Oral history of the Michigan Indians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Grand Rapids Public Library, 1978).

<sup>6</sup> Gertrude Kurath et al., *The Art of Tradition: Sacred Music, Dance & Myth of Michigan's Anishinaabe, 1946-1955* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> Charmaine M. Benz, ed., *Diba Jimooyung, Telling Our Story: A History of the Saginaw Ojibwe Anishinabek* (Michigan: Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan, 2005).

<sup>8</sup> Howard Webkamigad, *Ottawa Stories from the Springs: anishinaabe dibaadjimowinan wodi gaa binjibaamigak wodi mookodjiwong e zhinikaadek* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2015).

cultural histories and instead focus on the ways in which Indigenous people lived and moved through Michigan and the world during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rather than focusing on traumatic histories that have already been chronicled, such as the Indian Boarding Schools project,<sup>9</sup> this monograph will focus on five interconnected themes in Indigenous life: Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture. As the first study of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indigenous life told from the perspective of Indigenous communities, this project will make a significant contribution to the fields of history and Indigenous studies. Furthermore, by introducing a methodological approach that centers Indigenous voices, this project aims to set new ethical standards for conducting research with and for Indigenous communities.

The first chapter of this manuscript is centered on the theme of Sovereignty, especially the way in which Indigenous communities established agency over their own lives, often through long and painful processes in negotiation with state and federal government. This chapter will explore topics such as tribal government, inter-tribal coalition, tribal law, Indigenous health and family services, and Indigenous economic development. The second chapter of the manuscript is centered on the theme of Activism, such as the many ways Indigenous communities advocated for their needs, whether in the legal, political, economic, or social realm. This chapter will explore legal advocacy, political advocacy, protest, student activism, and intersectionality and coalition. The third chapter of the manuscript is centered on the theme of Land, specifically the sacred relationship between Indigenous communities and the Earth. This chapter will explore topics such as land stewardship, water, life, and environmental advocacy. The fourth chapter of the manuscript is centered on the theme of Lifeways and the everyday lives of Indigenous people in Michigan. This chapter will explore topics like Indigenous life on reservations, in cities, in rural areas, and Indigenous work and recreation. The fifth chapter of the manuscript is centered on the theme of Culture will explore various traditions that Indigenous communities carried in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and how those traditions have changed over the last one hundred years. In particular, this chapter will explore topics such as food, language, art, storytelling, and cultural institutions.

### Methods and Execution

This large-scale collaborative project seeks to bring together Indigenous communities from around the state to tell the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century Indigenous Michigan. Given the long history of problematic research methods which have harmed Indigenous communities, in many ways, the methods and execution of this project rival the substance and context of this project in the need for care, rigor, and intentionality.<sup>10</sup> One common way for academic institutions to reproduce colonial violence is to write histories of colonized peoples from the perspective of those in power.<sup>11</sup> Historians have long recognized the need for histories that value lived experience, leading to the legitimization of oral history as historical evidence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup> However, merely collecting oral histories from Native communities is not

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<sup>9</sup> “Department of the Interior Releases Investigative Report, Outlines Next Steps in Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative,” Press Releases, U.S. Department of the Interior, last updated May 11, 2022, <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/departments-interior-releases-investigative-report-outlines-next-steps-federal-indian>; “About Us,” The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, accessed November 27, 2022, <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/about-us/>.

<sup>10</sup> Ashley Hayward et al., “A New Era of Indigenous Research: Community-based Indigenous Research Ethics Protocols in Canada,” *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics* 16, no. 4 (2021): 403-417; “Ethical research,” Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, last modified October 11, 2022, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethical-research>.

<sup>11</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.

<sup>12</sup> Nēpia Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2019).

enough and listening to Native communities is only the first step to repairing the ongoing harm of colonial violence.

In addition to telling Native histories from the perspective of Native people, scholars of color have recognized a myriad of ways in which well-intentioned academic researchers can still reproduce colonial violence in their research methodology: whether by requiring participants to speak in a colonizer's language, asking participants travel to the research site, asking participants to contribute with compensation or recognition for their knowledge and lived experience, or asking participants to conform to dominant modalities of knowledge sharing.<sup>13</sup> With these histories in mind, the project team plans to pursue a research methodology which prioritizes the needs of Indigenous communities, centered on **oral tradition**. Oral tradition departs from oral history in its valorization of traditional oral modalities of knowledge sharing, not merely the recording and distribution of spoken knowledge, as commonly practiced in oral history methodology.<sup>14</sup> For Native communities in Michigan, oral traditions include stories which are shared in Anishinaabemowin, stories shared by way of song, dance, or chant, stories shared between elders and their younger generations, and stories shared in community.

This project gives oral history participants the opportunity to choose with whom they share their story. In Native communities and other communities of color, stories of lived experience are not meant to be shared into a microphone across from an institutional researcher. Instead, elders share their stories with their families and loved ones as a means of providing strength and resilience to the next generation. This project seeks to honor that traditional process by making space for elders to share their experiences with individuals they choose themselves. This project includes a budget for 30 oral history participants: Indigenous elders or knowledge holders who will share their lived experience pertaining to specific topics under the five themes of Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture—and 30 oral history co-participants, or community members chosen by oral history participants to hear their stories. Oral history participants may consent to being recorded, or opt into having their stories shared merely in writing. This project also includes a budget for 6 additional groups of 5 oral history participants, who will have the opportunity to share their knowledge in a collective setting more suited to Indigenous oral tradition. Each of these groups will be built around one of the five themes of Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture, giving participants the opportunity reflect openly on the theme and share their lived experiences with each other. A sixth group is set aside for younger participants who were raised in the 80s and 90s and can bring a unique perspective to the changes in Indigenous Michigan near the turn of the century.

This project seeks to compensate oral history participants for their time and knowledge. Too often, Indigenous communities are asked to participate or consult on projects without compensation or recognition, replicating colonial histories of extraction and reproducing cycles of harm. Every oral history participant will be compensated at a rate of \$100 per hour for up to 3 hours. This compensation rate is designed to reduce barriers to entry for participants who may not be able to participate otherwise. Participants will have the opportunity to share their knowledge and experience in either English or Anishinaabemowin, the shared language of the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodéwadmí peoples of Michigan. Under Hemenway's consultation, the project team has estimated the cost of Anishinaabemowin to English translation to be about \$100 per hour of audio, thus budgeting \$5000 for an estimated 50 hours of audio (approximately half the total 108 hours of audio collected in the project). This project is designed to

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<sup>13</sup> "OHA Statement on Ethics," Oral History Association, accessed November 27, 2022, <https://oralhistory.org/oha-statement-on-ethics/>.

<sup>14</sup> Mahuika, *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition*.

reduce the amount of unnecessary travel for any oral history participants. Many Indigenous community members live in dense cities throughout the state of Michigan. Other Indigenous community members live in rural areas, or on or near reservations far away from major urban areas. The project team has designed a research methodology which will meet participants where they wish to be met, often in the safety of their home communities. The oral history collection team will travel to all 12 federally recognized tribal nations throughout the upper and lower peninsula and have budgeted as such.

The project team will complete the oral history collection process in 2 phases. Phase I: Oral History Collection, Lower Peninsula, will take place from May 2024 to August 2024. Phase II: Oral History Collection, Upper Peninsula, will take place from May 2025 to August 2025. The project team will finalize the list of 30 oral history participants by extending invitations through many Indigenous networks throughout the state, including tribal governments, tribal schools, and tribal organizations. During this process, the project team will seek out elders and knowledge holders who can speak directly to the five themes of the project: Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture. The 30 oral history participants will be asked to nominate their co-participant, and travel plans and oral history listening session time and location will be finalized with support of the Humanities Clinic graduate student interns. The project team will also finalize the 6 groups of collective oral history listening sessions, each centered on one of the 5 themes and the final group of younger generation participants. Chen will travel to each oral history listening session location accompanied by one of the Humanities Clinic graduate student interns.

Oral history participants will be compensated for 3 hours of their time and shared knowledge. The first half hour of each oral history listening session will begin with blessings and introductions. During this time, oral history co-participants will be asked to lead a smudging ceremony, with adaptations made for cultural variations between Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodéwadmi peoples. Hemenway will consult on best practices for each oral history listening session. Chen will introduce the overall project and its goals and listen to any questions, feedback, and concerns. Chen will ask for consent from both participants to be recorded. Chen will then introduce the specific topic of expertise under one of the five themes of Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture. Chen will invite the oral history participant and co-participant to share their knowledge in any way they see fit. Chen will listen and take notes, while the accompanying Humanities Clinic graduate student intern will handle the recording technology and keep track of time. The Humanities Clinic graduate student intern will give a gentle reminder at the 1.5 and 2 hour mark. In the final half hour, Chen will thank the participants for their time and knowledge, listen to any questions, feedback, and concerns, and give gifts and compensation to both the participant and co-participant.

### **History of the Project and Its Productivity**

Dr. Karen Marrero and Eric Hemenway have collaborated on various projects related to Indigenous history for nearly a decade. In 2022, Dr. Lillian Wilson and Lily Jiale Chen proposed this collaborative manuscript preparation project and formalized the project team. The project team listened to community members while shaping the manuscript, narrowing the project to the 20<sup>th</sup> century in order to respond to repeated frustration regarding the lack of literature extending Indigenous history beyond the 1800s. Hemenway consulted extensively on the chapter themes, advising against the repetition of boarding school narratives and over-emphasis on religious or spiritual components. Chen began studying the literature of oral tradition, seeking better ways to ethically engage with local Indigenous communities by honoring Indigenous traditions and lifeways. The project team worked collectively to garner support for

the project, and Hemenway and Chen began reaching out to local Indigenous organizations and individuals to flesh out the list of oral history participants for the project. This list will continue to grow through the project planning period from the submission of the grant in November 2023 to the start of the oral history collection process in May 2024.

This publication of this monograph in 2027 is only the beginning of a multi-year process honoring 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indigenous Michigan history throughout the state. The project team intends to seek additional funding through the Michigan Humanities Council following the manuscript preparation project period in order to further the long-term goals of the project. First, the project team is anticipating a collaboration with Wayne State University Libraries, which will host the remaining portions of the collected oral histories that must be edited and cut for length to fit the monograph. These oral histories will be made public in line with the publication of the monograph.

Second, the publication of the monograph will be followed by an academic conference on 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indigenous history hosted by the Wayne State University Department of History. This conference will invite all project participants and additional speakers to respond and expand on the monograph. This conference will serve as both a celebration of the contributions of the monograph to the field and as an invitation for academics to engage in ethical research on Indigenous history throughout the world. Although this text is centered on Michigan Indigenous history, the project engages in oral history methodologies which will lay the foundation for new methodological considerations throughout the field of Indigenous research.

Third, the publication of this highly anticipated monograph will lead to new curatorial and educational programs in museums throughout the state. Both the Michigan History Museum of the Michigan History Center and Detroit Historical Museum of the Detroit Historical Society are eager for the publication of this text, which will inform the exhibits and public programs on Native history at both museums. The monograph will also benefit tribal museums in Michigan, including the Eyaawing Museum and Cultural Center of the Grand Traverse Bay Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and the Ziibiwing Center of Anishinabe Culture and Lifeways of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, both of whom will have access to the monograph and unpublished oral histories to inform their respective museums. Additionally, as the State of Michigan continues its audit of all state historical markers, this monograph will serve as evidence for new historical markers which celebrate 20<sup>th</sup> Century Indigenous Michigan.<sup>15</sup>

Fourth, this monograph will further the ongoing project to improve the K-12 and collegiate level education surrounding Indigenous Michigan history. Project Consultant Eric Hemenway already leads efforts to improve educational curriculum of Indigenous history at the state level, and this monograph will serve as a foundational text from which to build standardized curriculum. Teachers throughout the state are eager to teach Indigenous history but are desperate for new literature, as evidenced by the slew of research requests the project team has encountered from educators throughout the state. With this demand in mind, the project team is eager to make this knowledge accessible to the public to engage knowledge seekers at all educational levels.

Finally, this monograph seeks to inspire new Native to Native collaboration, inter-tribal collaboration, and Native to non-Native collaboration on a range of academic and non-academic projects. The history of settler colonialism in the United States has led to irrevocable harm to both Native and non-Native

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<sup>15</sup> “Commemorating Michigan history since 1955,” Historical Markers, Michigan.gov, last modified January 20, 2021, <https://www.michigan.gov/mhc/historical-markers>.

peoples, most of which is yet to be addressed or repaired.<sup>16</sup> A glaring result of this colonial history is the ongoing violence produced by silences in both academic and nonacademic literature on the history of oppressed peoples.<sup>17</sup> These silences are particularly visible regarding 20<sup>th</sup> century Indigenous history, as dominant narratives of Indigenous life continue to paint the false picture of the end of Indigenous life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the publication of this monograph, the project team seeks to forge new connections and build trust across communities, leading to new opportunities to repair the harm of colonial violence by honoring and celebrating Indigenous life in the United States.

## Collaboration

**Dr. Karen Marrero** researches, writes and teaches early North American and Native American history, with a concentration on settler-Indigenous interactions at Detroit and in the Great Lakes. Her book *Detroit's Hidden Channels: The Power of French-Indigenous Families in the Eighteenth Century* (Michigan State University Press & University of Manitoba Press, 2020) explores the means by which seventeenth and eighteenth-century Indigenous and French kin networks utilized Detroit's status as a diplomatic center to divert and revalue resources. Because it was located in Anishinaabewaki, the Anishinaabe homelands, and occupied by multiple Indigenous nations, Detroit was then and still is at the center of political, economic, and cultural power in the Great Lakes. Dr. Marrero has published articles and book chapters on French and Native American women in the eighteenth-century Great Lakes, and on French and Indigenous communities of the Detroit/Windsor borderland in the early nineteenth century and is currently finalizing an edited book on the history of early Detroit. For this project, Dr. Marrero will provide expertise in Indigenous history and oversee the final manuscript. She will be working part-time during the summer months of June, July, and August in 2024, 2025, and 2026, writing and advising on the manuscript.

**Eric Hemenway** is an Anishnaabe/Odawa from Cross Village, Michigan. Eric is the Director of Repatriation, Archives and Records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. Eric oversees the management, collecting and preservation of historic documents and materials for the tribe. These materials are used to support LTBB government functions, its citizens and educational initiatives, such as; museum exhibits, media, curriculum, publications, historical interpretation, signage, web content and presentations. Collaborations on exhibits have included the National Park Service, state of Michigan, Mackinac State Historic Parks, Emmet County, Welt Museum Wien Vienna, Austria and the Harbor Springs History Museum, as well as other museums. For this project, Hemenway will provide expertise in Indigenous history and facilitate connections between the project team and oral history participants. He will contribute 10 hours a week for 17 weeks during May, June, July, and August in 2024 and 2025. In the summer of 2026, Hemenway will contribute 10 hours a week for 12 weeks during June, July, and August as a consultant on the final manuscript.

**Dr. Lillian Wilson** is a historian of nineteenth- and twentieth-century United States. As the Humanities Career Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow at Wayne State, Dr. Wilson builds community partnerships with non-profits and cultural institutions in Detroit, and mentors graduate students as they work on semester-long internships with community partners. Her work on public humanities and higher education has appeared in *Humanities for All*, *GradEdge*, and *Perspectives*. Dr. Wilson's academic research examines class, gender, and equity at museums. In 2015, she led the acclaimed Detroit 67 Oral History Project at the Detroit Historical Museum. For this project, Dr. Wilson will provide oral history and project

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<sup>16</sup> Amy Lonetree, *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

<sup>17</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*.

management expertise and oversee Humanities Clinic graduate student interns. Dr. Wilson will handle travel and lodging logistics and coordinate participant compensation, recording, transcription, and Anishinaabemowin-English translation services. She will contribute 10 hours a week for 17 weeks during May, June, July, and August in 2024 and 2025. In the summer of 2026, Dr. Wilson will contribute 10 hours a week for 12 weeks during June, July, and August as a consultant on the final manuscript.

**Lily Jiale Chen** is a scholar of Indigeneity and museum decolonization in the field of American Culture. She obtained her BA in Sociology and Comparative Race and Ethnic Studies from the University of Chicago in 2017, and she is set to complete her Master's in Public History at Wayne State University in the Spring of 2023. Chen will begin her doctoral program in American Culture beginning in the Fall of 2023. She currently serves as a curatorial consultant in Indigenous history at the Detroit Historical Society, as well as a scholar consultant on the Michigan State Historical Marker Project for Detroit and consultant for the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center. Lily Jiale Chen will serve as the primary oral historian on the project, traveling to all collection sites and meeting oral history participants for their oral history listening sessions. She will contribute 20 hours a week for 17 weeks during May, June, July, and August in 2024 and 2025. In the summer of 2026, she will contribute 20 hours a week for 13 weeks during June, July, and August as a writer for the final manuscript.

The **Wayne State Humanities Clinic** is an innovative internship program that enhances graduate teaching in the humanities by hiring graduate students to work as paid, semester-long interns with Detroit non-profits and small businesses. The mission of the Humanities Clinic is to prepare graduate students for meaningful and diverse careers while supporting Detroit communities. The Humanities Clinic is based in the Department of History and directed by Professor and Chair, Elizabeth Faue, and Humanities Career Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow, Lillian Wilson. For the *20th Century Indigenous Michigan: An Oral Tradition* project, the Humanities Clinic will hire two graduate interns annually to support research and oral history collection. Interns will contribute 100 hours each during 3 months in June, July, and August in 2024 and 2025. Interns will assist Dr. Wilson on all travel and lodging logistics and will also coordinate participant compensation, recording, transcription, and Anishinaabemowin-English translation services. The interns will alternate remote work with travel to oral history collection sites alongside co-project manager, Lily Chen.

**Indigenous collaborators** will include the 12 federally recognized tribes of Michigan: Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Potawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe), Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians, Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Hannahville Indian Community, Bay Mills Indian Community, and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The project team is also looking forward to collaborating with intertribal organizations like the United Tribes of Michigan and the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, social service American Indian Health and Family Services, and community organizations such as the North American Indian Association of Detroit, South Eastern Michigan Indians, and Detroit Indian People's Alliance, political organizations such as the Anishinabek Caucus, as well as Native students from tribal colleges and universities and the Native American Student Organizations of the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Northern Michigan University, and Wayne State University.

## **Work Plan**

This project will begin with a planning period that will run from October 2023 to April 2024. During this time, the project team, consisting of Dr. Karen Marrero, Eric Hemenway, Dr. Lillian Wilson, and Lily



Jiale Chen, will finalize the list of oral histories to be conducted during Phase I and Phase II. Eric Hemenway and Lily Jiale Chen will lead the effort to invite oral history participants for the project. Participants will be invited from all 12 federally recognized tribes, other tribal communities, tribal schools, colleges, and universities, tribal organizations, Native organizations, and other Native communities. Dr. Lillian Wilson and Lily Jiale Chen will begin to make travel plans for Phase I in January 2024 and continue to finalize travel plans through April 2024.

**Phase I: Oral History Collection, Lower Peninsula, will take place from May 2024 to August 2024.**

These oral histories will take place throughout the lower peninsula, and travel will be arranged to all seven federally recognized tribes in the lower peninsula: Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Little River Band of Ottawa Indians, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Potawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe), Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, and Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians. Additional travel throughout the lower peninsula will be arranged as necessary. Dr. Lillian Wilson will coordinate all travel and lodging logistics, assisted by the two WSU Humanities Clinic interns. Dr. Wilson and the Humanities Clinic interns will also coordinate participant compensation, recording, transcription, and Anishinaabemowin-English translation services. Lily Jiale Chen will consult with Eric Hemenway to coordinate oral history listening sessions with all oral history participants. Lily Jiale Chen will conduct physical travel to each oral history listening site, accompanied by one of the WSU Humanities Clinic interns, who will alternate travel with remote work. Oral history listening sessions will take place primarily on weekends from June 1, 2024, through August 31, 2024. Dr. Karen Marrero and Eric Hemenway will edit the oral history transcriptions collected during Phase I in preparation for the final manuscript. Phase I: Oral History Collection, Lower Peninsula, will end on August 31, 2024.

**Phase II: Oral History Collection, Upper Peninsula, will take place from May 2025 to August 2025.**

These oral histories will take place throughout the upper peninsula, and travel will be arranged to all five federally recognized tribes in the upper peninsula: Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Hannahville Indian Community, Bay Mills Indian Community, and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Additional travel throughout the upper peninsula will be arranged as necessary. Again, Dr. Lillian Wilson will primarily handle all travel and lodging logistics, assisted by the two Humanities Clinic interns. Lily Jiale Chen will consult with Eric Hemenway to coordinate oral history listening sessions with all oral history participants. Lily Jiale Chen will conduct physical travel to each oral history listening session site, accompanied by one of the Humanities Clinic interns, who will alternate travel with remote work. Oral history listening sessions will take place primarily on weekends from June 1, 2025, through August 31, 2025. Dr. Karen Marrero and Eric Hemenway will begin edit the oral history transcriptions collected during Phase II in preparation for the final manuscript. Phase II: Oral History Collection, Upper Peninsula, will end on August 31, 2025.

**Phase III: Manuscript Completion** will take place from June 2026 through August 2026. During this time, the project team will complete the full monograph and prepare for submission to Wayne State University Press by September 1, 2026. Lily Jiale Chen will author the introduction and conclusion chapters for the monograph. The full project team will also contribute to writing a short introduction and conclusion to each of the five chapters covering the themes of Sovereignty, Activism, Land, Lifeways, and Culture. The final manuscript will be completed and submitted for publication by September 1, 2026, concluding the three year grant period.

**Final Product and Dissemination**

The final product of this project is a multi-authored monograph titled *20<sup>th</sup> Century Indigenous Michigan: An Oral Tradition*. The book will contain 5 chapters in total, plus an introduction and conclusion.

The first chapter of the monograph, tentatively titled **Sovereignty**, will begin with a brief introduction, written by the project team, introducing concepts of Sovereignty as they relate to Indigenous communities in Michigan. The chapter will include oral histories, edited for length, which address topics related to the overall theme of Sovereignty. The topics will include: 1) Tribal government. This section will include oral histories from current and past members of tribal governments, many of whom were the founding members of tribal councils and established tribal sovereignty for their tribes throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century. This section will also include oral histories from members of tribal governments which are currently seeking federal recognition, many of which began organizing in the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century. 2) Tribal coalition. This section will include oral histories from members of intertribal organizations which seek to protect Indigenous sovereignty across the state, including United Tribes of Michigan and Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan. 3) Tribal law. This section will include oral histories from members of the tribal legal system, including tribal judges, tribal lawyers, and tribal law enforcement. 4) Tribal health and family. This section will include oral histories from members of the community who work to protect Indigenous sovereignty over their health and families, including social workers from organizations such as American Indian Health and Family Services and others who serve under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). 5) Indigenous economic development. This section will include oral histories from Indigenous community members involved in Indigenous economic development, including tribal casinos and resorts as well as small businesses throughout the state of Michigan.

The second chapter of the monograph, tentatively titled **Activism**, will again begin with a brief introduction highlighting different forms of Activism in Indigenous communities in Michigan. This chapter will include oral histories which address topics related to the overall theme of Activism. The topics will include: 1) Legal Advocacy. This section will include oral histories from members of the community who have advocated for Indigenous legal rights throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Michigan, including rights related to farming, fishing, hunting, mining, logging/deforestation, and natural resource preservation. 2) Political advocacy. This section will include oral histories featuring the work of Indigenous activists in the political sphere, including members of the Anishinabek Caucus and other Indigenous political advocacy groups. 3) Protest. This section will include oral histories from members of the community who have participated in grassroots movements for Indigenous culture and lifeways, including over issues related to Land Back, Columbus Day, American Indian Boarding Schools, hate crimes, repatriation, monuments, memorials, and mascots. 4) Student Activism. This section will include oral histories featuring the activism of student groups across the state of Michigan, including students at tribal colleges and universities and Native American Student Organizations. 5) Intersectionality and Coalition. This section will include oral histories featuring activism from various groups within Indigenous communities, including women's groups and LGBTQ groups which seek to honor the needs of Indigenous people at intersection of multiple forms of structural oppression.

The third chapter of the monograph, tentatively titled **Land**, will begin with an introduction to Indigenous people's relationship to land in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter will include oral histories which address topics related to the overall theme of Land. 1) Land Stewardship. This section will include oral histories which explore Indigenous land stewardship in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including Indigenous responses to climate change and efforts toward natural resource preservation. 2) Water. This section will include oral histories which explore Indigenous stewardship of the bodies of water and waterways that give life to Indigenous communities, including the Great Lakes and the tens of thousands of lakes and rivers that make up Michigan's natural environment. 3) Life. This section will include oral histories which celebrate and

mourn the various forms of life that have been heavily impacted by climate change, including Black Ash, Birch, Porcupines, Eagles, and other birds of prey. 4) Environmental Advocacy. This section will include oral histories which discuss organized efforts to protect the natural environment, including tribal natural resource departments and Indigenous collaboration with federal environmental organizations.

The fourth chapter of the monograph, tentatively titled **Lifeways**, will begin with an introduction to the concept of Lifeways and introduce Indigenous lifeways in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This chapter will include oral histories which cover a variety of Indigenous lifeways, including: 1) Reservation Life. This section will include oral histories from members of Indigenous communities that make life on tribal land, diving into both traditional and modern lifeways of hunting, fishing, gathering, and picking, and how these lifeways have changed over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 2) City Life. This section will include oral histories from members of Indigenous communities that make life in major cities. 3) Rural Life. This section will include oral histories from members of Indigenous communities who live in rural communities and will explore how rural Natives make life in farmlands throughout Michigan. 4) Work. This section will include oral histories which cover experiences of employment in the lives of Indigenous people throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This section will explore how Indigenous people remained creative and resilient even while facing a myriad of barriers to equitable employment. This section will also cover the large-scale migration of Indigenous people to Detroit during the auto-industry boom in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. 6) Play. This section will include oral histories which cover how Indigenous people lived life and made meaning outside of work, including through leisure, travel, social events, sports, and the arts.

The fifth chapter of the monograph, tentatively titled **Culture**, explores Indigenous culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including food, language, art, storytelling, and other aspects of Indigenous heritage. This chapter will include: 1) Food. This section will explore the diversity of food in Anishinabek communities in Michigan, including Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodéwadmí foods and food practices, as well as new foods from 20<sup>th</sup> century Indigenous migrants to Michigan. 2) Language. This section will celebrate Anishinaabemowin and other Indigenous languages that have flourished in Michigan in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This section will include oral histories from Anishinaabemowin educators and other communities that work to keep Indigenous languages alive. 3) Art. This section will celebrate Indigenous art throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, calling attention to Native artists of all forms who have contributed to the large canon of Indigenous art in Michigan, including artists, singers, dancers, musicians, creative writers, healers, and other artists. 4) Stories. This section will honor Native storytellers, knowledge keepers, writers, and historians who carried the stories of Indigenous life through the 20<sup>th</sup> century. 5) Cultural Institutions and Celebrations. This section will contain oral histories from members of various cultural institutions, including tribal museums such as the Eyaawing, Ziibiwing, and Blackbird, and other Native arts organizations such as the Waawiiyaataanong Arts Council.

This book is intended for a wide audience, including both academic and public readership. This monograph will be intentionally written and edited for accessibility, with an upper-level high school student/entry-level collegiate reader in mind. As a project made possible by Indigenous collaborators, it critically important that the monograph can be read and shared within Indigenous communities, many of whom choose not to engage with academic jargon. The project team will submit the completed monograph to Wayne State University Press at the end of the project period in September 2026. The project team is looking forward to meeting with WSU Press every six months beginning May 2024 to keep the press updated on the progress of the monograph. WSU Press has advised the project team to aim for a 256-page monograph, balancing rigor with public preference. This monograph is anticipated in 2027.