



NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE

Humanities

DIVISION OF PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

## **Narrative Section of a Successful Application**

The attached document contains the grant narrative and selected portions of a previously funded grant application. It is not intended to serve as a model, but to give you a sense of how a successful application may be crafted. Every successful application is different, and each applicant is urged to prepare a proposal that reflects its unique project and aspirations. Prospective applicants should consult the NEH Division of Preservation and Access application guidelines at <http://www.neh.gov/grants/preservation/humanities-collections-and-reference-resources> for instructions. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to consult with the NEH Division of Preservation and Access staff well before a grant deadline.

Note: The attachment only contains the grant narrative and selected portions, not the entire funded application. In addition, certain portions may have been redacted to protect the privacy interests of an individual and/or to protect confidential commercial and financial information and/or to protect copyrighted materials.

**Project Title:** Preparing to Preserve, Digitize, and Catalog the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum Collection

**Institution:** Massachusetts Institute of Technology

**Project Director:** Christine Walley

**Grant Program:** Humanities Collections and Reference Resources

# Project Narrative

## Overview

The proposed project will complete detailed plans for preserving and digitizing a portion of the incredible wealth of materials collected in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum, making the collection accessible to scholars as well as the general public via a searchable, interactive website. Elements of this planning project include:

- Assessing the condition of the collection (photos, audio, video, MS);
- Prioritizing content for preservation and digitization;
- Creating a metadata scheme that supports access, exploration, and analysis by multiple audiences (scholars, students, journalists, and the general public);
- Developing technical standards for preserving selected assets;
- Structuring a preservation and digitization work plan; and
- Solidifying intellectual and copyright control over the collection.

## History of the Region, the Museum, and the Collection

Southeast Chicago, along with northwest Indiana, forms part of the Calumet region, once one of the largest concentrations of industry found in the United States and the world. This former steel-making region was integral to key transformations in American history. It was central to 19th and early 20th century histories of immigration and labor struggles that were bound up with an emerging industrial economy; it was crucial to the United States' mid-twentieth century economic dominance apparent in the building of skyscrapers, the mechanization of the country, and the prosecution of world wars. And, in more recent decades, it experienced the widespread social and economic fallout linked to deindustrialization that has plagued many parts of the Midwest, the United States, and beyond. In the early 1980s, the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum was created just as the regional steel industry was collapsing, and it would become a central repository for area residents to collect and preserve artifacts relating to the industrial as well as social, cultural, and environmental history of this once economically vibrant region.

The Southeast Chicago Historical Museum is a highly unusual museum that emerged through community-based efforts on the part of mostly working class residents to document the history of the region, its industry, and the many ethnic groups who settled there. The museum itself is an all-volunteer institution located in one room of the Calumet Park Fieldhouse on Lake Michigan and is deeply embedded within the community. The Southeast Chicago Historical Society was originally spearheaded by residents interested in commemorating regional history in the wake of the US bicentennial. It was led by James Fitzgibbons, a former general foreman at US Steel South Works, and supported by other area residents including labor leader Ed Sadlowski.

Subsequent funding allowed filmmaker James Martin and historian Dominic Pacyga at Chicago's Columbia College to work closely with residents during the early 1980s to begin collecting materials relating to the region's history. This project represented the first sustained engagement by scholars with this area and one that resulted in a documentary film, *Wrapped in Steel*, columns in a local newspaper, and various photographic volumes, but no written academic accounts. The materials from this project were later incorporated into the historical preservation efforts of Southeast Chicago community residents themselves. After the grant ended, the materials that had been collected about the steel mill communities were donated to the Southeast Chicago Historical Society, which had founded a small museum in 1985. The Southeast Chicago Historical Museum now houses the historical materials from this project as well as the large number of artifacts, photos, sound recordings, videos, newspapers and other items collected and donated by area residents and others since the 1980s.

The museum is a much beloved local institution, serving as the “attic” of Southeast Chicago and run for nearly three decades on a volunteer basis. The museum is visited by students and an occasional researcher, but mostly by former steelworkers and community residents, who frequent it to converse with others who care about the past of this increasingly neglected area. The current director, Rod Sellers, is a former high school history teacher who was raised in the region and is highly committed to helping other residents collect and document their history. The Museum is particularly important to scholars of American economic and cultural history, given the dearth of widely available information on Southeast Chicago. There is a substantial body of historical work on the city of Chicago itself, and Southeast Chicago is often mentioned in passing in relation to topics of more general significance for other parts of the city (for example, in histories of immigration and industrialization). However, with the notable exception of Dominic Pacyga’s work on South Side Polish immigrants and the just-released volume *Steel Barrio* (researched in part at the Museum), there has been little in-depth historical research conducted in the area. In fact, Southeast Chicago as an integrated region has been noticeably absent from much scholarly discussion, despite the central economic role that the region has played nationally.

This one-room museum is crammed with countless materials. These artifacts include a wealth of historical memorabilia, ranging from such items as a diorama of Southeast Chicago’s central commercial district in the 1940s to the last steel beam produced at US Steel - South Works in 1992. It also includes: local and regional newspapers and periodicals; steel mill literature and plant magazines; union materials; countless photos; films and videos including home movies depicting local Labor Day parades, the demolition of the steel mills, and community events; audio- and video- taped oral histories relating to the steel industry, World War II, and ethnic heritage; materials from the wide variety of ethnic groups historically based in Southeast Chicago as well as ethnic churches, schools, and other institutions; and materials on the environmental history of the region from the pervasive wetlands to local environmental activism opposing the region’s numerous landfills. Due to a lack of space, the museum has had to stop accepting certain items and there is limited ability to exhibit even the materials that the museum already houses. There are thousands of photographs, for example, that have never been viewed by anyone other than the museum director. The ability to access the museum is further limited by the fact that it is only open one afternoon per week due to limited funds.

### **Why preserve this collection?**

Given the continuing neglect of working-class history over many years – a tendency particularly problematic for working class communities that have become even more marginalized in a post-industrial economy – this treasure trove of historical materials offers a striking opportunity. Rather than depicting history in terms of an inevitable progression, one in which a post-industrial era replaces an industrial one in evolutionary fashion, this museum collection does something different. It allows a window onto the contested history of the region, the meanings this history has held for area residents, the struggles and challenges they have faced, the possibilities for alternative historical accounts, and the efforts of community activists to shape a still-emergent post-industrial future in Southeast Chicago.

The question of ensuring the long-term future of this treasured collection of working class history, as well as allowing greater access to area residents, a broader public, and interested scholars, is both critical and urgent. Over the years, there have been various efforts to increase the collection’s accessibility. In the early 2000s, Sellers, and other grassroots community leaders sought to raise funds for a “steel museum” that would document the rich social history of the Southeast Chicago steel mill communities and that would incorporate the last remaining mill structures in the area. Despite some initial financial contributions, the necessary resources proved impossible to raise. Since then, a handful of the Southeast Chicago History Museum materials

have been placed online through other institutions. For example, through the Industrial Heritage Archives of Chicago's Calumet Region (or IHACCR) project, a few historical images from the Museum have been placed on websites such as the Pullman State Historic site and the Illinois Digital Archives. However, only a tiny fraction of the collection is currently online; moreover, such sites do not allow the materials to be viewed in conjunction with other museum materials in ways that could generate more substantive insight into the region.

### **Proposed Use of NEH Funding**

The requested Foundations program funding will help lay the groundwork for preserving this collection and making it accessible online to the general public, area residents, and scholars through an interactive website. Only 25% of the materials in the museum have so far been digitized, and even some of the scanned materials lack state-of-the-art formats and/or cannot be converted to current formats without being rescanned. The proposed funding would be used to assess the museum collections for materials suitable for uploading to a new website, to determine selection criteria for preservation, to select suitable modes of archiving and preservation (including test cases of various materials), to create a metadata scheme, to develop a work plan for completing the project, and to help establish copyright control over this collection.

After the foundational work has been completed, additional support will be sought from NEH and other sources to fund the digitization and uploading of material as well as the design of a state-of-the-art interactive website. The purpose of the website will be two-fold. First, it will create an accessible and usable archive of historical sound, visual, and textual materials for scholars and the public. Second, it will create a curated storytelling platform where community members could use these artifacts as prompts to tell their own "stories" about Southeast Chicago, expanding the overall amount of historical material available about the region and offering a way to explore how everyday stories provide an alternative means of understanding the changing landscape of American society.

### *Context of the future website*

The storytelling component of the planned website is part of the larger transmedia *Exit Zero Project* ([www.exitzeroproject.org](http://www.exitzeroproject.org)) being created by (PI) Christine Walley and (consultant) Chris Boebel at MIT. Christine Walley, an anthropologist who was raised in Southeast Chicago as part of a steelworking family, has been engaged in long-term and on-going research in the area. She is the author of a recently published book *Exit Zero: Family and Class in Post-Industrial Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2013). Filmmaker Chris Boebel and Walley are also completing a documentary film entitled *Exit Zero* about the region. (A rough cut of the film screened at Chicago's Field Museum in April 2013). Chris Boebel has also worked in the region for more than a decade. In 2006, he partnered with Southeast Chicago community groups to create the short environmental documentary *The Evolving Calumet*.

Both the *Exit Zero* film and book use family stories told over multiple generations to explore the histories of industrialization and deindustrialization in Southeast Chicago as well as the links between deindustrialization and expanding class inequalities throughout the United States. To create the proposed website, Walley and Boebel are collaborating with MIT's Open Documentary Lab, a research group that is a primary leader in creating and studying new forms of online documentary work made possible by emerging technologies. Walley, Boebel, and OpenDocLab technologists will work with the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum to create an interactive website that will serve both as a usable historical archive and a story-telling platform. The open source software used for the proposed site will allow it be replicated by other communities and groups dealing with the long-term impacts of deindustrialization, allowing for a publicly assessable national network of sites that will allow contributors and users to reflect on questions

regarding the loss of industry and the transformed class landscape of the United States. The Chicago Field Museum has also expressed interest in collaborating with the Exit Zero Project and the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum and in including the proposed website as part of a network of projects supporting the emergent bi-state Calumet Heritage Area.

### **Project Significance**

This project is significant for its efforts to preserve working-class history largely from the point of view of working-class residents themselves. The NEH-funded Foundations project will lay the groundwork for creating a website that will allow previously inaccessible material to become available to and searchable for scholars and the general public, while the future story-telling platform will allow for ongoing community engagement with this history. The museum currently hosts slide shows and other events in Southeast Chicago's church basements, libraries, union halls, and other community meeting places, allowing area residents who are not online to participate in various forms of history sharing and collection. This online project will make it possible for community members who have since moved away in search of work or for retirement but who actively foster ties to Southeast Chicago to participate in such efforts. It will also allow younger residents – who are comfortable online but less aware of the region's history – to be involved in the storytelling and meaning-making surrounding this critical episode in their community and nation's history. Just as importantly, the project will also make this history more readily available to scholars, who will be able to access online historical documentation regarding such topics as industrialization, immigration, deindustrialization, and environmental issues in the region, and the general public, who will gain a rich sense of what it was like to live in an American industrial (or de-industrialized) community at specific historical moments.

### *Central humanities themes, questions, and disciplines*

The larger vision for this project brings together the disciplines of history and cultural anthropology, weaving their viewpoints together. The project is about the documentation of history, but also about how and why people tell stories about their own histories. It is about the content of history, but also about why that history is important to residents, why some people choose to ask certain questions and not others, and what this history looks like from different points of view. It is about preserving and collecting historical records of the past - textual, visual, and auditory - that are inaccessible or in danger of being lost. But it is also about how and why we imagine the past in particular ways.

In the broadest terms, the materials associated with the proposed Museum website, like the *Exit Zero* project with which it is affiliated, offers an intimate portrait of how Americans talk – and fail to talk – about social class and underscores the social, economic, and environmental fallout of deindustrialization in various parts of the Midwest as well as its links to heightened economic inequalities in the United States more broadly. In this collection, family and personal stories (in the form of oral narratives, memoirs, stories elicited by photos and material artifacts, and stories told through photos and home movies) will be interwoven and brought into dialogue with each other. These stories will serve to bridge the past with the region's post-industrial present in an effort to make sense of a changing national landscape in which working Americans have become increasingly marginalized. Such efforts are crucial in that reevaluating this local past is an essential part of understanding the present of the US more generally and finding ways to move forward on a national level.

### *Nature and size of the collection*

The collections housed in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum are wide-ranging and include:

1. *Materials on industry and labor:* Exhibits, albums, photographs, documents, artifacts, etc. relating to Wisconsin Steel, Republic Steel, US Steel-South Works, Acme Steel, Pressed Steel, State Line Generating Station, and General Mills; also materials on the important labor event known as the Memorial Day Massacre in 1937 as well as various union histories; numerous oral histories conducted with steelworkers.
2. *Materials on community, neighborhood, and ethnic history:* Materials on ethnic social organizations including neighborhood churches, schools, and other community institutions (includes a focus on Irish, German, Scandinavian, Polish, Slovenian, Italian, Lithuanian, Slovak, Croatian, Serbian, Greek, African-American, and Mexican groups); materials on neighborhood civic organizations; materials on working class culture (including a recent collection on movie-going in early 20th century Southeast Chicago)
3. *Oral history collection:* Includes extensive audio-taped and video-taped oral history collections: with area steelworkers (through the “History from the Mill Project” with Metropolitan Family Services as well as an additional oral history project in conjunction with the Chicago Field Museum); with veterans of World War II (in association with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project); with Mexican-American community residents; with Hegewisch residents (a largely Polish-American community in Southeast Chicago); also includes extensive unused interviews from the “Evolving Calumet” short film about the industrialized Calumet River (director Chris Boebel) as well as numerous interviews included over a ten year period for the Exit Zero documentary (director Chris Boebel, producer Chris Walley); additional oral histories conducted with a range of residents under the Museum’s auspices
4. *Video collection:* Includes materials on the demolition of area steel mills in the 1980s and 90s shot by residents; regional news coverage of the demise of area mills; home movies of local events ranging from historic Labor Day parades and Miss East Side pageants to Christmas pageants; on unsuccessful city attempts in the early 1990s to build a “Lake Calumet Airport” on top of the old steel neighborhoods; on the Memorial Day Massacre in 1937; on early working class culture and consumption practices including sites like the Roby Race Track from the 1920s; on the environmental history of the region; on the steel mills (for example, dumping slag at Wisconsin Steel); on local architectural landmarks including the building of the Chicago Skyway in the 1950s; interviews regarding race riots at Trumbull Park Housing Projects in the 1950s; histories of regional railroads; dozens of oral histories with area residents; videos documenting individual neighborhood history
5. *Collection from the original Southeast Chicago Historical Project* supported by a Columbia College grant in the early 1980s (James Martin, PI; Dominic Pacyga, consultant)
6. *Environmental history collection:* Materials on historic wetlands in the region; reports on industrial pollution; materials on the history of the Calumet region; on the Chicago Port District; on environmental activism against regional landfills; on efforts to revitalize industrial brownfields in a post-industrial era; on grassroots activist efforts to create an “ecological park” in the area
7. *Map collection and other artifacts:* Maps of Southeast Chicago from different historical periods and created by groups ranging from the Army Core of Engineers to local artists. (These maps may be used in later phases of the project website as means to explore the landscape of Southeast Chicago in virtual terms at particular historical moments through sites associated with a range of visual, acoustic and textual materials)

8. *Architectural materials collection*: Materials on various architectural sites in Southeast Chicago ranging from the state line marker, the Memorial Day Massacre site, the early Von Zirngibl gravesite; as well as materials collected through the “Teaching History Through Architecture” project conducted in association with Northeastern Illinois University

The Southeast Chicago Historical Museum also has an extensive collection of rare local newspapers including the now defunct Daily Calumet (the longest-circulating local newspaper in US history) as well as The Hegewisch News and Southeast Chicago Observer. Funding to preserve those materials will be sought from sources other than NEH.

#### *Relationship to similar collections*

Some of the materials from Columbia College project, known as the Southeast Chicago Historical Project (SECHP), were displayed in the early 1980s at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. Some museum photographs are currently available online through the Industrial Heritage Archives of Chicago’s Calumet Region (IHACCR) project at the Pullman State Historic and Illinois Digital Archives websites. The number of photographs accessible through these sites is limited, however, and, in the case of the Pullman site, continuously directs viewers back to the main site, making it difficult to engage with Southeast Chicago in any depth. The Southeast Chicago Historical Museum does have an existing rudimentary website. However, it is severely limited by the fact that it is not designed to be updated or changed and does not offer access to the artifacts in the Museum themselves.

The future site will differ from existing sites by offering a comprehensive look at the region that will include not only a strong focus on the steel mills and labor and industrial issues, but also a broader look at working-class culture and community life. It will also include a more general focus on families and the work activities of women and other non-mill workers, as well as community institutions ranging from ethnic churches and organizations to taverns and social clubs, to cultures of consumption from movie theaters to clothing fashions and children’s games. The proposed site also differs from existing industrial heritage sites in that it will also offer a strong focus on environmental history, underscoring significant environmental issues in the region, from the ongoing presence of ecologically important wetlands to the pervasive industrial brownfields and toxic landfills. The site will provide access to the large collection of museum materials on environmental topics.

The importance of this museum’s collection is its community orientation and the fact that its materials were curated by area residents themselves. The importance of these materials lies not only in their historical significance for a wider public or community of scholars interested in American history, but also in the meaning they hold for the area residents who chose to save and encourage the preservation of certain kinds of images and objects. What can these preserved artifacts tell us about *why* they hold meaning for residents? This orientation combines an ethnographic anthropological perspective with an historical one to ask not only what we know about the past, but also what that past has meant to us, and why and how certain kinds of objects embody those meanings. Future funding requested to develop the website will allow a focus not only on the objects, documents, and images themselves, but on the stories told about these objects, what historical narratives the objects invoke, the stories of how these objects and images reached the museum, and why residents thought they were worth preserving. In short, the future website will include two kinds of analysis - that associated with the interests of historians and other professionals engaged in national-level academic conversations and that of area residents who offer their own analysis of Southeast Chicago history through the stories and meanings given to collected objects, an analysis that in turn shapes their own national perspective.

### *Actual and anticipated use of the collection*

The archival materials on the future website will serve as a rich repository of largely untapped materials for scholars from a range of disciplines, including: history, anthropology, American studies, labor studies, working class studies, ethnic studies and others.

At present, the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum's volunteer staff regularly provides slide shows, tours, and other related activities in a range of public venues in Southeast Chicago as part of its focus on public history. In addition, a number of residents and former residents engage in wide-ranging online discussions regarding the history of Southeast Chicago through various Facebook pages moderated by the museum. This online traffic and historical conversation often attracts community residents who might not ordinarily frequent museums.

It is hoped that this already existing online discussion can be successfully transferred to the proposed website, making the site a space of active engagement for residents as well as scholars. We are also interested in encouraging greater inter-generational linkages through the site, as more media-savvy younger residents who know relatively little about the history of the region find a place to engage with that history. Finally, the future website will make this history available to a general public, including those interested in industrial, environmental, immigrant, labor, urban, and working class history. The Field Museum's interest in collaborating with this project and its decision to include it as part of a network of projects/groups involved in cultural and historical preservation within the bi-state Calumet Heritage Area will also allow this project to develop wider audiences both regionally and nationally.

### **History, Scope, & Duration of the Project**

As described above, the history of this project began in the early 1980s when the regional steel industry was collapsing and the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum emerged as a central repository for area residents to collect and preserve artifacts relating to the industrial as well as the social, cultural, and environmental history of their community. This history includes the efforts of dedicated community volunteers to build and protect the collection and, more recently, (PI) Walley and (consultant) Boebel's efforts to tell the story in the *Exit Zero* book and documentary film (the latter currently in post-production). The planned preservation, digitization, and cataloguing of the collections and the interactive online project that will bring the collection to a broad range of audiences (see below) are expected to be completed over the next three to five years.

### **Methodology and Standards**

Part of the requested funding will be used to establish intellectual control over this collection. Although the Museum provides an accession form whenever an individual or other entity makes a donation, forms for some objects were never submitted and there is a need to follow up with those donors or their family members where possible. A portion of the requested grant will fund consultation with Ellen Duranceau of the MIT Libraries, who specializes in legal issues pertaining to historical archives and collections and who can help clarify issues of copyright control for the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum collection and prepare it for posting online. This assessment will establish which materials are in the public domain and which have up-to-date accession documents by rights holders. For the smaller category of materials outside these two categories, a risk assessment approach will be used to determine which items are low risk or high risk for claims of copyright infringement and whether their use can be claimed under "fair use" legal provisions. (See Appendix D for an expanded discussion).

An advisory committee has been formed that will help oversee this project and will meet several

times a year (in person or, for some members, via skype). The advisory committee (which includes project team members, other members listed below, and two additional Southeast Chicago Historical Museum volunteers to be selected by the Museum board) will help oversee the assessment of materials in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum collection to determine priorities for digitizing and preservation.

Criteria for preservation will be based on the input of Southeast Chicago community residents as well as professional archivists, historians, and anthropologists. Materials of regional and national significance relating to labor, industrial, and national events as well as civil rights and immigration, such as the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937, oral histories conducted with World War II veterans, and the racially-based Trumbull Park Riots of the 1950s, will be flagged. As previously mentioned, however, materials illustrative of working class culture and history more broadly, as well as the role and work lives of women, occupations outside the steel mills, and children's culture will also be highlighted.

The Advisory Committee will generate a list of themes to be flagged during the assessment process. We recognize that Southeast Chicago residents might find value in different artifacts – or narrate their history differently from - professional archivists and historians. Where such differences arise, they will be taken as opportunities to explore how and why differing conceptions of history and historical value might be at work, becoming part of the dialogue built into the creation of the website itself (see discussion in Appendix B).

To support the assessment process, we will hire an experienced project archivist interested in a short-term position. Diane Pugh, an archivist trained in EAD or “encoded archival description” who was recommended by archivists at the Calumet Industrial Heritage Archives, has agreed to take on this role (see attached resume). This short-term project archivist will work with criteria established by the Advisory Committee and, under the supervision of the Museum Director, help to assess the collection and make recommendations regarding professional standards for archiving and preservation. She will create a diagram of the museum space listing content and classificatory systems; provide an overview of the collection as well as more detailed logged descriptions of flagged objects based on consultation with the advisory committee; help determine whether accession forms exist for flagged objects or whether further follow-up and copyright determination is required; and identify test cases to determine the suitability of particular preservation techniques. During the assessment process, the specialist will regularly consult with the Director and Advisory Committee. For artifacts and documents for which questions arise regarding evaluation and best practices for preservation, she will have opportunities to consult with archivists at the Curation and Preservation Services group at MIT Libraries; the Chicago History Museum; and the Calumet Heritage Partnership and Industrial Heritage Archive in Southeast Chicago and Northwest Indiana. Such consultations may occur in face-to-face meetings or via skype with a computer camera allowing for examination of any objects in question. At the end of the work period, the specialist will write a summary of the work's status. She will meet with the Advisory Committee to discuss this written summary, possible metadata schemes, and future work plans. (See also Appendix C).

Methods and standards developed by the Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative will provide the foundation for the preservation and digitization methodologies adopted by this project: [www.digitizationguidelines.gov/guidelines/](http://www.digitizationguidelines.gov/guidelines/). We will also reference the guidelines developed by the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration:

[www.archives.gov/preservation/technical/guidelines.pdf](http://www.archives.gov/preservation/technical/guidelines.pdf)

To assess the collection's condition, we will use the Northeast Document Conservation Center's (NEDCC) "Assessing Preservation Needs: a self-survey guide."

[www.nedcc.org/resources/downloads/apnssg.pdf](http://www.nedcc.org/resources/downloads/apnssg.pdf). In addition to EAD, the specialist will have access to the newly developed ArchivesSpace, an open source online archive management tool for which MIT Libraries, as a charter member, will be able to provide advice and consultation.

### **Sustainability**

Without question, sustaining and building on the results of this project will require additional funding. At the same time, we are confident that the results of the work funded by an NEH Foundations grant will support efforts to secure the needed funding, whether from NEH itself or other funders. Targeted sources include the MacArthur Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The proposed website will help secure ongoing and widespread access to this important humanities collection while providing an interactive story-telling platform through which users will make and share their own meaning of the archived materials. We recognize that ongoing hosting and maintenance of the website poses another fundraising challenge which we will address during the planning process. This challenge, however, may be mitigated by the links being forged with other well-established Chicago-based institutions. It is hoped that ties with the Field Museum, which has proposed collaborating with this project as part of a network of groups/projects interested in issues of cultural and historical preservation in the emergent Calumet Heritage Area, will help ensure its long-term sustainability as well as enhance its accessibility and profile. In the event, however, that the website cannot be sustained, the digital files will be archived in the Internet Archive or at MIT to ensure that content will be preserved.

We further note that web archiving is receiving intensive attention in the preservation community at present, leading us to expect that better sustainability options may be available once the collection has been preserved and digitized.

### **Dissemination**

Dissemination of project findings will occur through a white paper written by Walley (PI) and Boebel (consultant). This publication will outline the results of this planning project and serve as a decision-making guide for this project as well as projects involving similar collections. Results will also be posted online on the MIT anthropology website associated with Walley's research projects. This posting will focus on lessons learned regarding community-based historical work and suggestions for other community groups intending to undertake similar projects. Access to the proposed Southeast Chicago website will be free to all users. Based on open source software, the website design for the proposed site will also be made accessible to other communities and groups affected by deindustrialization with an ultimate goal of creating a network community-based sites in various parts of the country.

### **Project Team**

*PI: Christine Walley* is Associate Professor of Anthropology at MIT. Born and raised in Southeast Chicago, she is the author of *Exit Zero: Family and Class in Post-Industrial Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 2013). She is also the producer of the documentary film *Exit Zero* (dir. Chris Boebel). She received a B.A. in anthropology from Pomona College in 1987 and a Ph.D. in sociocultural anthropology from New York University in 1999. Her book, *Rough Waters: Nature and Development in an East African Marine Park* came out with Princeton University Press in 2004.

*Consultant: Chris Boebel*, a filmmaker based at MIT, is working with Walley on a documentary film about Southeast Chicago, also titled *Exit Zero*. Boebel has extensive experience as a film and video director, producer, writer and editor. Along with Christine Walley, he co-teaches a documentary film theory and production class at MIT, called *DV Lab: Documenting Science Through Video and New*

*Media.* Walley and Boebel have both worked extensively with Southeast Chicago Historical Museum staff. Boebel made a previous short documentary film “The Evolving Calumet” about Southeast Chicago and has professional experience with video archiving techniques.

*Director of the Southeast Chicago Historical Society and Museum:* **Rod Sellers** was raised in Southeast Chicago and has long-standing family ties in the area. He has authored or co-authored two books of historical photographs about Southeast Chicago. Rod also taught history for many years at an area high school. For 12 years, he taught an off-campus, after-school program called “Museology” in which area students worked in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum helping to organize and catalog materials, create booklets and exhibits, and develop the original website used by the Museum.

*Digital Humanities Specialist:* **Kurt Fendt** is Principal Research Associate and Director of MIT’s HyperStudio for Digital Humanities. Since establishing HyperStudio in 1998, he and his team have developed more than 35 digital projects for a range of humanities disciplines and created two digital platforms specifically geared towards humanities education and research. Before coming to MIT in 1993, Dr. Fendt was Assistant Professor in the Department of Applied Linguistics at the University of Bern in Switzerland, where he established the Media Learning Center for the Humanities.

*Project Archivist/Specialist:* **Diane Pugh** is a Chicago area-based archivist. She has a masters in library science and is a specialist in digital preservation, metadata standards, digital project management, and maintaining websites as archives. She will work full-time at the Museum for eight weeks to assess the collection and collaborate with the Director and Advisory Committee to make recommendations for archiving and preserving prioritized items as well as establishing copyright control over the collection.

**Additional Advisory Committee Members:**

**Dominic Pacyga** is a Professor of History at Chicago’s Columbia College. He is the author of numerous books about Chicago, including: *Chicago: A Biography* (University of Chicago Press, 2009) and *Polish Immigrants and Industrial Chicago* (University of Chicago Press, 1991). He is also co-author with Rod Sellers of a photographic history *Chicago’s Southeast Side* (Arcadia Press, 1998). Dominic worked with filmmaker James Martin on *Wrapped in Steel*, a documentary about Southeast Chicago. The materials from this project became one of the collections in the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum. He received his Ph.D. from University of Illinois – Chicago in 1981.

**Peter Alter** is an Archivist and Curator at the Chicago History Museum. He has researched and published on Serbian and Croatian immigration in Southeast Chicago. He received a Ph.D. in history from University of Arizona in 2000.

**Madeleine Tudor** is an Anthropologist and Research Manager at The Field Museum. She manages and conducts research for their Contemporary Urban Collections and is helping spearhead the Field Museum’s role in developing a Calumet Heritage Area that includes Southeast Chicago and Northwest Indiana. Madeleine received an MA in Anthropology from University of Illinois – Chicago in 1996.

**Nancy McGovern** is Head of the Curation and Preservation Services of MIT Libraries, where she is responsible for ensuring long-term access to all of the Libraries’ information assets, digital and physical. McGovern earned her PhD from University College, London and has been named a NDIIPP Digital Preservation Pioneer by the Library of Congress (2010) and a Distinguished Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, (2009).

**Ann Marie Willer** is Preservation Librarian at MIT Libraries where she manages the preservation program for the general collections, including both print and media formats, and contributes to establishing preservation standards and best practice for digitization projects. Willer is Chair of the Northeast Document Conservation Center and was Head of the Preservation Unit the University of

North Texas, 2002 - 2006. Her grandfather formerly worked at Republic Steel in Southeast Chicago.

**Ellen Duranceau** is Program Manager of Scholarly Publishing and Licensing at MIT Libraries. She serves as the Libraries' chief internal resource for copyright issues and for content licensing policy and negotiations. McGovern earned her PhD from University College, London and has been named a NDIIPP Digital Preservation Pioneer by the Library of Congress (2010) and a Distinguished Fellow of the Society of American Archivists, (2009).

## **Project Work Plan**

### *May 2014*

The Project Team and Advisory Committee will meet to discuss and hone criteria for preserving and selecting materials to be presented on the future website as well as the work to be done by the short-term project archivist. (The PI and consultant will meet in person with Chicago-based committee members, while other MIT-based committee members will participate via skype). Team members will consult with Kurt Fendt of MIT's HyperStudio to discuss metadata needs as they pertain to the proposed website and associated selection and preservation decisions. They will also engage in consultation with MIT librarian Ellen Duranceau on clarifying copyright control and related-rights issues for the collection.

### *June 2014*

The short-term project archivist will begin working on site at the SE Chicago Historical Museum under the supervision of Director Rod Sellers and within the criteria established by the Advisory Committee. The project archivist will create a diagram of the museum space and an overview of the collection and classificatory schema. She will also work on offering more detailed descriptions of particular objects that fit selected themes. The archivist and Director will maintain ongoing communication with Advisory Committee archivists, sending pictures via a laptop computer to obtain advice on any materials that require deliberation to determine best practices for preservation and digitization. The short-term archivist will use the Northeast Document Conservation Center's "Assessing Preservation Needs: a self-survey guide" as an assessment tool. At the end of the month, the project team will meet for a second time to discuss any issues that have arisen and to lay plans for the second month of work.

### *July 2014*

The short-term project archivist will finish work recording more detailed descriptions of select items. Such descriptions will include information on whether copyright has been established for said items, if accession forms needed to be submitted, or if there is a need for a risk assessment of said objects in consultation with Ellen Duranceau (Program Manager, Scholarly Publishing and Licensing, MIT Libraries) and the Advisory Committee. The archivist will also conduct test cases for preservation standards for select items.

At the end of the work period, the archivist will provide the project team with a written report of work conducted, outstanding issues, and suggestions for future work on the part of museum volunteers. In the written report, the short-term archivist will include the following deliverables: 1) the project log; 2) a map of the museum collection highlighting content types and categories; 3) a brief high level descriptive overview of the collection as a whole; 4) more detailed descriptions of items to be prioritized for future processing with the approval of the advisory committee based on the availability of accession documents and rights information for the items, and 5) collection examples with possible standards-based preservation strategies.

At the end of this period, PI and consultant will meet on site with the Museum Director and the departing archivist and with advisory committee members (both in person and via skype) to review accomplishments and to revisit metadata plans (with input from MIT Digital Humanities specialist Kurt Fendt) based on the findings of the previous two months.

*Note:* As discussed above, test cases will be conducted and cost estimates obtained as part of this process. For video archiving, five analogue videotapes will be selected and transferred to an archival Motion JPEG lossless digital format, and to secondary formats for publication and dissemination, under the supervision of Chris Boebel and the Academic Media Production Services Unit at MIT. For paper-based materials, we plan to follow established procedures for digitization, making test cases unnecessary except for oversized schematic drawings, maps, or large exhibit panels. For these, and for 3-D objects or any other odd items that are high priority for sharing on line, we will obtain estimates for preservation from local vendors rather than conducting test cases. In some cases, samples may be safely transported to MIT Document Services Unit or one of our Chicago-based partners for test scans.

#### *August 2014– December 2014*

Trained Museum volunteers will continue the asset assessment work utilizing the protocol established by the PI and consultant, the Director, the short-term project archivist, and Advisory Committee.

At the end of this period, a final meeting of the project team and Advisory Committee will be conducted to review accomplishments and to lay plans for securing funds to fully digitize and archive the selected materials in manner that supports their integration with the proposed interactive website and storytelling platform. Digital Humanities Specialist Kurt Fendt will finalize the metadata plan for the digitized assets, consistent with the plans for finding and manipulation tools to be programmed into the proposed website.

#### *January 2015*

Under the direction of the consultant, the project team will co-author a detailed report, articulating criteria used for selecting assets for preservation and featuring them on the proposed website, summarizing the condition of selected assets, defining the technical requirements for preservation, laying out any additional plans for solidifying permissions and intellectual control, and establishing a metadata scheme that supports the proposed functionality of the future website.

#### *February – April 2015*

The PI will develop a proposal for an NEH Humanities Collections and Reference Resources Grant to fund the preservation and digitization of SE Chicago Museum assets, consistent with the planning work funded by the Foundations grant. The PI will work with the Field Museum to determine possibilities for collaboration on future grant proposals that would include the Southeast Chicago Historical Museum project as part of the Calumet Heritage Area. Throughout the grant-funded period, the PI will also work with the Development Officer of MIT's Comparative Media Studies Program and MIT's Office of Foundation Relations to identify sources of funding for developing and maintaining the proposed interactive website.