

## Indigenous Resistance in Upstate New York: An Anti-Colonial Field Trip Guide

Lucy Langan '23 | Colgate University | May 15 – August 30, 2022 | USA

**Introduction:** Conflict between Native Americans and European colonizers is more well-documented and commemorated in the Southwest and Prairie States than in the Northeast. The most well-known and taught conflicts, including the Battle of the Alamo, the Apache Wars, The Wounded Knee Massacre, and The Battle of Little Bighorn, all took place during the era of westward expansion. In reality, however, colonial occupation and dispossession of Native land in the Northeast is just as ever-present as in the Southwest. This project takes inspiration from parallel projects that aim to make audible histories surrounding identity, violence, and land. Resonant with historical projects like Richard Rothstein's *The Color of Law* (2017), wherein he demonstrates how bank mortgages, housing loans, and red-lining exacerbated racial segregation in the US-North, dispelling myths of the American South as having a monopoly on racist violence, my proposed project seeks to redress historical fallacies. My project aims to bring to the forefront histories of Indigenous resistance, Indigenous epistemologies, and the legacies of colonialism in the Upstate New York region. Listening to and working in cooperation with the Oneida Nation's Shako:wi Cultural Center, the material work of this project will produce a developmentally appropriate and pedagogically grounded field trip guide for student visitors who are learning about Indigenous communities and American history. I hope the project will promote peace through building a greater local awareness of colonial history and legacies, which will lead to increased compassion, activism, and a desire for understanding. Below, I will provide a narrative overview of how I arrived at my project, along with a project summary detailing my methods and reasoning, affiliations, working budget, and expected outcomes.

**Overview:** As a white settler, self-reflective researcher, and cultural worker, it is important that my project is undertaken with full support and guidance from the Oneida Nation. In accordance with Indigenous and anticolonial scholars like Patel (2014) and Tuck (2009), my project aims to support Indigenous ownership of their historical narratives and combat the historical portrayal of Native people as helpless victims by showing they are active agents in shaping their histories. Most importantly, I do not want to cause harm by developing a project that the Oneida Nation dislikes or does not find beneficial. During the project's construction, I began by proposing multiple avenues, including historical research and various curriculum design projects to the outreach coordinator of the Oneida Nation's Cultural Center, Jessica Farmer. She explained that the structure of the Oneida Nation and the requirement of receiving approval from the higher-ups to conduct projects involving the Nation's buildings would make certain avenues of a project unrealistic. However, she confirmed her interest, along with her manager's approval, in collaborating with me to design a field trip guide for local students to use surrounding their visit to the Shako:wi Cultural Center.

The Oneida Cultural Center is located in Oneida, NY, and conducts outreach programs for local students to learn about the past and present cultural practices of the Oneida Nation people. Lessons often include guided storytelling and hands-on arts and crafts history lessons, giving "visitors and future generations a sense of their roots and heritage" (Shako:wi Center, 2021). The Center, however, does not have a direct relationship with local public schools. Teachers lack a field trip guide and a post-field trip lesson that can help broaden students' understanding. Both Hamilton and Sherburne Earlville High School Social Studies teachers express a strong desire for this kind of pedagogical linkage that would contextualize and bridge knowledge from the Cultural Center to broaden course themes and state curriculum guidelines about US history. In conversations with local school teachers and Jessica Farmer, we settled on the idea that the field trip guide will highlight five Oneida objects displayed in the Cultural Center, such as lacrosse sticks, baskets, and wampum. The guide would use each object as a lens to highlight Indigenous resistance, contributions to US society, and ongoing colonial occupation of the Northeast Region. This project attempts to address injustices and promote peace in Colgate's backyard and in an area where I not only go to college but where I grew up. As a graduate of Cazenovia High School and a Colgate student, addressing the lack of knowledge about colonialism among local school districts through collaborating with the Oneida Nation is an especially meaningful use of the PfP grant.

**Project Summary:** My project will begin in June and continue through July and August. During this time, I will develop a field-trip guide, which is a historical booklet that includes (i) a background overview history of the Haudenosaunee confederacy, including the six nations: Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, and Tuscarora, with a distinct focus on the Oneida Nation because of their geographic proximity to Hamilton. Historicizing all six nations is essential because each has individual cultures, histories, and present practices; they cannot be entirely understood without considering their relationships, including their

union. Next (ii), the bulk of the field trip guide will include images and text about each of the five objects Jessica Farmer and I will decide to focus on from the Center. While using these objects, Jessica Farmer and I will tell a story about resistance to the colonial occupation of Central New York. For example, lacrosse is a widely popular sport in the region, but its Indigenous origins are rarely mentioned. Through historicizing the objects on display at the Shako:wi Cultural Center, I can also add important stories about how Indigenous people served in every major US War beginning with the Revolutionary War, how their societies have influenced the social and political structure of America, and how Indigenous ways of conducting peace and interacting with the environment have been called upon today as hopeful solutions to conflict and climate destruction. In addition (iii), the field trip guide will include a reflection section meant to extend one's thinking and learning process beyond their visit. This portion of the guide may include discussion questions, prompts, and classroom activities to help students expand and contextualize their learning. Last (iv), the project will result in three versions of field trip guides designed for fourth, seventh, and eleventh-grade students, respectfully, as these are the New York State-designated years for learning about US and Native American histories and are in the highest demand for these lessons according to teachers. Further, the field trip guides will be available on the Shako:wi Cultural Center website and in-person at the center, so they will be open to anyone who visits the center—not only students. Further, I plan to incorporate a week-long trip to DC to meet with scholars at the National Museum of the American Indian and the Library of Congress to seek their advice in the development of these materials. By learning from Indigenous personnel trained in educating the public prior to collaborating with members of the Oneida Nation, I will bring a more nuanced understanding and ease the burden of education carried by Indigenous people.

**Qualifications:** In 2020, I worked at Sociedad Latina, a Non-Profit Youth Empowerment organization in Boston, where I designed and conducted lesson plans in Spanish and English to engage youth newly immigrated to the US in topics of music theory and production, visual art, and socio-political activism. In 2021, I interned at Boys Hope Girls Hope in Cleveland, where I taught and assisted English and History to eighth-graders. I have both Education and History majors and took *Education Peace & Nonviolence* and *Decolonizing Educational Research*.

**Affiliations:** To guarantee my project's progress, I will, most importantly, work closely with (i) Jessica Farmer from the Shako:wi Cultural Center, the Outreach coordinator in charge of education events. She has expertise in the Cultural Center, Oneida Nation history, and the kinds of messages to include in my field trip guide to most benefit the center and the larger Indigenous community. As questions of land and representation remain central and pressing in higher education, the (i) Departments of History and Educational Studies at Colgate and (ii) Dr. Guido Pezzarossi at Syracuse University have committed to assisting this project and supporting historical research and curriculum design. I will be advised by Professors Mark Stern and Meg Gardner of Colgate Educational Studies to provide while designing learning material and academic writing. I will also reach out to Colgate Professors Jordan Kerber and Heather Roller, who are experts in Native American studies. Dr. Guido Pezzarossi of Syracuse University is willing to provide advisory expertise. He specializes in the history of Native Americans in Upstate New York and has experience advising students on their pursuit of similar projects. I will also seek advice and work collaboratively with (v) Michael Jones, a Colgate alum who focused on decolonizing education through his senior thesis and now works as a high school social studies teacher at Hamilton Central. He will be a valuable resource for helping me best understand the local public-school teachers' curriculum demands and how the field trip guide can best support Hamilton and Sherburne Earlville's pedagogical needs.

**Expected Outcomes:** I hope that my project will result in three major outcomes. First, on a broader scale, my project actively counters the fallacy that Indigenous peoples in the US are free from colonial violence and unjust power dynamics while simultaneously focusing on their resistance to colonialism. By amplifying Native voices, I hope my project will aid in the process of healing for Indigenous peoples in my communities and promote healthier relationships between Native and non-Native peoples in CNY. I see my project as resonating with contemporary historical reckonings like Nikole-Hannah-Jones' *The 1619 Project* (2021), which deconstructs white historical narratives and centers Black people's resilience and contributions to the US. Second, it will build a bridge between local schools and the Oneida Nation through The Shako:wi Cultural Center. The field trip guide and busing funds that I upload and share with local teachers will encourage them to explore the center and consequently better understand how history has shaped present relations between the Oneida Nation and the US government. My project will allow The Shako:wi Cultural Center to better achieve its goal of outreach and community education. Third, my work will contribute to Colgate and Syracuse University's academic departments. I will share the product of my project—my field trip guide—with respective departments. My project will contribute future history and

education students, professors, and community members with valuable historical information and lesson-planning examples. More specifically, Professor Gardner is interested in holding an event through the Teacher Preparation Program in the Fall of 2022 during which I would present my field trip guide and takeaways for future teachers or curriculum designers at Colgate.

Name: Lucille Langan					Note: all funds in US dollars.				
Project Name: Indigenous Resistance in Upstate New York: An Anti-Colonial Fi									
School: Colgate University					TOTAL FUNDS REMAINING:				
					\$ 350.00				
Projects for Peace grant: \$ 10,000.00									
Additional Funding, if any:					TOTAL EXPENDITURES:				
Total funding available: \$ 10,000.00					\$ 9,650.00				
Student Expenses					Project Expenses				
Travel (Including gas money and public transportation to DC, and while living in New York to the Shako:wi cultural center)	Lodging (6 nights in a hotel in DC)	Museum entry fees in DC	Food (10 week's worth)	Gift cards for interview compensation	Cost of housing over the summer in Hamilton	Printing of field trip guides	bus fare for three school field trips	Staffing Costs: payment for Jessica Farmer's Contributions	Miscellaneous
300	1,100	100	800	50	4,000	200	1,000	2,000	100
Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
\$ 300.00	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 800.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,000.00	\$ 100.00
Total Student Expenses: \$ 2,350.00					Total Project Expenses:		\$ 7,300.00		