

Histories of Regional Native Americans

Archives and Regional History, East Hall, Room #111

Native Americans populated Southwestern Michigan before the French traders arrived in the 1600s and other settlers arrived in the 1820s. Sources of information about these people exist on several levels. Popular pioneer accounts, from the perspective of the white settlers, describe interactions between Native Americans and pioneers. County histories published for Michigan also describe the Native American population that existed at the time the settlers arrived in the 1820s and 1830s. Native Americans did not leave an extensive paper trail in the nineteenth century. More recently, oral histories of Native Americans provide accounts of the varied experiences. Some oral histories include accounts passed down through several generations and provide another perspective on the Native American experience in Southwestern Michigan.

For this assignment, you will visit the Archives and Regional History Collections at 111 East Campus. Find a source describing Native Americans and respond to the following questions.

1. What type of source did you use? Identify the title of the book or oral history.
2. What is the perspective of bias of this source?
3. If you listened to an oral history or viewed a transcript, can you identify the tribal affiliation of the Native American interviewee?
4. What are some of the topics discussed?
5. What did you learn about Native Americans in Southwestern Michigan?