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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Emerging from a series of SURF-funded, community-centered projects [[Documenting Deportation](#), 2016; [Oral History in Milwaukee Public Schools](#), 2020] housed within the Cultures and Communities program, this project, in collaboration with Dr. Rob Smith of Marquette University's Center for Urban Research, Teaching, and Outreach (CURTO), assembles a real-time, digital, community-based archive of the ongoing Movement for Black Lives in Milwaukee and across the state of Wisconsin.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project will preserve and make available primary-source from Wisconsin's Black Lives Matter movement, including news articles, photos, livestream videos; documentation and digital ephemera from protest events; public statements from elected officials, community leaders, and protest participants; and more. The final project will also draw on community expertise and student research to situate this movement in its historical context.

Positioning itself on the cutting edge of a recent shift in archival ethics and methods in community-based archiving, this project builds on and extends the work of similar projects which have archived Black Lives Matter movements in locales across the country [See, for example: [Preserve the Baltimore Uprising](#), 2015; [Documenting Ferguson](#), 2015]. We are refining a method that will ensure this project is truly collaborative and accountable to community concerns, priorities, and feedback at every step of the way.

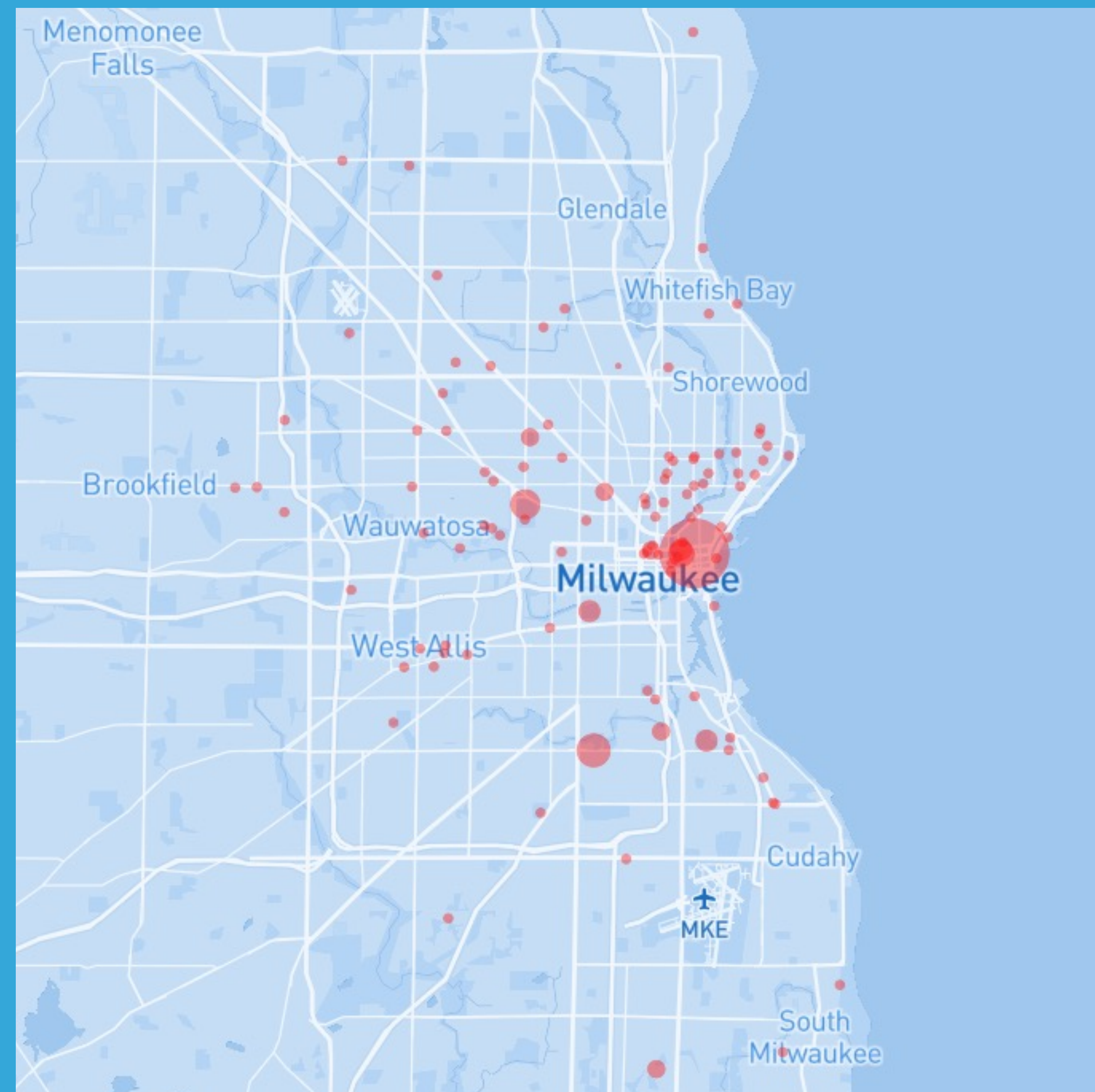
Documenting Wisconsin's Black Lives Matter Demonstrations

Pilar Sharp, Agnes Lopez, Paul Newcomb, and Eli Frank

"In a relationship of caring, we must balance our desire to capture histories that would otherwise be silenced in the archival record with the privacy, desires, and needs of the subjects of our records."

[Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor, "From Human Rights to Feminist Ethics: Radical Empathy in the Archives," *Archivaria* 81 (Spring 2016), 37].

*NOTE: This poster links to some outside resources, including two example presentations about the project given to high school and college classes by student researchers (see: "Conclusions"). Hyperlinked resources are underlined and appear in gray text.



A map of protests and protest-related events from the summer of 2020 created by student researchers. In addition to geo-tagged primary-source material, the project includes a spatial analysis of the movement that addresses its geographic distribution across the state of Wisconsin, 'hotspot' areas of movement activity, and its radical claims to public space.

PROGRESS

Student researchers collected primary-source material relating to the protests from May to September, 2020. Students also consulted with scholars and leaders in the field of community archives and began community engagement work, forging contacts with movement participants, community leaders, activist organizations, and local historical societies.

CONCLUSIONS

This is a long-term project still in development. Our work thus far has underscored the need for a robust, community-engaged method that ensures a final product that emerges from the concerns, priorities, and feedback of movement participants. With [grant funding secured](#), we will move forward with the funds to compensate movement participants, high school-age youth, and others for oral and written reflections of movement actions, grassroots-sourced content from the protests, and for time spent in conversation and collaboration with us. We anticipate that a website featuring primary-source material collected and curated by student researchers from the summer of 2020, community-sourced content, and the capability for community submissions will be live by fall, 2021. Building on presentations student researchers have given to [high school](#) and [college classes](#), we will broaden our educational and outreach efforts to movement and activist spaces. In its final form, we intend an archive that will amplify movement demands, serve as a source of strength and collective identity for movement participants, and further efforts at anti-racist education in the classroom.