

People's Recorder Podcast Now Available

By Garth Webster

As a follow up to People's Recorder Podcast article in the February 2024 edition, James Mirabello of Spark Media is excited to announce that the podcast episode, *Native Historians Do Stand-Up: Revitalizing the Oneida Language and Preserving Their History*, with support from Wisconsin Humanities, is now available on YouTube as episode 6 of the award-winning People's Recorder (PR) series.

As mentioned in the previous article, PR was inspired by Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Federal Writers Project (FWP) during the Great Depression era, which hired Oneida citizens to interview their fellow community members to translate their accounts of daily life, including boarding school experiences, from the Oneida language to English. This resulted in a plethora of notebooks, which are currently stored in the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay archives.

The conversations within the notebooks were also recorded, serving as a basis for linguists to create the Oneida Language Project, an initiative that has helped teach the Oneida language for many years. One prominent individual involved with the project was Oscar Archiquette, one of the first Oneida WPA writers who is often credited with helping to save the language.

In addition to Archiquette, listeners will hear stories from more contemporary Oneida leaders such as Charlie Hill, Tribal Historian Loretta Metoxen, and Gordon McLester, who was inspired to begin video recording Oneida elders.

Other episodes of the series discuss the Writers' Project in states like Florida, Virginia, Nebraska, and California. In addition to these episodes, PR is releasing bonus interviews with historians, authors, and scholars. Listeners will be able to enjoy a good portion of the interviews, including a few related to the Oneida WPA, for free. However, because the grant Spark Media was utilizing to produce

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THE ONEIDA LANGUAGE PROJECT

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the episodes was eliminated by policies of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) in early 2025, they had to find other means to fund their work. To do so, Spark Media is offering subscribers of their Patreon channel with special access to extended versions of the conversations, as well as future bonus episodes and other content.

Mirabello expresses the importance of these conversations in the February 2024 article stating, "The stories in this podcast and this episode [6] in particular matter, local stories matter because they make a difference and are usually left out from what we are taught in history books."

Along with episode 6, other Spark Media productions on their YouTube channel include interviews with Gerald Hill and Loretta Metoxen.



Native Historians Do Stand-Up (Charlie Hill): Revitalizing the Oneida Language and Preserving their History



A Conversation with Gerald Hill
Bonus Episode of the People's Recorder



A Conversation with Loretta Metoxen
Bonus Episode of the People's Recorder

