

**ASIANetwork Mellon AAPI Voices and Stories Program
Selected Site Liaisons and Their Projects (2024)**

Project Title: Elevating Asian Voices Through Digital Storytelling
Dr. Elsa Fan, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Webster University
Community partner: Japanese American Citizens League in St. Louis

This project is a partnership between the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) St. Louis Chapter and Webster University to build upon an existing collection of Japanese American oral histories by expanding the scope of oral histories and storytelling to the wider AAPI community. We aim to integrate students into community-led initiatives by working with our partners to elevate the diversity of AAPI stories in and around the St. Louis region. This initiative involves two key components. First, the collection of oral histories: by working with the community, we seek to raise awareness and draw attention to the complexities of the AAPI community, paying special attention to those voices that are overshadowed and not generally heard. Students will be trained in oral history methodologies and work closely with JACL to interview AAPI individuals who are willing to share their stories with the public. This process will teach students to think critically about how we can work with and alongside communities to elevate their stories rather than speak for them. Second, the collection of creative works: as a supplement to the stories, the team will also collect creative works that explore racial and ethnic identity, reflect nuanced points of view, reveal personal histories, and contribute to a vision for a greater understanding of Asian Americans. We plan to distribute these creative works across a range of platforms to bring visibility to the AAPI community in the region.

Project Title: The Arkansas Chinese Heritage Project
Dr. Zach Smith, Associate Professor of History and Director of the Interdisciplinary Asian Studies Program, University of Central Arkansas
Community Partner: Chinese Association of Arkansas

This project is designed to support the Arkansas Chinese Heritage Project, a multi-media oral history archive launched in 2023 by the University of Central Arkansas' Center for Chinese Language and Culture in collaboration with the Chinese Association of Arkansas. The grant will provide for the current unfulfilled needs of the Arkansas Chinese Heritage Project, namely, cross-training in oral history and digital humanities methods, capacity building for community-led research initiatives, and broader networking with scholars undertaking similar projects throughout ASIANetwork's member institutions. The team will conduct oral history interviews with Chinese families in the rural Southern state and develop metadata based on this. They will then build a website for the Arkansas Chinese Heritage Project, offering a searchable archive of family histories, an audiovisual library of recorded interviews, and a collection of StoryMaps that integrate individual narratives into a broader history of Chinese grocers in Delta region.