My summer research focused on gathering primary documents related to my upcoming honors project: a history of Latino social activism during the 1960s and 1970s in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Like many minority communities during this period, many Mexican-Americans and Puerto Ricans, concentrated primarily in Milwaukee’s near Southside neighborhood, started to assert their rights and defy their marginalization. Using direct action tactics, creating and utilizing community organizations, and seeking political positions, Latinos challenged and addressed a number of issues negatively affecting their community. These topics included education, discrimination, employment, and access to adequate and culturally competent healthcare. My project seeks to understand the origins of this Southside activism, the specific strategies and goals of Latino activists, and how this movement paralleled and diverged from other historiographies of the Civil Rights movement.

With the generous support of a Paul Nyhus grant, I was able to travel Wisconsin to conduct primary research at several archives in Wisconsin. I spent one week in Madison researching at the Wisconsin State Historical Society. Housed in the WSHS archives and library were numerous documents pertaining to the Latino community in Milwaukee, including government documents and reports, newsletters and pamphlets from community organizations, newspaper articles, and correspondence between Latino community leaders and Wisconsin state officials. I also spent a week conducting research in Milwaukee. At the archives at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, I discovered a number of materials directly related Latino activism in Milwaukee. These included the personal papers of Tony Baez, an advocate for bilingual and bicultural education in Milwaukee public schools, oral histories and interviews with Latino community members and activists, and records and minutes from community organizations. Also during my time in Milwaukee, I was able to examine several documents related to the founding of a community health center during this moment of activism. My two weeks in Wisconsin were certainly productive, and will be invaluable to my honors project. This research would not have been possible without the generous support of the Nyhus Travel Grant, and I am incredibly grateful for this opportunity.