

Oral Histories of Tompkins County

Archival Finding Aid

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2020 - High School Students Discuss COVID-19

‘High School Students Discuss COVID-19’ contains 11 self-recorded monologues from Tompkins County teenagers from the earliest months of the COVID-19 pandemic in Tompkins County. These short narratives give personal insight into the dramatic shifts that area youth experienced as school and social lives upended in a few short weeks in early months of 2020. Recordings were originally collected by JT Stone, a freelance journalist and recent Ithaca High School graduate for an article published on the Ithaca Voice in September 2020.

Ithaca Voice article: ‘*Tompkins County high school students discuss returning to school amid COVID-19*’, September 14th 2020 -
<https://ithacavoices.com/2020/09/tompkins-county-high-school-students-discuss-returning-to-school-amid-covid-19/?fbclid=IwAR1Qj04pEh2XKIJrYntQSDo0YHfEIEBT59L460rT7t8FX0xx0D1dQi0QbJU>

Interviews with:

Leo Bereano

Leo Bereano, a senior at Ithaca High School, reflects on the difficult experience transitioning to remote learning due to COVID-19 in spring 2020. Bereano considers how teachers may utilize technology to improve online learning in the coming Fall 2020 semester and the aspects of in-person learning that are sacrificed when continuing remotely due to safety concerns.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Bereano-Leo*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Bereano-Leo_Transcript*

Rose Chandler

Rose Chandler, a junior at Ithaca High School, discusses the chaos with online learning and discusses potentially returning in person for the upcoming school year.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Chandler-Rose*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Chandler-Rose_Transcript*

Veery Evans

Veery Evans, a sophomore at Ithaca High School, reflects on the choice of in-person or remote learning and the safety concerns to be considered. Evans discusses not only the learning difficulties of spring 2020 but also the loss of activities such as theater and choir.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Evans-Veery*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Evans-Veery_Transcript*

Nikolay Fontanez-Vargas

Nikolay Fontanez-Vargas, a junior at Ithaca High School, discusses struggling to maintain focus during online classes in spring 2020 but also the concerns of an in-person learning environment during the pandemic. Fontanez-Vargas considers the loss of musical theater and friendships due to COVID-19 safety measures.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Fontanez-Vargas-Nikolay*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Fontanez-Vargas-Nikolay_Transcript*

Savannah Gonzalez

Savannah Gonzalez, a senior at New Roots High School, discusses how COVID-19 regulations will affect the in-person classrooms. Gonzalez also reflects on the online learning experience and the special events, such as prom and graduation, that will be different or canceled due to the pandemic.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Gonzalez-Savannah*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Gonzalez-Savannah_Transcript*

Frances Klem

Frances Klem, a sophomore at Ithaca High School, discusses the uncertainty of in-person classes and canceled cross country meets.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Klem-Frances*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Klem-Frances_Transcript*

Emma Loiacono

Emma Loiacono, a junior at Ithaca High School, explains how family safety played a role in choosing to continue learning online in the coming fall semester.

Loiacono discusses the difficulties of combining the classroom and home environments as well as missing the little joys of in-person learning.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Loiacono-Emma*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Loiacono-Emma_Transcript*

Alexa Palumbo Martin

Alexa Palumbo Martin, a sophomore at Lehman Alternative Community School, discusses hopes and concerns for the upcoming school year. Martin considers the effects of masking and social distancing in the school, financial privilege with online learning, and continuing school activities with COVID-19 safety regulations.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Martin-Alexa Palumbo*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Martin-Alexa Palumbo_Transcript*

Jessica Scheidler

Jessica Scheidler, a junior at Ithaca High School, explains the decision to continue remote learning in order to care for a younger sibling despite wanting to return to school. Scheidler discusses the disorganization of online learning in spring 2020 and missing seeing friends and teachers in person.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Scheidler-Jessica*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Scheidler-Jessica_Transcript*

Sawyer Tierney

Sawyer Tierney, a senior at Ithaca High School, discusses the choice between more effective in-person learning and staying safe from COVID-19 through remote classes.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Tierney-Sawyer*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Tierney-Sawyer_Transcript*

Saba Weatherspoon

Saba Weatherspoon, a senior at Ithaca High School, reflects on deciding to return to school in person and how the soccer team influenced this decision. Weatherspoon discusses mental and physical hardships with online learning and how sports, band, and other senior events will be affected by COVID-19 safety regulations.

- *Recorded spring or summer 2020*
- *Audio File: OHTC_2020_Weatherspoon-Saba*
- *Transcript File: OHTC_2020_Weatherspoon-Saba_Transcript*

CITATION FOR THE COLLECTION

“High School Students Discuss COVID-19” Oral History Project, eleven oral histories recorded in 2020 by high school students of Tompkins County, The History Center of Tompkins County. Oral Histories of Tompkins County Audio Archives, Ithaca, NY, 2022.

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