SLIDE 1:
This lightning talk will cover two key events in the Baltic fight for independence, as a portion of a larger project called “Collapse and Rebirth: A Living Archive on the Collapse of the USSR and Beyond.” This presentation is a demonstration of key features of the project in the context of independence movements and minority-majority politics in the Baltic Republics. If you’re interested in learning more about the background, processes, and a general overview of the project, please view my colleague Keelyn O’Brien’s lightning talk entitled “Collapse and Rebirth: A Living Archive on the Collapse of the USSR and Beyond” for more information.

SLIDE 2:
For a very brief introduction: our team includes about fifteen undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and digital librarians from Michigan State University in addition to partners at Harvard’s Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, and an advisory board of scholars, librarians, and former diplomats around the world. We are using Omeka S and esri StoryMaps to create a digital, “living” archive on Several members of our team work as “student experts” on the Baltic Republics, including Evan Baker, Jacob Little, and myself (Bridie McBride). Our work centers around researching and creating stories on key events in Baltic history. In this presentation, we will look at two of our Baltic stories (one on Latvian independence and another on Lithuanian), and follow up with a brief overview of our metadata practices and Baltic bibliography. If you’d like to follow along, we’ll be starting from our Baltic StoryMaps page: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a9c894d7c0114a33a55f3ba49ede462. Please respect that this is a working prototype, and we’d appreciate that it not be shared widely yet!

SLIDE 3:
This video takes the viewer through our Baltics page to the first story we’re examining: “The Chautauqua Conference, Helsinki-86, and Black Ribbon Day.” We’ll navigate to the separate page for this story, and then read through Evan Baker’s story. We’ll also click through several different primary sources (hosted in Omeka S). This story helps demonstrate the interconnected nature of the three Baltic republics’ histories and independence movements.

SLIDE 4:
This video takes us through to a story on President Gorbachev’s visit to Lithuania in January 1990. Again, we’ll read through the text, and examine several primary source documents on the project’s Omeka page. We are utilizing materials in English, Russian, and Baltic national languages to study multiple perspectives on events. This story also serves to demonstrate the interconnected nature of the events leading up to the collapse; Gorbachev’s visit overlapped with events in Baku, which is made visible through the hyperlinks in the story text.

SLIDE 5:
On the left is a screenshot of our metadata practices on Omeka. We follow Dublin Core standards as closely as we can—which can sometimes be difficult with archival material! In the middle is a screenshot of the scanned and OCR’d material we were working on. On the right is a screenshot of spreadsheet of Baltic bibliographic materials and additional resources. This excel sheet includes digital archives for all three Baltic states, a list of related YouTube videos organized by theme, and a directory of compiled Baltic communities and
organizations in the Midwest. This will be especially important when we begin building relationships for crowdsourcing materials, help with translations, and potentially conducting interviews.

The majority of the team is relatively new to digital humanities. We welcome feedback, questions, suggestions for the project.

Thank you!