

MICHIGAN ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

"Preserving Michigan Voices."

Critical Lifelines: Portraits and Stories of Home Care Workers

*By Clare Luz and Katherine Hanson,
Michigan State University*

When families need help providing in-home care for older relatives, they turn to paid help, most of which is provided by Personal Care Aides (PCAs). In 2017, I {Dr. Clare Luz} of Michigan State University received an Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress American Folklife Center to capture the stories of 30 PCAs across Michigan through in-depth interviews and photographs. This oral history project is proving to be an important vehicle for raising public and legislator awareness of a major public health issue and strategies for addressing the issue. As such, it has the

Continued on P. 3

*Personal Care Aide Henrietta Ivey's story on P. 4.
Khalid Ibrahim Photographer*



The Schizophrenia Oral History Project

The Schizophrenia Oral History Project is an archive of life stories of persons with schizophrenia. Narrators are women and men with schizophrenia who are sharing their lives in an effort to increase understanding and reduce stigma related to mental illness. Their stories reveal not only their struggles, but their remarkable courage and resilience, their hopes, dreams and talents, and their concern for others. In addition to documenting their histories, those of the Project are sharing their stories in presentations for professionals and the general public.

Historically, there is no group more stigmatized and unheard than persons living with schizophrenia. In the hope of providing an audience for their voices and facilitating greater public understanding of severe mental illness, we are documenting life stories from currently stable persons diagnosed with either schizophrenia or schizo-affective disorder. We know of no other oral history project that focuses on individuals with schizophrenia, and most of the literature concerning schizophrenia is written about – and not by – those with this condition.

Our courageous narrators have taken a great personal risk in sharing their stories, and they have done so in the belief that their experience in facing their challenges will be of use to someone else. It is their hope that because they have spoken out, life may be easier for others who have schizophrenia, that new opportunities may open for them, and that they may find greater acceptance. But for their

Continued on P. 6

About the Michigan Oral History Association

Mission

The mission of the Michigan Oral History Association (MOHA) is to provide effective cooperation and communication among persons, programs, and institutions concerned with the techniques, uses, and promotion of oral history in Michigan. We serve those who are interested in methods and techniques of the oral history process as a means of preserving unique memory of people, places, events and ideas.

Who We Are

MOHA promotes and educates about oral history, as a resource for capturing on electronic media, attitudes and emotions not otherwise preserved. The pool of presenters includes experienced oral history practitioners, archivists, database managers, video producers, authors, professional transcribers, journalists and teachers. Presenters participate in history-related conference sessions, conduct workshops, and serve as facilitators for state and regional forums.

How Can MOHA Help You?

Workshops, information, advice and resources are available to both beginning and experienced oral historians. Forums provide exchange with others who may have similar problems, obstacles, and opportunities. Established or in-progress oral history projects can benefit from MOHA’s ability to promote and publicize initiatives and resources.

Become a Member!

As a member, you will receive:

- The MOHA Newsletter (quarterly)
- Discounted registration fee at MOHA forums and conferences
- Mentoring and assistance with your project
- News of oral history events and projects
- Updates on latest innovations and resources
- Contacts for workshop presentations

Request a Workshop! Workshops are tailored to meet the specific needs of the audience. Common topics presented: how to organize a project, how to conduct oral histories, technology, forms to use, best practices, and archiving your oral histories. For help planning a workshop, **contact info@michiganoha.org**.

Membership Dues:

Individual:	\$25
Institutional:	\$50
Student:	\$15

Send to:

MOHA, 210 Detroit St., Saline, Michigan 48176.

Call for Posters

Oral History Association 2019 Annual Meeting

October 16-19, 2019 Salt Lake City, Utah

The online submission portal is available [here](#).

The Oral History Association (OHA) is now accepting submissions for a poster session and project bazaar that will be held at the OHA Conference at the Sheraton Salt Lake City Hotel in Salt Lake City, Utah. Proposals addressing the meeting theme, “**Pathways in the Field: Considerations for those Working In, On, and Around Oral History**” are most welcome, but any timely subject of interest to oral history will be considered. Posters are often used to showcase a completed project, or to communicate ideas about research in progress.

The poster session and project bazaar provides an opportunity for informal, interactive presentations and discussions.

The final deadline for submissions is **July 8, 2019**, but submitters will be notified on a rolling basis.

DON'T MISS OUT!

**MOHA Memberships
due now!**

**For more information
and inquiries:
info@michiganoha.org**

Michigan Political History Society's

James J. Blanchard
Living Library of Michigan
Political History

The goals of the Living Library are to record the stories, experiences, and observations of major political figures in Michigan and to make these interviews available online, giving everyone the opportunity to learn more about Michigan's rich political history.

Accordingly, interviews with people who have observed or chronicled Michigan's political history - as well as participated actively - have been recorded on DVD and distributed to local cable stations, state universities and other interested broadcast outlets. These interviews – recordings and transcriptions - are now online to view at any time.

A special thanks to Congressman John Dingell for sponsoring this site. All interviews recorded after January 1, 2013, will be recorded in HD and available online. www.jjblivinglibrary.com. A special thanks to Governor Blanchard and Mr. Jay Ragsdale for making this possible.

David and Beverly Lang, co-owners of LTS Productions, produced many of the oral histories. MPHS Oral Histories are now being produced by Future Media (Bob Bishop).

Interviews can be borrowed from MPHS by contacting Linda Cleary at (517) 282-4520 or via email at mipoliticalhistory@gmail.com. The collection is also housed at the following libraries:

WSU Walter P. Reuther

Library: <https://library.wayne.edu/reuther/>

Library of

Michigan: <http://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/>

UofM Bentley Historical

Library: <http://bentley.umich.edu/>

If you would like to recommend someone for an oral history recording, please contact Linda Cleary at (517) 282-4520 or at mipoliticalhistory@gmail.com

Home Care Workers

Continued from P. 3

potential to change public policy and ultimately the social value we place on elders and those who care for them.

In-home care includes bathing, dressing, grooming, cooking, cleaning and the types of daily tasks that we all need to engage in to live. The role of PCAs is pivotal as their ability to notice and respond appropriately to changes in client conditions can mean the difference between life and death. They can avert adverse, costly, life-changing events such as falls. It is one of the fastest growing segments of the American workforce and is, as it has been historically, comprised primarily of women of color with poor labor conditions and low socioeconomic status.

Dr. Green was a prominent scholar of labor-related folklore, champion of marginalized workers, and passionate about documenting their stories. This Fellowship was an opportunity to bring attention to a serious issue that will profoundly affect all of us, personally and collectively. Rapid population aging now coexists with a critical shortage of people who can provide the kind of care that makes it possible for older adults to live at home for as long as possible with the highest quality of life possible. Demand for supportive services already far exceeds supply. In Michigan alone, an estimated 32,000 more home care workers will be needed by 2020.

Although family members still provide the bulk of in-home care, their availability is increasingly limited, in part due to smaller size families, increased participation of women in the workforce, or the economic need for adult children to take jobs geographically distant from their parents. Among other reasons for the PCA shortage is the fact that their work is done in the privacy of peoples' homes and therefore, the public and policy makers know very little about who they are, what they do, and why their work is so important.

At the heart of this project is the need to raise up both the joy and hardship of life as a PCA, as told in their own voice. Our team therefore set out to explore the experiences, culture and traditions of

Continued on P. 4

Personal Care Workers

Continued from P. 3

this contemporary American workforce. Most PCAs struggle on the economic edge with unsustainable labor conditions, low wages and benefits, and a lack of guaranteed hours, training, and respect. We explored who these workers are and what drives them to this work and inspires them to stay in it. We asked what it is they love and find hard about the work, what skills they bring to the job, and what their lives are like. Those who participated were eager to share stories of their lives and work which is so often unnoticed by the general public. Many of them stated that it was the first time anyone had asked to hear their stories. Despite the challenges, they universally said they are PCAs because they feel it is a calling, want to engage in meaningful work, and they love their clients and the relationships they develop.

The team was comprised of myself, Khalid Ibrahim, epidemiologist and photographer, Katherine Hanson, project coordinator, and Marsha MacDowell, director of MSU's Michigan Traditional Arts Program. We reached out to PCAs across Michigan and selected PCAs to provide the widest possible range of geography and demographics. The material we gathered will be used to raise public awareness, educate policy makers, and advocate on behalf of PCAs in new and creative ways. A **traveling photographic exhibit** with associated stories and educational materials will travel across Michigan and showcase the importance of this workforce as an essential service, the drastic shortage of home care workers that affects all of us, and known strategies to address the shortage. The prototype exhibit has already been on display for state legislators. The photographs and stories have been archived in the Library of Congress for future use by the public and researchers interested in workforce issues.

For more information about the project, more personal stories, exhibit, and other efforts to build a strong PCA workforce in Michigan, please contact Clare Luz, PhD, Principal Investigator and Director of IMPART Alliance, at luz@msu.edu.

*At the heart of this project is
the need to raise up both the
joy and hardship of life
as a PCA,
as told in their own voice.*

Henrietta Ivey, Detroit, licensed pharmacy technician, started out as a family caregiver then her paid PCA work grew by word-of-mouth. For her, it is all about the love and compassion she gives, the relationships she develops with her clients, and knowing she's made someone's life better. She hopes someone will be compassionate enough to help her out one day. Henrietta takes pride in doing her job well and refers to herself as a homecare professional. She has become a staunch activist, fighting for home care workers' rights to a living wage, benefits and more respect. She has been told by policy makers, *"This is not a real job that you do. Get a real job."* She responds, *"We're part of the healthcare system so it would be nice for someone to finally recognize, these are real workers. We should not have to be ridiculed or disrespected because of the choices that we make on what we're trying to do to help people."*

Jeremy Klimas and Elizabeth Peterson, Grayling, live in a full house, blending families and three generations to make ends meet because one income as a PCA is not enough. Raised in Detroit, Jeremy joined the Air Force, did three tours of duty, one in Afghanistan, two in Iraq. He then moved north to help his grandparents while working as a police officer. He left the force to become a PCA. *"It is one of the best decisions I've made...Just seeing the joy on people's faces when you're providing them help...It makes me feel like I'm making a difference."* Elizabeth's mother is a PCA. It's hard work. There are dangers, verbal abuse and being physically hit. Yet she, her mother, and Jeremy keep doing it because *"It's a calling. We're not in it for the money. It's the relationships that you build...knowing that you were able to hold somebody's hand while they were dying and they weren't alone."*

Studs Terkel, Radio Talk Show Host and Oral Historian

Excerpted from Peter Dreier, November 29, 2018, **The Nation**. Dreier is professor of politics at Occidental College. His most recent book is *The 100 Greatest Americans of the 20th Century: A Social Justice Hall of Fame* (Nation Books).

Today, organizers, activists, and academics emphasize the importance of people “telling their stories” in order to insert a human element in political battles and to “shape the narrative” of how we look at social movements. Studs Terkel, Chicago radio talk show host and oral historian, reinvented the study of history and contemporary politics by giving ordinary people an opportunity to tell their stories.

Terkel became a well-known personality beginning in late 1949, when *Studs Place* first aired as a 15-minute segment of NBC’s *Saturday Square*. It was originally set in a tavern, but the following year it became a half-hour series set in a greasy-spoon diner, with Terkel as its proprietor. An unscripted drama, the show featured ordinary people facing life’s challenges, which gave Terkel, the show’s star, an excuse to interview fascinating people, some of them famous or soon-to-be-famous, as in an early [episode](#) with Mahalia Jackson.

In 1952 Terkel began what would become a 45-year relationship with WFMT radio. For his first show, *Sounds of the City*, Terkel would roam the city at night with a microphone and tape recorder, uncovering all kinds of funny and moving stories. That show morphed into *The Studs Terkel Program*, a daily one-hour radio show. At first, he mostly played music, but slowly began adding his own commentary and interviews with both famous and unknown people. Terkel had the knack of asking the right questions and getting interviewees to relax. As a result, his subjects—who included many political activists and writers not often heard or seen on radio or TV—talked candidly and in rich detail about their lives, feelings, and ideas. Terkel made his listeners feel as if they were eavesdropping on an interesting conversation.

WFMT has collected a growing archive of more than 1,200 of Terkel’s programs, called “[The Art of Conversation](#).” You can listen to Terkel interview musicians, singers, lyricists, composers of jazz, opera, and folk, writers, actors, and political activists.

Terkel’s first book, *Giants of Jazz*, published in 1957, profiled thirteen jazz musicians based in part on his interviews with such artists as Armstrong, Holiday, John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, and Charlie Parker. Terkel didn’t become a famous best-selling author until André Schiffrin, an editor at Pantheon Books, approached him in 1965 about writing a book that would capture the story of Chicago at that moment in time—the civil rights movement, the rise of automation, and the nuclear arms race. The result was *Division Street: America*, an oral history published in 1967. Terkel edited the transcripts of his conversations with 70 people from a cross-section of Chicago—cops, teachers, cab drivers, nuns, CEOs, and others. They ranged in age from 15 to 90, and spoke from diverse political and religious perspectives.

Division Street: America was a success with both the critics and the public. It was the first of many books by Terkel with a similar format, showcasing the voices and views of ordinary Americans. Next came *Hard Times* (1970) about the Great Depression, and then *Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do* (1974), followed by *Race: What Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession* (1992), *Coming of Age: Growing Up in the 20th Century* (1995), and *My American Century* (1995). [Working](#) was made into a Broadway play in 1978. He won a Pulitzer Prize for his book on World War II, “*The Good War*” (1984).

His books reflected Terkel’s genius for interviewing people and eliciting vivid and fascinating stories from everyday persons, a skill honed over the years on his radio program. He drew people out, creating a

Continued on p. 6

Studs Terkel

Continued from P. 5

tapestry of conversation that revealed insights into the American character. Terkel made people comfortable by being respectful, really listening to them, and by what he called his own "ineptitude" and "slovenliness." He believed that most people had something to say worth hearing.

His final book, *P.S.: Further Thoughts from a Lifetime of Listening*, was released in November 2008, a few weeks after he died at the age of 96.

2019-2020 Labor Brown Bag Series

"*Our Daily Work/ Our Daily Lives*" is a cooperative project of the Michigan Traditional Arts Program (MSU Museum) and the Labor Education Program (MSU School of Human Resources and Labor Relations). It is exciting to know that 2019-2020 will be the 24th year of the brown bag series. The schedule is getting developed, and additional ideas for speakers and topics are sought.

So far, scheduled talks include organizing unions in the 1970's; guestworkers at Signal International; Maurice Sugar and labor culture; Japanese internment camp labor; art of the Industrial Workers of the World; mining strikes and soccer; and the 1937 Flint sit-down strike among others.

For more information on the MSU Museum and its exhibits and events, go to the website: <http://museum.msu.edu>. For more information concerning the Labor Education Program and the School for Human Resources and Labor Relations, go to the website: <http://www.hrlr.msu.edu>.

Schizophrenia Oral History

Continued from P. 1

dreams to be realized, their voices must be widely heard, and it is to that cause that we are devoted.

For our narrators, these interviews mark the first time they have been asked to talk about their lives, and they expressed an often profound and emotional relief at being able to speak out loud and for themselves at last. As our narrators' voices are heard, we hope that others who are struggling with schizophrenia, and who also feel as one narrator (Paul) said, "in it alone," will come forward to tell their stories as well.

Some life stories from our participants have been shared in presentations. Some audience responses:

"Thanks so much for sharing your story. You are all brave and generous."

"Listening to their voices and stories brought me joy."

Some of these stories will be highlighted in the next MOHA newsletter.

Dr. Tracy McDonough and Dr. Lynda Crane are interested in your life story. What would you most like others to know about you? You can talk one-on-one with Tracy or Lynda, and if you decide to participate, your story will be audio-taped. If you would like to include your picture you may, but that isn't necessary.

If you would like to participate in an oral history project about people who have struggled with schizophrenia, please call (513) 244-4210 or email us at

tracy@schizophreniaoralhistories.com.
www.schizophreniaoralhistories.com

"...for their dreams to be realized, their voices must be widely heard... These interviews mark the first time they have been asked to talk about their lives, and they expressed an often profound and emotional relief at being able to speak out loud and for themselves at last."

Using Oral History in Museums and Libraries

Enriching information about the past leads to today's understanding and appreciation. Oral history is inherently an educational experience; it adds depth and dimension to our understanding of the past. Oral histories provide museums and libraries an effective way to build meaningful visitor experiences and to reach new audiences. Oral histories are a means of interpreting the past and telling a community's story. Community-engaged exhibitions are where men and women's stories live.

The points below can be used for both museums and libraries that wish to actively engage visitors, providing exhibits, display materials, and written or oral voices.

While museums display objects relative to the community or the display's subject (for example, mining in the Upper Peninsula), there is a need to give a sense of how people used these objects. Oral histories "allow visitors to hear the voices of the people who used the objects on display or who lived through the events depicted.

Interviews not only enhance a museum's displays and exhibits but provide material for public talks and media presentations." (*Doing Oral History* by Donald A. Ritchie)

Oral histories provide the human element to historical information, building on special exhibits with behind-the-scenes information – by soldiers, workers on assembly lines, journalists, immigrants. What was it REALLY like? With this thrust, it is important to provide a variety of speakers and a range of subject content. Along with historical research information, make sure visitors understand that these interviews are from individuals with individual perspectives.

Videotaped narratives and interactive computers can engage visitors. As such, they can offer multiple viewpoints in different voices. Doing so shows that **history can be interpreted in different ways and with differing perspectives.**

MOHA Board of Directors

Jim Cameron (President), Social Studies Consultant, Michigan Department of Education
Michael Laney (Vice President), Media Digitization & Metadata Specialist, Vincent Voice Library, Michigan State University (MSU)
Brad Jarvis (Treasurer), Assoc. Professor, History, Saginaw Valley State University
Geneva Kebler Wiskemann (Secretary), Founder of the Michigan Oral History Council (parent title of MOHA), former MOHA President and long-time Secretary and newsletter production
Camron Michael Amin, Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn
Marci Cameron, Editor
Brittany Bayless Fremion, Asst Professor of History, Central Michigan University
Tim Gleisner, Director of Archives, Michigan Library
Lindsay Hiltunen, Archivist, Michigan Tech. University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections
Julie L. Loehr, Senior Acquisition Editor, Michigan State University Press
Russ Magnaghi, Director, Center for Upper Peninsula Studies, Professor of History, Northern Michigan University
Karen Schaumann-Beltran, Asst. Professor of Sociology, Schoolcraft College
Jordan Shananaquet, Archivist, Department of Repatriation, Archives and Records, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians
Melanie Shell-Weiss, Chair and Associate Professor, Liberal Studies Dept., Grand Valley State University
Billy Winkel, Curatorial Asst., Detroit Historical Society
Board Members Emeritus
Tammy Barnes Apmann, Kalamazoo Valley Museum
Bill Gulley, Staff, Document Freeze Drying Restoration Services
Donna Odom, Executive Director, Society for History and Racial Equity (SHARE)
Richard D. Peiffer, Sound Engineer, G. Robert Vincent Voice Library, Digital & Media Center, MSU
John Revitte, Professor Emeritus, Human Resources & Labor Relations, MSU
Tim Streasick, Information Resources Asst, University of Michigan Library Operations Group
Jane Karoline Vieth, Retired Professor of History, MSU

MOHA Spring 2019

Michigan Oral History Association
210 Detroit Street
Saline MI 48176

Inside This Issue

Critical Lifelines: Home Care Workers.....1
Schizophrenia Oral History Project.....1
About MOHA.....2
Oral History Association Call.....2
MI Political History Society's Living Library.....3
Studs Terkel: Radio and Oral Historian.....5
Labor Brown Bag Series.....6
Using Oral History in Museums & Libraries.....7
MOHA Board of Directors.....7