



*Serving 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*

## **Michigan Voices 2017: Forum Announcement and Call for Presentations**

Taking place in the Michigan History Center on **October 21st**, *“Michigan Voices 2017”* will bring together oral history practitioners from across the region. Here is your opportunity to keep abreast with a wide range of other developments and experiences, as well as advice from experts. Presenters are invited to discuss their oral history research and projects in a series of brief, “lightning” talks, offering an opportunity to share their own work.

A wide range of previous topics has included training middle school through college students, experiences of Hmong Americans, issues of transcribing, newest technologies supporting oral interviews, 50-year church history, and reflections on lessons learned during the creation of oral history projects.

**The Michigan Oral History Association’s (MOHA)** *“Michigan Voices”* will also provide a fantastic chance to network with the region’s oral history community.

The “Voices” event is free of charge. Check MOHA’s website ([www.michiganoha.org](http://www.michiganoha.org)) in September for registration information. Coffee and bagels will be provided during the meeting, though lunch will not be included. Instead, MOHA will have a gathering at a local restaurant where people can chat, eat, drink, and network after the event. Look for the restaurant announcement, as well as links to their menus and prices, on the MOHA website in early October.

For those interested in presenting, MOHA will be accepting presentation proposals until September 15th. The presentations should last about 5-10 minutes and be prepared for five minutes of audience Q&A.

If you are interested in presenting, or would like to get in touch with someone who may want to present, the call for presenters is available on both MOHA’s website and Facebook page.

The **MOHA Annual Meeting** of members and other oral history practitioners will precede the “Voices” program, and all are welcome.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

### **Inside**

About MOHA/OHA.....	2
Walter P. Reuther Library.....	2
Growing Community.....	3
Imagine Flint; StoryCorps.....	4
Ypsilanti African American Heritage..	4
Tips: Preparation for Oral Histories: Paperwork.....	5
EduPath: Civil Rights through Oral History.....	5
OHA Annual Meeting; Content.....	6
Michigan History Day Winners.....	8

## 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. Based on the foundation of the Michigan Oral History Council organized in 1979, the name of the non-profit corporation was changed to Michigan Oral History Association in 1994.

### Who We Are

MOHA serves people interested in methods and techniques of the oral history process as a means of preserving unique memory of people, places, events and ideas. 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.

**Request a Workshop!** Workshops are tailored to meet the specific needs of the audience. Common topics presented: the importance of oral histories, 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 Geneva Kebler Wiskemann at [workshops@MichiganOHA.org](mailto:workshops@MichiganOHA.org) or (517) 321-1746.

### 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
- Mentoring and assistance with your oral history project
- Opportunities to participate in local and statewide conferences and workshops
- News of MOHA publications and other related resources
- Updates on oral history innovations and current projects in the state
- Opportunity to join a MOHA committee

### **Membership Dues:**

Individual:	\$25
Institutional:	\$50
Patron:	\$50
Sponsor:	\$100
Student:	\$15

*Send to: MOHA,  
5580 W. State Rd., Lansing MI 48906-9325.*

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**Walter P. Reuther Library oral histories** provide unique, personal perspectives on national issues of social justice, civil rights, labor and unions, industrialization-deindustrialization, urbanization, immigration, and migration. These interviews, conducted in the 1950s – 2000s (bulk 1970s-2000s), tell stories from Detroit, Michigan, the Midwest, and beyond, including urban folk traditions, African American communities, race and class issues, and the rise and sharp decline of industrial and professional unions. Oral histories may be accessible as sound recordings, video footage, or transcripts.

**To browse a general bibliographic list of titles, visit the WSU library catalog:**<https://elibrary.wayne.edu>

**To browse or search for more in depth description, visit the Library's guides:**<http://as.reuther.wayne.edu>

## “Growing Community in Oceana County”

*By Melanie Shell-Weiss, Ph.D.  
Department of Liberal Studies,  
Grand Valley State University*

Food and agriculture are among the top three industries in Michigan. Yet so much of the history of agriculture and rural life in Michigan remains unrecorded and undocumented. Thanks to a Common Heritage Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, Grand Valley State University, El Centro Hispano de Oceana, and the Historical and Genealogical Society of Oceana County are working to address need through a project called “Growing Community: Oceana County’s Agricultural History.” Oceana County is the world’s largest producer of asparagus and one of the leading producers of strawberries, apples, and cherries, to name just a few. Farms across that county employ some of the largest numbers of migrant farm workers in the state of Michigan.

Faculty, students, and staff from the partnering organizations began collecting oral histories from community members in February 2016, focusing first on year-around residents and community elders. As word of the effort spread, project team members were approached by an 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher at Shelby Middle School, who hoped the effort might help him incorporate more locally relevant materials into his information literacy unit. After reading several articles about migrant farming in Oceana County that had been collected by the project, the 8<sup>th</sup> graders were also eager to share their stories and family histories. Project team members spent a lively day collecting oral histories with those students in early April of last year. In May 2016, we organized a free luncheon for any community members interested in learning to collect oral histories or volunteer with other



aspects of the project. A Community History Harvest was held Saturday, June 18, 2016. Both events were very well attended.

Oral history collection continued through December 2016. All interviewees were given a digital copy of their interview to keep. The project team members make high quality digital copies of all donated scrapbooks, photographs, letters, and related two-dimensional materials, returning both the original and a digital copy to the donor. As a result of these efforts, the project has collected 45 oral histories, 800 new photographs, and more than 7,000 scanned images. The project team was also able to share some of the insights learned through their shared work at the Agricultural History Society’s Annual Meeting in June 2017.

We are currently working with Grand Valley State University Libraries to process and describe these materials. We plan to begin making these materials available to the public via the GVSU Libraries’ Digital Collections and the Oceana County Historical & Genealogical Society in 2018.

For more information, please contact: Melanie Shell-Weiss (project director) at [shellm@gvsu.edu](mailto:shellm@gvsu.edu) or phone (616)331-8059.

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**Promote Your Project!**  
**Submit newsletter or website features,  
ideas, information, and news to:  
[newsletter@michiganoha.org](mailto:newsletter@michiganoha.org).**

## African American Oral History Archive in Ypsilanti

After the Civil War, Ypsilanti had one of the largest African American populations in Michigan. Members of this well-organized community lived through the Jim Crow era, fought racism during WWII, and led the local Civil Rights movement. Historian and Eastern Michigan University Professor A.P. Marshall sought to preserve their stories, conducting dozens of interviews with community leaders in the 1980s.

Thanks to a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ypsilanti District Library is partnering with the African American Cultural and Historical Museum of Washtenaw County (AACHM) to archive and record stories from Ypsilanti's rich history as an African American city, and to educate the public about that heritage. This archive will allow future generations to hear the words of the people whose lives left a lasting mark on our city and our state.

The project involves digitizing approximately 50 oral history interviews that were recorded by Professor Marshall, and recording additional interviews with current older residents of

Ypsilanti's African American community. The interviews are available online at the Ypsilanti District Library (<http://history.ypsilibrary.org>) with transcripts and detailed annotation about related events.

Marshall came to Eastern Michigan University in 1969 and retired in 1980. In that time he taught library science and served as the director of Eastern Michigan University's library as well as the Dean of Academic Services. He was involved in the Ypsilanti Rotary Club, Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Ypsilanti-Willow Run Branch of the NAACP and Brown Chapel African Methodist Episcopal Church, for which he wrote a history.

While in Ypsilanti, Marshall began to research the city's historic African-American community. His pioneering work brought to life figures like Elijah McCoy and helped transform Ypsilanti's sense of itself. Marshall wrote many articles and several books about Black Ypsilanti, including 'Unconquered Souls' available at the Ypsilanti District Library. Albert Prince Marshall died in 2001 at the age of 86. Check out <http://history.ypsilibrary.org>.

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## Imagine Flint: Our Voices Together

**StoryCorps** and **Flint Public Library** have joined together in creating a project that allows people to share their experiences about Flint's water emergency. Oral interviews capture and record personal accounts of how residents are coping with the city's water crisis. Edited sound clips are produced by Flint Public Library (FPL) with interviews collected as part of StoryCorps@yourlibrary project with the American Library Association and StoryCorps ([www.storycorps.org](http://www.storycorps.org)). Copies are shared with the persons interviewed, FPL, StoryCorps, and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

FPL was one of 10 libraries selected nationwide to participate in StoryCorps@yourlibrary in 2015. FPL is collecting the voices of people in the community to begin a long-term oral history project that celebrates Flint's remarkable past, and hopes and dreams for the future. Excerpts of talking to a friend or family member include: growing up in Flint in the 1930s and 1940s in a neighborhood where "everybody knew everybody...It gave me a strong foundation;" another about difficulties with her job at General Motors and problems with her union representation; another about her family's coming to Flint as refugees in 1952, her father's work here, and the ongoing plight of refugees today.

Check out [www.soundcloud.com/flintpubliclibrary](http://www.soundcloud.com/flintpubliclibrary).

**Preparation for Oral Histories: Paperwork  
Tips & Guidance from MOHA's  
"A Guide for Doing Successful Oral Histories"**

Research includes determining the type of paperwork needed and creating the necessary forms and documentation. Though computers are reliable and convenient, they can crash and valuable information can be lost. The most successful program has a backup papertrail.

1. Through your gatherings with local historians and residents, you will be able to create a **guidance questionnaire**. A questionnaire in oral history is for guidance ONLY. You will use this form to help keep you and the participant on track. However, you will also want a certain degree of wandering to occur or be made possible. Some of the most valuable tidbits of history come through the wandering story.
2. An **introductory letter** to participants. You want them to know what the project is about and that their stories are vital to the project.
3. A **biographical data sheet** is used to learn basic information about the person, such as pertinent dates, schools they attended and neighborhoods they lived in.
4. **The most important form that is developed is a release form**. Through a release form, you are gaining permission to collect, preserve, and use the life story for certain purposes. It defines the oral history experience and informs the participant what to expect and what they are committing to. No matter the size of the program, this form provides the basic understanding between you or your organization and the participant.

A release form should state:

- a. What is being collected and by whom. Does the collected information include audio and/or video recordings, memorabilia, photographic images, etc. and who will own them. When a person shares their life story, they are only sharing one version; they will always retain the right to share their story with whomever they want, whenever.
  - b. What will happen to the materials. Where will they be kept, what type of projects will they be used in and who will have access to them, and again, who owns them? This information is for the protection of
- Continued on p. 6*

## **EduPath: Civil Rights Through Oral History**

The **Michigan Oral History Association** is teaming with the **Michigan Department of Education** and **EduPaths** to create **modules for teachers**. EduPaths is designed to help educators navigate their professional growth by providing self-paced Modules. Teachers will be able to access the Modules through the EduPaths website- [www.edupaths.org](http://www.edupaths.org). MOHA Secretary Geneva Whiskemann created the initial storyboard for the oral history Modules while Saginaw Valley State University professor and MOHA Board Member Brad Jarvis will complete the project.

The MOHA efforts are designed in concert with the Michigan Department of Education's civil rights initiative creating Modules for teachers in several areas- African American, American Indian, Arab American, Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQ, and People with Disabilities. The Modules will be designed using the Southern Poverty Law Center's Ten Essentials of Civil Rights Education and teachers will be encouraged to apply the Oral History Modules to the specific content. The Modules are created for online learning where teachers will access the Modules at any time and complete them at their own pace.

Modules for the civil rights groups and oral history will be completed during the 2017-18 school year. MOHA will join EduPaths and the Michigan Department of Education in announcing when the Modules will be ready for teachers and educators.

## Paperwork

*Continued from p. 5*

## The most important form that is developed is a release form.

both the interviewer and participant.

c. Space for the participant to voice any concerns and, if necessary, set limitations on the material's release. A participant should always have the opportunity to set limitations when sharing their personal life story, which usually makes them feel more comfortable, even though rarely used. For example, participants might request that only one form of the interview, such as the transcript, be released, or that the interview not be released for a certain number of years or until after their passing. They might also ask that certain parts of the interview be withheld. If any of these situations are requested, they should be respected, noted on the release form, and honored.

- d. The final part of the release form is the inclusion of every single signature of every person whose voice appears on the recordings. An interview is most constructive when conducted between one participant and one interviewer. However, at times a family member will interrupt the interview in progress, bringing up valuable information or a correction to previous recollections. Though this should not be encouraged as it takes away from the first hand recollections of the participant, if the information is relevant and important you should have permission from whoever said it. That means collecting their signature. All interviewer(s) should also sign the form as they are active participants in the program and should provide permission for the use of their words.

Create folders ahead of time with your interview paperwork. You will then be able to check that you have copies of everything you need. You will also be ready if an unexpected interview opportunity becomes available.

**For samples of these forms contact MOHA at [info@michiganoha.org](mailto:info@michiganoha.org).**

## 2017 OHA Annual Meeting October 4-8, Minneapolis

The 2017 Oral History Association theme is **Engaging Audiences: Oral History and the Public**. The program will engage archivists, historians, cultural producers, activists, scholars, teachers and others.

Harvard historian and *New Yorker* staff writer **Jill Lepore**, the author of books including *Joe Gould's Teeth* and *The Secret History of Wonder Woman*, will deliver the meeting's keynote luncheon address. Plenary sessions honor the life and pioneering work of the scholar-activist duo Alice and Staughton Lynd, who helped to both document and organize antiwar, civil rights, labor and other social justice movements over their long careers, and explore the importance of documentary work in the age of Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock.

Three days of sessions will follow from Thursday through Saturday. The Presidential Reception on Thursday night will be at the **Mill City Museum**, a stunning facility built on the ruins of what was once the largest flourmill in the country on the banks of the Mississippi River.

**The OHA business meeting will be held on Saturday morning.** Professional development opportunities on Sunday morning will be free and open to all conference attendees in the form of an **OHMS workshop**. OHMS, the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer, is an open-source, web-based application designed to enhance user access to oral histories online created by the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries.

A compelling slate of Wednesday workshops is offered including Creating Digital Exhibits Using Oral History, Podcasting I and II, and Oral History and Social Change. Teacher workshops offered on Saturday are open to the local community and will introduce educators to oral history and how it can enhance your classroom. Three tours developed by the local arrangements committee will allow attendees to explore the Twin Cities: "On the Avenue": Franklin Avenue, Minneapolis' American Indian Cultural Corridor, Historic St. Paul Pub Crawl, and Immigrant Stories: A Walking Tour of Eat Street.

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**Michigan History Day  
Awards**

*Continued from page 8*

Winners:

Youth Winner: Ian Davis  
“Six Million,” Youth Individual  
Documentary category, about  
Adolf Hitler and his policies  
against the Jewish population  
of Europe.

Junior Winner: Emily Olsson,  
“A Blooming Resistance:  
Youth’s Stand Against Hitler,”  
Junior Individual Exhibit  
category.

Senior Winner: Lilly Wu  
“Chinese-American Women:  
Strikes with the ILGWU,”  
Senior Individual Website  
category.

The award honors **James  
Campbell, former President  
of MOHA. The Historical  
Society of Michigan** – the  
oldest cultural organization in  
the state – has been committed  
to preserving our history  
through publications,  
education, conferences,  
awards, and local support. For  
more information on HSM,  
visit [www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org).

The 2018 HSM History Day’s  
topic is “*Conflict and  
Compromise in History.*” Check  
out: [hsmichigan.org/mhd](http://hsmichigan.org/mhd).

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**HELP US SAVE COSTS!**

***If you can, request to receive the  
MOHA newsletter electronically.  
Send an email to  
[newsletter@michiganoha.org](mailto:newsletter@michiganoha.org)  
with the word “newsletter” and  
a preferred email address.***



*Emily Olsson of Montague, Junior  
Winner of James Campbell Award*



*Ian Davis of Sault Ste. Marie,  
Youth Winner of James Campbell  
Award*

## 2017 Michigan History Day Awards for Best Use of Oral History

The State Finals competition of Michigan History Day was held last spring in Bay City. Michigan elementary, middle and high school students took part in this year's Michigan History Day, which is an educational program of the Historical Society of Michigan. This year's theme was *"Taking a Stand in History,"* presented by students in performances, exhibits, papers, websites and documentaries. Along with top honors in each of these categories, Special Awards were selected.

**The James Campbell Award for Best Use of Oral History, sponsored by the Michigan Oral History Association, was presented to:**  
*Continued on page 7*



*Lilly Wu of Bay City, Senior Winner of James Campbell Award.*

**Michigan Oral History Association  
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