LIFE HISTORIES
AND
BIO-SKETCHES
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Nineteen residents agreed to participate in indepth interviews for this study. Participants were questioned about the objects they placed on display and then asked about their life histories. Whenever connections were made between objects displayed and important life events, additional interview questions were asked to gain supplementary contextual information. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed for thematic content. These interviews were converted into succinct biosketches for this report, which include the relationship of the display to the resident's life story. All names used are fictitious to preserve the anonymity of the residents. Any errors are mistakes on our part and not the residents.
1) Alice – Assisted Living Resident

Alice has had a turtle collection ever since her daughter handed her one and said, “Slow and steady wins the race.” According to Alice, “They just come to her.” Alice grew up in a prominent political family in the Midwest. She studied piano at a large state college in the Midwest where she also met her husband. Gradually, her musical interests expanded to collecting dulcimers, and then she began collecting folk songs from around the country. She eventually held concerts all over the country singing folk songs. Her husband taught art at a midwestern university and eventually was promoted to the Chairman of Fine Arts. They lived in a large house with an extensive garden. She had an entire room set aside for her collection of 40 dulcimers. After her husband passed away and her children left home, she rented her extra rooms to students, who still remain in contact with her today.

Alice loves to talk about her friends, children, and grandchildren. Her room is filled with items from her past and every item has a story. Turtles overflow several surfaces, and there is even a fish bowl. Alice has an Apple computer complete with a modem and a scanner. She uses the computer to edit her daughter’s books and to catalogue folk songs. The doorway display she put together is one of the most extensive in the community. There are turtles on many of the horizontal surfaces complete with a turtle crossing sign. Pictures of family, grandchildren and grandchildren’s artwork fill in the areas between the turtles. Two framed pictures are prominently displayed. One is from a newspaper article, which features a story about her folk singing career. The other is from a treasured student taught by her husband. Currently, she has only one plant to remind her of her garden, but in the past, there have been more. The display clearly reflects her adage. “You will be amazed what people think up to put turtles on.”
2) Marion – Assisted Living Resident

Marion decided to put two wood mosaics outside her doorway to let people know an artist was in residence. She and her second husband found the mosaics at a Florida craft fair where they frequently hunted for folk art. Marion's life as an artist, craftsperson, interior designer, and caretaker evolved through a transcontinental journey. She grew up in Baltimore at her grandfather's house. Her parents had lost a great sum of money in an investment deal and the "old folks" needed someone to stay with them during the day. Her aunt still lived at home, but had a job working as an illustrator for a large department store. Marion went to Quaker school all the way from kindergarten. Upon graduation, her father offered her two choices. She could go away to school for a year or he could send her to a local women's college. She wanted to go away, so she chose to go to a technical school, called Carnegie Tech. At technical school, she took a course in structural sewing to see how garments were put together. It was then she discovered her niche in costume design. She loved the fashion extravaganzas where finished costumes were paraded down the main staircase of the school. Happily, she was able to return to school after all and graduated with a degree in Costume Design and began to teach.

In the Fall, she was invited by some friends to a summer gathering place on the river. When she expressed that she was not going with anyone at the time, her friends assured her that they had someone for her. Her reply was, "Oh, gad, no." However, it turned out that "they were meant for each other." They wanted to get married, but neither one had enough money, since she was teaching for a small salary and he had borrowed money from his father to finish his Ph.D. Encouraged by some of his friends, he moved to Alaska to pan for gold. Marion eventually tired of waiting for better fortunes and wired him that she was coming at the end of the school year. Fortunately, her fiancée was able to secure a position taking care of the horses for the Geological Survey of Alaska. He wired back that she should wait until the Fall.
She remembers the trip to Fairbanks was quite hair-raising when the car lost its brakes halfway there and they had to turn it up a snow bank to stop it. Her parents had found a proper Presbyterian minister in Fairbanks to marry them, but he was out hunting when they arrived and the license office was closed. With a little persuasion, the office was opened and eventually the minister came home. They stayed in Alaska for ten years. Her husband began teaching math at the university, and they built a log cabin on a small piece of land near the campus. They used oil lamps until the school ran a wire down to the cabin for electricity. Marion practiced weaving and doing wood block art designs. She decorated the cabin in Scandinavian style. She remembers living on rabbits for the first year because the rabbits were so big, you could get three meals out of one.

When the war began, they left Alaska because they wanted to help. They also wanted to be nearer to her husband's mother since his father had recently passed away. When the Air Force refused Marion's husband, he worked for the Bureau of Mines conducting geophysical surveys of the United States based out of Ralrah, Missouri until the war was over. When the Geological Survey started a geophysical survey, he was put in charge of that branch. They found a farmstead in Middleburg, Virginia and built a house. This was right in the middle of hunt country, so her husband was able to support his love of horses. Keeping with her family's tradition, she invited her parents to live with them in an attached apartment. Her husband said, "If you are going to do that then I must invite my mother and sister." So it ended up that Marion lived between both families and she nursed everyone. Eventually, she lost her first husband to cancer.

Marion remarried and began traveling back and forth between Florida and Virginia since her second husband was an avid sailor. In her travels, she decided to retire in the Carolinas because she loved the atmosphere. Her apartment is filled with her own artwork as well as art from others. If you look at the art pieces as a whole, you can see a common theme. Almost all of it is very mosaic in quality similar to a dress-maker's pattern. There are wood mosaics and wood block prints with each color outlined in white and even a Picasso's mistress painting that is very cubist.
3) Beatrice – Assisted Living Resident

Beatrice grew up in Newton, Illinois. She received a music scholarship to study at Illinois, Wesleyan. After school she taught music, but quickly realized she was not getting anywhere and she had, "no one to run around with." She moved to Chicago and got a job reading for a Loose Leaf Law Service. She worked there for a year before she realized she was losing her sight due to the extensive reading. She then got a job in public service when an opening became available, because "one of the girls got married." According to Beatrice, women lost their job when they got married in those days.

After receiving training in Joliet, she moved to a small town to start her job and met her husband. Her husband worked overseas for several years. After their two children were older, they spent several years in Switzerland where Beatrice took painting lessons with a man who studied in Paris. She painted everything she felt was interesting. While in Switzerland, she loved to take visitors to France for breakfast and then drive through the tunnel and come out in Italy for lunch. She and her husband belonged to the American Women’s Club and the American Men’s Club. These organizations were formed for the support of Americans living abroad. She belonged to the Opera Committee and she loved touring the opera house in Geneva. Twice a year the group would take a trip, and she had an opportunity to see 54 countries. Beatrice was quite an adventurer. She drank reindeer blood in the Land of the Midnight Sun and she visited a Masai Village in Africa “where they drink cow's blood.” She says “…the tour group paid one hundred dollars to see the village, but they left quicker than they arrived after seeing the flies.” She has painted several places where she has traveled to and lived.

Beatrice’s suite is filled with her paintings. Each one is like a small snapshot of her travels. She keeps a picture book of her paintings handy to show visitors since many of the originals were given away. Two paintings were hung outside – one she painted of Hong Kong Harbor and the other she purchased while in Hong Kong.
4) Catherine – Assisted Living Resident

Catherine has a collection of 350 elephants. As a child, her mother would take her to the circus and she loved to visit all the animals. The ones she liked the best were the elephants. She has a respect for them because they are so big, and yet so gentle. She said, “With one blow they could crush their handlers who are rude to them, yet they do not.” This gentle spirit is why she admires them. In many ways, this gentle spirit reflects how Catherine has approached life. Before coming to America, she and her family witnessed many major turbulent events in European history.

Catherine’s parents were Russian. Her father was a military man, who was prominent in Imperial Russia. After the Revolution, they were (going to be) forced to leave the country. During a military leave for his honeymoon, they were fortunate to be picked up by a boat at the Black Sea. Many of the countries that were against Communism had gathered ships in the area to pick people up. These ships were overcrowded. Catherine’s mother had an English governess, and could speak excellent English. A British ship was about to leave, but upon hearing English several members of the crew said, “Captain, she is one of ours.” The captain stopped the boat and allowed them to board. The ship sailed on to Greece, but they decided not to get off because Greek was not one of the six languages they could speak. They eventually ended up in Yugoslavia because King Alexander had been brought up in Russia and was sympathetic to Imperial Russia. After settling down, they suddenly found out the peace talks in Paris had moved the border and now they were in Austria. They decided to go to Vienna where they knew the French Ambassador. Catherine was born in Vienna. The French Ambassador helped the family by providing extra milk to her mother.

Catherine had a short movie career while in Vienna. Her father was walking in Stadtpark (city park) in central Vienna in the only outfit he had—his uniform. He was asked to join a film about the Russian Revolution. Catherine was used in a scene where a mother is running with a baby. After
that, she was in a film that showcased a birth at court. She also played baby Tarzan. Back then, they
did not care about the gender of the baby in movies.

When Catherine was three, her parents divorced. The Revolution had crushed her father. Her
mother remarried a mining engineer and they moved to a small village in Yugoslavia. She grew up
hearing Russian, Serbo-Croatian and German. Her mother noticed she had a talent for languages and
taught her German, English and French. When she finished high school, the Germans occupied
Yugoslavia and closed down all of the schools of higher education. She was dating a man ten years
her senior who asked her for her hand in marriage. She decided, "Why not, I have nothing else better
do." The Germans forced her husband to move to Rhineland, Germany for a year of training.
Catherine joined her husband because she was expecting her first child. Unfortunately, Rhineland
was a prime bombing target for the Allies. After a year they wanted to go home, but were told they
must stay. They escaped three times and each time the Germans came looking for them threatening
her mother and her stepfather so they were forced to return. On their last escape, they got off the
train in Vienna and had the luck to meet a man who gave her husband an engineering job. Her second
child was born in Vienna. When they heard that the Russians were nearing Vienna they decided to
move to Munich, to keep from being asked to return to Communist Russia. Her third child was born
in Munich.

Catherine's language skills proved to be very useful. Catherine began working with the United Nations
for the Liberation. They sought to reunite families separated during the war. However, this organization
closed down, since few people wished to return to Communist Russia. She then worked for the
International Refugee organization. They sought to place professionals in other countries. While she
was driving an American around, he asked her where she would like to go. Her immediate reply was
to the United States. At that time, you could only come to the United States if you had relatives in
the country. President Truman changed this policy by allowing several thousands of refugees to be
sponsored by local people. Unfortunately, this man had returned home before further conversation
could occur because his son had died in a tragic accident. However, he did not forget Catherine's
reply and he wrote to her when his church decided to sponsor a family. Another twist of luck
reunited Catherine's family. Her mother and stepfather had been sent to a concentration camp and
then pushed forward to another camp, which was not known to Catherine. Her mother secretly
wrote a postcard to Catherine to inform her of her location and left it behind since she was not
allowed to mail it. A man found the un stamped card and forwarded it to Catherine, so she was able
to find her relatives and liberate them. Catherine never knew who helped her find her family. When
she wrote back to the church, she made sure that both families were included in the sponsorship, so
they would never be separated again.

One year later she, her husband, children, her mother and her stepfather arrived in the United States.
They settled down in the sponsor's town—a small college town in the Midwest. She became a
secretary in the local college and her husband became a janitor since he could not speak English.
Eventually, her talent for languages landed her a part time job teaching Russian, since so many
students were fascinated with Sputnik at the time. Her husband proved to be very useful by inventing
a remote control device for changing slides at the college. Eventually, he learned English and worked
in his chosen field of engineering. Catherine devoted much of her time to raising the children, but
the school came up with a challenge. They approached her about studying at the college. She
refused saying she needed to spend the money on her children. Then, they offered her a loan, which
she also refused. Finally, they “found” a full scholarship for someone with a Slavic background. She, of course, accepted and graduated with honors. After graduating, she taught languages in several schools in the area.

With such a life-story, one can see how the gentle spirit of an elephant reflects Catherine’s life. It is amazing how she kept moving forward. The display outside her door was filled with clues to this amazing history. On the floor were several elephants, each different and unique. On a small table were several Russian items. A child’s samovar, a Russian teapot, was prominently displayed. Samovars are a cultural symbol of Russian hospitality. A wood carving depicting a Russian troika driven by a bear, came from a school trip to Russia. This carving symbolizes an old Russian folk story. On the walls are several pieces of art by a close artist friend, Paul Arnold. A painting by Gabriel Norway, shows the Sacre Coeur church in Paris after it was bombed and reconstructed. Perhaps, the most interesting display item was a curious little collection of figurines she had placed on a shelf. She pointed out that this symbolizes America. The Native American figurines represent how America got started with its first inhabitants. The Mexican figurine with a sombrero represents our Mexican neighbors to the south. The Canadian mouny figurine represents our Canadian neighbors to the north. The Amish figurines represent the people in the middle. For a person who has crossed so many borders and seen so much, this symbol (of people coming together) clearly demonstrated an important place in her heart.
Mary was extremely proud of her pictures and each one has a story. She firmly stated, "That every one of her pictures was done by an artist and not just purchased from a store." Outside her door was a small telephone table with a plate from Russia placed on top of it. She had decorated the plate with holly for the holidays. Above the picture was a simple graphic painting of an orange fox in an orange frame. A friend had made the table for her previous home. Inside her suite, "pictures" cover every wall. Her pride and joy is a framed painting she bought for $5.00 in New Orleans and now is worth $500.00.

Mary grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. She recalls stories of how her father only had a sixth grade education because he was too proud to go to school in torn clothing. He apprenticed himself to be a plumber and turned it into a good business until the Great Depression. When Mary was six her mother died during childbirth, but her father was determined to keep the family together. He eventually remarried after three years. Mary did well in school and won a full scholarship to Washington University by scoring high on achievement tests. She was called into the principal's office and asked to turn down the scholarship, since she was a shy girl and would not make much use of it. He suggested that she give the scholarship to John Black who would make better use of it. Her father agreed since he had made it without a college degree and he did not see the point in a girl pursuing all this education. Later, she found out the scholarship went to the second highest scorer, who did not agree to give the scholarship away to John Black. The principal had lied when he said, "She was the only thing keeping John Black from receiving the scholarship."

Upon leaving school, Mary taught school in a one-room schoolhouse during the deepest part of the Depression. The county received a bargain, since she was so young they did not have to pay her very much. Eventually, she decided teaching was not for her and left the position. She decided to travel to Washington, DC to the Masters' Plumbing Convention and take her stepmother and father.
returning from the trip, her step-mother encouraged her to study the Comptometer, the forerunner of the adding machine. After completing the course, she got a job, but quickly did not see a future in it. It was too boring. On a lark, she went with her sister to visit a friend at Missouri University. That is when her sister announced that she was going to get her into college. Together, they found her a job with the National Youth Administration for thirty cents an hour. Her sister agreed to go home and wire her the rest of the money for the first semester. The money arrived on Tuesday and on Wednesday she was in college.

While at Missouri she had her first experience with art. She was walking up the staircase to go to her job and saw this painting of orange flowers – Van Gogh’s Sunflowers Series. She had never seen anything like it. Mary said, “From then on I was hooked, but it was much later in life that I started collecting.” After Mary graduated, she worked at Iowa State University and met her husband there. Her husband was a pharmacologist and worked for a drug company. For awhile, they moved around a great deal. Later in life, she had an opportunity to travel to Russia and Africa. The table outside her doorway holds the plate she purchased while in Russia. Above the table, Mary’s love of the color orange is apparent in the picture of the orange fox.
6) Jane - Assisted Living Resident

Jane grew up on a farm in Idaho. She considered herself a Yankee since her grandparents had an apple farm in Maine. Her parents met in Manhattan, Kansas where they were both teachers. They moved to Fargo, North Dakota after they were married. She recalls stories of how the whole family moved west to Idaho on the train. Her mother rode in the passenger car, while her father had to ride on the flat car with the goods and furniture to keep them from being stolen. In Idaho, her family built a house and farmed 60 acres, which according to Jane was "God-forsaken until we got water irrigation." Her brother still lives on the farm and has expanded it.

Jane left the farm to attend school at the College of Idaho. After two years, she transferred into the Nursing Education Program. She said, "I had some idea that I was going to save the world." This was the beginning of World War II. Eventually, she realized that saving the world was not possible. She met her husband at Idaho College and supported him all the way through his Ph.D. in American Constitutional History. Her husband taught at Berkley for seven years. Since they did not have a lot of money, one of their favorite things to do was to go hiking in the Berkley Hills. Jane loved looking at the new architecture. Jane felt that her time at Berkley was very rich. She had an opportunity to take design and color classes, which are her passions.

Jane and her husband left Berkley pursuing a variety of teaching positions in different states. Along the way, two girls were born. They finally settled in Minnesota for thirty years. In Minnesota, she had an opportunity to build a house in the Frank Lloyd Wright style. She collected Minnesota pottery for years. Frequently, the family traveled abroad. They had a grand trip to Paris and Italy. At their daughter's suggestion, they spent a year abroad on a teaching Fulbright in Nigeria. She and her husband also spent a year in England on a sabbatical. She recalls visiting friends and being fascinated
by English hedgehogs. Upon their departure, her friends bestowed upon them a small hedgehog figurine.

Eventually, Jane relocated to a different state to be near her grandchildren. Her dwelling suite is filled with items from her travels. She insists that her room is different from all the others. Her love of Frank Lloyd Wright’s architecture is obvious, by the large stained glass window that hangs in her window. This stained glass window came from the Purcell-Cutts house which was designed by William Purcell, an architect who followed Frank Lloyd Wright’s style. She said, “This window is a part of me.” On her outside door, she displays her grandchildren’s artwork. A Minnesota pot and a Nigerian Calabash are displayed to remind her of her travels and past homes of many years. She has also displayed the English hedgehog figurine on the shelf outside her door because, “No one else has one.”
7) Nancy - Assisted Living Resident

Nancy grew up in Iowa, the youngest of seven children. She believes that she has outlived all of her sisters because she was an athletic child, played outdoors, and enjoyed golf as an adult. Her grandfather left money for her and all of her siblings to go to the local college, Morning Side College. But she was determined to have her independence and go to DePaul University in Indiana for her junior year. She got her wish and really “lived it up.”

She later graduated from Morning Side and met her husband while teaching in a high school. She supported her husband while he got his Ph.D. in just two years from Johns Hopkins University. She and her husband settled in at the University of North Carolina. During the summer, she would travel with him to different teaching positions at Harvard and Northwestern. They considered these summers to be elegant vacations. One summer, they had an opportunity to visit her husband’s ancestral home in Norway.

Nancy’s doorway contains a wall hanging from her trip to Norway. She also has a live tree that her niece gave to her. The tree was sitting on a small table and decorated for the holidays. The door decoration was special to her because she had made it out of tin cans years ago.
Eileen grew up in a little village outside of Syracuse, New York. She remembers fondly that she and her brother were inseparable. In fact, her mother held her back until her brother was old enough to enter school. Eileen says that, “she was born with a book in her hand,” and she naturally assumed she was going to Syracuse University to become an English and History teacher. The Great Depression put a stop to those plans, but her mother said she could go to Nursing School. Eileen was so appalled at the lack of instruction and the poor use of grammar by her teachers that she would write down these mistakes in her notes. She recalls that her notes had to suddenly disappear when her teachers asked her to turn them in for a review.

After leaving school, she got a job in Providence, Rhode Island on her 21st birthday. The job was an assistant night supervisor of a large hospital. Eileen remembers refusing to delay the baby delivery process just so doctors could arrive and collect their fees. This was quite radical in those days. She returned to New York and got a second degree in Public Health Nursing at a large university. She started working at the Health Department around the time of World War II.

From then on, she “never applied for another job; they just came to her.” Her education continued. She received a Masters in Public Health and then completed a Doctorate in Education and Administration from Columbia University. She then decided to try a little adventure and moved to upstate Michigan to be a consultant for the county nurse system. All she knew was “upstate Michigan was not the city of Detroit” and few roads were paved back then. She returned to Syracuse to head up the Department of Public Health Nursing at the University. There she helped to establish the first College on Aging. She then had a variety of consulting positions, which allowed her to travel. She worked with the American University of Beirut, the Central Europeans Nations Treaty Organization in Turkey, the World Health Organization in El Salvador and The Agency of International Development in the Philippines. She also had a Fulbright, which allowed her to travel to New Zealand when she was 70.

When she moved into her apartment, she decided to display some of the photographs from her trips to El Salvador and the Philippines. While in Latin America, she learned to do the handkerchief dance and purchased a series of plaques that depict the dance. These are displayed outside her door and she still recalls what the natives told her about the dance, “Handkerchief dance very sexy.”
9) Martha - Apartment Resident

Martha grew up in the town of Marion, Ohio. She did not have any siblings and remembers well her parents being active in politics. In fact, her mother and father were in the room when President Harding was elected president. A picture taken at the White House with President Harding and Marion town representatives hangs in her living room. She can easily pick out her father and mother in the crowd. As a child, she traveled around the countryside to her uncle’s farm and to Lake Erie for picnics. She remembers having an old Ford car with a rumble seat where she and her collie dog Laddie would ride. Laddie was her companion for sixteen years.

Her mother was an Oberlin College graduate, so Martha was destined to attend this school. At Oberlin, Martha studied kindergarten primary education. The day she graduated, the Superintendent of Schools helped her to find a position. Her first position was in Garrettsville, Ohio and that is where she met her husband in church. Her husband owned a grocery store and eventually, built the first drive-in super market in town. They settled down in Hiram, Ohio and raised five children. Her apartment is filled with pictures and mementos of her family. One of her sons died as an F100 fighter pilot in the Vietnam War. Her bedroom has a few of his model planes he built as a child as a remembrance of him. One of her daughters from an early age wanted to be an artist and several of her pieces hang in Martha’s apartment. She recalls how her sons teased her that she would not make any money as an artist. Her reply was “I have got to paint.”

Martha loves nature and has always been fascinated by rocks, shells and animals. She considers herself an “outdoor person.” Martha and her husband loved to take trips. Once a year, the family would assemble at a beach in South Carolina. One of her favorite things to do was to take trips on the Windjammers in the Caribbean. She preferred to sleep on the deck rather than in the cabin.
Martha's display outside her door reflects a variety of times in her life, as well as her interests. Since she was one of the earliest residents, she has had an opportunity to place some of her items across the hall in a small sitting room, which opens to the corridor. On her shelf, she has a bowl of rocks. The rocks were collected over a lifetime of walking and there were many sizes and colors. On top of the rocks, she had placed a whole dried frog and a snakeskin she had found on her walking trips. In the corner of her alcove, leaned a walking stick. Down the hall were several pictures, which she had contributed to the community. A painting done for an art class while she was at Oberlin was in a prominent location. She also had a picture of a windjammer as a key memory of the trips she use to enjoy. A picture of Monticello recalled a trip to Jefferson's home with her children and how they played in one of the reflecting ponds.
10) Jean – Apartment Resident

Jean grew up in a townhouse on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. She remembers going to Central Park everyday. Summers were frequently spent in Connecticut. Except for time spent at a boarding school, she did not leave home until her first marriage. She worked at the American Film Center, which was a Rockefeller funded organization devoted to furthering the use of non-theatrical films. Her interest in film and photography started when she was twelve and purchased her first camera, a 98-cent Box Brownie.

She lived outside of New York for most of her life and raised two children. During the 1970's, she had an opportunity to go to Kenya twice. She was able to take pictures of animals, while she was there. She recalls fondly picking up an African Witch doctor carving at the docks in Brooklyn. When it was uncrated, the dock workers said, “Nice piece of whittling.” Before retiring in the Carolinas, she lived in California where she served as a volunteer at the Sea Grass Hospital.

Jean's doorway was filled with pictures of lions, tigers, and zebras from her trips to Kenya. Her daughter placed the pictures there because, “she has an eye for that sort of thing.” Jean also provided a picture of her own domestic cat, Misty. She said, “I think it is nice for people to know who she is.”
11) The Grangers — Apartment Residents

The Grangers met in Peninsula, Ohio. This was a second marriage for both of them. They appeared destined to meet, since they were both around the Hay Stack School of Crafts in Maine in the late 1960's. However, they never crossed paths until later. Mr. Granger grew up in Cleveland and studied law at Case Western Reserve University. He has always had an entrepreneurial spirit and opened his own firm. When the war started, he decided to help the war effort by working in a factory that made landing gear and pneumatic tools. This led to a career in owning and turning around manufacturing companies all over the country. He considers himself a "problem solver." Mrs. Granger went to school at Hunter College, but she values art courses, art history and going to museums as the best education. During her career she ran galleries, became interested in crafts, antiques and organized trips to Europe. Her current interests are textiles and American crafts.

Once they married, both enjoyed traveling as well as remodeling their homes to fit their needs. They have had as many as five projects going at once. At three places where they have lived, a wall has been removed to gain more space and light. They still own a house in Maine and travel there every summer for four months.

The Grangers' art interests and problem solving mindsets are evident from the moment you walk into their apartment. Outside their doorway is a large modern marble sculpture by Bernice, a local artist. They bought the piece when they first got married. They both felt the piece made a statement. Mr. Granger, the problem solver, clearly went to work on figuring out how to best use the limited space in their suite. With the help of an architect, a wall was removed between the living room and the
second bedroom to expand their living space. Built in couches with storage were placed along one wall. On the other wall is a floor to ceiling shelving unit with prominent lighting features, books and a large teapot collection. In front of the teapot wall is a clever maple screen, which hides a small twin bed, which can be used as a guest bed. This maple screen provides a backdrop for two Saarinen chairs. The reconfiguration also provided a small dining nook by the window, which was an important feature for the couple to create. The bedroom was also reconfigured with built-ins for more books, artwork, and a computer area. Mrs. Granger's interest in textile art is clearly represented by the custom fabrics. Unique Kilms cover the floor throughout the space. When asked if they would ever change the piece outside, they felt they might change it to a sculpture of Adam and Eve they had just purchased on their recent trip to Yucca.
12) Blanche – Apartment Resident

Blanche grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina. She remembers having a pony and lots of dogs and cats that stayed outside. She went to college in Washington DC and married her senior year. This was during the time of the second World War, so they frequently moved around. She cannot recall living in one place more than three or four years. According to her, people moved to get a better job or promotion. She stayed in Jacksonville, Florida the longest.

To her, cats are very important and she feels they are the perfect apartment companions. Her display reflects their importance. She has a sign up in French that says “Chat Lunatique (Crazy Cat).” Below the sign, so if you cannot read French she placed a sign that says, “The Cat Box.” Her son does not share her sentiment about cats. He gave her a plaque to display outside her door since he felt she should have something without a cat on it. The plaque is a relief of a hen that specifically says “God bless this house as much as possible.” She finds this amusing since God can do whatever He wants.
13) Helen - Apartment Resident

Helen was born in Virginia but she did not spend much time there. Her father decided to go to medical school at Johns Hopkins, not to study medicine but physical education. Afterwards, he joined the YMCA organization and went to China. He then took a job with the Chinese Government University, which he felt was more in line with his interests. Her family lived in China for thirteen years until Helen became of age to go to college. She chose a small Midwestern liberal arts college and studied corrective physical education. Then she “began to notice that people with crooked spines had crooked personalities too.” After obtaining a Master's in Corrective Physical Education from New York University she pursued a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Iowa.

After leaving school, she worked during the Depression for the Ohio State Board of Social Welfare running a child guidance clinic and the Michigan Children’s Institute. Eventually, she moved to Iowa to marry. Her husband served as the Director of Child Guidance and she served on the State Board of Welfare. When World War II began she joined the Navy effort, and her husband joined the Army. In the Navy, Helen worked in the curriculum section of Navy personnel until her IBM card went through a sorting machine and the Navy discovered she spoke Chinese. The Navy felt that if she could speak Chinese then she could certainly learn Japanese. She politely pointed out to the commander that she was thirty-four and the rate of attrition for the language course was quite high for people over thirty. He replied, “You do not look like a tired thirty-four.” She relocated to Colorado to study Japanese and later moved to Washington where she translated captured documents. When she retired, she received a letter from the Navy Commander stating, “Your shipmates will miss you more than you realize.” This was a complete surprise to Helen, since she had not been near a ship during the entire war.
After the War, she and her husband held a variety of teaching and private practice positions around the country until they eventually returned to Iowa. She taught at Iowa Wesleyan for 11 years. For six of those years she did not draw a salary, because she was over the age of sixty-five. Her courses included Psychology as well as East Asian History. After her husband died, she then returned to a small Midwestern college town to be near a good friend.

Helen's doorway contained a simple framed shadowbox containing miniature Chinese instruments. She has had an interest in music all her life and many of the small instruments she has actually played in their larger forms. She purchased the instruments on a school trip with students in East Asia.
14) Dorothy – Apartment Resident

Dorothy grew up in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She can remember growing up with lots of cats and dogs. Dorothy remembers her mother kept her plants on two Singer sewing machine bases, which she purchased from a repairman who lived in town. She went to school at the University of North Carolina and Stephens College at Columbia University. In those days, freshmen women were not accepted into the university. Although Dorothy studied journalism, she ended up in medical records and worked in several hospitals.

One of the first things she asked before moving into the retirement community was “Can I have a cat?” She has always liked the lion family. She is very clear though that the cats are not her family. They are her pets.

Her display outside her door reflects some objects from the past as well as her love of her cats. Her mother’s wrought iron sewing machine bases are out in the hall along with pictures of the cats. For a whimsical holiday decoration, she has two straw cats riding miniature bicycles. An old dress she turned into a wall hanging displays a large lion.
15) Barbara — Apartment Resident

Barbara and her sister grew up in Cleveland. She went to Vassar College and studied Library Sciences. She then spent her career working in the Cleveland Public Library system. Her principal enjoyments have always been music and the outdoors. Her sister was an accomplished mountain climber.

Her doorway was unusual, because it had two brass doorstops and figurines depicting Punch and Judy. Her mother loved to collect brass and one of her chief hobbies was marionettes. Punch and Judy were two of the most famous marionettes of the time. A marionette craze was sweeping the area because of a famous puppeteer who was part of the Cleveland playhouse. Barbara remembers that she and her sister took part in the plays, but that her mother received the most enjoyment. The doorstops have always been with her and she considers them, "a bit of family."
16) Rebecca – Apartment Resident

Rebecca grew up in Oak Park, Illinois. Her family lived in the same house where her mother grew up. She recalls walking through Frank Lloyd Wright’s yard on the way home from school. According to her, “He was not there but his family was.” Her family was very musical. She recalls her father playing the cello and her grandfather was a music critic. Rebecca went to Swathmore College in Philadelphia and studied psychology and philosophy. The branch of psychology she studied was gestalt psychology which relates to phenomenological psychology which is based in the philosophy of learning and perception. Kurt Lewin’s Field theory was a key aspect of her studies. Upon leaving Swathmore, she had a year of graduate work at the University of Chicago where she studied psychology and neurology.

After leaving school, she went to work for the Scott Foresman Publishing company editing textbooks and manuscripts for college. She worked for the company for thirty-three years. Rebecca was fascinated by the battle between behavioral and cognitive psychology. She witnessed a total change in academic thinking, in that, behavior is a result of what you think and feel and not just what is done to you.

Rebecca married twice. By her first marriage, she had two children. She met her second husband on a blind date set up by a mutual friend. Her second husband was an ardent World Federalist and interested in prayer. Through prayer, her husband decided “that what the world needed was to get things done together rather than separate.” Thus, he planned his engineering career so he could spend a couple of days a week working on world government. World Federalists strongly believe in the power of working out problems at a global level rather than jockeying as national adversaries.
Both of their strong beliefs in these principles motivated them to take early retirement and spend several years volunteering at various World Federalist organizations.

Her involvement with World Federalist brought many friends, which included a Japanese couple. During this time she took a course in English as a Second Language (ESL) and began instructing several students in ESL. Eventually, they relocated to the south to retire and built a small cottage on a lake. After her husband died from chronic leukemia, she decided to move into a retirement community.

Rebecca's display represents some of her world involvement and her roots. She decided to put her grandmother's sewing chest outside her door. On top of the chest are Japanese figurines that she received from her friends. Above the figurines are framed embroideries from a Chinese ESL student. A framed print hangs on the opposite wall defining her strong world philosophy—"We are one earth, we are one humanity, we are one spirit."
Francis grew up on a dairy farm in New Hampshire. Her mother did not believe girls should be working in the barn, so she helped with other chores, such as separating the cream or picking strawberries. One of her favorite memories was learning to swim in a brook, which was a short walk away. The brook was only twelve inches deep, but since she was small, it worked for her. She left home to go to Syracuse University to study math education, but quickly realized that she needed to have more options, since the men teachers could also coach a sport as well as teach. Therefore, she switched her major from math to home economics. During school, she remembers working in a private home and not having enough money to ride the trolley. She walked a mile and a half to school and frequently had to come home at noon to do the dishes.

She met her husband on her first job out of school. He had a degree from Cornell in agriculture. He was a teacher, but later was promoted to principal and then to superintendent of schools. They lived in a variety of places. Sometimes she taught at the school and sometimes she stayed home and took care of her two daughters. This was a time before teachers were organized and frequently they would move just to get a $200.00 raise. It seems that everywhere they lived they were close to a river, a lake, or an ocean.

Because of the school year, they enjoyed six-week vacations. They would frequently go to her parents in New Hampshire for the summer. Her husband satisfied his need to farm by helping her parents and providing advice on how to improve the farm operation. By the time her parents retired, the farm was a great success. Her husband loved to garden and would have large areas planted at many of their homes. Although, Francis was not interested in farming, she frequently remembers helping out. Later, her husband lost the use of his legs. Some of her most treasured memories were working with him to keep up the garden. They went to great lengths to make the paths accessible for
him to get to all the planting beds with a motorized scooter. In retirement, they owned a home in Florida and New York and traveled in between because her husband could not be chilled.

After her husband passed away, she decided it was too much for one person to keep up. So, she moved to a retirement community close to her family. She waited a year and a half to find something to put outside her door. Her choice was a small natural looking fountain which fills the hallway with the sound of falling water. Around the fountain she placed rocks, plants and ferns. When asked why she likes it she says, “It’s alive.” She loves water and the plants remind her of the gardens in her life.

The rocks, she picked up during her recent hiking adventures. On the opposite wall is a Brass Lilly in relief that holds a special memory for her. This is the first art piece she purchased with money she had to waste after a lifetime of frugality.
18) Richard - Apartment Resident

Richard grew up in Florence, South Carolina. His father was a dispatcher for the United Coastline railroad. According to Richard, no train ever passed through the town without changing locomotives. Because, at that time, trains stopped for water every 100 miles and the crew always stayed with the same locomotive. Richard remembers not having a car when he grew up since they could always ride the train if they needed to go somewhere. He knew all the crew members since they lived only a half a block from the track. He even has obtained a copy of the first book he ever received about trains as a child.

A gifted student, Richard has degrees from Furman University, The University of Virginia and Vanderbilt University. He met his wife in Nashville while studying at Vanderbilt University. His first degree was in medieval history. He taught in high school and college for a few years, but decided his true calling was to be a librarian. He eventually worked as a university librarian in several schools as well as running a large federal library. Whenever he traveled, he preferred to travel by train.

About the time he retired, he started to collect model locomotives. Eventually, his collection nearly outgrew the house. Each of the miniature steam locomotive is handmade of brass and actually operates. He has sold a great deal of the collection, but still keeps his favorites. Almost every wall in his apartment is filled with track shelves filled with miniature locomotives. He advertises it as a museum. Richard has a librarian's knowledge base about locomotives, which he shares with anyone who visits his museum. He was also instrumental in pointing out that the locomotives being depicted in a model at the site of the first Transcontinental Railroad Museum in Promontory, Utah (the historical place where a golden spike was driven to celebrate the joining of the Union Pacific Railroad and the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869) were the wrong color. He proudly remembers returning to the museum years later and finding out the proper colors were in place. Outside his door, he has placed a small toy locomotive and a sign from the National Railway Museum in Britain to let people know, "this is where the museum is." During the interview, a great deal was learned about the fascinating history of steam locomotives.
Sarah grew up on the south shore of Massachusetts by Cape Cod. She remembers happy days spent at the seashore digging for clams. Sarah's father worked in a box shop making wooden boxes. Since he was a handy carpenter, he also made furniture. Being the oldest girl, she received piano lessons. She was then supposed to teach her younger sisters how to play. Although she did not have much luck with her sisters, she did earn reasonable money teaching other children in the neighborhood. Her brother was fortunate to win a scholarship to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. The rest of the family had to work to help keep him in school. Because there was no money to send her to college, Sarah decided to go to cosmetology school. The day before receiving her license she decided that this was not for her and left. She wanted nothing to do with hair and never wanted her license.

Sarah always enjoyed making her own way and recalls how she left one job because she could not take arguing with her boss. She immediately accepted a position washing dishes in a restaurant and in three months, she was in charge of the restaurant. She quickly pointed out that, "It was not because I was clever; I was willing to work and it was the second World War." She worked in the restaurant for seventeen years. During the war years, she met her husband who was a service man. His family owned a pharmacy and expected him to be a pharmacist. Similar to Sarah, he quit before he got his license. He still worked in his parent's store because his family owned it and Sarah frequently helped in the store as well. She and her husband raised one son.

After her husband passed away, she decided that she was through with cold weather. She sold everything and moved to Fort Lauderdale. She lived on the beach for sixteen years and loved every minute of it. She loved the sound of the tide coming in and walking the shoreline looking for things. She volunteered at an organ and music store to teach people how to play. She remembers how she

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learned there that you do not have to always play a piece of music like it is written. She liked that a great deal. Since her son travels frequently, he asked if it would be possible for her to move to a southern state near her grand daughter. So, she moved away from the beach. Outside her doorway are many reminders of her time in Florida. An avid shell collector, she has a variety of shells displayed. Some have been made into ships, which she sold to people looking for souvenirs when she lived in Florida. She also placed a chest outside her door that her father made for her. The combination makes her doorway very distinctive.

**BIO-SKETCH FINDINGS**

The primary finding from the resident interviews was that most of the items placed outside the door had significant meaning and were tied to a resident’s interests and past lifestyle. These interviews also provided key sources of information on how the doorways are used by individuals, as well as their attitudes about their displays. This information helped to answer some of the key questions presented next in the research questions and discussion section of this report.