

Voices from the Grassroots Oral History Project

Detroit Equity Action Lab

Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights

Wayne State University Law School

Detroit, MI

Marian Kramer

Interviewed by

PETER BLACKMER

July 13, 2019

Detroit, MI

Narrator

Marian Kramer is a veteran organizer with roots in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She is the national president of the National Welfare Rights Union, a member of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, and a member of the People's Water Board. Kramer was a lead organizer with the Congress for Racial Equality in the Civil Rights movement. She organized all over the South with a specific focus on Louisiana and Texas. She moved to Detroit, Michigan in 1965 and continued her activism through her involvement in union organizing, organizing against water shutoffs, advocating for access to affordable water, and welfare rights.

Interviewer

Peter Blackmer is a Research Fellow at the Detroit Equity Action Lab, an initiative of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights at Wayne State University Law School.

Abstract

In this interview, Marian Kramer discusses the Poor People's campaign, the National Welfare Rights Organization, the West Central Organization, and tenant organizations in the 1960s. She explains how she became involved in these movements in Detroit and how the women she worked with in these organizations became successful organizers. A major theme throughout is her belief that successful movements cannot be imposed by outsiders but must instead be led by the people who are suffering. She points to examples in the Civil Rights movement, labor unions, the welfare rights movement, and the poverty movements.

Keywords

Detroit, Michigan; Frances Piven; George Wiley; Housing; Labor unions; National Welfare Rights Organization; Poor People's Campaign; Richard Cloward; Water shutoffs; Welfare rights; West Central Organization; Westside Mothers; Yvette Linebarger

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Transcript of interview conducted July 13, 2019 with:

Marian Kramer [MK]

Detroit, MI

By: Peter Blackmer [PB]

PB: Alright. Can you just give us your name, where you live, and your organizations and affiliations?

MK: Oh, my God.

PB: [laughs softly]

MK: Marian Kramer--Baker, really. I live in Highland Park, Michigan, and I always tell people that's the capital of Detroit [Michigan]. And what else you want to know? Organizations. Oh, my God. Not from histor...not historically, [laughs] 'cause we'll be here all night. [coughs] 'Scuse me, 'scuse me. I knew it was about time for me to cough. I'm the National Chair for the National Welfare Rights Union, the group out of the old National Welfare Rights Organization at one time, and I'm a member of the local Michigan Welfare Rights Organization as well as on the board of the General Baker Institute. I'm a part of CLUW [pronounced Clue], Coalition of Labor [Union] Women. Can we stop that?

PB: Mmhm. [both laugh] Like you said, we'd be here all day.

MK: I, you know, because I don't like to leave 'em out, you know.

PB: Mmhm.

MK: Organizations out, but my...my brain is not like it used to be.

[0:01:31]

PB: Mmm. So can you start...can--we got a lot of ground to cover...

MK: Go on.

PB: ...since last time, but let's just start today with how Michigan Welfare Rights first got involved in the struggle around water.

MK: Well, back in the [19]60s, there was a Poor People's Campaign that was organized in Syracuse, New York. What is that...what...what's the head up for?

PB: That's my hometown.

MK: Oh, no wonder.

PB: [laughs]

MK: In Syracuse, New York, and a lot of us that was at West Central Organization at the time got on the bus that West Central rented, and we really wanted the community to be there and be active in this, and so the bus was packed, and it was great for the people! It was cold as hell. I'm telling you, it was cold when we

left Detroit--and you have to understand I'm...I'm from the South--and then we got up to Syracuse. It was freezing, but it was good to see people that I had been in the Civil Rights movement with. They were there because they lived there and they went to, you know, the school up there.

That's...you know. And I got there and we ran into George Wiley, who had been Assistant to the Director of CORE [Congress of Racial Equality], and I...I said, "Something is beaming 'cause George is runnin' 'round here like he always run around when he's got something for us to do." It was four of us that had left the South together, and first thing George said, "You guys grab a seat. We got to talk." I said, "Mhm, [laughs] he got an assignment for us." And it was. He wanted us to meet Richard Cloward and Frances Piven because they had a proposal. They wanted to see if I--we were interested in coming on board around, and that was the first Poor People's Campaign that happened at that time, you know. And they explained to us... It was George, first of all, said, "You know, we really need you guys to come on staff." I said, "George, what staff?" I knew what staff. He said, "The Poor People's Campaign."

Well, all of us had--I know my ex-husband and I, my first husband [Dave Kramer], we had talked to people in Detroit and we already was working, you know, deep in the community against urban renewal and all and making sure that the community played a...held a role in...in, you know, the question of them being pushed and forced out of their community. But at that time, I told him, I said, "George, I can't come full-time." And I told you before, the women that were running Westside Mothers, which ended up being one of the largest one even in...in the country. "I do not think Gloria [Brown] nor Selma [Goode] will accept me on staff," you know, and that type of stuff. They said, "But this would be coming directly from...from the national 'cause you'll be representing the national." I said, "No. I'mma have to say no, but I will work. Don't worry, I will work to help build a welfare rights, you know, throughout the area." And Dave [Kramer] at the time, he had just...he...he was on staff of West Central Organization, an [Saul] Alinsky organization that was blooming at the time. That's what the community was using to fight the corporations and what they were doing in our community and, you know, pushing people out and everything. So the other two people, they were on their way to New York, you know, and there was jobs waiting for...waiting for them there.

You know, when you were in the Civil Rights movement and you were...and once you came out, people kind of grab you to become, you know, one of their employees 'cause they figured given all the stuff we done went through, we should have some knowledge on something. And that--but I was glad that I stayed. I...I didn't want to get--you know, I didn't want to go to [Washington] D.C. I didn't want to go--I wanted to stay where I planted my feet and then started getting acclimated to, you know, Detroit and what-have-you. And I got--and I really grounded with the women, poor women in public housing, Jeffries Public Housing, and we built a welfare rights and public housing in Detroit. As well as the local group finally started accepting us [laughs] because these women, you know... I always tell people, you say you can't organize, but you do organize every day. You either organize what you're gonna put on and what you're gonna, you know, you know, how you're gonna go to work, if you're going to work or what you're gonna do. That all takes org...that's the question of organization, organizing, and you have to organize and say how...do I have enough money to put some food on the table for my children? Then, if I don't, what am I...what is gonna be my plan for today? And of course, they became some of the best organizers. You...you...you had to respect. And they were there on the ground and living that life every day, as far as the welfare rights.

[0:07:56]

So, they...they became a strong element, organization in the metropolitan area of Detroit and throughout Michigan and what-have-you, but they didn't travel too much, and I, you know, I was over at WCO [West Central Organization] still, you know, doing what I could do to support 'em, helping, you know, if people had problems with the Welfare Department and showing, you know, going through their complaints and stuff like that. But, one good thing is that Gloria [Brown] and Selma Goode, they were pretty good at knowing policies and stuff. But the thing about it when I, after several years of working through the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and whole bunch of, you know, stuff that, you know, staying right here in Detroit, one thing I had learned was you couldn't trust a darned thing that the workers was telling you at the Welfare Department 'cause they didn't know, really, you know.

And so it was good that, you know, I stayed in touch with the women. I was a member of the organization, and they...we became the first organization within the national that these women got sick and tired of some of the mess that was going on, nationally and locally, and they said, "We...we think we need to pull out of the organization." You know, one thing about poor people, if they don't have no money, they'll find some money to put in their organization, and they were good about that. At the time when we were recruited for that organiza--you know, to build that organization, a lot of those women, some of 'em working in, you know, hotel, motel, and restaurant workers and what-have-you. So they knew unions, you know, because they were a part of unions, you know, so they just eased on back into some of that, but they...this time, they eased back with welfare rights because a lot of the tools of welfare rights came from union organizing, and they became like a thorn in the side, but they did not put welfare rights down. They...they loved that org...that organization.

So they were beginning to have problems nationally and what-have-you because, you know, I...I told... With welfare rights, if you don't put the victims of poverty themselves in leadership, it's like going into a factory. If those workers are not the ones that need to be in leadership and leading this thing, you gonna fail. So sooner or later, welfare rights was not only attacked by...by [Washington] D.C. because it was a threat to this government because what are you talkin' 'bout, organizing poor people? At one time, I think I told you, in this there was over a hundred thousand people, I think, in welfare rights throughout the country, and these women were taking over welfare office demanding for people's rights and what-have-you. It was a new day, a new day. And I just...I just enjoyed it, [laughs] you know, although I didn't want to travel nowhere. I traveled right in the district I needed to keep building, you know. But I...I had the opportunity to hang with some women that not only because of them, you know, trying to raise their kids and being on the job and all that type of thing, they were out... If I had to call them at nighttime and say, "Look, we got a problem with a slum landlord," they would be there.

And the thing about 'em--people talk about pistols and stuff like that. Those women had pistols in their...in their shirts and stuff like that because they...they were from the South, a lot of 'em, and they knew... I knew what--my momma used to carry and stuff like that. They would come in from work and they didn't have nothing. They better have something, you know, to get in the way trying to get

home. So, you know, they...they usually used to tell me, if we go...when we go to those...oh, to the big huge buildings that used to be here at one time in Detroit, you know, apartment buildings, and these slum landlord--these slum super--well, they call 'em superintendents in New York and they call 'em--and I forgot what they call the person that was over the building here. You could walk in there sometime--[laughs] never forget this, Father [Norman] Thomas that was with us this time one time. We walked into one building, and you could hear in the walls the rats. And I said, "Okay, all you ministers, don't be running out of here! We standing right here." But there were some good guys 'cause they were...they were kind...they were rebellious also with the issues of in...internal leadership of the Cat...the diocese as well as with the...the mayor at the time because, you know, he was one of the people that even stopped and went to the Catholics and stopped any money being given to WCO although the...the people that was on that board liked what they had heard, you know. And so, who was the...I used to could just flop it off my head. Look up the mayor at that time...

[0:14:15]

PB: Gr...in the earl...late [19]60s? Not...[Roman] Gribbs?

MK: Not Gribbs. Gribbs was after that.

PB: [Jerome] Cavanagh?

MK: Cavanagh. Well, you know Cavanagh.

PB: Mmhm.

MK: Even when he had been... Prior to becoming a mayor, he was a...a lawyer, and he was a lawyer for a lot of the...the gangsters and everything. You know, I won't say that too much, but we used to run into a lot of slum landlord that...that were also a part of the Mafia. And in fact, the first time I attended one of those

meetings when we would send out a letter to the landlord and say your...your...these are the complaints of your tenants, and we need you here to talk to your tenants. We would have it at WCO, and you would think that they would...they would...would not show up. They showed up because they--why did they show up? They showed up because the people had showed up in their neighborhood in Grosse Pointe [Michigan]--and that was the best demonstrations, in Grosse Pointe--and we would show up on a bus with leaflets to all their neighbors and what-have-you, and the police say, "Look. What do y'all want?" "Well, he needs to get a new furnace for the building. We're freezing over there." "Well, I'm going in here and tell him, and I swear he's gonna...he's gonna come and talk to you and every..."--this was in Grosse Pointe. Quite naturally, they didn't want us there.

So they showed up, and the first one that showed up that I was able to be off from work and see show up, he drove up in a...in one...one of those...I always call them hearse cars, those huge cars, you know, with about three or four bodyguards and--but when he walked into that building, there were people all around in that building. I mean, it was a...there was no more seats, the community showed up. And Dick Venus, Reverend Venus, chaired the meeting. Dick was some mess. I'd say...I'd say, "All you ministers probably gonna get fired by your congregation that's out here hanging with us." They'd say, "Well, that'd be a good firing, too," you know. But Dick chaired the meeting, and people had an opportunity to speak about the conditions in that building, and his...his person is not taking care of that. It was...it was a good sight for even the women of welfare rights to be able to see another way, also, to help organize, you know. You don't have to take the mess from the city if you got complaints over there concerning your living quarters and what-have-you, and they did. They began to deal with a lot of that.

You know, through welfare rights, we...we not only began to understand the...the whole fight, you know, with the city and...and all these different components of the city and why it takes you so long to even get to the right person, you know, but we learned who was at the Welfare Department and who...who wheeled and dealed there, you know. And they...they...they hated to...I know they told me one time, my worker told me, when I had to finally go when my first husband and I split up, but when I got pregnant, I said...I said...I told some of the people at the office. They said, "Where you going, Marian?" I said, "I'm going to the Welfare Department." "You don't need us?" I said, "No, I'm gonna...I'm really just going to

learn some more, you know." I walked into the Welfare Department on Seward, at Seward and Woodward. That place was packed. I sit down and I must have been about that big. [holds hands up to indicate size of pregnancy; laughs] That was a little old thing. And...and I asked them, you know, told 'em I was there to fill out an application, and the young lady said, "Well, sit down over there with the rest of 'em!" And I'm just observing everything again going on 'cause we...we had to always try to check out these welfare office. And I had sat there about an hour, which was too long, and I got up and I said, "Can I speak to your director?" "Well, you have to wait." I said, "No, I don't have to wait. This is too long of a wait. People been sitting in here for long." I said, "I came in here and I...you know, I got to get home and eat and feed myself and that baby I'm carrying, you know. This is ridiculous!"

Well, sure enough, they brought out the worker that was gonna be my worker. It ended up that she and I became friends because she came...she had to come to the house for--at that time, you go fill in your application, then you had to wait on them to come and investigate you and your home, and she said to me, "Marian, when I first met you and came to your house, I was shaken." I said, "Shaken from what? I'm...it was just me!" She said, "You had two dogs there." I said, "That's my brother's dog that live upstairs." I said, "Yeah, I can imagine you being afraid of them." She said, "But I loved every time you came to the office either for yourself or for someone else in the community and stuff like that, and you would ask for the director." She said, "They would get so scared. I would...I had to..." She said, "I would have to hide myself to keep from laughing."

[0:20:29]

She said--because, you know... As we began to see this, there was a relationship developing with some of the workers, you know, within the Welfare Department because they knew they...they were catching hell also. And welfare rights, on down the line sooner or later, as we started taking on legislative stuff, when we fought for--and Michigan was good for that, for increasing grants. We told 'em, "Look,"--told the workers too--"You need to come join some of this because you need to be fighting for increasing your salaries." They were not unionized at the time. And, you know, they would get a little hush money, which was not that

good, but because the workers and...and we...we finally got...some of them were good on that.

I was in New York at the time. When I came back here, I went right back to welfare rights. And...and one thing we learned was that those workers did not know policies, and so one good thing Selma [Goode] and...and a lot of the folks did was hold these workshops for all of us, and we learned by what--Well, Yvette [Linebarger], when I got back here, I became friend with Yvette who was a...over...she was the President of Wes...Westside Mothers, and she snatched me right up and said, "Look, you gonna have to be the secretary." I said, "But I haven't been back here a good two weeks, and I got an assignment!" I said, "Okay." I said, "I'll do what I can," because Westside Mothers had a large membership, and that membership... The people would show up once a month on a Tuesday to not only hear the new policies and what-have-you, but to begin to understand other stuff that was, you know, that pol--things that were going on around what they were fighting for.

Westside Mothers not only helped to organize other welfare rights throughout the state also, but you could...I could tell that the...the membership was getting restless because, you know, you go as far as you can on the one hand. But the thing is, I said like earlier, you got to educate and you have to make sure that the people that is leading the organization are the people that are suffering themselves, and that--Yvette, when I...when we came together, she would call me every night, "Look, this is...we got to talk about tactics now for the next meeting." It got to the point I was approached and...and they--by, you know, the person that was holding the keys to everything--and said, "Marian, I don't want you to put everything in the minutes." I said, "If I'm taking minutes, I put everything in the minutes." Now, you know--and...and when I told Yvette about this, she said, "Oh no, you put everything in those minutes. That...we're gonna...we're taking..."--Yvette was smart as hell.

PB: What was Yvette's last name?

MK: Linebarger. L-I-N-B-E-R-G-E--I forgot. She had eight children...

PB: Mm.

MK: ...that she raised, and...and she watched and made sure that she looked at mail that came into welfare rights, and she showed me and I said, “Yvette, one thing we need to do, let’s cut some of this stuff out. When we do, let’s make sure that every person that come in here that needs to help have a...”--we put their stuff into a folder. That’s a folder that we could always go in there and make sure they have that back-up. We started doing some of that, and we knew those women were gonna get mad, but they couldn’t say nothing because Yvette chaired the meeting, and, you know, Westside Mothers not only grew more, but the people in their mi--you know, in there [points to brain] as far as their knowledge and stuff grew more in knowing how to run an organization.

[0:25:22]

PB: Can I ask you about the tenant organizing side of this?

MK: Who?

PB: The tenant organizing in the public housing.

MK: Tent organizing?

PB: Tenant.

MK: Okay, that...

PB: So...

MK: That was...all that was going on.

PB: Yeah, so was that...did you find that to be an impactful avenue for getting people active in organizing?

MK: Yeah. Yeah, we organized... Understand, WCO [West Central Organization], it was a place not only for dealing with the city--I know [Jerome] Cavanagh wished we...we had gone somewhere and died [Peter laughs]--with the city--and I know he was mad at those priests [laughs] and nuns that joined. [coughs] But coming off of organizations like welfare rights, people learned--the people that were having the problem, such...such as tenants--organizing. And I know before I left New York, I was beginning to see a lot of tenants organizing 'cause I told 'em before I left, I said, "Look, in...in your check"--I mean, in your money for the week. [loud shouting outside] Well, you can put the air conditioning back on. I don't usually like air conditioning, but it's getting hot.

PB: Mmhm.

MK: They're gonna soon start making sure that you pay for the utilities. [loud air conditioner whirring] See, 'cause in public housing at that time, all your stuff was in...in your income. I mean, what you paid public housing. And true enough, before I left, what happened was they were surveying a lot of the place in...in Bed-Stuy [Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York City, New York] and all the places, you know, in Brooklyn [New York City, New York] and what-have-you, and...and as it gravitated towards even--I'm trying to think of some of the Presidents at the time. [Jimmy] Carter. Carter was better jobs and income. Carter and [Bill] Clinton--and even those behind him, you know, you could see the path was changing when it came to the safety net. And I know a lot of the young people that were working for organizations that was getting 501, they had a 501 (c) (3), a lot of times they thought they knew more than what we did, welfare. I said, "You might know something 'bout policies and stuff like that, but what do you know? Have you ever lived on welfare? Have you ever raised children on welfare and stuff like that?" "Oh no." Well, I said, "Well, then get baptized first and then start talking. I know you're using Saul Alinsky theory on things that have been put in your mind

thinking that you know more than the person that you're supposed to be here to help organize."

And it's the same...it was the same... You know, as I look back, it's the same thing that we had to use in the Civil Rights movement. It was the same thing that unions have to organize and deal with 'cause you don't just bust into a place and think, "Ha! I'm the s--I'm the special person now. I know everything." You don't know nothing. You're gonna get your butt kicked, if anything. So, you know, through all that stuff, tenant organizing along with welfare rights became close. They were different organizations, and they would support each other. We...the tenants called me one Sunday morn...Sunday. I thought I was--I was enjoying myself. I was at home by myself. I was gonna eat and everything like that. They called me and they said, "Marian, we need you over here at...at Jeffries public housing." I said, "I didn't think I had to come to that meeting!"

But the... See, the city had moved to up the...their rent, which was hard for the people. And so Miss Shine and all--not Miss Shine. Miss Shine was in labor, but...but she came over. Welfare Rights, I mean WCO, was the place that we had em all in there, different places. They came over and we had--it was on a Sunday. I'll never forget, it was raining and it was cold and everything. And darn it, when I got back, I noticed that my dog had eaten up my food too, but that's life. When we got over there, Miss Shine said, "Well, Marian, we're about to present, when you get here, what they claim they want us to pay and when they want us to pay. And if not, they're talking about evicting a lot of us." And they...they gave a report on that, and then they looked at me and said, "What should we do, Marian?" I said, "You should be telling me what you should do! I... [laughs] I've learned a lot from you." I said, "I tell you what. Why don't we all stop paying...why don't you all stop paying your rent? That will hurt their pockets."

So, Jeffries public housing, we organized a...a contingent of people that were a part, you know, of...of Jeffries, and it was the tenants. At that time, they had not...we had not got on with the tenant organization, but sooner or later down the line we did. And we pulled that...we pulled that rent strike. Hey, they were mad. They were real mad. And we went to--those women were so good, I, after a while, I said, "Can I go do some work back at my jo--paying job?" They said, "Yes. We got this." They--we had mapped out all the various, you know, public housing.

Now, when you went to some of 'em, it was all white, some of 'em on the East Side, some further on out and what-have-you, and they were kept up much better than the ones that we were living--that poor people were living in. Well, that started getting swept away. Not only the folks that led the tenant organization leadership, but they had support in the community when something needed to be done, if they need to take the city and stuff on. We won that strike. We won that strike, and what was so good, who was in the forefront were the tenants themselves.

And eventually, you know, we were able down the road become, you know, get involved with the tenant organization even on a national level, and some of our welfare rights people became some of the leadership even in there. So, you know, we...we kind of merged a lot of 'em together. But, you know, you had your own organization, and...and you had your own leaders and that stuff, although they might...might be the same person, but yeah. But that...it didn't start all out together, it was a step-by-step process. When they needed something, they began to examine and then--'cause these women don't...these women run their household, you know, and...and their streets and everything. I'll tell you one story and I--what time is it?

[0:33:30]

HT: 2:37.

MK: Okay. I'll tell you this story about--and you need to go there before he pass away...

PB: Okay.

MK: ...and that is Howard King.

PB: Howard King?

MK: King. If he can remember her. I'll even come over there.

PB: Okay.

MK: One of the families that I got real close with when I got here was the King family. They were a part of WCO. His aunt, Miss Shine, when she moved on Butternut Street, she had to make sure she had her pistol on her. That's the thing--I said, "Miss Shine, where did...how did you take care of your house at night?" She said, "I didn't sleep. I had friends in the neighbor--you know, friends I brought and family that we slept on...I had to sleep on the...the roof because these people did not want us here." Now, these people were a lot of folks from the hills of West Virginia and all that stuff, but that's what the damn capitalists use to keep us all divided, you know. They had no more than what we had, you know. And then some of the mess started leaking in the neighborhoods, you know--and we knew it wasn't us putting that mess out. It had to be the gov[ernment]... Peop--women began to understand. I said, "Look, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] and them are...are checking us out." I had enough...enough check done by them when I was in the Civil Rights movement. And I said, I got up here, and I finally had a child. They went out there to where my child was being...for child care for...and began to interview the person that was taking care of my child during the day. And she said, "I don't know nothing about Marian's business."--although she did. Now, you know, people protected you. But the same thing, they try to instill that fear in the tenants organization, trying to--and we knew that people had infiltrated a lot. We know a lot of people--I mean, we know even here now there's infiltration that is going on, but we don't get paranoid like we did at that time. But, people wanted to kill 'em. Must (??)...we...no. 'Cause they're gonna have to work more than what we work to cover up the mess that they got to do, you know.

But, people...people began to learn. They learned--and that's what I have faith in as far as the workers here, be they working, unemployed, and these young people that they not...you know, you think you gonna graduate from college and you think you gonna be able to get you a good job here. They don't need the young people no more like they needed us at one time to come out of those

schools--people came out of high school, quit high school, and went in those factories. They were making more than teachers made, you know. So now, we got a different situation. The name of the game is computers. The name of the game is that they...they don't need our hands no more to produce. They look like they're doing good by bringing this factory in and stuff like that. They're gonna be gotten rid of quickly, too, people quickly also, because they, you know--have you ever been in one of...seen...in...in--where is it?

There's this area where you go and order your car. It's in...it's in Germany. Go and order your car and at...at the, you know...what you order and what you want in the car and everything like that. You follow that car. I'mma try to find... I have to look for the...the information. It was in a magazine. You follow that car, and the people working on it have on these white jackets and stuff like that, and you follow that car all the way down to the end. No hands hardly have touched that car, and they bring the commute train through the factory. My husband used to be on...General [Baker] used to be up on...on all that stuff--through...through the factory where they could cut out on a lot of transfer...you know, transferring parts. Now, my daughter say, "Mom, we're doing--they're doing us there." My daughter Jacquelyn (sp??), when she was working at Chrysler, she said, "They bring our parts from Canada on the train in here, the just-in-time theory." She said, "And it is really hard, you know, on both side of the fence, you know, us not being able to be together like we could." I said, "Yeah, I wish you all had some sense like the workers in Canada." And they organize all--people at...at the barbershop and everything. When the strike goes on, the strike go on for everybody, you know. I said, this class here, we been bribed so much, it does not understand that. But it's...it's in your hands now.

Even, you know, so those women in welfare rights were key to the movement because they...they were nothing to...they knew how to play and make you have fun. They knew how to cook. They knew how to take...take care of their children as well as other kids. If we needed to send people to [Washington] D.C. and they had children, let me tell you what we organized. We organized a number of--this is from them--a number of women that would stay here, and they would have all the information on the children, and they kept, they...they kept their mouths shut at the time, and they would take care of the children while those women went to D.C. or to Atlanta [Georgia] and other places to organize. I mean, it was...it was a hell of a thing to be around at the time.