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The ninth decade: Six Central Ohio women

Hartranft, Linda Bussard, Ph.D.

The Ohio State University, 1992
THE NINTH DECADE: SIX CENTRAL OHIO WOMEN

DISSEMINATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Linda Bussard Hartranft, B.A., M.A.

*****

The Ohio State University

1992

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To My Husband

John C. Hartranft
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Professor Erika Bourguignon for her encouragement and guidance during my years as a graduate student. Her intellectual breadth and enthusiasm for scholarship remain an inspiration, and I thank her for her help and her friendship. Thank you to Professor John C. Messenger, one of my earliest graduate school professors, for his encouragement and his help with editing. Thanks also to Professor Richard H. Moore for broadening my perspectives and providing useful suggestions.

To the six women who offered me the stories of their lives, I am grateful; through you I have learned the meaning of being a woman in her eighties. I expected to find your lives fascinating, but I did not expect to make six friends.

To my husband John, who has supported me in every way during this journey, no thanks could ever be sufficient, and to our sons, Jay, Jeff, and Josh thank you for your help, your understanding, and especially for your humor.
VITA

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PUBLICATION

1986 Margaret Mead’s Contribution to the Study of Sex and
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America, Erika Bourguignon and Seminar Participants.
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FIELDS OF STUDY

Major Field: Anthropology

Psychological Anthropology
Anthropology of Women
Anthropology of Age
PREFACE

The six women who generously participated in this study by sharing their life histories and their perspectives on life as women in their eighties generated data which are rich and varied, and the examples which appear in this document by no means exhaust the information which they presented. The interviews contain more information about each topic than is presented in the dissertation and also contain information about topics not discussed here. The joint nature of the project is evident in the selection process. The selection of the main issues was based on the fact that all or almost all of the women placed importance on these topics in telling their stories. The use of specific examples as illustration was based on my choice of the examples as appropriate, on an attempt to avoid duplication in the use of examples, and on the desire to let each woman speak concerning each topic when possible.

It was with considerable frustration that I came to terms with the fact that each woman’s story would not appear in the fullness with which she presented it. Each
woman's life history merits its own book; perhaps that will come in time.

I consider myself to be a native anthropologist because I am a member of the society in which I am studying. Native anthropology, sometimes called insider anthropology or indigenous anthropology, is not new. In his Presidential Address to the AAA meetings in Detroit in 1964, Leslie White (1965) stated that while we should continue to study "the nonliterate and the prehistoric," we should consider the possibility that we can make more of a contribution by studying our own society, since we know little about it. Although this study does not speak to the questions he mentions as unknowns (Why do we prohibit polygamy in the United States? Why do we not adequately support our schools? What is the significance of America's interest in baseball?), it does address another American topic which merits exploration: the ninth decade of life. Perhaps White's suggestion had its intended effect; at any rate, Rynkiewich and Spradley (1975) note that students who wanted to study their own culture began to be heard, and in 1969 the AAA passed a resolution supporting the idea of doing research in the United States.

This study also meets Joan Albon's (1977:70) suggestion that anthropologists should study "horizontally"—that
is, study "those closer to their own social and economic status," instead of studying "down." John Caughey (1986) suggests that there are at least three reasons for anthropologists to study middle-class Americans: 1) we cannot understand fringe cultures in the United States without understanding the dominant culture; 2) documentation of mainstream America is important in itself and because of national and international implications; 3) the study of the middle-class is important to what Messerschmidt (1981:5) calls "the anthropology of issues."

Donald Messerschmidt (1981:9) points out that there is an inside/outside continuum in anthropology, and that "perhaps the most reasonable approach for determining what it is like to be inside a particular culture...is to let the native informants speak as much for themselves as possible." I address the inside/outside continuum in the introduction, making the point that in studying old age in my own society, I am in some ways, nevertheless, exploring another culture.

As a native anthropologist, I see some challenges and many advantages to my position. Because I am a native, I must resist overfamiliarity and make sure that my views and the views of the women are carefully distinguished. Caughey (1986) points out that although the native anthropologist may avoid gross misinterpretations, he or
she is in danger of missing the patterns in a familiar culture. I have tried to address these problems by close reliance on interview tapes and by careful coding. There are some risks to doing native anthropology: Hervé Varenne (1986:39) points out, for example, that the traditional anthropological veto, "My people don’t do it that way" becomes "My mother doesn’t do it that way," and the anthropologist is evaluated by those who are also natives. On the other hand, I have the advantage of drawing on a lifetime of experiences within the general society I am studying and therefore have a base of cultural knowledge from which to begin. I can serve as my own informant as I draw on experiences I have had with people in their eighties and the experiences of others with whom I speak. (When I tell a new acquaintance about my area of study, I am almost guaranteed a story of that person’s relative, friend, or neighbor who is in his or her eighties.) Language is not a barrier, and I am aware of subtleties of speech and mannerisms that have meaning in this culture. I find it easy to establish rapport and a relationship of trust. Since I did not have to leave the field when my research was complete, it has been easy in the period following the study to maintain a relationship with each woman.
As the literature review shows, this study joins a number of other studies of age done in this country by American anthropologists, but it is one of the few to look at the lives of women in their eighties. It explores a subject that will be of increasing interest to researchers, however, in part because the numbers of the very old in our population will continue to grow in coming years, and in part because, as can be seen in the stories these six women tell, the ninth decade is a complex and intriguing one.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION ........................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ..................................... iii
VITA .................................................. iv
PREFACE ............................................... v
LIST OF TABLES ....................................... xii
LIST OF FIGURES ..................................... xiii
CHAPTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SUMMARIES OF LIFE HISTORIES</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. PHYSICAL CONDITION</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. INDEPENDENCE</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. WORK</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. FAMILY</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. FRIENDS</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPENDICES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. INTERVIEW DATES FOR SIX WOMEN</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. POSTSCRIPT</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Percent Increase: Total Population and Older Age Groups</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sex Ratios in the United States</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sex-Specific Expectations of Remaining Life for Individuals Age 70 and Over: Two Functional Statuses, United States, 1984</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Driving and Housing</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Work Experiences, Volunteer and Paid</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Family Characteristics</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Retirement Communities - Levels of Care</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Retirement Communities - Fees</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Retirement Communities - Services</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURES

1. Genealogical Chart for Julia ................... 324
2. Genealogical Chart for Margaret ................. 325
3. Genealogical Chart for Catherine ............... 326
4. Genealogical Chart for Laura ..................... 327
5. Genealogical Chart for Emily .................... 328
6. Genealogical Chart for Anne ..................... 329
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Introducing Six Women

Emily, eighty-four, works as a hostess and cashier in her daughter's restaurant several hours every day. "I don't know what I would do if I didn't [work]. I'm not one to sit at home--I never have been. And yet I am limited to what I can do now."

At eighty-five Julia makes her own arrangements to stay at the health center of her retirement community for a period of recuperation following surgery on her hip. Although she knows the surgery entails risks, she looks forward to improved walking ability. "But Dr. Clifton put his hand on the walker and said, 'I hate to see you using that.' I have to use it. I felt the same way. So they'll get me straightened up, I hope."

After being forced by crippling arthritis to give up her apartment, Anne, eighty-four, struggles to find intellectual activity in a retirement community near her son's home, three hundred miles from her hometown. One evening's entertainment was a singing group followed by
punch and cookies. "...I went, you know, I go to absolutely everything because I don’t like sitting here all day long, but that doesn’t keep your brain cells working."

Laura, eighty-two, has been chosen to represent the residents of a group of related retirement communities on the corporate board of trustees. "Ten years ago if anybody had told me I’d be doing what I’m doing now, I’d have been utterly surprised...but that’s been about the way my life’s gone." She adds that about every ten years she looks back and is surprised at what she has accomplished.

Margaret, eighty-five, reads current novels and watches the news on television, but says, "I get so disturbed sometimes about things that are happening in our world, and sometimes I think I shouldn’t watch the news." In response to her daughter’s suggestion that she stop watching, she replies, "I’m still living in this world; I’m still part of it."

Catherine remarks that friends keep telling her about senior citizen activities, suggesting that at eighty-seven she might like to participate. "I just am so busy otherwise, I don’t have time for their activities, and I suppose too that I’ve always had a lot of the kind of interests you pursue on your own..."
The Study

These six women in their eighties are part of a worldwide phenomenon: the aging of populations. In both more-developed and less-developed regions of the world the percent increase for the very old is much greater than that for the population as a whole. Between 1980 and 2000, for example, the total world population is expected to grow just over thirty-eight percent, while the world population of people over eighty is expected to grow almost sixty-nine percent1 (Hoover and Siegel 1986:8).

Although anthropologists have shown increased interest in old age in the last twenty years, little research has focused on the very old. This is true also in the areas of sociology, psychology, and gerontology which share a concern for aging and issues of old age.

In recent years there has been frequent acknowledgement of the fact that the differences between a person of sixty-five and one of ninety-five are of such significance that including everyone over sixty-five in a single cohort makes the category almost meaningless. Researchers have suggested divisions into the young-old (sixty-five to seventy-four) and the old-old (seventy-five and older), or even the young-old (sixty-five to seventy-four), the old (seventy-five to eighty-four), and the old-old (eighty-five and older). Emphasizing function rather than
chronology, others suggest "frail elderly" as a useful designation. Research which makes use of the suggestion to recognize the differences between early and late old age is just beginning to appear.

This study speaks to the need to take a closer look at the lives of the very old and addresses three areas of research in which data are lacking: 1) it concerns the ninth decade of life; 2) it deals with middle-class, white women in the United States; 3) it provides a series of life histories of people from a similar segment of society.

The life histories of six white, middle-class, well-educated, widowed or never married women who live in two contiguous counties in Central Ohio provide the data for this study. These women were born in the first decade of the 1900s, and their lives come close to spanning the century. They are a part of American society that is seldom studied by anthropologists. I asked each to tell me her life story and to talk about what it is like to be a woman in her eighties. I had several objectives.

First, I was interested in preserving each woman’s story. In the time-honored tradition of anthropology, I wanted to collect the life histories of elders, stories that would tell of lives at a particular time and place.
Second, I hoped to answer the question, "What can I learn about old age if I listen to women in their eighties?" Very old women are often invisible in society. When they are acknowledged, it is often to ask, in the third person, "What should we do about them? How will we take care of them?" This study allows women to speak for themselves about how life looks to them in their eighties and from their eighties. The issues are their issues, and the memories are their memories.

Third, by means of the collection of life histories, the current decade of these women's lives can be put into perspective. In order to understand old age it is necessary to place it in the context of life as a whole, because the experiences of a woman as an individual and as a member of a cohort have a bearing on the way she experiences old age. Although it seems clear that studying the life course as a whole should be analytically useful, putting this perspective into practice presents difficulties. One option is the use of long-term studies such as the Duke Longitudinal Studies of Aging or the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging. Another option, with different opportunities and limitations, is the type of retrospective provided by the life history. The use of life histories makes it possible to place a woman's later years in the context of her life as a whole.
Fourth, six life histories of women from the same society who have a number of characteristics in common make it possible to begin to see which life experiences and attitudes are specific to a particular woman and which are shared within this group.

Obviously, these six women do not speak for all women in the United States in their ninth decade, or even for all women of their locality, class, marital status, educational level, or other circumstance; each speaks only for herself. Although I will generalize only within the group, and I do not mean to suggest that these women represent the population over age eighty, the number of people who make up the larger cohort is of some interest.

Of the 248,709,873 people counted in the 1990 United States Census, 7,013,904 were eighty and over: 4,790,112 women and 2,223,792 men. (Myers [1990] predicts the imbalance in the sex ratio of those eighty to eighty-nine will continue between now and 2080.) At a more immediate level, a combination of the figures for the two Central Ohio counties in which these women live shows that of the 1,089,737 people in the counties, 2% or 23,949 are over eighty. Women make up 52% of the population of the two counties and 73% of the population over eighty. White women are 43% of the population of the two counties, but they are 65% of the population over eighty.
Old age is more than chronology, however. It is a culturally constructed interplay of physical, psychological, and social dimensions. What does it mean to say that old age is culturally constructed? I start with the idea of culture as shared meaning systems (Shweder 1984:1) and agree with Clifford Geertz, who says, "The whole point of a semiotic approach to culture is...to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live so that we can, in some extended sense of the term, converse with them" (1973:24).

These ideas are quite similar to the viewpoint of A. I. Hallowell, who states, "...cultures may be said to be elaborated systems of meaning which, in an animal capable of self-awareness, implement a type of adaptation which makes the role of the human being intelligible to himself, both with reference to an articulated universe and to his fellow men" (1955a:10), and who suggests ways in which it might be possible "to assume the outlook of the self in its behavioral environment" (1955b:89).

My understanding of the self draws more on Hallowell than on Richard Shweder or Geertz. Hallowell emphasizes species-wide psychobiological capacities which are combined with the needs of the dependent infant and the constraints presented by caretakers to produce a pan-human psychic unity or human nature which is then
variously elaborated by a particular culture (1955a). He sees self-awareness as a generic part of human nature, although the way in which the self is construed is particular to an individual society (1955b:75). While the characteristics of the self are culturally constructed, so are the threats to the self (Hallowell 1955b:105). I see old age as it is culturally constructed to include both threats to and opportunities for the self.

Although I subscribe to a shared meaning systems theory of culture, I assume that part of what is shared is a body of coordinating and conflicting concepts, aspects of which are available to be drawn upon in various life situations. Meanings are shared within a culture, but within that shared realm there is room for contestation and negotiation. The negotiation involved in sharing cultural meanings is not specific to old age, but it comes into play strongly at this time of life because of the losses—physical, psychological, and social—that must be accommodated. In order to maintain their sense of self and to continue to be social actors in the world of adults, these women contest negative stereotypes and attempt to negotiate a psychologically and socially healthy way of viewing themselves and presenting themselves to others. [See the volume edited by Counts and Counts (1985) in which the idea of a negotiated old
age is a thematic thread in reports of aging and death in Pacific societies.

The life view of these women is grounded in reality: eighty-five is not forty-five with white hair, but, on the other hand, physical frailties do not in themselves necessitate a withdrawal from the world of the mature adult. These women strive to make satisfying lives for themselves in a world that offers them few models for how to be old in a way that fits their needs and desires. It is here that the cultural construction of old age is evident, and here also that we can see the relationship between culture and the self.

This study contributes to ongoing conversations in the areas of anthropology of age and anthropology of women. Old age and gender are two concepts which, although regarded as natural at first glance, have on further reflection been increasingly recognized as culturally constructed. Robert Rubinstein in thinking through the issue states:

So we must keep in mind that both gender and age have the same bases in biology and provide the same "amorphous" background material for the operation of powerful cultural symbols such as "nature," or "culture" and others. It hardly seems possible that old age is more innately "biological" than gender (1990:113).
Not only are both of these concepts culturally constructed, but they are intertwined. To be twenty and female is a different experience from being eighty and female; being eighty and female is a different experience from being eighty and male. Gender and age interpenetrate to influence status, role, and experience.

As a fifty-year-old, white, middle-class woman, I studied "across" (rather than the more usual studying "down") in my own and nearby communities. This means that in a sense I shared a sub-culture with the women with whom I talked. In another sense, however, I was an outsider entering another way of life. The literature draws on metaphors to emphasize the unknown aspect of old age and the difficulty of understanding it without actually experiencing it: old age is "uncharted territory" (Kaufman 1986:4) and "the last frontier" (Fontana 1977); the elderly are "modern pioneers" (Silverman 1987); there is a "country of the old" (Hendricks 1981); to turn eighty is "to enter the country of age" (Cowley 1980:2); studying the oldest old is "a voyage into uncharted waters" (Sankar 1987:346); and old women are "pioneers in uncharted territory" (Day 1991:xvii). The women themselves told me of the difficulty involved in understanding the differences the ninth decade brings. Laura, eighty-two, who was introduced earlier, says when I ask her what
advice she would give someone a decade or two younger than she:

...I don’t think you can prepare for it....I don’t think I could have prepared for these years. In fact, if somebody had been talking like I’m talking now, and I was seventy-five, I probably wouldn’t be--really know what they were talking about. And I think that’s true. I think you have to experience some of these things to know....If you experience them, then you know what they are; if you hear about them, that’s something else.

Her words confirmed my belief that while I shared general cultural knowledge with these six women, in trying to understand the meaning of being a woman in her ninth decade I was, in significant ways, involved in a cross-cultural experience.

One way to find out what the indigenous people believe and what they think they are doing is to ask them. I asked, and six women were generous with their thoughts and their lives.

Organization of Chapters

Chapter II is a review of the relevant literature. It cites studies which have become classics, acknowledges the proliferation of aging studies since the late seventies, and looks more specifically at studies of people over eighty. It also cites personal documents, topical reports, and comparisons between aging in the United States and Japan.
Chapter III discusses methodology and issues related to it. It includes planning the research, selecting the participants, interviewing, managing the data (including the use of Ethnograph), interpreting, and writing. Other issues are the relationship which developed between the women and me and ethical considerations.

Chapter IV summarizes the life history of each of the six women. It is my intention to tell enough about each woman that the reader will be able to consider her comments about more specific topics in context.

Chapter V looks at issues of physical condition. The women talk about health, energy levels, disability, and death. These issues take on increasing importance in the ninth decade.

In Chapter VI the women talk about two issues of independence: driving and housing. All have given up or modified in some way their driving, and all have made decisions regarding housing. Issues of independence or dependence are a powerful part of aging, and these women make them thoughtfully.

Chapter VII considers the significance of work in the lives of the women. Work, both paid and volunteer, is important to these women as they consider their lives now and in the past.
Chapter VIII focuses on family. The women's early experiences within their families of orientation have much in common, but their experiences in mid-life, and to a lesser extent in late life, with their families of orientation and procreation show considerable variation.

In Chapter IX the women discuss friends, speaking of relationships that have been, and are currently, important in their lives.

Chapter X sets forth the conclusions, addressing the objectives of the study and other relevant issues.

Appendix A shows a list of interview dates; Appendix B gives a postscript on the lives of the women as they are two to three-and-a-half years after the end of my interviews with them; Appendix C comments on issues of kinship and charts relationships discussed in kinship terms by the women; and Appendix D reports information about retirement communities.
NOTES:

1. Between now and 2020 the percent increase for people over eighty will be greater than that for the total population in every region of the world (see Table 1 below [Hoover and Siegel 1986:7]).

**TABLE 1**

PERCENT INCREASE: TOTAL POPULATION AND OLDER AGE GROUPS

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total &amp; 60+</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>80+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>50.4</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less-developed regions</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>113.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.S.R.</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>53.4</td>
<td>51.3</td>
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2. The numbers given in Table 2 (Myers 1990:36) are the numbers of males for every one hundred females in each age group.

**TABLE 2**

SEX RATIOS IN THE UNITED STATES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sex ratios</th>
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<th>2005</th>
<th>2025</th>
<th>2050</th>
<th>2080</th>
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<tr>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>92.0</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-74</td>
<td>73.9</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>87.6</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-79</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>75.7</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>81.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>71.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>52.3</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>61.1</td>
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<td>90-94</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>47.1</td>
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<td>95-99</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>45.0</td>
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<td>100+</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>37.1</td>
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CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Anthropologists have, since the earliest days of the discipline, recognized the value of talking to elders—about their lives and about the ways of their people—as a means of preserving a record of vanishing cultures. Until the 1960s, however, if information about old age in a particular society appeared in a published report, it was usually in the form of a few comments about the end of the life cycle. Informants from the earliest period, whose stories are sometimes presented intact as life histories, are usually male (an exception is Rufus Anderson’s Memoir of Catherine Brown, A Christian Woman of the Cherokee Nation [1825]). The study of old age as a significant part of the life course and the popularity of documenting women’s lives through life history are relatively recent phenomena.

Classics of Anthropology of Age

The anthropological study of aging begins with Leo Simmons’s The Role of the Aged in Primitive Society
Simmons compiled data from the Human Relations Area Files on seventy-one non-Western cultures, finding one hundred and nine characteristics of societies which are related to the status and treatment of the old. His general finding is that the old had higher status in less technological societies. He notes that one of the first observations he made on surveying the data was "significant contrasts on the basis of sex alone" (1945:1). Although the study has its critics [see Holmes 1981 for a discussion of criticism], it is credited with leading to the proliferation of studies on aging decades later.

After Simmons, no major research on aging appeared until the arrival of Cumming and Henry's controversial Growing Old: The Process of Disengagement in 1961. A product of the Kansas City Studies of Adult Life, this study found that older adults and society mutually and willingly disengage to the benefit of both, and it led to what has been labeled the disengagement theory. Later scholars found the situation to be more complex than this (Havighurst, Neugarten, and Tobin 1968; Maddox 1968; Clark and Anderson 1967; Anderson 1972). [Also see Arnold Rose 1968 for a useful discussion of this issue.] Talcott Parsons seems prescient when he says in the foreword of the book, "...this study will serve as the most important
focus of discussion of the problems on this level for some time" (1961:v), because this study is still frequently cited.

The next major study of aging is Clark and Anderson's *Culture and Aging: An Anthropological Study of Older Americans* (1967), which has generated much research and is directly relevant to my study in its concern with aging as a cultural process. The study, which includes both quantitative and qualitative components, finds six "principal goals underlying self-esteem" in the aged: "1) independence; 2) social acceptability; 3) adequacy of personal resources; 4) ability to cope with external threats or losses; 5) ability to cope with changes in the self; and 6) having significant goals or meaning in later life" (1967:177). It suggests that the old might better substitute secondary values which are available in the culture of the United States (such as conservation, self-acceptance, and being) for the primary values (such as acquisition, self-advancement, and doing).

A third study from this early period which has also generated considerable research is Cowgill and Holmes's *Aging and Modernization* (1972). In this volume, various authors present chapters on aging in fifteen different societies, and in a concluding chapter Cowgill and Holmes attempt to determine which characteristics of aging are
universal (they find eight) and which are variable in more modern and less modern societies (they find twenty-two). In general they find that status is higher for the old in less modern societies than in more modern ones. Later Cowgill (1974) attempts to make the theory more explicit, but nevertheless, more recent research has found that the situation is not as straightforward as it appeared in the original study (Silverman 1987).

Aging Studies Since the Late Seventies

Following this rather slow beginning in the study of aging came an explosion. Beginning about 1977, a number of individual studies were published—Old People, New Lives (Ross 1977); Number Our Days (Meyerhoff 1978); Ages in Conflict (Foner 1984); Will You Still Need Me, Will You Still Feed Me, When I’m 84? (Francis 1984); The Ageless Self (Kaufman 1986); and Remarkable Survivors (Day 1991). At the same time an even greater number of edited collections appeared—Life’s Career - Aging (Meyerhoff and Simić 1978); Other Ways of Growing Old (Amoss and Harrell 1981); Dimensions: Aging, Culture, and Health (Fry 1981); Growing Old in Different Societies: Cross-Cultural Perspectives (Sokolovsky 1983); Age and Anthropological Theory (Kertzer and Keith 1984); Aging and Its Transformations (Counts and Counts 1985); New Methods for Old Age Research (Fry and Keith 1986); The Elderly as
Modern Pioneers (Silverman 1987); Aging and Cultural Diversity (Strange and Teitelbaum 1987); and Anthropology and Aging: Comprehensive Reviews (Rubinstein 1990). The premises underlying many of these studies include the cultural construction of old age and a life course perspective.

Three of these studies, in addition to the Clark and Anderson study mentioned earlier, have particular relevance for my work. In The Ageless Self: Sources of Meaning in Late Life Sharon Kaufman presents the life histories of fifteen people over seventy in order to study "the issue of continuity and meaning in old age" (1986:22). She finds that the themes in the life histories she records integrate three sources of meaning: personal experience, structural factors, and value orientations (1986:149). I find commonalities in much of our data, but there are some differences: for example, she finds that good health is taken for granted; I do not. Some of the differences in our data may have to do with the questions we ask, and some may have to do with the wider age range of people she interviewed; but I suspect, having looked at quotations from her subjects and evaluated them differently than she does, that some differences may have to do with interpretation by the researchers. For example, when she asks Martha what is
hard about being seventy, Martha replies, "Oh, I think the physical disabilities. The aches and pains...." (Kaufman 1986:8). According to my evaluation, the people Kaufman interviews, like the people I interview, acknowledge their health problems and go on to be as active as possible in spite of them.

A second book from the above list has participants with characteristics similar to those of the participants in my study. In Remarkable Survivors, Alice T. Day (1991) draws on three studies of white, ever-married women born in 1900 to 1910. In 1978 the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development funded a demographic survey of 1,049 women in this cohort to gather reproductive data. In a second survey in 1987, questions directed to 568 of the same women, now seventy-seven to eighty-seven years old, focused on the results of family size for social support, and later in the same year Day secured home interviews with twenty of these women. The study explores successful aging and factors which contribute to it; the women in this study define success as consolidation (that is, they attempt to maintain the status quo) rather than growth, and they do not have high expectations, but are resilient and optimistic. She found that the oldest women in her study were experiencing more losses and had to deal with more changes than the younger women (1991:257). She
sees value in multiple methodological approaches because the qualitative interviews showed that in the quantitative interviews underlying motivation was not apparent and the number of supportive relationships was underreported.

A third book that merits individual consideration is *Aging and Its Transformations* (1985) by Dorothy Ayers Counts and David R. Counts, which looks at old age and death as they are experienced in Pacific societies. An introduction by Counts and Counts and a conclusion by Victor Marshall bracket ten articles emphasizing the negotiated nature of age, and even death, and the way in which age is experienced differently by men and women.

When journal articles are added to the proliferation of books on anthropology of aging, the great interest in this area is even more apparent. A bibliography on books and articles relevant to the anthropology of aging edited by Marjorie Schweitzer (1991) contains 311 pages of partially (and briefly) annotated entries, giving evidence of the growth of this field and the impossibility of reviewing the area in other than the most selective manner. A perusal of the titles and annotations also indicates the scarcity of publications which focus on the very old.
Journals on Aging

There are a number of journals which publish research on aging from a perspective of interest to anthropologists. Of particular relevance is the Journal of Cross-Cultural Gerontology, an international journal devoted to studies of aging and the problems of the old and to studies of comparative aging. Other journals of interest are the International Journal of Aging and Human Development, a journal concerned with psychological and social studies of aging; Ageing and Society, a British journal emphasizing aging from the perspectives of the social and behavioral sciences and the humanities; Research on Aging, an interdisciplinary journal on aging; and The Gerontologist.

Studies of People Over Eighty

Because studies of people over eighty are sparse, I have included in this discussion a broader range of studies than I otherwise might have. A special issue of the Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly, a journal which focuses on issues of health and society, presents papers from a 1984 session of The American Association for the Advancement of Science from which "the oldest old," a term applied to those over eighty-five, is said to have come (Jeffreys 1986). In introducing this issue, Suzman and Riley (1985) state that the increase in numbers of the
very old is so new that it is difficult to interpret, but they find that "not only are older people living longer today; but they are also growing older in ways that differ markedly from their predecessors who grew older in the past" (1985:178).

Several of the studies in this issue look at the subject from an economic perspective: Atkins (1985) assesses the economic status of the very old and finds they have fewer financial resources than the young old; Torrey (1985) finds that including everyone over sixty-five in a single group hides those over eighty, who are more diverse in income and use more benefits; Soldo and Manton (1985) look at planning for the social and economic costs of long-term care for the oldest old; and Binstock (1985) examines the possibilities for avoiding economic conflicts between cohorts.

Other articles approach the topic from a health perspective: Cornoni-Huntley and others (1985) find that there is a need for prospective longitudinal studies of populations over eighty-five; Minaker and Rowe (1985) report that interactions of disease and old age need more study; and Manton and Soldo (1985:207) find that "changes in health and the natural history of disease processes may be occurring concurrently."
In a more comprehensive study of those over eighty, Eena Job (1983; 1984) and a staff of interviewers located 340 of the reported 366 people eighty and over living in residences and institutions in a suburb of Brisbane, Australia. Of these, 204 people consented to be interviewed and spoke about their life histories and their present circumstances in a single, open-ended, taped interview. The results were coded, frequently not by the interviewer, and were analyzed by computer. The results are reported under the categories of childhood, education, work, leisure, sexuality, marriage, parenthood, politics, religion, health, and old age.

Cumming and Henry (with Parlagreco) raise the possibility that the very old are part of a "biological, and perhaps psychological, elite" (1961:201). The eighty year olds in their study were described as static, disengaged, and having higher morale than either those in their seventies or the panel as a whole.

In a brief report by Barbara Barer (1989), men and women who are beyond the age of eighty-five are interviewed about their daily routines. One principal change noted is that these people need to do things more slowly, and because of this they spend more time on personal care and household tasks than they would have in younger years.
Although Barbara Myerhoff (1978) does not specify the ages of the people who were the focus of her study of old people associated with a Jewish senior center in Venice, California, most of them seem to be over eighty. Myerhoff found that being Jewish herself was important to being accepted and gaining the cooperation of the participants. Her sensitive portrayal shows the way in which these people strive to make themselves and their culture remembered. Although three hundred people were members of the center, she concentrated on thirty-six and completed interviews of from two to sixteen hours, in addition to participant observation. In another report of the same community, Myerhoff (1986) shows these elderly people using a protest march and a mural as collective expressions aimed at asserting their presence in the world and making sure they will be remembered.

In Chronicle of My Mother (1982), the author and poet Yasushi Inoue presents a collection of memories about the declining years of his mother. Following a brief comment about his father's later years and death at eighty, Inoue describes his mother's loss of memory and the efforts of the family, principally the female members of the family, to care for her until her death at eighty-nine.

Bould, Sanborn, and Reif expected to focus on the themes of independence and dependence in their study
Eighty-Five Plus: The Oldest Old (1989); instead they found it more useful to conceptualize the situation as interdependence, saying, "As we examined the daily lives of the oldest old who had aged successfully, we began to understand that independence was not a characteristic of their life-style; interdependence, reciprocity, and helping networks were" (xii-xiii). The authors, who have experience in sociology, nursing, and social work, offer suggestions for improving services to the old.

Andrea Sankar (1987:346) sees the oldest old stereotyped as "uniformly needy and sick," and thus finds them a good example of the cultural construction of old age; she reports that they are, in fact, an extremely heterogeneous group. In concluding remarks she contrasts attitudes toward old age in the United States and Japan and finds the view in the United States more negative: "In Japan the decreased physical capacity and general slowing down associated with age and especially with advanced old age, do not constitute a threat to culturally valued personal attributes, as they do in the United States" (1887:355).

Jane Zones and others (1987) argue that the health, housing, and economic position of women eighty-five and older are the result of historical and social conditions which have affected their cohort over the years. She
examines the governmental policies of the United States for their effect on this situation.

There are a number of demographic studies which provide information concerning the very old (Rosenwaike 1985a; Hoover and Siegel 1986; Myers 1990), with Rosenwaike's *The Extreme Aged in America* (1985b) being the most complete demographic account available for this age group. Charles Longino, Jr. (1988) compares men and women in the age group over eighty-five and finds both economic and social differences, in that men are wealthier and more likely to be married and living independently; and Rogers, Rogers, and Belanger (1989) use life-table estimates to project the number of years of independent life and dependent life for individuals from ages seventy to ninety-two.

Cynthia Beall (1987) presents three approaches to studying longevity—anthropological, actuarial, and epidemiological. Factors associated with longevity vary from society to society, but family patterns and female advantage are seen cross-culturally. Claims of extreme longevity for such groups as the Hunza of Pakistan, the Vilcabamba of Ecuador, the Abkhasia of the Soviet Union, and Puerto Ricans are debunked. The Puerto Rican data are supported by a similar finding by Rosenwaike and Preston (1984).
Personal Documents

Writings about the lives of women in their eighties—whether in the form of life history, autobiography, memoir or other—are scarce. Perhaps the most well-known and the most fascinating is Florida Scott-Maxwell's journal, *The Measure of My Days*, (1979[1968]) in which she explores the thoughts and emotions she experiences during her eighty-third year. Susan Sheehan presents a very different year in the life of an old woman in *Kate Quinton's Days* (1984), a Pulitzer Prize-winning account of the eightieth year of a widow in New York City and her struggle, with the help of her daughter, to get the medical and social service help she needs to survive.

Florence Davidson, a Haida woman, was eighty-one when Margaret Blackman collected her life history in 1977. Her story, appearing as *During My Time* (1982) emphasizes her role as wife and mother in a society undergoing much change.

The life story of an even older woman is that of Chona, the ninety-year-old subject of *Papago Woman* (1979), who told her story to Ruth Underhill in the early 1930s. This heavily edited account presents Chona as a striking individual and yet a woman carefully socialized to the ways of her society.
The male perspective on becoming eighty is perceptively and often humorously explored by Malcom Cowley in *The View from 80* (1980). Among other topics of this book, which was written because of the enthusiastic response to a magazine article on the same subject, are his personal reaction to his eightieth year and the comments of others in their eighties.

There are several life histories of women in their seventies: Ida Pruitt's *Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman* (1945); Nancy Lurie's *Mountain Wolf Woman* (1978[1961]); David Jones's *Sanapia, Comanche Medicine Woman* (1972); and Rosemary Joyce's *A Woman's Place: The Life History of a Rural Ohio Grandmother* (1983). An addition to life history writing from outside the anthropological tradition is the story of Émilie Carles, who was seventy-seven when, over a three-month period, she taped the interviews from which Robert Destanque wrote the story of her life, which would become in English, *A Life of Her Own: The Transformation of a Countrywoman in Twentieth Century France* (1991[original in French 1977]).

**Series of Life Histories**

Several anthropologists have seen value in the collection of a series of life histories of people with characteristics in common. Bruce Shaw (1980), who
collected the personal histories of thirty Aborigines (he speaks of two of the life histories which have been written up as being complementary), sees the collection of multiple histories as protection against bias. Sidney Mintz, in response to Mandelbaum's (1973) classic article on life history methodology, suggests that a series of life histories of people with similar characteristics would "specify with more confidence the way individuality plays itself out against terms set by sociocultural forces" (1973:200). Lawrence Watson (1989) speaks of establishing a baseline by means of a number of life histories of people with similar characteristics, making it possible to observe unusual features in an individual account. Margaret Blackman (1991:58) suggests that "a collection of life histories from an area can, through its multivocality, gainfully inform our understanding of perceptions of local and regional history."

An example of the type of series called for in the preceding comments is *Three Swahili Women* (1989), in which Sarah Mirza and Margaret Strobel present the life stories of three women from Mombasa, Kenya. Although the women are of different ethnic groups, they are part of the Mombasa community and have a number of characteristics in common. At the time the stories were collected, one woman was in her mid-eighties, one in her mid-seventies, and one
in her mid-fifties. The oldest woman’s story is the longest because she had the leisure to sit and talk, and much of her story is about family and customs of her culture, reflecting both her interests and those of the interviewer.

There are a number of other examples of a series of life histories concerning subjects who have characteristics in common. Oscar Lewis uses life history materials, among others, in his family studies, *Five Families* (1959), *The Children of Sanchez* (1961), and *La Vida* (1965), and the tape recorded Cuban life histories, published after Lewis’s death, tell of lives influenced by the Cuban Revolution in *Four Women* (Lewis, Lewis, and Rigdon 1977a) and *Four Men* (Lewis, Lewis, and Rigdon 1977b). Ruth Landes’s *The Ojibwa Woman* (1971[1938]) ends with three brief life histories presented as raw data without analysis, and Elizabeth Colson analyzes *Autobiographies of Three Pomo Women* (1974[1956]) by looking at cultural uniformities and individual differences. Sarah LeVine in *Mothers and Wives: Gusii Women of East Africa* (1979:357) considers the way in which seven young Gusii women from Kenya "draw on Gusii traditional culture in their struggle for survival and psychological well-being." Although these seven case studies focus on the present, there is much life history
material included. In Jane Kelley’s *Yaqui Women: Contemporary Life Histories*, a collection of life histories of four women who were probably in their seventies, interpretation is guided by an interest in "interpersonal relationships and adaptive strategies" (1978:31).

Another type of series, exemplified by Nancy Lurie’s *Mountain Wolf Woman* (1978[1961]) and Paul Radin’s autobiographies of Mountain Wolf Woman’s brothers (1913; 1963[1920]; 1926) are those collected by two different anthropologists concerning individuals from the same group.

**Topical Studies of Old Women**

Other studies of women and old age focus on particular topics. Katherine Allen, in *Single Women/Family Ties: Life Histories of Older Women* (1989), collected the life histories of fifteen never-married women and fifteen widows, comparing their life experiences in relation to family. All of these working-class women, who were seventy-four at the time of the interviews, were involved with families and were caregivers, but their positions differed.

The chapters of most relevance to my work are one by Lopata (1987) and one by Shirley O'Bryant (1987). Lopata's article points out, in reviewing her earlier Chicago area studies of widows, the importance of social class and educational achievement to the lives of the women. O'Bryant's study finds that widows aged sixty to eighty-nine living in their own homes in Columbus, Ohio, intend to stay in their homes as long as possible and that the support they receive comes mostly from their children.

In another study O'Bryant (1991) interviews three hundred widows over sixty about issues of self-sufficiency and determines that the type of support a woman finds helpful is dependent on conditions specific to her life situation. O'Bryant suggests that interdependency rather than independence may be a realistic goal for the aged.

Sarah Matthews uses mostly "hired hand" interviews in The Social World of Old Women (1979) as she studies white widows over seventy who are mothers and live alone. The informants are housing project applicants at the time they are interviewed, but Matthews suggests that in their middle years they would have been of various social classes. She finds that the marginal position of old women is more closely related to the way society regards them than actual characteristics of the women.
In a second study, *Friendships Through the Life Course: Oral Biographies in Old Age* (1986), Sarah Matthews discovers three ideal-typical styles of friendships (independent, discerning, and acquisitive) in guided interviews with men and women from sixty to eighty.

**Cross-Cultural Comparison - Japan**

One reason for interest in comparing aging in Japan and the United States is that both countries face increasingly aging populations. Another reason is that because Japan and the United States approach the situation of aging populations from different cultural traditions, researchers look for evidence that one of the countries is more successful at meeting the needs of its old people, or at balancing the needs of various age groups, than the other.

In comparing the lives of the old in Japan and the United States, Christie Kiefer (1990) suggests that rather than consider their well-being as a single issue, it might be more useful to consider prestige, power, and security separately. He finds that the Japanese old have high prestige compared with the old in the United States, but that the two groups are about the same in power and security.

A report which looks at aging and long-term care in Japan and the United States, issued by the Japan Economic
Institute (Murdo 1992), suggests that avoiding the need for long-term care requires financial well-being, physical well-being, and personal support systems. In terms of financial well-being, more old Japanese are in the work force than are their American counterparts; most who retire in both countries depend principally on social security (public pension in Japan) and company pensions; and Japanese save more than Americans and so would have money from this source to help with financial security in old age.

The report suggests that physical well-being is affected by staying active and preventive health care. A comparison of activity rates is not available, but Japan is said to have a better system of preventive health care than the United States.

A comparison of personal support systems shows that the three generation household is common in Japan (although the percentage of such households has dropped over the last ten years) but not in the United States, and a much higher percentage of Japanese than Americans say that family or relatives would look after them if their health failed. When long-term care is needed, however, nursing homes are not as available in Japan as they are in the United States. Home care of the old is encouraged in Japan, not only by tradition, but also by help from home.
care workers and tax deductions based partially on the level of infirmity of the old person. Retirement communities incorporating nursing homes are just beginning to be built in Japan. In the United States home health care is growing but so is nursing home use. It is interesting to note that although the Japanese have the world’s longest life expectancy (The Japanese Health and Welfare Ministry reports that for females born in 1991 the life expectancy is 82.11, for men, 76.11 [The Columbus Dispatch 1992]), there are no distinctions made in this report for the oldest old. The oldest age group for which data is reported is sixty-five and older.

Yoshinori Kamo (1988) compares the housing arrangements of the old in Japan and the United States, in part to see if Japan offers a model for the United States as a way to lower the cost of caring for the elderly by substituting family-based care for public welfare programs. She finds that some stem families are being replaced by nuclear families and that where the three generation family exists there is an increase in relationships through a matrilineal tie. Increasingly Japanese women do not want to live with a mother-in-law, and Kamo suggests that much of that reason is that they do not want to have to care for a frail, elderly parent-in-law. She sees living arrangements for the old in Japan coming to resemble the
arrangement of those in the United States, rather than the other way around.

Hiroko Akiyama, Toni Antonucci, and Ruth Campbell (1990) look at patterns of exchange and reciprocity between older Japanese and American mothers and both their daughters and daughters-in-law. Traditionally daughters are an important source of support for older mothers in the United States, and daughters-in-law are an important source of support for older mothers in Japan. Three studies show that the norms of exchange and reciprocity are different in the two societies and that changes in exchange rules are gradually taking place in Japan.

There are few life histories of the old in Japan. A glimpse of young old age can be seen in Women in Changing Japan (1976) edited by Joyce Lebra, Joy Paulson, and Elizabeth Powers, in which articles by Gail Bernstein ("Women in Rural Japan"), Lois Dilatush ("Women in the Professions"), and Mary Lou Maxon ("Women in Family Businesses") each include a brief life history sketch of a woman in her sixties. A view of middle age is presented in David Plath’s Long Engagement: Maturity in Modern Japan (1980), which contains life histories of two men who are forty-five and fifty and two women who are forty-three and thirty-eight.
Comparative studies of old age in Japan and the United States are of interest not only because both countries face increasingly aging populations but because of the different contexts in which aging takes place in the two countries.

Conclusion

As the anthropology of age approaches the half century mark, the number of studies has grown significantly. Although little theory has resulted, similar perspectives guide many of the current studies. Life history, variously interpreted or uninterpreted, continues to be seen as an effective means of presenting the individual in society.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study uses a life history perspective to identify the issues of life and aging that are of concern to six women in their ninth decade. In the stories that they tell and the views that they present, they reveal the course of their lives and the ways in which they deal with situations they face as women in their eighties.

Selection of Participants

I used a type of non-probability sampling called purposive or judgment sampling (Bernard 1988:97) in which the researcher decides what purpose the informant will serve and chooses someone who meets the requirements. Bernard points out that non-probability samples have low external validity--it is possible to generalize only within the sample--but that they are useful when only a few subjects are needed for intensive study such as life history. Each woman I talked with represents only her own version of her own life as a woman in this culture. The results are not generalizable beyond the group.
I placed some limits on the characteristics these women would have, however, because I wanted to have the possibility of considering issues of age that were of interest to several or all of the women. Although I would be guided by what the women told me rather than by a preconceived idea that they would be concerned with issues in common, it seemed to me that placing limitations on the characteristics of the women in the study would make any differences or similarities in the issues more meaningful. It was with this in mind that I decided to interview women who met the following criteria: eighty to eighty-nine years old, able to talk about both the past and the present, white, middle-class (drawing on Jeffries and Ransford [1980] and Rossides [1976] for confirmation of my evaluation), not married at the time of the interviews, and living in Central Ohio.

Once I knew the characteristics of the women I was looking for I used a variety of sources to get the names of individual women who might be interested in participating. In order to get six women to participate in the study I contacted nine women. The source of the name, the method of contact, and the results are listed below in the order in which I contacted the women.

1) I telephoned a woman I had taught with twenty years earlier and had kept in touch with by Christmas card but
had not talked to or seen. She wanted to participate.

2) A friend was still in touch with a woman who had been her college dormitory housemother. The friend told the woman what I was doing and then took me to meet her. She wanted to participate.

3) An acquaintance suggested a neighbor who might be interested. She told the neighbor I would be calling. I called the woman and explained the study. She agreed to participate, and we made an appointment for the first interview. When I called to confirm our appointment the day before the interview, she asked to postpone the interview because she was ill. I talked to her several more times, and found each time that her health was worse. Eventually she needed oxygen all the time and was not able to participate.

4) I telephoned a woman whom I had known casually for a number of years and with whom I had recently had a brief conversation in a store (establishing her age). She wanted to participate.

5) I wrote a letter to a woman whom I had met at a party for a mutual friend. I explained what I was doing and said I would call her. She called me and said she would like to participate.

6) I wrote a letter to a woman whose age and situation I read about in the newspaper in an article about housing
and older women. I telephoned and talked to her daughter who told me she was on an extended visit out of state and gave me a date to call again. When I called again the woman said she was about to leave to visit a child for three months. I did not pursue this situation further.

7) I called a local retirement community and explained that I would like to do a series of interviews with a resident and listed the characteristics that I wanted the woman to have. My call was transferred to a staff person who told me she was sure she could find someone and that she would call me within a few days. She called with a name and brief description. I telephoned the woman, and she wanted to participate.

8) I telephoned a friend of the mother of one of my friends. She asked me to call back because she had the flu. Within the next few days I found a sixth participant, and I sent her a letter thanking her for her interest and told her that I had completed the selection.

9) I followed up on a newspaper article about a woman in her eighties who was still working by visiting the woman at her place of work. I explained the study, and she agreed to participate.

Data Collection

At the beginning of each set of interviews I told the participant that I was a graduate student in the
anthropology department at Ohio State specializing in the anthropology of women. I told each woman that I was interested in two basic areas of information—her life story and her perspective on life as a woman in her eighties—and that whatever she wanted to tell me was what I wanted to hear. I also told each woman that if I asked a question about something she preferred not to talk about, she should feel free to say so. I did not ask her to sign the Human Subjects consent form at our first meeting because I wanted her to have a sense of what I was asking her to participate in and to be comfortable with the non-threatening nature of the procedure before she was confronted with the form.

I planned for each woman to participate in ten interviews, each lasting about an hour, although I was prepared to offer shorter interviews over a longer period of time if the women seemed to become tired. All of the women were able to meet for an hour without difficulty, and most of the interviews lasted an hour to an hour-and-a-half, with some lasting as long as two or two-and-a-half hours. We usually met once a week on a set day, but we worked around holidays or other appointments that one of us might have. I wanted to spend enough time with each woman that we would get to know each other, develop rapport, and cover in as much detail as possible the two
broad topics I had outlined; three of the women completed ten interviews and three completed only six. Appendix A contains a complete list of interview dates and an explanation of the number of interviews.

There are a number of benefits to doing multiple interviews. I saw the participants in varying states of health; I heard about the anticipation of an event and then its evaluation; I followed on-going sagas of a particular family member or particular problems; and I heard some favorite stories more than once and found that they were told the same way or with significant differences. The following is an example of the depth of information that can be gained from a series of interviews but not from a single encounter. I was much impressed by the way in which one of the women discussed with me events she was keeping up with in the hometown newspaper to which she still subscribed. I came to have a different understanding of her keeping current with hometown news when she told me the same two stories the next week and then three weeks after that, as though she had just read about them. It may be that telling me the stories imprinted them in her memory or that there was something about the stories or the time that she read them that made an impression on her. (I later recognized a much more serious variant of this situation in Inoue’s Chronicle of
My Mother [1982] in which visitors to the house are at first not aware of the author's mother's memory problems because her comments are appropriate; it is only after they have been present for a while that they realize that her comments are repetitive.

With one exception the interviews took place in the homes of the participants, and I found this to be an effective procedure. It did not involve travel for the women; it was conducive to conversation; it made it possible for them to show me pictures, letters, gifts, memorabilia, or other personal effects which added to what I came to know about them; and it allowed me to see the women in their own environments. One of the women preferred to meet me in her daughter's restaurant before it opened. Her daughter seemed protective of her, and I sensed a reservation about exposing her mother's home to a stranger. Although this was a satisfactory arrangement, there was a difference between the level of intimacy which developed in this relationship and the others. I cannot be sure that location had anything to do with this, but it was probably a contributing factor.

I structured the interviews only by the two orienting topics of life history and perspective on aging. There were two reasons for using this interview style: one, I anticipated that it would be the best style for letting
each woman speak about her own issues; and two, I believed that this would be a comfortable style for allowing each woman to make use of the memories to which she had access. Each woman structured her own set of interviews to suit her abilities, background, personality, and her own understanding of what it was we were doing. The women wanted to cooperate with what I wanted, and it was not unusual for one of them to interrupt herself to say, "Now, you just stop me if this isn’t the kind of thing you want to hear about." In response I would say, "This is fine. Whatever you want to tell me about is what I want to hear." Sometimes they would ask me again about the study as a whole, and I would repeat the two broad topics. Each woman had her own style of presentation. The two extremes were one woman who thought of a topic ahead of time, spoke for an hour with little input from me, and then was ready for informal conversation, and one woman who talked only briefly without questions from me, and in whose interviews I found myself being much more involved than I wanted to be.

When I introduced topics, either to keep the conversation going or because the woman seemed to have nothing more to say about a particular subject, I tried to stay with topics that I thought the woman would be likely to talk about at some point anyway or something
another woman had talked about. My intent in doing this was to keep the focus on the women's issues rather than on my issues. I also tried to ask open-ended questions rather than those which could be answered only if the participant could remember certain specific information.

One drawback to an unstructured interview is that in letting the women talk about what they want to talk about I end up with topics of potential interest about which I can say nothing. If a woman does not mention a topic, I cannot assume that it is of little importance to her. It may mean she did not think about bringing it up; it may mean she did not think I would be interested; or it may mean she does not see it as an appropriate topic for this type of conversation. For example, there is limited economic information of a specific nature contained in the stories these women tell. No one speaks of the amount of her current income or amount of rent. This is not unexpected, as both Job (1984) in studying people over eighty in Australia and Allen (1989) in studying seventy-four year old widows and never-married women in the United States note that their subjects do not give financial information. The interviews for this study were conducted in a conversational manner, and in that context, explicit financial information would not normally be revealed in this culture. Although having many interviews with the
same woman makes it more likely that all significant topics will be covered, there seems to be no perfect solution: no one style of interview meets all needs. I am pleased with the data these interviews generated, however, and satisfied that the goal of letting the indigenous people speak about their own issues has been met.

Reciprocity was important to the women, and although I often took cookies, quick breads, or a few flowers when I visited, they frequently outdid me by sending me home with homemade noodles, cinnamon bread, chocolate pudding, or tomato aspic, as well as book publishers' advertisements and magazines they knew I would enjoy. One woman, aware of the value of the true gift she was giving me, said that although she had not been able to get a Ph.D. herself, she could help me get one.

I used two tape recorders at each interview to minimize the possibility of losing data, and as it happened, I did have a recorder malfunction during one of the interviews. If any of the women found this peculiar, she was polite enough not to say so. I also tape recorded my own comments after most interviews, frequently ending up with ten to thirty minutes of information about the context of the interview situation and ideas I had about interpretation of the data. Although tape recording
comments preserves detail (and could be done in the car as I drove home), there are drawbacks to this method. I did not have the tapes of comments transcribed because of cost and because of the personal nature of the content, and I found later that except in the instances in which I was disciplined enough to take written notes on my tapes recorded comments, there was no quick way to have access to this information.

In addition to the interviews themselves, I had other ways of learning about the women. Each of the women on her own initiative gave me or showed me such things as photographs, scrapbooks, genealogies, family histories, articles she had written, books and personal responses to them, family heirlooms, and birthday cards. The women and I exchanged telephone calls, notes, and cards. There were occasions when I spent time with some of the women apart from the usual interview sessions, going shopping, having lunch, or attending a special event.

Although each woman speaks for herself about what it means to be a woman in her eighties and about her life story, I am aware of the collaborative nature of any such encounter: I know that my saying that these are areas in which I am interested and my coming to the conversation as the person I am has an influence on what I am told. (I agree with Vincent Crapanzano [1980], who states that
the difference between autobiography and life history is that life history "is an immediate response to a demand posed by an Other and carries within it the expectations of that Other," but I would stop far short of Gelya Frank's [1979] suggestion that "speaking somewhat metaphorically, the life history can be considered a double autobiography....") In addition, each woman is aware that she speaks to an audience. She tells her story to me, to those who will read the dissertation, and to her family, who will eventually have access to the tapes. Any person can give many versions of his or her life—all of them true from a certain perspective. Impression management (Goffman 1959) is a factor in social engagement, and this encounter is no exception. I believe that the women told me the truth about their lives and their perspectives, but I believe that it is a true story presented with particular audiences in mind.

Data Management

Keeping track of the data and getting them into a usable form was a multi-step process. I began by listening to each tape at some time after the interview and making notes about content on the right-hand page of a notebook; I used the left-hand page to make comments and ask myself questions. Although I did not plan interview questions, this procedure allowed me to keep track of what
we had talked about and to have some topics of conversation in mind in case they were needed.

I made an unsuccessful attempt to transcribe the tapes myself and then found a professional typist to transcribe them to computer disks. I set up a separate computer file for each interview and made corrections on the copy as I listened to the tape again, hearing the data now for the third time. I found that some of the voices which were completely and easily understandable in person were not clear on tape and could not be understood by the typist; in other cases, certain important words, sometimes negatives, were not heard or typed. As I listened to the tapes and made corrections on the computer files, I kept a running list of possible coding categories and ideas.

Once I was sure that I had an accurate transcription, I used a computer program called Ethnograph to help with the management of coded data. In doing this I converted the data files to ASCII (generic format) files, transferred them to the Ethnograph program, and by a simple process printed interviews with each line of data numbered. I then coded the data using the numbered sheets. In deciding between "splitting" and "lumping" as I coded, I chose "splitting"--to an extreme--and ended up with two hundred and fifty categories. This was necessary because I wanted to code everything the women said rather
than to decide before coding what was important. Early in the process new insights meant considerable re-coding, but I was able to code more accurately as I got further along. In the end, I re-coded some categories, keeping the original, specific code, but adding a second more inclusive code.

After coding, I entered the codes into the Ethnograph program by line numbers. Ethnograph allows a single line or segment to have twelve different codes and allows seven levels of "nests" within a segment, a coding intensity that was more than adequate for my needs.

At this point the work had been done and the benefits began. Instead of copying, cutting, and putting together coded categories, I could type in a code, indicate the names of the files to be searched, or indicate that all files were to be searched, and print out the sections of the interviews that corresponded to the code. I did this for each code that I wanted to consider. The Ethnograph program was useful in organizing the data for this study, and because new codes can be added easily, it will facilitate additional work with these data.

**Interpretation and Writing**

My use of the term interpretation rather than analysis is deliberate. I take interpretation in life history to be the process of understanding the meaning of the
subject’s life. I contrast this with analysis, or testing a specific proposition from a systematic theory (Frank and Vanderburgh 1986). I attempt to interpret life history within a life course perspective (from which I draw on the work of Matilda White Riley 1979; Philip Silverman 1987; and Christine Fry; 1990) which sees aging as a life-long, multidimensional, and contextual process in which the individual or cohort both influences and is influenced by sociocultural and environmental factors.

My interpretive strategy was to organize the life history data around the issues of most importance to these six women and by doing this determine what it means to them to be women in their ninth decade. Because the orienting questions were general and allowed the women to talk about what was significant to them now and in the past, it was possible for me to discover their interests by coding their conversations. The five issues that were most germane to the concerns of the women became the chapters on physical condition, independence, work, family, and friends. In three of the chapters (Independence, Work, and Family) the data lend themselves to summary in table form, and I have included a table in the conclusion of each of these three. Preceding the five chapters on specific issues is one which presents a summary of the life history of each woman, making it
possible to place the issues from the later chapters in context.

Several decisions had to be made in establishing a writing style and determining how to represent the speech of the women. First, the ethnographic present in this document is the time of the interviews. I attempt a logical use of tense, in general, writing about what we experience and say in the interview session in the present tense and what the women tell me has happened previously in the past tense. Second, I try to represent the women's speech in a way that does justice to their speaking style. I indicate laughter when it is obvious, but I do not try to record every "a" and "um" which occurs in the course of speech. These women have excellent vocabularies and speak standard English. Once or twice, in putting their spoken words into written form, I have made a change in the agreement of noun and verb to accommodate the fact that errors that result from changes of thought made in the middle of a sentence are more obvious in written than in spoken language. I have made no other changes in form and have not attempted to use the interpolation sic for the normal irregularities of spoken language.

Relationships and Ethical Considerations

Long-term interviews on personal topics, such as the ones which were part of this study, provide more than the
opportunity to exchange information; they provide the opportunity to establish satisfying relationships. I looked forward to our meetings each week, and it seemed to me that the women did too. Although I was saddened by the death of one woman, the feeling I had in leaving almost all interview sessions was one of the pleasure of getting to know someone better. Now several years after the interviews have ended [see Appendix B for an update on the lives of these women], our relationships continue, a pleasant reward for our weeks of work.

The ethical considerations which come into play in doing life history interviews center around making sure that the participant does not feel exploited by the researcher, either at the time of the interview or later as he or she thinks back on the experience. I tried to make sure that the participants understood that they were free to choose the topics they wanted discuss and to ignore topics they did not want to discuss. I was careful not to ask questions in such a way that the participant might be manipulated into revealing information that she would rather not reveal, and honored all requests for certain statements to be "off the record." Out of consideration for the women and because of issues of informed consent, I did not tape record during hospital or health center visits.
To protect the privacy of the women and in keeping with anthropological tradition, I changed their names and the names their friends and relatives (choosing names appropriate to the generation of the individual) and changed or eliminated the names of retirement communities, churches, and most cities, but I have used the actual names of states and public figures. I have not attempted to modify or disguise life situations or events.

**Conclusion**

The life course perspective provides the underlying premises with which to approach the lives of these six women, and the life history, subjective by nature, is an effective means of eliciting a personal response to the ninth decade.
CHAPTER IV
SUMMARIES OF LIFE HISTORIES

Introduction
In order to understand the ninth decade of life and the significant issues (physical condition, independence, work, family, and friends) that these six women in their eighties discuss, it is necessary to place their stories within the context of the life course. The purpose of this section is to tell enough about each woman’s life so that when she is identified in the chapters that follow, her comments and experiences can be understood against the background of her life as a whole.

Catherine, age eighty-seven
Catherine was born in 1902 on the farm in New Jersey where her father and grandfather had been born. When she was one or two her family moved to a small village, and it was here that she began, as the oldest of twelve children, to help with the care of her younger brothers and sisters. Her maternal grandmother frequently provided a respite from her duties at home by taking her to New York City to visit a great-uncle.
Catherine attended grades one through eight in a one-room school. Her father was on the school board and always made sure that the teacher in the school in his village was a competent one. She describes her family as church-going, but not deeply religious; in contrast, she feels that she was "almost born with a religious motivation or Christian motivation."

She commuted by train to high school in the county seat, because the village school ended at eighth grade. She graduated in 1919 and was the first person from her village to go to college.

Catherine attended the women's college of a large eastern university, becoming active in the student YWCA and teaching Sunday school in a mission church which served a Black population from the Azores. She attributes her life-long desire to work toward justice and peace to the speakers she heard and the people she met at regional conferences held for students by the YWCA and YMCA during this period. She graduated in 1923 with a major in European history and a minor in political science.

Although her professors encouraged her to continue her education, she wanted to begin working to help her nine younger brothers and sisters. She taught high school for two years and then began to work for the YWCA. It was at this time that she met her future husband, an
entomologist, who was thirteen years older than she. They were married two years later, in 1928.

After they were married, Catherine and her husband moved to Central Ohio where he had accepted a position as professor at a large university, and soon they moved into the house Catherine has lived in for sixty years. Catherine began to do graduate work in history and to become involved in the social issues with which the YWCA was concerned. She earned a master’s degree in American history in 1933, writing her thesis on the Moravians of North Carolina. For several years afterward she worked on special projects for professors in the history department.

Her older son Mark was born in 1935, and Michael was born in 1939. During the 1930s the family was joined from time to time by one or another of Catherine’s siblings, who lived with them while attending the university. Catherine was an attentive mother and planned her work in the community so that she could almost always be at home when her sons came from school for lunch.

By this time Catherine was so committed to the public affairs work of the YWCA that it had become almost a full-time volunteer job, and she later served on the national board of this organization. Her involvement in the community included securing WPA funds to start a center
for training household workers and serving on both a state
wage board and a state commission which heard cases of
racial discrimination in the defense industry. She also
chaired several major committees in her church, including
one which established an interracial nursery school, and
many years later she served as senior deacon.

Her husband retired from the university in 1958 after
thirty years of teaching and spent a number of years as
a visiting professor in various parts of the country;
Catherine frequently accompanied him. In 1972 her husband
died at eighty-three years of age.

Her children both live in the East. Her son Mark, who
is a history professor, and his wife Amy, a teacher, have
a college-age son and daughter; and her son Michael, who
is a landscape architect, has three sons and a daughter,
ranging in age from elementary school to college.

Catherine’s philosophy is evident in the conclusion she
once wrote for a committee report:

Fortunate is the woman who finds organizations such
as the church or the YWCA or similar groups
dedicated to goals to which she can give both
intellectual and emotional assent. This then may
become an instrument by which she can become part
of the age long process of working toward justice
and righteousness for all persons....
Emily, age eighty-four

Emily was born in 1906 in a small town on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River; her sister Harriet is seven years older than she. Her family moved frequently, and she lived in a number of towns along the Ohio River. She remembers the adventures of the 1913 Flood—a family friend taking all the neighborhood children out on the river in a rowboat and relatives from nearby towns staying with her family because their homes were flooded.

She enjoyed grade school and did not worry about grades; she says she liked the boys even then. She has pleasant memories of learning to roller skate, swimming in the Ohio River, and walking to school with her cousin Gordon, who was seven months younger than she. She was athletic and loved to jump double Dutch rope and go sledding.

Her family had moved seven times by her sophomore year of high school, all in the same general area of Kentucky and Ohio. In some of the towns they lived in rooming houses and took their meals at boardinghouses. Emily says she liked to move, and she seems to have made friends easily.

She spent her last three years of high school at the same school and made three close friends. She remembers dates for movies and evenings of getting together to make
fudge, play the piano, and sing. She played tennis with her girlfriends, and they always had an audience of boys. Her varsity basketball team played boys' rules and wore uniforms consisting of bloomers, midi-blouses, and knee pads; they traveled all over Kentucky and won the high school tournament several times.

Emily graduated from high school in 1923 and went to a state college in Kentucky for two years, majoring in education. She played basketball and found that "sports kind of took me through." She laughs when she remembers that if she had a date for a movie, he would have to pay not only for her ticket, but also for a ticket for her roommate, who would serve as chaperon.

When she was nineteen, she taught a fifth-grade class of forty pupils, making seventy-five dollars a month and continuing her education through in-service programs. She got married at twenty and taught for another year, during which she and her husband lived with her parents.

Emily's daughter Carol was born in 1929, and when she was five, Emily's husband Paul, an industrial engineer, was transferred to another city, the first of five moves the family would make as Paul was promoted. Paul, Jr. was born ten years after Carol, and Emily says the two of them had fun together in spite of the difference in age. In mid-life Emily enjoyed sports, bridge, tea parties, and
going into the city with friends to shop. Later, when their children were grown, Emily and Paul planned trips with a group of good friends, the highlight of which took them on a tour of Hawaii.

When she was in her early sixties, Emily worked at her husband's office for a few years. After he developed heart problems, she took care of him at home for five years until his death at age seventy-two.

After her husband died, her older sister came to live with her for two years. It was also at this time that her daughter opened a restaurant, and Emily began to work there as hostess and cashier. She moved from the house that she and her husband had shared to a one-bedroom apartment in a neighboring suburb.

Emily's family is the center of her life. Her daughter Carol and her husband, who live in a nearby town, have a son and a daughter, and each of them has two young children; her son Paul and his wife, who live in Florida, have a son who is getting married soon.

Emily has a good friend that she eats lunch with every Sunday; a number of years ago the two of them took trips to Bermuda and Alaska. She loves bridge and plays whenever she has the opportunity.

In speaking about her life, Emily says, "I just really had fun. I had a fun life."
Margaret, age eighty-five

Margaret was born in 1903 in Pennsylvania; her older sister Frances was six at the time. Her father was a Methodist minister, and the family moved frequently, living in three different cities in the state before she started school in 1909. Pleasant memories from childhood include sledding on the streets of the town, her parents playing duets in the evening, and her father asking each night at dinner, "How did school go today?"

The family frequently visited maternal grandparents in Ohio and paternal grandparents in Pennsylvania. When she was in fourth grade, her family moved to Ohio because her father had "kind of a nervous breakdown." Her maternal grandparents had retired, and her grandfather had left her mother (and each of his other children) a farm. Her father farmed and recuperated for two years, and her sister Rebecca, nine years younger than she, was born at this time. When her father recovered, he changed denominations and for the rest of his career was a Presbyterian minister.

By the time Margaret was in high school, the family was living in a town on the Ohio River, and it was here that she and her girlfriend traveled the six miles to school by horse and buggy. After she graduated from high school, she went to college for one summer and then began nurse’s
training in a northern Ohio city. She had to leave
nursing school after a little more than two years because
she got one serious illness after another. She returned
home, and her family doctor recommended her for private
nursing jobs, at which she worked both before and after
her marriage.

She married a young man who had served in World War I,
and they had two sons and two daughters between about 1925
and 1932. The family was hurt badly by the Depression;
her husband, who worked for a steel company, "went to work
one morning and [the factory] was boarded up." He then
worked for the WPA for sixty dollars a month, and she did
nursing and cooked for the hired help on a friend's farm.

When her children were older, she and her husband
separated and eventually divorced. "...he wasn’t a good
provider. He kind of depended on me to make the living,
and I had the four children." In 1942 she went to
northern Ohio to look for work and found a job in a
defense plant, where she inspected propellers and tools,
did interviewing, and was a union officer. When she was
laid off after the war, she went to work in a large hotel
as a housekeeper, supervising five or six maids. She
liked the job, but it did not pay enough to support the
two children she still had at home, so after a few months
she quit.
She married a man she had met while working at the defense plant. Her second husband, never in good health since having malaria during the war, died of a heart attack in 1952, three years after they were married.

By this time her parents had retired, and in 1953 she moved into their home to take care of them. Her father died that fall, and she worked for Montgomery Ward until her mother could no longer be left alone during the day. At that time she moved with her mother to the town where her older sister lived. Her older daughter Dorothy, who was separated from her husband, came with her two children to live with Margaret, and Margaret shared in the care of her mother and her daughter's young children.

In 1962 she began a seven year period as housemother in a freshman girls' dormitory on a small college campus. About 1970 her nephew asked her to come to his college and be housemother at his fraternity; she was ready for a change and stayed there three years. On both campuses she signed up for classes from time to time, taking courses in religion, psychology, tailoring, and art appreciation.

Her daughter Barbara died of cancer at age fifty. She misses her greatly, calling her a good friend. Her daughter Dorothy remarried and moved into her husband's house, and Margaret rents the first floor of her old house; Margaret's grandson, a teacher, lives on the second
floor, and a student lives on the third floor.

Margaret participates in church and community activities, although her involvement has slowed in recent years. Her eleven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren are scattered around the country, and she wishes that she could see them more often.

Julia, age eighty-five

Julia was born in a small town in Ohio in 1903; her family moved when she was a baby and again when she was five, the second time to the city where her parents lived for the rest of their lives. Her only sister, Claire, who is two years younger than she, lived her whole life there also.

Her father was an elder in the Presbyterian Church, and she attended church, Sabbath school, and junior church; she sees church as an important beginning to her life. The only elementary school memory that she mentions is from the fifth grade, when she sat behind Arthur, whom she would marry almost forty years later. In high school she edited the yearbook and played violin in the orchestra. During the summer she made two dollars a week working for the town newspaper, which was owned by her future father-in-law. She graduated second in her class and still remembers that the boy who graduated first in the class had moved to town just before their senior year, bringing his easily-earned grades from a country school.
Julia went to a nearby college for two years until her money ran out, and then took a test to be certified to teach. Her first teaching job was in a one-room school where she boarded during the week with the family of one of her students, sharing a bed with the eighth-grade daughter. She made ninety-four dollars a month that year, and with money from that job, summer jobs, scholarships, and loans, she was able to return to college. She majored in speech, was on the yearbook staff, and played the viola in the orchestra.

She graduated in 1927 and taught for a year in the place of her speech professor, who took a year's leave of absence. She then taught English at two different high schools in Michigan, earning her master's degree during the summers. Her next teaching position was in northern Ohio, where she taught English and served as adviser to the yearbook.

Julia and Arthur, her childhood classmate, got reacquainted when they were both invited to Christmas Eve dinner at the home of Arthur's brother and sister-in-law. The next summer while Julia was working on her doctoral degree and living in a dormitory on a university campus in Central Ohio, they began dating, and they were married in the summer of 1953, when she was forty-nine. She left her job in northern Ohio and moved to Central Ohio at that
time. She accepted a position teaching high school English and later became adviser to the newspaper staff.

Julia speaks of losing her heel to cancer a few years after she was married and giving up graduate work because she could not do the amount of walking she needed to be able to do on campus. She says that she was disappointed at having to quit and that she enjoyed the work even though she did not finish. She continued teaching and eventually chaired her high school English department.

She describes her marriage as happy and says that she and Arthur had a lot of fun together. He retired two years earlier than she because of heart problems, and after she retired in 1969, they took a trip each year for four years, usually going to England and then adding various side trips—Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Spain, Portugal, and Greece.

Her other interests in retirement were researching genealogies and writing family histories. She worked first on a genealogy and history of her family, and then she and Arthur began to research his family.

Arthur died of a heart attack in 1974, and she completed the work on both projects. She says that she was lost when he died and that working on the history that they had begun together kept her immersed in his family.
Julia moved to a retirement community in 1983, about six years before our interviews began. Within a year of moving she was asked to be editor of the newsletter for her retirement community, a job which allowed her to continue a life-long interest in writing and editing.

Julia had hip surgery for the second time six weeks after our interviews began. Although she was no longer in pain, the surgery was not as successful as she had hoped, and she had to wear straps over her clothing to hold the hip in the socket. When I visited her in the hospital and twice in the nursing home, she seemed to be doing well; in fact she seemed more mentally sharp than during our interviews. She developed pneumonia suddenly, however, and died the following day.

Anne, age eighty-four

Anne was born in northern Illinois in 1906. She is more interested in the present than in the past and told few stories about her early years. Two of the stories she did tell involve travel—a one hundred mile train trip to Chicago for a family reunion when she was ten and a two week trip that she calls "the family's one great adventure" to Niagara Falls, Lancaster, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. to visit relatives and see the sights. She also speaks of her mother's buying the family home and inheriting several relatives, including Anne's maternal
grandfather and his male nurse.

Anne and her husband were high school physics class partners and dated through high school and college. She went to a small Methodist college in Iowa, majoring in mathematics and English, and he went to a small Presbyterian college in Illinois, majoring in physics and English. Her main college activities were intramural sports. "It started with hockey in the fall and went through to baseball in the spring."

She graduated in 1927 and taught freshman and sophomore English and girls' physical education; she also coached the soccer and basketball teams. She and her husband were married in 1928. She continued to work for one year after they were married and remembers the school superintendent saying, "Doesn't your husband have a job?"

Her husband was alumni secretary of his college in Illinois, and all three of their children were born there. In 1944 they moved to Tennessee where her husband worked for the Methodist Church; for twenty years he promoted The Upper Room, a devotional guide, and later he had other responsibilities. She and her family helped to establish a church, which was the center of much of her activity over the years. She became commissioner for the Girl Scouts in 1944 and was interested in camping facilities for scouts. In the years after her children were grown,
she became involved in neighborhood community centers, again making camping facilities a special interest. Her father, a widower, was seriously burned in a trash fire in the early 1950s, and he lived with Anne and her family until he died in 1956.

Anne enjoyed the opportunities she had to travel. She accompanied her husband to Methodist conferences, visiting Washington, Niagara Falls, Baltimore, Denver, and San Francisco. Years later her son accompanied her and her husband on a trip to Hawaii, renting a car and helping them tour.

When her husband had a stroke, they moved from their house into an apartment. Though her efforts and the kindness of friends, he was able to continue to be involved in some of his previous activities. He died in 1980, and she stayed in the apartment for about nine more years.

She is not sure when she began to be troubled with the arthritis which has become so severe in recent years, but she says she has been taking salts of gold shots for about twenty years. Toward the end of the time she lived in the apartment, she needed help managing and had a maid who came in for a varying amount of time every weekday and cleaned, did laundry, ran errands, and drove her to meetings and to appointments with her doctor. With this
assistance and with the help of Meals on Wheels, she was able to manage. She continued to participate in church activities and had friends in weekly for cards and Scrabble. In the fall of 1988 (a year and a half before our interviews) she broke her hip, went through what appears to have been a successful rehabilitation, and was able to walk with a cane. It was about this time that she began to consider whether she could continue to live alone in a city where she had no family, and six months before our interviews, she moved to the assisted living area of a retirement community in Central Ohio.

Anne’s family is spread out across the country. Her oldest son, Ron, who is not married, moved to California as a young man after serving three years in the Navy. He is retired and is quite attentive to his mother, calling and visiting frequently.

Her daughter, Carolyn, nineteen months younger than Ron, lives in Texas and is still employed. She and her husband have a son who is deceased, two daughters, and a two year old grandchild. Anne longs to see her great-grandchild and tries to figure out a way she could bring about a visit.

Her youngest son, Dan, eight years younger than Carolyn, lives in Ohio with his wife Lynne and their son and daughter, who are away at college. Dan and Lynne are
professors at a large university, and they are Anne’s most constant source of help and companionship.

Anne has a brother seven years younger than she, who has remained in their hometown in Illinois. At the time of our interviews she was quite concerned about him because he was recovering from brain surgery.

Anne has found adjustment to her new home difficult, at least in part because her physical limitations prevent her from following her former pattern of getting involved in activities. She was recently asked to serve on the Religious Activities Committee for the retirement community, but she continues to be frustrated by the lack of opportunity to meet people who share her interest in current events, social issues, and board games, saying, "I haven’t found any kindred spirits."

Laura, age eighty-two

Laura’s father, who was English, met her mother in Central Ohio. They were married in Illinois and went to live in Mexico City where her father had a job with the railroad. Laura was born there in 1907, and she was three when they came back to the United States because of political unrest, the first of what were to be many changes of residence in Laura’s early life.

When they came back, they lived in Illinois, and in 1910 while her father and several other officials of the
railroad were on an inspection trip in a handcar, they were killed in a head-on collision. Laura and her mother went to live with her mother’s parents and an aunt and uncle in another city in Illinois. When she was five she went to visit her paternal grandmother in England for eight months.

Her maternal grandfather, concerned that her mother’s depression had not lifted in two years, sent her to Virginia to visit a friend of his who had children her age, and it was here that she met the man who later became her second husband. Their courtship was interrupted when Laura’s grandfather got sick and had to retire from the railroad, and the whole family moved to California where they owned orange groves. The couple continued to correspond, and in 1916 they met in Chicago to be married; Laura, who was in the fifth grade, was her mother’s witness.

The new family moved to Virginia, and Laura’s stepfather’s mother and sister lived with them. Over the next few years there were several moves and several long visits to California. When her maternal grandfather died, her grandmother came to Virginia to live with Laura’s family.

It was not until high school that Laura felt that she put down roots. She was interested in organizations ("I
think I belonged to all of them") and had an active social life. Her half brother was born at this time.

She attended a large Ohio university, beginning with a major in journalism but focusing most of her energies on friends and fun. Her first real interest in the academic side of college came during her junior year when she met two women psychology professors, with whose encouragement she became a psychology major. She was engaged while she was in college, but when she went back to Virginia, the romance faded. She broke off a second engagement in her mid-thirties.

By the time she graduated the Depression had hit, and the job she had been promised no longer existed. She returned home to Virginia to teach chemistry and biology in a high school/junior college and remained for twelve years, completing the work for her master’s degree in the summers.

Her stepfather died in the early 1940s when he was fifty-four. Her mother, widowed a second time, this time with a son in his early teens, was unable to manage without Laura’s help, so Laura turned down the invitation to return to her university to teach and begin work on a doctorate. When the offer was made again the next year, Laura accepted it, much against her mother’s wishes. Laura received her Ph.D. in psychology in 1948 and stayed
at the university for two years as an assistant professor, working for the Bureau of Educational Research in a visual demonstration laboratory.

After she left the university, she worked as a clinical psychologist at two institutions, the Columbus State School and the Girls' Industrial School, staying in each position about five years—long enough to get new programs and procedures established. Later she became chief of the psychology section of the Ohio Bureau of Mental Retardation. In 1963 or 1964 she was invited to return to the university and join the staff of the counseling center. During the twelve years that she was there, much of her work was with women between thirty and sixty years old, who were returning to school and needed help dealing with the changes in their lives.

After she retired from the university, she began a private practice and started what she called the Women's Consultation Service. She continues to do workshops from time to time, does some consulting, and occasionally sees clients for counseling. A year or two ago she received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ohio Psychological Association.

She moved to her one-bedroom apartment in a retirement community in 1982, seven and a half years before our interviews started. Among other activities, she has
taught an autobiography class in her community, has joined a nearby Methodist church, and has become involved in representing the residents of her retirement community on a local council and representing the residents of a number of related retirement communities on the board of trustees of the corporation.

Laura's only relatives are cousins in Georgia and her sixty-seven year old half brother. She has some responsibility for her brother, who, during the period of our interviews, went from a retirement home to a nursing home.

Laura has given considerable thought to her own aging and to aging in general, saying, "I still do think that if you're going to get anything out of life as you get older, you have to compensate for the losses." She has compensated for the losses in her own life by dealing with physical changes and by adapting her living arrangements, work, and social life to meet the conditions of her ninth decade.

Conclusion

The life history summaries presented here are intended to place in context the stories that these six women tell in the following chapters about physical condition, independence, work, family, and friends. The women in this study have a number of characteristics in common--
they are white, middle-class, well-educated women who live in Central Ohio and are in their ninth decade; but as these summaries indicate, their life experiences show considerable variation.
CHAPTER V

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Introduction

As they talk about their lives, these six women speak of their physical condition, including energy, health, disability, and death. A discussion of physical condition separate from other aspects of life runs the risk of emphasizing problems in a way that these women would never choose to emphasize them, because at any age, good health requires little comment; it is the departure from good health—the broken hip or period of illness—that becomes a topic of conversation. Although they are not preoccupied with their physical condition, these women, whose ages range from eighty-two to eighty-seven, have to take the realities of health into consideration as they plan their days, and they must learn to live with bodies that are not as reliable as they were in earlier years. In their ninth decade they continue to value active and independent living, and they deal with issues of physical condition straightforwardly, by means of compensation and planning.
Energy

These women plan their days with the expenditure of energy in mind, and within the limits of their energy, they attempt to continue activities and interests with success that varies from woman to woman and from time to time within the life of each woman.

Emily, who is eighty-four, works several hours a day as a hostess and cashier in her daughter’s restaurant. She likes having somewhere to go and work to do, and she enjoys the staff and customers. If she did not have to be somewhere she says, "..in the mornings I don’t think I would do anything. I have to push which is good." She finds her energy level has changed, and explains, "I never was one that wanted to sit, but now I can sit real easy." She continues, "Well, I have the wanting to do things, but not the energy. You have to realize that you just can’t do what you can’t do. Or I don’t think you can anyway."

By way of example she adds:

Carol [her daughter] went to [a nearby city] Sunday and wanted me to go along. Well, I knew they were going to get out and go to the stores. I can’t do that. Now I’d like to have gone, but I don’t think it’s fair either to go and not be able to do anything after you get there and spoil everybody else’s fun.

To a question about whether or not she feels a need to limit the number of activities she participates in on any
one day, she responds:

I try to. Yes, if I do something in the afternoon, then I don't much want to do something at night. I don't go out much at night, but some. I have friends that take me places and bring me home. I won't drive at night.

Sometimes the temptation to over-schedule wins out, and she realizes that a day which would have been merely busy when she was younger is now exhausting. On a day when she has an interview with me, work at the restaurant, and an evening of bridge, she regrets that she is also committed to go downtown in the afternoon to try on a dress she will model a few days later in an informal fashion show at the restaurant, and she laughingly laments, "I guess I want to do things, but I don't seem to have the energy--now that's sad."

Anne, who is eighty-four, has arthritis which has become quite painful. She says it does not hurt more to walk than to sit but "it's just that it is more comfortable not to be walking on it." It is difficult to tell whether pain or lack of energy is responsible, but she walks less and less. Her sons are concerned and have encouraged her to try to walk more. She thinks they do not understand the situation.

My boys think I give in to it too easily, because here [in the assisted-living area of her retirement
Because of an incident in which she walked, using a cane, to an office down the hall and had to call for help when she could not get back to her room, the staff has decided that she needs to begin using a walker. She used a walker during the period of time in which she was recovering from a broken hip a year earlier (before she came to the retirement community), and she is a little discouraged that she must go back to that means of getting around. When she uses her new walker during my visit, I comment that she is doing well with it, and her response is, "I’m sure not winning any races." She adds, "That takes more steam than I have sometimes."

Change in routine and the inconvenience of being away from her own surroundings are tiring for Anne. She must use a high-rise toilet seat, and when she is away from her room, she must make sure that the seat is taken along. She speaks of the day that new flooring tile was installed in the hall outside her room, and everyone on her floor was displaced for the day without warning:
And we were out of our rooms from breakfast time until dinner time last night, and that was complicated for somebody [like me]. They had to keep moving me around where there was a bathroom I could use.

When I visit the day after the disruption, she pronounces the whole experience "very disconcerting," saying that she missed her comfortable chair, her reading material, and her routine. She is clearly exhausted and having a difficult time recovering from all the confusion.

Catherine, who is eighty-seven, has the ability to look back at her younger self almost as if she were looking at another person, as she compares the level of energy she had as a younger woman to the level of energy she has now.

Responding to a question about how she was able to devote so much time to volunteer work in her church and community and still care for her family during her younger years, she credits the cooperation of her husband and children and her sense of organization.

So I think we never really had any problems in managing it [extensive volunteer work and a young family], and I, now at eighty-seven years of age, have no idea how I managed it myself. I realize that by and large, I probably was what people would describe as an energetic person, and I think I probably had basically very good health. I can remember flying up to Chicago, in the days after flying became common, for a meeting up there, getting there for a morning meeting which went on into the afternoon, coming home and having people here that evening, and I have no more--now I just--it's just something that's beyond anything I could
possibly think of doing, you know, when I think of the energy that that sort of thing took...

She compares her ability to work in the evening when she was younger with that ability at eighty-seven:

Another thing that impresses me [laughs] when I read these things [articles about public issues she wrote years ago for her church bulletin] is how much reading I was doing all the time. You see, those were the years when I had no difficulty after the children had gone to bed, and everything was quiet, I could read and do things for two or three hours which made it very helpful to be able to add those things to your day. I can't do it now, I get sleepy, by 10:00...

She does have less energy now than she once had, but her energy level in early life sets a high standard, and although the contrast is obvious to her, to the onlooker it appears that she is doing very well. One day when I arrive at 10:00 a.m., she apologizes for not having swept the leaves from her front step because she got up late. "I had a very strenuous day yesterday, and when I looked at the little clock by my bed, it was a little after 8:00."

Rather than being defeated by the change in her level of energy, however, Catherine uses her organizational skills, still very much intact, to work around this situation. In planning on November 29 for a time we could get together in December she says:
I think next week and the first part of the following week would be a little hard for me, because I've been part of a group for sixty years, and for years now, they like to come and have their Christmas party here, and it comes early this year. I don't know, I think maybe this is the last time I'm going to be able to manage it. These are all somewhat older people, and they like to come because I still get out my old decorations, and most of them have given up even doing it anymore, and you can see, I've already gotten out my old Madonna and put it on my mantel, because I have to start early to do things. It takes me so long to do everything.

Later she adds:

Amy [her daughter-in-law] said to me [laughs] over the phone just not too long ago about this party that's coming up, she said, "Do you have to have it?" I said, "I suppose if you're perfectly honest, no. I can tell them I just can't do it anymore." [laughs] You know, you hate to come to that. Maybe you hate to accept things the way they are.

Margaret, eighty-five, makes an indirect comparison to her energy level now and fourteen years earlier when she was in her early seventies and took a trip to Europe with a friend. "It was just wonderful, and we were younger, and I didn't get tired at all. I just enjoyed it all very much."

During the period of time that the interviewing was going on, Margaret had the opportunity to go with a young friend to visit the college where she had once been a housemother and to observe the many changes. She takes pride in the fact that she was able to climb the three
flights of stairs to her friend's office but admits that she was "pretty much winded when we got there." She walked to the dormitory where she had been housemother and then around the small campus. The next week she mentions the experience again. "I was exhausted when it was over, but it was good. I loved doing it and loved seeing good old Scott Hall again."

Margaret wants to go to a nearby city with a senior citizens group to see a traveling art exhibit and is considering whether or not she can manage the trip.

Sandy [the director of the senior citizens group] said, "Are you going to go, Margaret," and I said, "I don't know, I'm afraid of the walking; I'm afraid it will be too tiring." She said, "They have benches that you can sit down and rest on," so we're going to think about it anyhow.

She is, however, making definite plans to go with a friend to the Kiwanis Pancake Breakfast and is delighted that the Kiwanis Club is making free tickets available to senior citizens.

Laura, who is eighty-two, is interested in the process of aging in general, as well as in her own aging, and in response to my suggestion that she elaborate on a statement that she had made about the fact that old people "don't have the energy they had before," she says:
Well, let me give you an example of what's good here [her retirement community]. If I were living alone or in a house, and I wanted to go to the symphony, even if I had a friend some place that might be across town that wanted to go to the symphony too, I wouldn't go. Here, we've got a bus, and there are a bunch of us that have season tickets, so the bus takes us right down to the door, we get out, don't have to wander around parking. It's there at the door when we come out and we come home. Now if I had to walk, and particularly at night, I wouldn't care to do that. I wouldn't do it. I'd be restricted.

When she moved into her building, which was at that time being converted into a retirement community, most of the residents were in their seventies or late sixties and were not interested in having help with such things as making arrangements for their Diners' Club restaurant trips. Now more than seven years later, many of the residents are in their eighties--the average age is seventy-nine--and their needs have changed.

Now it takes more energy, so what they're asking for is more help from a social director. Not to plan it, but to go out there and look, make the arrangements, and do the things like that.

Her living situation also offers the possibility of hiring help for cleaning or laundry or for buying a meal ticket when she does not feel like cooking or going to a restaurant to eat. She appreciates the opportunity to get services easily when she wants them.
If something goes wrong in my refrigerator, [I don’t have to] call the repairman, wait five days, fuss around whether I have to be in or out or anything else. I write a work order around here and that afternoon, somebody’s there. This is energy conserving, and I don’t have to worry about it.

On the other hand, Laura sees a certain amount of involvement in the chores of daily life as necessary for having energy.

The people in congregate living—that’s independent living but with your meals [served in the dining hall] over there—and assisted living for some reason seem to have less energy, but I think they’ve lived in an environment probably where things have been done for them, decisions been made for them. Because I’ve seen some people come from over there and into Emerson [the more independent part of the community], and blossom.

Laura has some concern (she mentions it several times) about the fact that she has many papers—some left from the time she was working—which need to be sorted out and dealt with, but in spite of saying frequently that she really wants to get started on this task, she does not, and she speculates about why:

My next door neighbor and I exchange views on things every once in a while. Both of us have trouble keeping up with papers [unclear]. We laugh and joke about it....We both say to each other every so often, "Today I’m going to get these things cleaned out," and then we see each other the next day, and we didn’t do it....And I begin to wonder whether I don’t do those things because they’re not important to me, I’m not interested in it, I hate to do that, or whether this is part of the process, sort of
shedding—let’s see how can I say it?—how to keep your balance so you have enough energy to do the things you want to do. And yet I’m not really aware of not having enough energy. Everybody tells me they couldn’t keep up with my schedule, but I do it at the expense of not doing certain other things. I’ll sit here and watch T.V., I’ll read, I’ll do some things or just lie back and relax—when I know I got all those things in there [laughs].

Laura believes in using individual means of compensating for physical loss—such as hearing aids—and structural means of compensating—such as better acoustics in meeting rooms of retirement homes. She talks about the energy used to compensate for physical problems:

...when they all add up, there are quite a few things that I’m compensating for, but I think that that kind of compensation...can be built into the environment to make it easier. And it takes energy to try to listen when you can’t really hear [laughs]. It takes energy to try to read when you can’t really read. Now I don’t have any problem—the only problem I have, I have prisms in each of my lenses, because the vision was distorted, [unclear] but it’s all right. I can read, I can do things, I just finished reading a paperback mystery story. But it does—it’s not as easy to do as when you were younger, but there are a lot of things like that...

Health

The health of the women varies—some feel better on a daily basis than others, and some have problems that are potentially more serious than others. During the six to twelve weeks that each set of interviews covers, change in health status is evident for some women.
Emily, eighty-four, speaks of breaking her ankle two years ago, characteristically finding pleasure and humor in a difficult situation.

Two years ago, Carol [her daughter] stepped on a rock and broke a bone in the bottom of her foot, and two weeks later, I got out of my chair in the living room to get a drink of water, and I have shoes that have those, I don't know what kind of soles, but they don't slide. As I got out of the chair, I fell and broke an ankle.

Her grandson, who is a physician, came to look at her ankle that night, and she went to the hospital the next day to have it set.

They thought at first I had broken both ankles because they were both swollen, and they couldn't decide what they were going to do with me [laughs]. Thank goodness, it was only one of them. They took me up to Carol's and I stayed up there, and I could use a walker, and Carol's husband--Carol, of course, was there incapacitated also--and her husband cooked the best meals! I have never had such wonderful meals as he cooked for us when we were that way [laughs].

She said later in the same conversation:

[My legs] never hurt, either one of them, and they haven't ever hurt to this day. I don't know why. Carol was in a cast also. There we were. But we kind of enjoyed it with each other and had fun. People would look at us and wonder what happened to both of us.

Emily's doctor has encouraged her to get more exercise, and she has been trying to do more walking but finds
There's never a good time.

Well, just to get out and walk to me... the doctor told me one time I should walk thirty-five minutes. Well, you know that's a long time. I started at five minutes, and I was ready to quit [laughs].

She is grateful that she has "no aches and pains," but she feels that her legs are weak—"just age"—and her feet "don't always just do what I want them to do." She does try to fit more walking into the course of her day: "Well, I've been walking in here [the restaurant]. I go down through the dining room and back, and they say, "Oh, are you taking your constitutional?"

She tries to walk an extra distance in the grocery store because the cart gives her a little more stability. She adds, "I don't know why I'm so unsteady, but I am, and I don't like it." She often uses a cane when she is outside, and feels more secure with it.

If I'm going up steps and there's a bush, if I can get hold of, now this, I have heard other people say, and I thought that's the silliest thing I have heard of. You just hold on to a little sprig of a bush, [and that] helps me get up the steps. Now that's mental—purely.

Although Emily feels fortunate compared to many old people because she is not in pain, she is aware that she has slowed down a great deal, and says, "I was so athletic when I was young that I can't understand not being able
to do those things now." In response to a question about the good things about being in one's eighties, Emily, who characteristically looks at the bright side of life, responds:

That's a hard question. I don't know, I slowed down so in my eighties. I never thought walking would be difficult, which it is. But I have so many friends and so much to do that I don't have time to sit and worry about it, but it's not fun...

I ask her if slowing down is the worst part of being older, and she responds:

Yes, yes. I still would like to do the things that I used to do, but I know I can't do...but having no pains or anything, I shouldn't complain. Because so many people have aches and pains.

Emily has worn a hearing aid for about four years because she has a fifteen per cent hearing loss. She has two but only wears one, leaving one ear free to use the telephone at work.

Catherine, eighty-seven, whose health is generally quite good, has occasional spells when she just does not feel well. She describes one of those times:

Yesterday, I didn't feel good at all, and I debated all day long as to whether I should call you. It was one of those times when I was just, I call it light-headed, I don't know whether that's an apt description or not. I wasn't really dizzy, but my head wasn't where it ought to be, and it's the kind of thing that off and on for quite a few years,
every once in awhile, that just seems to hit me. And I hadn't had one of those spells for quite a long time, and I didn't know whether it was going to last more than a day or not, but now this morning, my head [laughs] maybe it's as clear as it ever is...

In response to my comment that this must be frightening to experience she adds:

Well, it might be except that I've had it happen enough times that I know that I just have to abandon my plans for the day and rest a day. Sometimes it takes more than a day, but other times, it doesn't. It's not a very comfortable feeling when you have it, and I have tried to figure out what brings it about, and I have certain theories, and sometimes they seem to be applicable and other times they don't, but anyway.

Sometimes it seems to her that this condition comes on when she has been doing too much or "getting too much interested in too many things." She speculates that this episode of discomfort might be due to getting quite excited earlier in the week about a visit to the new art museum at a nearby university to hear the architect lecture on the building design. She also thinks that this feeling may be related to an inner ear problem that she was treated for once previously. The tests and treatment were unpleasant, and she hesitates to go through them again.

Catherine has a strategy for dealing with physical problems.
I had a kind of a miracle thing happen. Day before yesterday suddenly this hand was so sore I could hardly lift anything. I didn’t remember hitting it against anything or anything, and yet it didn’t seem to me like arthritis, and I couldn’t figure it out, and I thought, "Oh, dear, is this a new affliction of age?" [laughs] It was very bothersome yesterday and actually, last night, I got awake, let’s see, this is about 2:30, and it was just hurting so much, I had a hard time getting back to sleep, and today it’s practically gone. Now isn’t that just a miracle? I think it’s so puzzling that you can’t figure out about these things, but I’ve always had the philosophy that when something happens, you don’t get all in a turmoil for a day or so, because it might disappear, and then if it doesn’t, you better find out what it is....Anyway I’m just glad it’s over.

Catherine recently began using Life Call, an emergency alert system involving a call button worn on a chain around the neck. Since she lives alone, she feels more secure knowing that this means of calling for help is available if she should need it.

Anne, eighty-four, has lived for more than twenty years with arthritis which started in her hands and now affects her hips, back, and feet. She has had an artificial knee for "a long time," since having her arthritic knee replaced because it had become swollen and painful. She remembers "the first step I took after—I couldn’t believe, after living with that pain, and it was gone. It was really great!" In spite of this success, her arthritis has become more crippling and more painful. She tries to make the best of her situation and to resist
giving in to pain and lack of mobility, but the struggle becomes more and more difficult.

She broke her hip a year and a half ago when she was living alone in an apartment. As she describes the accident, "I just got up out of the chair, and it broke. Of course, then I collapsed on the floor." She lay on the floor, helpless, until a friend came to give her a ride to a meeting and called the emergency squad to take her to the hospital.

After leaving the hospital, she spent a month in a rehabilitation center where she had a successful recovery. She learned to use a walker, and, typical of her desire to assert her independence to the extent she can, she points out that when her surgeon gave her permission to use a cane, she chose a regular cane rather than the heavier, three-pronged cane "although I don't believe it was considered to be the best solution."

Having struggled to regain her ability to walk, Anne is discouraged that she is now losing her mobility again because of pain and weakness. Although in the recent past she used a cane to get around in her room and depended on an aide and a wheelchair to go to meals and activities, she still maintained her belief that she was able to walk longer distances with a cane if she chose to do so. The incident in which she was unable to get back to her room
after walking in the hall with her cane has forced her to abandon this belief. Anne has begun using a walker in her room and has come to realize that she will have to use a wheelchair for all longer trips. About the walker she says, "One lives and learns. I'm not real happy about it, but I guess I should be grateful that there are things that you can do."

She gets therapy to practice using the walker; she is not sure how often, perhaps every day. The therapist wants her to use a walker with wheels so she will not have to lift it for each step, but she is not comfortable with the idea, saying, "I have a vision of the thing taking off with me...not being able to keep up." Two weeks later Anne continues to use the walker without wheels saying, "...I feel much more secure with this, and I figure I'm the one involved."

Anne has difficulty being comfortable enough to sleep at night. She sleeps on a foam mattress rather than on one with springs and uses pillows to hold her body in the position that is most comfortable for her. Because of this difficulty, even a brief stay in the clinic proved to be a problem.

Since you've been here, I've had an adventure. I developed shortness of breath or something, and I spent night up in the clinic or whatever they call that place. And it wasn't, it didn't turn out to
be anything of any consequence, but they parked me up there for the night, and they had two beds. I felt badly because the other lady was going to have knee replacement the next day, a surgery, so she needed her rest. Here I was up there complaining about the bed, and I had to go to the bathroom every time you turned around... They put down the side and they brought a chair in and wheeled you to the bathroom, and then reversed that process so going to the bathroom was an event [laughs]. And I thought, poor soul, she needed her rest, she didn't need that.

Later in the interview she continued:

... I sleep on a foam mattress, because of my back, and I have a terrible time on box springs. Well, bless Pete, the two beds upstairs are box springs. They tried everything. They put blankets under my back. They tried everything. Finally, in the middle of the night, they said, "We're going to take you back to your own bed."

Anne's feet are quite misshapen, and her custom-made shoes have openings cut in them to give her feet more room. Because of the pain from arthritis and from sores on her feet, she walks as little as possible. She needs to go to the bathroom frequently, and this walk across her one-room apartment to the bathroom makes up most of her exercise.

When I arrive for one interview, she mentions her pain, saying that she is waiting for spring "or whatever it takes to make my hip stop hurting." She adds, "I always think it's related to weather. Maybe it isn't. It's arthritis, and you can't really decide." With that she
quickly turns the conversation away from her discomfort to ask, "What's new with you?"

In a later interview we comment on the pleasant weather and the beautiful spring flowers, and I ask her if she is interested in my getting a wheelchair so we can go for a walk. She responds, "I don't think I am, thank you, because my back is very painful this morning. It's one of those things. You take it as it comes."

Arthritis has visibly deformed Anne's hands, feet, and back. In spite of her pain, she feels that her treatment is successful.

I get relief from the pain or discomfort with Tylenol which is, you know, is very simple, and is not habit forming or anything. So, I am very fortunate.

She requests Tylenol only when she needs it for pain, saying, "I just thought I didn't want to get into the routine of taking something when I didn't need it. I've heard it might lose its effectiveness that way." However, during almost every visit she either calls the clinic to have Tylenol brought to her or mentions having taken it recently.

She also gets a salts of gold shot every two weeks as she has been doing for about twenty years. This involves having a urine sample analyzed one day, having a blood
test later, and finally, if everything checks out, getting the shot itself.

I’m fortunate, one of the fortunate ones, because there isn’t a whole lot they can do for arthritis. They had me in the hospital and did various tests, the heat and all that business, and of course, nothing worked. Dr. Dickerson said, “You can try this, and if it’s helpful, you’re going to do this the rest of your life.” So every two weeks, I got what they call a gold shot, and my son, he said, “You must very valuable, Mother, all those gold salts.” They seem to do the trick, so we’ll keep on doing it.

She takes several medicines in pill form which are brought to her in her room by a nurse or aide, either because they are scheduled or because she has called the clinic to request Tylenol for pain. She is appreciative of the staff person who brings the medicine, making comments such as “Oh, bless your heart. Thank you. I would miss this little pill.” When she mentions staff members, she almost always makes a comment about how helpful and kind they are. “That young nurse is—that young man is very kind and very thoughtful. He really is.” She adds, “Now, he doesn’t do anything like what an aide would do, but he dispenses medicine, and he does it very nicely.”

Anne uses Depend, an absorbent undergarment, and was quite open in making me aware of this need. When she returned from the bathroom, she brought a new package and
asked me to hand her the scissors so she could open it, saying, "I’ll get these open for the next visit. These are wonderful garments for an old lady like me." Later in the same conversation she added:

When you get old, you discover lots of things [laughs] that you didn’t know were facilities—but that are wonderful to have for an elderly lady. So, one lives and learns. And [I’m] just grateful for somebody who thought of those things.

Anne has used a hearing aid in one ear for three or four years, and if she is not wearing it when I arrive, at some point early in our conversation she will ask me to get it for her. She has occasional minor problems with it and remembers the ease with which she could have it serviced while she waited, when she was in her hometown. She is nervous about having it out of her sight when an aide takes it for cleaning, and she worries about how to go about finding local service if she has more serious problems with it. She keeps her sense of humor about the situation, however, commenting after the aide cleans the hearing aid and tells her that she will check her ear later:

I wouldn’t have thought to ask, to know that she would do something to it, but it does make a big difference. Now if she cleans out my ear besides, I’ll probably hear more than I want to hear.
Julia, eighty-five, smoked until three years ago. She had been thinking about giving up smoking, and when she went into the hospital to have her first hip surgery, she decided that this was the time and had no difficulty quitting. She worries, however, that she may have quit too late and may get lung cancer.

About two years ago she fell while negotiating a curb and injured her tail bone. She tells about this and another similar experience which happened earlier:

Well, I started with this, and it was hard for me to walk, and I used a cane first, and then I went down to [the theater, and the curb]...was very high, and I couldn't handle it, and I just sat down, I just sat down on my tailbone, and then I fell again...[at another time], I didn't get far enough back to realize the ramp started way back so I sat on my tailbone, and it was really damaged, and so I have used the shower and hot water on it, and it's healed, I'm glad to say.

She also speaks of a serious problem with her back, which sounds like osteoporosis:

Dr. Clifton thinks the bone, there was some damage to the bone, probably starting when I was around fifty when I stopped menstruating, and the doctors can't agree whether you need to keep on taking hormones and do you take...a...a...oh...[LH: Calcium?] calcium, and some of them say that doesn't do any good, and some of them think it does, and my doctor didn't give [it to] me, and Connie [her niece] told me about calcium, and she said, "I think you better," because my back--the vertebra broke and I have a compressed fracture in my spine. It's very crooked and maybe more than one, so he didn't give me any calcium for that...And so, I haven't had any
trouble until now, and it's certainly—I was over in the health center, and it was a very painful one because they thought I had a virus when I went over, but I really had a very sore back, because the vertebra was broken.

Later in the conversation she says, "They don't put a corset or any kind of thing, because it just comes from the bones giving up. So I don't know what I have ahead of me." She had surgery on her hip three years ago, and the doctor told her recently that he had thought the improved function would last for seven years. Unfortunately, it has not. She now uses a walker with wheels.

Dr. Clifton wanted me to wait a while to see whether I wanted another operation, and so I said, "Can I have one with wheels?" "Sure." So they write a prescription for one with wheels. They sent the most expensive one they had [laughs]. That was something. But it really is very easy to [use].

She says, "...Dr. Clifton said, 'I hate to see you using that [the walker].' I have to use it. I felt the same way. So they'll get me straightened up, I hope."

During our next to last interview Julia says that her leg feels sore. She has just learned that she is to have her hip operation in two weeks—the week after Christmas. She will go to her niece's house for Christmas and from there to the hospital. Her niece is a retired nurse, and she talks things over with her and depends on her to drive
her to the hospital and pick her up, but otherwise she seems to take responsibility for dealing with the doctor, hospital, and health center herself. She speaks of calling the head of the health center and saying, "I'd like to come to your house when I get back." She anticipates being in the hospital for a week and then recuperating in the health center of her retirement community. After her last hip surgery she was in the health center a week before going back to her apartment; this time she thinks that her stay may be longer.

She looks forward to the relief from pain that she hopes to get as the result of the surgery and hopes she will feel more comfortable walking. She has not had much exercise lately except for walking the length of the hall to the elevator several times a day. She says, "...I haven't walked as much as I should since this pain and that loose kind of feeling that things are coming apart." When her hip stops hurting, she also hopes to eliminate the darvocet she takes six times a day for pain relief.

Margaret, eighty-five, broke her hip a year before our interviews while she was visiting a friend from nursing school days who lives in a town about two hours away.

Well, she has had problems that I haven't had [knocks on wood, laughs] with her legs, and she broke her hip one time, so she wasn't as free to move around and do things. And I was still driving
last year when I went up to see her, and I went out for groceries after I got there, and when I came back and went to carry the armload of groceries up her steps, they were just different steps than mine, and they were steep, and I fell backwards into her driveway. I fell down two steps and...was on my back in her driveway. The hospital...was just across the fence, and so they called the ambulance and took me to the hospital.

Although Margaret did not want to bother her busy family, the doctor insisted on notifying someone, and her daughter came the next day in time for the surgery. During Margaret’s ten-day hospital stay, her daughter visited and brought her friend in a wheelchair so the two could spend some time together in spite of the accident.

They gave me a lot of therapy, and Dr. Jensen came in to me...and he said, "Mrs. Davis, you’re a very strong lady." I said, "Strong lady—should I thank you for that compliment?" He said, "Yes, I think you should." I said, "What do you mean strong?" He said, "Well, I looked at your age on your chart, and you are going through this with such aplomb, I can’t believe. The nurses say you haven’t complained." I said to him, "I want you to know that these nurses in this...hospital are something else. They’re more like nurses when I was in training."

She went to her daughter’s house to recuperate. She reports that she "used a walker for several days, but...had no problem at all," and she has had no pain in her hip from the accident.

During the interviews Margaret mentions problems with allergies, her eyes, and unsteadiness on her feet, but
these are spoken of almost in passing or because the topic comes up in our conversation.

After I mention that one of my children has allergies, she says that her grandson has them and then, almost as an afterthought, mentions that she has them too.

Oh, sure, well, I have had allergies. I go to Dr. Shoemaker about every five or six weeks, and they give me a shot of an antibiotic, or I'll swell up. I have polyps in my nose. They swell up and stop my breathing through the nose, and I had them taken out surgically one time. I'd never go through that again. They just came right back again. So I have to have an antihistamine every once in a while.

She does not want to take antihistamine shots any more often than necessary, and her doctor agrees, so she waits as long as she can between shots.

Margaret had cataract surgery on both eyes four years ago; one eye is fine, but she has recently begun to have problems with the other one. During one interview she puts on dark glasses and admits that her eye is bothering her "a little bit." Although she says she is not in pain, the light from the window bothers her. She speaks of how the problem started:

Then the eye started swelling and hurting, and I went in to Dr. Simon, and he said that I needed to have a cornea transplant. The cornea had not kept in good shape, and he explained the whole thing, how the cells as you get older, the cells do not rejuvenate themselves and do not reproduce, and this is what happened. Not in this eye, this eye is
fine, but this one, and so in January, January 10, [two months earlier] he did a cornea transplant....It was outpatient. I came right home. In fact, I went out to my daughter's. She didn't want me to be alone for a few days, and we went in the next day, and he said it was very successful, and he was proud. My eye was swollen; I couldn't see.

Since then she has had problems with her eyelashes scratching her eye because the lower lid was curling in; a tuck in the lower lid seems to have solved this problem.

Margaret cannot always count on her legs to support her. At times she is amazingly—if alarmingly—agile, as when she dances around her living room to show me how some girls who had sneaked into the fraternity house where she was housemother had danced in their nightgowns. Another time she gets up from the couch to get coffee, takes a few steps and stumbles. She says, "Oops!" but doesn't fall, adding, "I have a bad knee. Sometimes I have to be careful."

Margaret recently had a serious fall in her yard. While out looking at spring flowers, she lost her balance and rolled down an embankment. She lay there for quite a while, hoping that someone would come down the street and spot her red blouse and come to help her, but no one passed by. After a while she was able to crawl to the porch and pull herself up, get into the house, and call for help. She was badly shaken and bruised, but an
examination at the hospital showed no broken bones.

It's getting a little better each day, but it's just been really bad, and at night after lying in bed, I usually have to get up once in the night or toward morning, and it's agony to get out of that bed.

Although she laughs occasionally as she tells the story, it is obvious that this has been a traumatic experience and that she has not yet recovered completely. She is somewhat chagrined at having fallen and says, "...my daughter scolded me, she said, 'Mother, you know you shouldn't go out without your cane or walker.'" I said, 'I know.'"

You know, I'm thankful I didn't break anything. You know, the night I went to the hospital, late afternoon it was on Wednesday, for the x-rays, I had the awfulest time getting up on the table, those old hard tables and turning and getting back down. I was so exhausted from having dressed and gotten in the car and going, and I was hoping--and I can't imagine this now--that, not that I would have any broken bones, but they would just admit me and take care of me. I wanted to go to bed and have a nurse come in and get me ready for the night and just completely not have to do anything for myself.

The whole experience was exhausting and challenged her usual independent spirit, but she continued to carry on her daily activities despite her temporary discomfort. Laura, eighty-two, is still quite active but has had and continues to have a range of problems--vision, hearing, mobility, and heart. She has defined most of the physical
problems she has as being "nuisance things" as opposed to "life-threatening things," but they nevertheless represent threats to her well-being. She speaks about "the surprises" involved in getting older:

The things that I worried about didn’t come to pass [laughs]. It’s the unexpected things I didn’t think about. The nuisance things. Not the big things, it’s the nuisance things, the things that get in your way when you want to do something. Like, for instance, I have some trouble with fibrositis. It’s sort of unpredictable. It’s just that—I can’t get under my cupboards out there. Or I want to go someplace, and I have to be sure to have enough aspirin in me so I can do that. But it’s a nagging sort of thing. Or vision—I’ve had two lens implants. As a result of that, I had vision—one eye sees that angle and the other one this one, and so they put a prism in there to bring it together, and that’s all right, except that when I try to look down, I don’t have depth perception, so I can’t tell how deep a step is, and so on like that. I think that will get straightened out later on. But, it’s that type of thing that’s not life threatening, they’re just a nuisance.

She has had two lens implants in the last two years, one more successful than the other. She was getting along fine when she suddenly lost her vision in one eye. She learned she had developed a cyst, which could not be removed, behind the macula of the eye. "But it’s getting better. I think it’s going to absorb maybe or do something. But it’s the things that get in your way."

Laura got her first hearing aid four years ago, and when she recently found that she was asking, "What did you
say?" again, she went back for the second one. Although she limits the amount of counseling she does now, she still identifies her need to hear with her work.

...I got my first one because with clients, particularly women, if they talked softly, that's the band where I've lost the hearing, you know. And I find my self saying, "What did you say?" and I thought, this will never do [laughs].

Laura's doctor has suggested that she adhere to a strict diet of low salt, low cholesterol, and no free sugar. She is well informed about what she should be eating, but finds following the diet difficult.

I've been on this, suppose to have been on this a long time, but Dr. James called me the other day after the test, and she said my blood sugar and cholesterol are way up again. My cholesterol, I brought it down with diet, but it was over 300, so I have to get it down.

Laura has had other physical problems. One that was once quite serious and has recently become less troublesome is severe muscle pain. At its worst it limited her ability to move around freely, challenging her image of herself as an active person.

For instance, I've had trouble with my back and my legs. I'm getting it together now, I'm getting over it, but I couldn't bend to get underneath the cupboard, I couldn't just get up--I've always just done things myself, lifted things, carried them around, fixed lamp cords....But that limitation in mobility, I didn't expect it to have the effect that
it has had on me anyway.

With the help of exercises designed for her by a therapist, she is getting mobility back and has less pain.

Laura has also had a number of "spells" that seem to involve her heart. The first one happened ten years ago and resulted in her being monitored in the hospital for ten days. This was diagnosed as a thyroid problem which caused irritation to the heart, and she began to take medication to control the situation. She had two more spells between then and the time we began interviewing and a fourth in the period between our sixth and seventh interviews.

...why it starts or anything else, I have no idea...I was coming out of the Breakfast Club, and I was talking, and I was really having a good time, because I was having more time lately, you know, to socialize a little bit, and I was talking to someone when we were coming out the door, and I get this funny feeling right here, right down here. It's not a pressure, it's not a pain, it's just a queer feeling. I almost automatically reached for my pulse, and I when I did, I realized it was going like mad. So one of my friends came in here with me, and I sat down. I thought it would stabilize maybe, because almost every time I've gone to the hospital it has stabilized by the time that I got there.

She waited for about three-quarters of an hour and called the nurse who checked her pulse--"...it was going about 134 and fluttering"--and called the doctor. She was
carried out through the lobby of her apartment building on a stretcher, hooked up to oxygen and an IV. She felt "very conspicuous" and called to a friend who was in the lobby to tell her she was all right. Her condition stabilized shortly after she got to the hospital, and she was home and resting four hours later. She still does not know what causes the problem but states that while "not life threatening, it looks terrible when I go out that way." By the next week Laura has had another "spell," more testing, and no indication of what is wrong.

Laura continues to explore ways of thinking about the process of aging that she is going through:

When I was talking about compensation, I didn't realize how important that was until you experience some of this yourself, you know. I would never have thought that the immobility would effect me the way it did. You think you can sit in a chair and go on and function anyway. I don't know, maybe it wouldn't affect somebody else, but it affected me. It was almost as if saying, now you're a hundred years old, you can't do anything, and if that had continued, I would have had to deal with that sooner or later, you know, one way or another, so..but you learn as you go along.

Disability and Death

All of the women have thought about their own deaths, and although no one indicates any fear of death, all indicate a reluctance to linger in a disabled state.
Emily, eighty-four, alluded to her death only once, when she was telling me how helpful family and friends are to her. "I’m very fortunate, I’m very fortunate. I don’t want anyone to ever feel bad after I’m gone that they didn’t do what they were suppose to do because they did, and more too."

During our first interview Anne, eighty-four, tells of making decisions about the services which will follow her death. She speaks in the context of telling me about the pastor who serves the retirement community where she lives.

Oh, goodness....he can call everybody by name, and I’ve talked to him about what happens when I die here. What are the procedures, how you get cremation, and how you do that, and what my children do, and he says, "Well, as long as you’re a resident here, I think there ought to be a short memorial service in our chapel." I said, "I don’t know that many people." But he said, "You belong here, so there ought to be that, then take your ashes back to [your hometown], and your children can have a service in your church." He was very kind, I thought, to take the time to come in and talk to me about it, so that I can make my wishes known to my children before the day arrives.

Laura, eighty-two, also speaks of the necessity of dealing with disability and death as one ages:

I think everybody, at least in their eighties and probably in their seventies too, do not want to be helpless. We do not want to have to be in a nursing home which [unclear] very sterile environment, and I know here when somebody has died suddenly, people
sort of feel relieved for them. It’s that sort of thing, and that isn’t what I thought, you know, that wasn’t—and you seeing other people who are friends deteriorate and things like that, that was academic as far as I was concerned, until I really began to see it happen to people at my age and even younger, but so you have to, sort of have to come to terms with that. But then all of your life, you’ve come to terms with something, you know, and so it’s not life threatening, but it’s threatening, at least to your psychological selves.

Laura says that the way she thinks about death now is different from the way she thought about it when she was fifty. "I was more afraid of death then, you know. When my grandmother died, it was death itself. Death doesn’t bother me now; it’s what comes between now and death [laughs]. That’s the difference." Her reaction when she was rushed to the hospital supports this belief.

Yes, well, after you have this several times, you know, you sort of know what to expect, and I know, it’s frightening the first time, and they had me at Fairmont [Hospital], they had the heart monitor on me, but as soon as they said heart, I told Dr. James I was greatly relieved, and she looked at me so funny, and I said, "I would much rather have a heart attack and go quickly than have something else happen and have to drag it on." That’s the way I want to die [laughs].

As we are having coffee and a snack on her holiday china on the January 11, Catherine, eighty-seven, says, "On Saturday I’m going to put my Christmas plates away. I think even the twelve days of Christmas is past." I comment that I am still using my Christmas cups also, and
she replies:

Well, you know, I don’t mean this in any teary, sad way, but every time I put things away, I think, "Well, I wonder [laughs] if I’ll be around to use them again?" so there is a kind of a--oh, I don’t know--a sense of nostalgia or something about putting things away [laughs].

When I ask Catherine if life in her eighties is different than she had anticipated, in her fifties and sixties, that it would be, she says she does not think she thought much about it in her sixties, then she adds:

But still, yes, I can still say at that time, I think I was so busy and consumed with what I was doing then that maybe I wasn’t thinking too far ahead, which maybe doesn’t sound very smart, but I can’t remember--and I can’t remember whether it was even crossing my head as to whether I was going to live to a rather advanced age or not. I don’t think that during the major part of my life, I’ve ever been consumed with any anxiety about death. I can’t ever recall that I have been, and I certainly don’t have any anxiety about it now. I think the only thing, and I suppose you could say everybody just, if you had any choice in the matter, you’d just terminate life quickly [laughs]. That is more than just the simple thing that it’s human I suppose that you would like not to have to endure suffering, as it were, but I think as time goes on, especially, you think about it, you think, you’ve seen by that time, too many examples of where that, if you want to use the word, burden--there must be a better word than that--not only the physical burden, the time consuming burden, but a financial burden to your family, and it just doesn’t seem any point to it really. There’s nothing to be gained from it, and I think that’s one of the reasons why you would hope you wouldn’t be a, have to experience some long terminal illness, particularly if you’re mentally affected by it. I don’t, even now, I don’t dwell on that, but I think that’s a thing that probably
many people would feel....

She goes on to talk about her understanding that euthanasia is more widely accepted in Sweden than it is in the United States and her assumption that it will become more acceptable here. She sees a dilemma in the situation, however, as she tells of a case she has heard about in which a family considered removing life support from a woman in a coma who was believed to be beyond recovery:

...and I don’t remember what the length of time was, but sometime after that, she regained consciousness, and the case was discussed, because it indicated that at least such decisions should not be made quickly, so I think it’s a very complicated kind of thing....

Margaret, eighty-five, speaks often, in several different contexts, about her wish to die in her sleep and not linger in a disabled state. She tells of the mother of friends from church who had been in a nursing home for ten years, blind, deaf, and unable to walk.

We went to see her the other day—we have a parish care committee who goes to see people in nursing homes—and I felt so sorry. I looked at her, and you know, what kind of a life is she living? She can’t hear, she can’t see, and she’s having total care, and I just, every once in awhile somebody in my acquaintanceship will go to sleep and not wake up in the morning, and I pray that will happen to me. Yes, that’s the wonderful thing about just going to sleep and not waking up again.
This attitude is also evident in her comments to her doctor, whose mother had died in her sleep:

I wrote him a letter...I dearly love him, he's so nice, and I said, "...I know you'll miss your mother, and this is a shock to have her go this way, but if we all had our preference, this is what we would do, just go to sleep and not wake up."

About herself she said, "...I only dread coming to the place where I can't get around myself or something like that, and I hope and pray that never happens..." In talking about the fact that she would never want to go to live with her daughter, she said, "...I don't want to be that kind of a burden on them. I'll go on as long as I can, and maybe I'll go to sleep some night and not wake up. That's my preference."

Although Julia, eighty-five, spoke very little about death, it is obvious that she made decisions based on the kind of life and death she wanted to have. She chose to have hip surgery for the second time, a procedure with certain risks, given her age, instead of continuing with the pain and lack of comfortable mobility that she currently had. She also asked, during our fifth interview, "Do you think you have gotten enough from me?" and "What more do you want to get from me?" in a way that made me think she was taking into consideration the fact that she might not be able to continue the interviews
after her surgery.

Although the surgery was not as successful as she had hoped it would be, and the hip had to be held in place with straps worn over her clothing, Julia was no longer in pain and expressed no regrets at having had the operation. As she had planned, she went from the hospital to the health center of the retirement community in which she lived. On my first visit with her in the health center (during which I did not interview), she said with a laugh, "Better finish these interviews while you can." I may have looked surprised because she added, "You might as well laugh about it."

When I visited the next week, she seemed to be doing better than before the surgery. She talked about what she was reading, and we took a walk down the hall to the desk and back. Her sense of humor and plans for the future were evident as she told me that she hoped to go back to her apartment that weekend at least long enough to get some more clothes and send the ones she had with her to the cleaners. Some women had commented that she wore the same outfits all the time, and she said with a chuckle, "They don’t have much to do or think about, so they pay attention to things like that." We made plans to start taping again when I visited the next week.
Julia's warning about the interviews proved to be correct, and when her niece visited two days later, Julia could hardly breathe. Her niece insisted on getting oxygen for her immediately, in spite of staff assurances that she only had a cold, and took her to a hospital emergency room. She was eventually admitted, and early the next morning she became worse. She was put on a respirator, but she was not responsive. Julia had prepared a living will, and when her family brought it to the hospital, the respirator was turned off. She died soon afterward.

Conclusion

These six women find ways to deal with their physical condition; they do what they can to maintain and improve their health, and they try to work around situations which cannot be changed. They are realistic about the physical impairments the ninth decade may bring, fearing not death, but only severe disability. Statistically each can expect to have some years of independent and dependent living ahead,¹ and each looks for ways to compensate for physical problems so that she can continue to be active and independent as long as possible.
NOTE:

1. Even at age ninety-two, a woman who is independent in activities of daily living can expect to live 5.7 more years (see Table 3 [Rogers, Rogers, and Belanger 1989] below).

### TABLE 3

SEX-SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS OF REMAINING LIFE FOR INDIVIDUALS AGE 70 AND OVER: TWO FUNCTIONAL STATUSES, UNITED STATES, 1984

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age x</th>
<th>Total remaining years</th>
<th>Remaining independent years</th>
<th>Remaining dependent years</th>
<th>Total remaining years</th>
<th>Remaining independent years</th>
<th>Remaining dependent years</th>
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<tr>
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<td>B. Dependent at age x</td>
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<td>Remaining independent years</td>
<td>Remaining dependent years</td>
<td></td>
<td>Remaining independent years</td>
<td>Remaining dependent years</td>
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<td>2.0 (18%)</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>3.9 (60%)</td>
<td>4.0 (40%)</td>
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<td>9.1</td>
<td>3.3 (58)</td>
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<td>2.0 (22)</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>4.3 (53)</td>
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**II. Females**

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*Based on 7 ADLs. Percentages may vary due to rounding.
CHAPTER VI
INDEPENDENCE

Introduction

Independence is a highly-valued trait in the United States, and its value does not diminish for these women in their eighties. Used in the sense that Clark and Anderson (1967:177) use it, meaning "the ability to provide for one's own needs," independence is a relative term; no one in society is completely independent, but all want to be able to carry on basic life tasks without help. If the time comes in old age that independence must be limited, it becomes important to be able to secure help without losing self-respect. Realistically, no one reaches her ninth decade without the need to make some changes in her way of life, and few changes have the impact of those that involve independence. Driving and housing, two topics involving issues of independence, are important issues for each of the six women. As these women talk about their lives, they show the diligence with which they strive to maintain their independence, the thoughtfulness with which they introduce changes which
modify independence, and the skill they use continue to manage their lives as competent adults in the face of the challenges of age.

Driving

For those who drive, and all of these women did or still do, giving up driving is a strong marker of old age. These women have watched others go through the experience, have anticipated it for themselves, and eventually have either modified their driving habits or have given up driving.

Julia, at eighty-five, has not driven for about six months, but she has ordered her new license plates by mail and expects them to arrive soon. She has had the car winterized, and her niece's husband has agreed to "drive it enough to keep it going." She holds out some hope that she will be able to drive after her hip surgery. "If I can drive, I can go over to Northmont [the nearby shopping center] and take care of what I need, but we'll see."

For the time being she depends on others for help. Her neighbor across the hall offers to pick up groceries for her when she shops, and her niece frequently provides transportation. She appreciates her niece's help, but states, "I don't want to be too demanding of Connie..." She shows considerable success in broadening her transportation network. When she consistently had
difficulty getting a taxi to pick her up at the dentist within a reasonable period of time after her appointment, her dentist offered a solution:

"They’re so busy. He’s a very good dentist, and so he wants to put my appointments at 3:30 or 4:00, and then he can bring me home, which is a responsibility that he doesn’t really have, but he said, "I can take you home. I’ll just take you home on the way home."

Twice she has been able to set up appointments following our interviews (although one was cancelled), and thus I was available to drive her to the dentist. It is by means such as these that she is able to continue essential activities without driving.

Anne, at eighty-four, gave up driving some time before she moved to the retirement home where she lives now.

When I gave up driving, that kind of limited living in an—anywhere where you can try to be independent. But after I got to be eighty, I thought, it just isn’t fair to everybody else, because if I had an accident, people would say, "Why is that old lady driving a car anyway?" so I gave up driving.

Later she added:

...that’s the end—of, you know, independent living, because just to have somebody buy my groceries, or take me to church or take you anywhere, you know, you have to depend on someone else.
When she was living in an apartment complex in another state, she had found an adequate solution to her transportation problem.

Well, I was very fortunate. Someplace along the line, I picked up a young woman who had—she had belonged to a cleaning service, and I had written them and said, "You have an outstanding worker in this young woman. She cares about the person's things, she wants them to look nice, she is just more than just an employee." It wasn't long until after that, her, the business dissolved or something, so she began to work for me one day a week, and she could drive my car, she could take me to the doctor, she could just, you know, it meant a lot.

Although she could not consider driving now because of the condition of her health, Anne misses the freedom of having a car at her disposal. Her severe arthritis prevents her from using the bus service that the retirement community provides, so most of the time she is restricted to her building and the area around it, and she needs a wheelchair to navigate that area. And as she says, "A wheelchair requires a pusher." She is grateful to her son and daughter-in-law, who live in a nearby town and take her to doctor and dentist appointments and for weekend visits to their home. She looks forward eagerly to visits from her "California son" who is retired and is free when he visits to spend time driving around with her. She always has a list of errands she hopes to take care
of when he comes.

Anne long ago accepted the fact that because of her physical impairments, she is unable to drive, and she no longer even considers the possibility. Now what she longs for is a readily available driver.

Catherine, at eighty-seven, is still driving, although she has modified her driving habits in recent years. She feels comfortable driving during the day, especially if she is familiar with the trip and her destination is not too far away. At other times she relies on friends. She still drives each Friday to get her hair done in a town a few miles away, saying that it may seem silly, "but the person to whom I go, I like very much, so unless the weather is bad, I still do it, and some times in the year it's a nice little ride."

She tries to establish a personal relationship with any service person she has to deal with regularly, and she has been quite successful in this regard with her car mechanic. Tony, who runs a nearby service station, sees to it that her car is well-maintained.

...after my husband died, very good friends who evidently had gone to him for years and knew about him, took me over, and introduced me to him, told him the situation. Well, I soon learned that he's highly regarded as an auto mechanic. He has given me the most marvelous service. I buy all my gasoline there even though I pay one or two or more cents more for the gallon, but Mark [her son] says
it's worth it to have somebody like that.

Later she added:

About three times over the years, some little thing will happen, and I can't get the car started. He'll come instantly and not charge me for it. It's just really wonderful service, so I'm very grateful for something like that.

Emily, who is eighty-four, still keeps her car and drives occasionally, but usually is happy to have a ride with family or friends.

I don't drive much anymore. I have no sense of direction. [LH: Is that right?] I can go around the square, and I don't know when I get around the square which way to go.

She speaks of how much she appreciates the fact that friends are willing to drive her, especially at night, adding, "Everything looks different to me at night." One friend and her husband recently picked her up for an evening of bridge and dinner afterward.

...she and her husband have been so nice to me. They pick me up and take me places and bring me home which is quite a help, otherwise I'd be marooned at night. They are the ones that drove the other night when the snow storm [hit]. [LH: That is nice to have some help with transportation.] I wouldn't go if I had to drive. I don't think a woman by herself is safe out by herself anymore.

Later, however, she says:
I’m so glad I can drive. I feel sorry for these older women who don’t drive. At least with the car sitting there, I know I can go if I want to. [LH: Do you do very much driving?] No, not a lot. [LH: It’s nice to have it when you want it.] I don’t like to be dependent.

She drives to a grocery in a nearby shopping center, or goes with her daughter when she shops. Occasionally she drives to a cafeteria in the same shopping center.

Ordinarily her daughter picks her up for the drive to the restaurant, but one morning she realized that her daughter was going later than usual, and if she waited to go with her, she would be late for her appointment with me at the restaurant. She did not have my telephone number at home, so she decided to drive herself.

Now this morning, I thought, "Now what do I do? I can’t call her to tell her I’m going to be late, and if I go with Carol..." And I thought, "Well, why don’t you drive yourself?" Now, you know, you can get so you’re too dependent.

Emily seems comfortable with the driving situation which has evolved. She is pleased when someone else is available to do the driving, but she likes knowing that she can, under certain conditions, choose to drive.

Laura, who is eighty-two, drives frequently and continues to drive long distances if she is in familiar territory. She also arranges for all car maintenance and repair.
She tells about having car trouble shortly before Christmas.

Well, what happened was in that eighteen below weather—it just stopped running, rather it didn’t start. We tried to jump start it, and it wouldn’t do it. So, AAA wouldn’t come because I was at home. They would only get people who were out someplace else. And so I couldn’t get anybody else to tow, so I had to wait until the Wednesday after Christmas and AAA came then, and then I made an appointment with the Honda place. And they took it down and I got it back Thursday [laughs]. And I hadn’t mailed some packages, cards, [laughs] because I put it off until the last minute. So that was bad, but it gave me a quiet Christmas. I had a good time around here.

About eight months earlier she had driven from Central Ohio to Virginia to clean out her family home and put it up for sale when her half brother, who is fourteen years younger but not as healthy as she, was no longer able to live there.

Well, I drove down there and drove back. In fact, I did all that. I left here on Saturday and drove down to Lexington, met my two cousins at a motel there, and we spent the night. Then Saturday, Sunday, they stayed there [at the house in Virginia] Saturday, Sunday, I mean, Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, and I stayed on Wednesday, Thursday, and I left Friday morning and came back, drove back. So we got a lot done.

She wants to drive down again to check on her brother’s health, but she is waiting for her own health to stabilize.
They're still trying to get my medication firmed up about this heart [unclear] I have. It isn't anything life-threatening; still I can't go down there while they're trying to do this, and so, and then I don't know what the doctor's going to say about my driving down there, but I've always driven down. I've been driving down there for fifty years. It's an easy drive. There isn't any reason why I can--I couldn't do it. But anyway, we'll see.

Margaret, who is eighty-five, has given up driving--sometimes she says a year ago and sometimes two years ago. She describes one of the accidents which led her to quit driving:

I had this little thing down at the parking lot. I was in my car with my groceries and ready to leave, and it was diagonal parking, and I looked carefully around, and I started to back out, and this fellow came around the corner. I don't know yet where he came from, and I backed into him, didn't hurt him much, but nevertheless, my insurance went up then the next time.

In each interview we have, she mentions in some way the fact that she has given up driving.

I have not resented getting old except sometimes when I can't--well, for instance, when I gave up driving, that was a big trauma in my life. [LH: How old were you then?] Well, I gave up about two years ago, eighty-three, and I did it because I came to the conclusion I was no longer--had the reflexes and the quickness of thinking and making decisions and so much traffic and all. Besides that, I had a couple little fender benders down in the parking lot, which I swear were not my fault [laughs].
Finally, remembering old people in previous generations who had worried the family with their driving, she decided to give it up before she had further problems.

But I thought no, I don’t want to endanger somebody else’s life, and I don’t want to hurt myself, and now’s the time to do it. And, you know, my family were so relieved, I know [laughs]. So I just sold my car, and I quit driving.

Although this has obviously been a difficult decision for her, she has managed to adjust to it.

Of course, my daughter and her husband live not far from here, and when I have to go to the doctor, they take me, and if I have to go shopping, like yesterday, my grandson shopped for me. You can do it. You can do it. I just feel better. My insurance was very expensive for me.

She has friends who pick her up for church each Sunday, and the director of the senior citizens center calls each Thursday to see if she wants to go shopping that afternoon with a group from the center.

For Margaret the need to stop driving seems to have coincided with a need to slow down in other ways. She is aware of many activities sponsored by her church, the small college in her town, and the senior citizens center and knows that she could have transportation if she requested it, but she finds she can no longer be as active as she once was.
At one time, I used to be a bridge player. I loved to play bridge, and I played bridge every Friday afternoon at the Townsend House, but I don’t do that anymore. Since I gave up driving, I can’t do what I used to, and I don’t even feel up to it sometimes....

During their ninth decade these six women either stopped driving or modified their driving. This change, however, involves more than giving up a valued activity; it involves devising new strategies for accomplishing with the help of others what was once possible by oneself. While there are real and painful losses involved, these women work at finding substitutes for driving that fit their health and energy levels and allow them to maintain, to the extent that they are able, the activities in which they are interested.

Housing

One of these six women has lived in the same house for sixty years; all the rest have changed housing arrangements in their later years—though not necessarily during their eighties. Their reasons for making a change include getting away from the care of a house and yard, making one’s own choice while able, and being forced by disability. Each is living in a housing situation which meets her needs at present, but several are concerned about what will happen if the time comes that they cannot manage where they are now.
Julia, eighty-five, has been living in a one bedroom apartment in a retirement community for almost six years. She has problems with dates, twice stating the date that she moved in as thirty years earlier, but the six-year period that she gives fits in with other information she has given. She applied for residency the year after her husband died, but did not move in for seven years. She speaks of the decision to move.

I talked to my niece, and I said, "They have an apartment for me over at Chatham Woods, shall I take it or shall I stay on in the apartment I’m in?" which was on two floors, and I thought of moving to another apartment which would be on one floor and had an elevator, but, oh, Connie said, "Go to Chatham Woods," and I think she was realizing that her own mother, my sister, was—well, that she was going to have to take care of her, and she is now, and Claire is very confused.

She moved to a retirement community which is a few miles from her niece’s home.

...they offered me first an apartment on the first floor, and Mr. Stephens took me to look at it, and I looked out the window, and I realized that I had to, you know, [turns her head sideways] this way to see the sky, and I said, "I never could live where I could not see the sky." So then he put me on the eighth floor so I can see the sky.

When I comment on the attractiveness of the building, she tells me with a chuckle, "Yes, it’s the Cadillac of the--I was told that after I came up here."
The apartment, to which she brought furniture and mementos from her former home, has a closet-sized kitchenette, a bedroom, and a bathroom, has quite a home-like feeling. The one institutional aspect that I notice is that announcements are made over a speaker into the apartment to announce such things as the beginning of an exercise class or the arrival of a visitor for someone who is not in his or her apartment. Her apartment is at the far end of the hall away from the elevator, giving her a long walk each time she wants to go downstairs.

Well, I hope I can manage. I hope I can stay up here instead of going over to the health center, but Dr. Lucas offered me a room downstairs on the second floor next to the dining room, next to the lobby of the dining room, but it doesn’t have some of the things that this has, and I decided I’d stay here. So I really walk a long walk to the elevator, but maybe that’s very good, because I don’t walk very much except to the elevator and back. I go down several times a day.

The retirement community has dining and meeting facilities that are available to residents who reserve them for guests and organizations. Julia tells of making arrangements to entertain her PEO group.

Well, yes, you just, in September you get in and make your arrangement, because it’s necessary, because they double up other people sometimes. I just make the appointment and usually I have my meeting in March or April, so then I go in a couple weeks before and choose the menu and I get the number that are going to be there, and we have a
very nice suite down on the second or third floor which is a nice place to meet just, well, to gather there before we go up, down to the dining room, and then we go across to the parlor in Landis Hall and have our meetings.

This arrangement allows her, with little investment of energy and in spite of restricted living quarters, to continue to be a full participant in an activity which has been meaningful to her throughout her adult years.

Margaret, eighty-five, lives in a college town in a three-story house owned by her daughter. When her daughter re-married ten years ago and moved into her new husband's house, she chose not to sell her old house. Margaret, retired from being a housemother for a fraternity at Monroe College, moved in "at very low rent." Her first-floor quarters consist of a living room, kitchen, eating area, bedroom, and bathroom. Her grandson, a teacher, who is waiting for his new house to be built, lives on the second floor; a former student at the nearby college, who is in and out of town, rents the third floor.

She has seldom had problems with the college students who have rented the upstairs and is comfortable being assertive in her role as landlord-in-residence. She lets tenants know what she expects and deals straightforwardly with differences of opinion. She laughed as she told of
a college student whose girlfriend began staying overnight.

So I called him in, and I said, "Do you have a girlfriend that is staying up there with you at night?" and he said, "Yes," and I said, "Well, I've seen a girl coming out in the mornings." He said, "Do you object to that?" and I said, "Yes, I do. We live in a nice neighborhood here, and there are young people around, and I don't want that in this house." He said, "But it's my apartment," and I said, "But it's my home." So he said, "Well, then I'll move out." So he said, "Okay, you do that" and he did [laughs].

Margaret ordinarily does her own laundry using the washer and dryer in the basement and manages the housework with occasional help from a cleaning woman. When I visit soon after she has had a serious fall, she has arranged for some help.

...I have a big washer and dryer in the basement and I'm thinking about this now, I'm having a cleaning woman, that's who I was talking to, she's coming tomorrow to clean, and I guess I can get her to put, to run a load through. I have her, whenever she's, she has such a full schedule, and I asked her to come this week if she could, so she'll be here tomorrow. [LH: That will be a help.] Oh, yes. It's nice, and she's such a good person to clean, and does it cheerfully and fast, and I enjoy talking to her and being around her.

She knows her grandson would be willing to help with the laundry, as would her daughter, so she does not anticipate a problem. Her daughter invited her to stay at her house while she recovered from the fall, but Margaret, always
wary of infringing on her daughter's freedom and feeling more comfortable in her own home, declined.

She mentions that her daughter's concern with her diet has led her to participate in Meals on Wheels.

This is why Dorothy wants me to have Meals on Wheels. I like to cook, and I'm a good cook, but she thinks when you're by yourself, you know, that you snack too much, and you don't cook good meals for you. We have such a wonderful set-up here. They do it down at the Methodist Church, although it has no connection with the church as such. But I get meals Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the lady who is in charge is just wonderful, and she plans good nourishing meals. And now you pay what you can pay or what you want to pay, and they'll bring me about four or five meals, and I write them a check for ten dollars and so that, they figure an average of two dollars a meal. You couldn't buy the groceries for that, and I don't drive anymore, so it's really a very, very wonderful thing.

Margaret is happy with her present living situation. "I love this house. This is my daughter's house that I live in, and I'm comfortable here, you know. So life has been very good to me." However, she is concerned about the future.

I'm faced with this everyday, I think about how long am I going to be able to get along by myself. My legs are not behaving very well, and I'm, I've almost fallen several times in the house, so I kind of watch and keep my cane with me. [LH: You probably should use it all the time...] I probably should. I probably should. I got up in the night last night to go to the bathroom, and I--my bed's close to the bathroom door--and I almost went into the bathroom, you know, plunging in, and everything. You know, you just wonder how long you can carry on. I sure
don't want to go to a rest home or a place like that.

She does not want to live with her children either. When I ask her if she would like to live with her daughter, who lives nearby, her response is firm.

Oh, I wouldn't live with my daughter, no. Now the reason is, I don't want to infringe on their life, their lifestyle. They're busy people, and you see my son-in-law is sixty-seven years old, and Dorothy is sixty-four, and I just, I would just spoil things for them. That's the way I feel. I don't want to be that kind of a burden on them. I'll go on as long as I can, and maybe I'll go to sleep some night and not wake up. That's my preference.

One of her sons, who lives in Montana, suggested a few years ago that she move to a retirement home built by a friend of his. She would be near him, and he would look after her.

Well, Montana, goodness sakes, I have too much family around here, and within visiting distance, and I just couldn't do it. So I wrote and thanked him, but--and then my other son is about ready to retire, and they don't know where they're going to be, but, Linda, as much as I love them and as kind and good as they are to me, I don't want to live with any of them. I don't want to do that. That's how people used to do years ago, and nothing was thought about it because there weren't any other situations to get into, but I don't want to do that.

She gives much thought to her current living situation and to how she will manage as she gets older.
... I have two friends this past month who have gone
to a retirement home. They had, the one had an
automobile accident and went down in a ditch going
into the IGA....She's gone to a retirement home now.
A lovely place, but it costs fifty, sixty dollars
a day. Just think of that! You'd have to have a
lot of money. So, you know, we all come to this if
we live long enough. But I think it's sad when
people can't accept it, because it's just something
that happens to everybody if you live long enough.

Yet, although she knows of at least two church-affiliated
retirement communities which seem appealing, she does not
think she could afford that type of housing.

...I visited there [a church retirement community
in another part of the state] when I was still
[unclear] a couple times, and I thought that was
just lovely. I don't have money, Linda, so I don't
know what I'll do. I really don't have very much
income, and those places are so expensive. I
visited some friends a couple weeks ago that are
over at Sunnyglen [retirement housing in a nearby
town], a new place, not a nursing home, it's a
retirement home, and it's just lovely, but it's
fifty dollars a day [laughs].

She thinks frequently about her own housing situation
and worries about all the old people who do not have the
money to afford expensive housing.

...I have several friends, Linda, that are like my
age or maybe a little younger, and they're living
like I am from day to day, and you wonder how long
they're going to be able to be alone and to live
this way. You know you just...[laughs] I have a
real good friend...and she's a lovely person that
belongs to my church. I told her the other day, I
called her and I said, "I had a dream about you the
other night," and she said, "What did you dream?"
I said, "I dreamed that I was moving in with you,
and we were going to live together." She says, "Come anytime." [laughs] The reason I dreamed that, I know, was because I have thought many times about why people, older people, don't do this. Each one in their frailties and so forth, could help the other, and you know, of course, you know, it's a matter economics and all sorts of things.

She has been thinking about this problem for a long time, as this story from twenty years ago shows.

When I was at Union [the college at which she was a dormitory housemother], I used to tell the housemothers that after I was through [there], I was going to buy a big house some place, and it would be a retirement home for housemothers. And they all thought that would be wonderful. And I said, "You cannot come to dinner in your bathrobes. You've got to dress when you come to dinner, and you have to keep yourself clean and neat and so forth." They'd laugh and say, "We'll do that, Margaret, we'll do that." [laughs] [LH: Well, now that's a good idea.] Oh, I wish I'd have had the money to do it [laughs].

Catherine, eighty-seven, lives in the same house she has lived in for the last sixty years, since shortly after she came to the Midwest as a bride. She and her husband raised two sons in this house, and it is full of memories for her. She hopes to be able to remain here, and her comment shows that she has given the subject considerable thought.

...then as time goes, went on, and friends, some maybe a little older, but maybe not in all cases, moved from their homes and sell their homes and go to retirement centers, you know. They'd keep asking me when I was going to do this. That goes on
perennially, and I suppose a lot of things enter into that. I’ve lived long enough now to observe a lot of things, and my observation is that when maybe single women who have been professional women who maybe never have had a home in a sense of what I call a home, retire and in a few years decide to do that, they’re still younger than I am now, and it’s not like having had a home with a lot of family association or anything of that kind, and they seem to be very happy in that change and way of life...

She tells of a friend a few years younger than she who moved into a retirement home and developed a heart condition as a result of the stress of the move, and continues:

I know several cases where people have gone through the ordeal of moving and very soon afterwards have died, because I think that maybe they really down within them, it was so traumatic for them. And I think that there are all the time more and more things being devised to help people stay in their own homes, and people are happier there. I do realize that my decision at my age, staying here, that there are risks involved, and I accept that.

In order to stay in her house Catherine has to solve the inevitable problems of maintaining an old house, which included during the three-month period of our interviews problems with old plumbing, the necessity to re-wire the telephones to accommodate the use of Life Call (a medical and emergency alert system), and a major furnace failure made more serious by the fact that replacement parts were no longer available. A friend, trying to be helpful, called a furnace company representative, who said her
furnace could not be fixed, but Catherine did not give up.

Well, anyway, I thought now, what’ll I do? Then it just came to me rather clearly the Marlow Company had put that furnace in originally, and I called them, and ultimately talked to Tom Marlow who is the grandson of the man who founded the Marlow Company, and he confirmed indeed that company had been in business since 1924. And he came to see me, came twice and was so empathetic, I’ll put it that way, to my concerns. And I acknowledged that were I thirty years younger, I really should put a new furnace in, you know, but at my age, it wasn’t--well, I don’t want to be dishonest, the expense was a major thing, but then, getting it out, you know, would just be horrendous, and those kind of upheavals are very discombobulating, so to speak, and he gave a lot of thought to it, I think, and in the end, said he thought they had somebody who could, what it really amounted to is building, I’m going to use that word, or constructing a kind of converter that could be used, so that the old furnace would work....

More routine situations have to be handled too. A friend from church who is "a wonderful gardener" comes to re-pot a plant and asks if he can be of help.

He said, "Is there anything else I can do?" I said, "Well, you know, I’ve been saying for quite some time it wasn’t safe for any man to enter this door because there would be something I’d ask him to do," and my hall light bulb had burned out, and I don’t climb up on stools and things anymore to do things. I don’t think that’s a sensible thing to do when you’re alone, and he’s a tall man, so he could just do it standing there in the hall. And then he said, "Now is there anything you need at the grocery store, because I’ll be glad to get it if you do."

She got Life Call about half way through the period of time in which we were doing the interviews. There was
no particular incident that caused her to get it, but she thought that living alone six hundred miles from the nearest family member, she would feel more secure with a system like this. She had talked to both of her sons about it, and they thought it was a good idea.

Well, you see this has a little button here, and I can pull that button--It's good for me to be telling you to see if I know--then that starts a beeping going and gets in touch of the headquarters of this, and--and they report it instantaneously whether it would be a call for medical help or fire or police. So I hope it works. I don't want it, you know, you don't dare try it out, because I might be calling everybody in town here to see if it works.

From time to time she hires someone to help her. When she was trying to get her house ready for a Christmas luncheon that she was hosting for a group she belongs to, she borrowed the services of a neighbor's handyman for a day and had another man coming to help for part of a day.

Catherine seems to be managing well in her house, and her desire to stay there seems reasonable under present circumstances.

Laura, eighty-two, chose a different housing situation but is equally convinced that her choice is the right one for the kind of independence she is seeking. When she made the decision that she wanted to move into a retirement community, she was living in a house owned by a friend.
I had an apartment in the upstairs of a home of friends of mine—a couple who had a son. And then, they both died and I took over the house—I didn't own it, but I took it over from the son. Then his son wanted to come to the university, and so I took him in, and he went to the university and I stayed—I was going to stay until he graduated, but I decided—they kept raising the prices down here, and I decided I wasn't going to be able to afford it pretty soon, so I left before he graduated. So that's the way that worked.

She spent three years deciding on her new location, looking at every available situation and almost choosing a different community before she decided on the one where she has been living for seven-and-a-half years. Location was a major deciding point. She chose a community that was not too far from the downtown area of the city, near a small shopping center, and close to the university where she used to work.

....I came down here and I thought I might get lonely, bored, but the reason I came was because I don't really have any family except a half brother in Virginia, who isn't very well, and I wanted to make my choice of where I was going to be before somebody else had to make it for me and where I had a sense of security. If I had to go to a nursing home, I'd be familiar with where it was. And I'd be with people I knew. So I decided to do that before somebody had to make the decision.

The community she chose has living areas that range from independent living through various levels of care including a health center. Her building has a lounge and a receptionist but otherwise looks like any other
apartment building. There are activities available for those who wish to participate, and health care is accessible, including a nurse who is present each afternoon.

Laura has a one-bedroom apartment with a living room/dining room, small kitchen, and bath. She had roomy cabinets built into the hall and uses the extra, out-of-apartment storage space available to her, but still finds it difficult to find space for all the personal and professional possessions she would like to keep.

She usually cooks for herself or goes out to eat, but if she chooses to she can buy a meal ticket and join others in the community in the dining room of another building. Although cleaning and laundry services are not included in the rent, she can arrange to purchase these services easily when she needs them. Household repairs are also easy to arrange.

When I ask her if there is a downside to living in this type of community, her reservations are minor.

It’s like a small town. I grew up in a small town, so I know how to live in a small town, but it’s like that. Everybody knows everybody else’s business.... So some politics get played in the resident organizations. But it’s very much like you lived outside....I don’t know. This is a very friendly place. There’s a difference of opinion every so often, and they get into some squabbles and so on like that, but the undergirding of being friendly and being of a family is there all the time. You
don't have that feeling that somebody's going to scoot off and be malicious or do something else. So I think it's good. I think it's the best move I ever made.

She is a friendly, sociable person and adjusted quickly to the move.

I've been here about seven and a half years. Well, that's given me ample time to--this is home as far as I'm concerned. But it didn't take me long. I went down, drove down, to Virginia, oh, about three months after I moved down here and coming back, I was thinking about things, and I was thinking about home and I was thinking about this, and I thought, "Aha, I'm over the hump [laughs]. I'm over the hump."

Emily, eighty-four, lives alone in a one-bedroom, one floor apartment in a suburban neighborhood. It is attached to three other apartments, and each apartment has a covered carport in back. It is a few blocks from a shopping center which has, among other shops, a grocery, a drugstore, a department store, and several small restaurants, including a cafeteria which is especially popular with retired people. As is characteristic of her, she defines her need for space in terms of family.

Yes, I only have one bedroom, which I miss the second bedroom, but when my son and his wife come, my grandson thank goodness, has a big house. Now Carol has a big house, but when Lisa and her two children come, that takes care of her house, and Erik has a third floor that has two bedrooms and a bath.
She moved to this apartment from a larger home in a nearby town after her husband died. The house and yard had become too much to handle.

We had a house up on the hill and a lot of trees in the front with a lot of leaves—that was just a part of the problem. [LH: That’s hard to take care of.] Yes. I think I had to pay eighty dollars to get the hill raked. And then I had to get the grass cut, and then being in a house, when something went wrong, I kind of panicked. The furnace didn’t come on right or the water stopped, and I never regretted moving out.

She currently has help with such tasks as window washing from a maintenance man she has known for a long time, and who has become "just like part of the family." She also has a woman who comes in to clean. "I had her for about sixteen or seventeen years, and I can just go off and leave her there, and I couldn’t get along without her either." [LH: It makes a big difference.] "Sometimes I think the Lord does take care of us, yes."

When Emily says, "I don’t cook," she means she does not prepare the kinds of meals she made when she cooked for a family. Now she relies on frozen meals or frozen vegetables. "The last two or three years, I just quit. I use mostly frozen things. Now they’re not as good, but they are easy."

She realizes that she needs to eat nourishing meals, saying, "They say that is the trouble with all older
people. They don't eat right, and I agree with them."
Although she has never liked breakfast, she has orange juice, toast, and coffee. She eats lunch at her daughter's restaurant, but she eats late and suspects that this, and the fact that she does not get much exercise, may be responsible for her lack of appetite.

Her grandson gave her a microwave for Christmas two years ago even though she said she did not want one, and now she finds it handy. She goes to the cafeteria in the shopping center nearby occasionally, and she appreciates the soup and other dishes her grandson's wife brings her.

The fact that she does not like to cook for one person is another reason she does not do much cooking.

I always say, it's not worth--I won't cook that--and yet I feel I have to eat. I didn't for awhile, and I got to be so anemic, and it was bothering me. It was either eat or else.

Anne, eighty-four, moved to Central Ohio five or six months before I met her to live in a retirement community in a town near the home of her son and his family because her serious problems with arthritis made living alone difficult. She had lived most of her adult life in Tennessee, first in the house where she and her husband raised their three children, and then much later in an apartment after her husband had a stroke.
She was reluctant to leave her community and church, but as her health deteriorated, there did not seem to be a workable living situation in her hometown.

Oh, yes, and I was able to live in my own apartment until I came up here, and I came here just because it seemed prudent. First, I had no family in [my hometown], and so when I broke my hip, my son... had to come from California to kind of supervise me, so it seemed prudent to go someplace where there was family and also to anticipate that something like that might occur again.

Anne realizes that the retirement community she lives in is one of the most pleasant she could have found, and she appreciates the fact that she can afford to live there:

Oh my, oh my, I never dreamed the day would come when I would have not only social security but a nice retirement. I couldn't live here if I didn't have those two. I have been able to salt a little money away, because this is an expensive place to get into at first.

She is, however, less than happy with the social situation in her retirement community, and her complaints center on the lack of activities that provide mental stimulation.

Her living area consists of a carpeted room large enough to accommodate a bed, a large dresser, two upholstered chairs, and three tables of various sizes. The room also has two clothes closets. Her son measured the room before she came so that she could decide what to
bring. The furniture and decorations are from her home, and each object has a story behind it. The effect is cozy and personal. She has a small adjoining bathroom. Because she does not use the tub or shower, preferring instead to take sponge baths which she can manage unassisted, the bathtub area has been made into a place for extra storage and contains shelves, a file cabinet, and a refrigerator.

Some people are more adventuresome than I. They keep a microwave in the bathroom or something, but I don't think that's—I have a hard time just getting myself anywhere, I don't believe I want to fool with the microwave or the cleaning up after that.

She has chimes outside her window and a bird feeder, which her son keeps filled. She seems to enjoy watching the birds, and they provide a topic of conversation. She can see a flower bed from her window, and since she has not been living here through all the seasons yet, she speculates about what flowers may appear in the spring.

Anne lives in the assisted-living area of the retirement community. This means that aides are available to provide the assistance she needs to get through her day. She gets up in the morning at 6:30 in order to be ready to go to breakfast at 7:30. She takes a sponge bath, and gets dressed.
But I use a sponge bath, because I don't, I would be intimidated trying to get into the tub, so I do not. I'm amazed at the people whom I think are incapacitated who get in the tub, or they get in the shower really is what they do.

She knows that she could have help with her bath if she asked, but says, "...until I need it, I guess I'll try to manage for myself."

The aide who helps her get ready for bed at night lays out her clothes for the next day, usually slacks and a overblouse. By the time she is ready to put on her shoes in the morning, an aide comes in to help. Anne knows she is entitled to special assistance, but she does not seem to know exactly what the aides are willing to do, and she is reluctant to ask for help.

The little aide, when she came to get me this morning, I was slow, I hadn't combed my hair, and so she brushed, and I said, "Oh, that feels good," because she really dug in. She said, "Well, we're here to help you." Now that's the first time anybody has said that. I was glad that's how she felt.

In spite of the help she receives, she finds that getting ready in the morning is becoming increasingly difficult. "First I try to take a bath around a walker--it's awkward to say the least--and then get dressed around it."
The aide takes her to breakfast in the wheelchair and makes her bed while she is out of the room. Anne makes her choices for each meal from a menu presented at the table and generally likes the food.

I think there's a very nice selection, and it probably wouldn't always be what one would choose, but there's a variety, so it's very nice. Sometimes you make good choices and sometimes you don't. It's like going to a restaurant, you never know.

A maid comes once a week, and Anne tries to see that things are done the way that she would do them if she could.

Once a week the cleaning lady comes to clean the room, and she changes the bed. I think I got her trained, now maybe that's not the word to use, that you turn the mattress too.

She has arranged for someone to do her laundry and worries about getting her clothes back on time.

Then a lady who kind of appeared out of nowhere comes once a week and gets my personal laundry and does it, but she's, well, yesterday was her day, and she was here before 9:00 and got my sheets and my laundry and everything. I didn't see her again until after 6:00, and so, by then I was panic-stricken. I don't have that big a wardrobe...

She seems to be able to have most of her needs for services met. When she needed to have her hearing aid repaired, someone took it to the shop and brought it back
for a few dollars. She can order supplies, such as toilet paper or soap, by telephone from a little store in the building, and an aide will bring them to her room. A beauty shop across the hall from her room is available to provide a shampoo or permanent. Several times a year representatives from a clothing store come in and set up a shop. Recently she visited the shop and enjoyed picking out a new blouse.

They say, oh, you don't need to pay, we'll put it on your bill. Well, my bill looks like the national debt already. I would much rather pay for it [laughs]. Anyway, they had quite a selection of things. This is the first time I've ever bought anything. I bought a new blouse. I don't know when I've had a new blouse. My daughter-in-law is going into town on Thursday to go on some errands [unclear], and I thought I'll give her a treat, I'll let her see the new blouse.

The assisted-living area of her apartment community meets Anne's need to have help with some of the tasks of daily living and allows her to continue to have some independence at the same time.

Conclusion

Table 4, page 153, which summarizes the driving and housing situations for the six women, shows that all of them drove when they were younger, and that three of them continue to drive. The table indicates the length of time each has lived in her current home and the type
### TABLE 4

**DRIVING AND HOUSING**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>ever driver</th>
<th>current driver</th>
<th>previous home</th>
<th>current home</th>
<th>#yrs in current home</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Julia</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>rented apt.</td>
<td>independent living with services in retirement community</td>
<td>6 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>rented house owned by daughter</td>
<td>c. 10 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>own house</td>
<td>60 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>rented house</td>
<td>independent living apt. in retirement community</td>
<td>7 1/2 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>own house</td>
<td>rented apt.</td>
<td>c. 8 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>rented apt.</td>
<td>assisted living apt. in retirement community</td>
<td>6 mos.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**apt. = apartment  n.s. = not stated**
of housing situation she lived in immediately before moving to this home.

Independence continues to be important to these women, but in their ninth decade they must make compromises in the way independence is defined. For Laura, independence includes driving to Virginia to see her brother; for Anne it is the ability to give herself a sponge bath. But each of these women strives to think of herself as a person of independence, if only in limited areas, and to accommodate the changes that must be made as she ages.
CHAPTER VII

WORK

Introduction

The term work is used in different ways by the women in this study, and I was guided by their ideas (embedded in the interviews, not given in response to specific questions) and my own definition of work as productive activity as I decided what would be included in this chapter. I began by considering what the women said about paid productive activity in the community and unpaid productive activity in the community. Later I followed a suggestion to consider their comments on productive activity within the household.

All of the women consider paid productive activity in the community to be work. Unpaid productive activity in the community appears to be regarded differently by different women.

Anne says that in her day women were not expected to work after marriage, and she seems to be referring to paid work. Later I ask if she was keeping house after she quit teaching, and she says, "Right, and raising children."
Doing community service type things in my church and community." It seems she might choose community service, rather than volunteer work as a label for her activities.

Catherine identifies herself as "almost a full-time volunteer," and describes some of the women with whom she was associated as "prodigious workers." She speaks of a sort of understanding with her husband in which he does the work that he is so involved in and supports the family, and she takes the responsibility for church and community commitments. She uses the term "volunteer work" for her work with the YWCA, and some of the work that she did as a volunteer would probably be paid work today. Even in 1955 when she traveled around the country doing public affairs workshops with civil rights leader Dorothy Height, she was a volunteer, and Dorothy Height was a paid YWCA national staff member.

Julia, who writes and edits the newsletter for her retirement community as a volunteer, also does a job that might well have been part of a paid position. In it she draws on the skills that she developed in her years of teaching and advising newspaper staffs.

Laura describes workshops that she has presented in recent years and then adds that she got paid for some of them and did not get paid for others, as though it is the work, not the payment which is significant.
All four of these women bring well-honed skills and professional attitudes toward the unpaid productive activities in which they participate, and although I cannot be sure about the label they would choose for their activities, given their views, the designation work seems appropriate.

Some types of unpaid productive activity in the community may be evaluated differently; for example many church-affiliated productive activities are probably considered to be part of the domain of religion. Other activities, while useful, such as Margaret’s visits to old people in nursing homes, may be more accurately thought of as good deeds.

Productive activity within the household, which is not specifically called work by these women, is portrayed as arduous by one woman, mentioned briefly by some, and not mentioned at all by others. However it is labeled, the level of labor intensity is considerably different depending on, among other considerations, whether or not there are children in the family and whether or not there is household help.

In terms of household productive activity, there is no indication that these women consider the care of one’s own children or the care of a parent as work. The care of children seems to be assumed as part of their role as
mother; the care of a parent seems to be seen as a responsibility. House maintenance is mentioned as a matter of finding someone to make repairs, and in one case, wash windows; the jobs are considered work, but the process of finding someone to do them does not seem to be considered work. The household productive activities of cleaning and laundry during their younger years are not mentioned by Julia, Laura, or Margaret. Emily sent her laundry out and had cleaning help in her younger years. Catherine discusses planning cleaning tasks and schedules with the woman who cleaned for her earlier in her life and also mentions working with her on some tasks. She says that sometimes when she would come home from a day of meetings "maybe that's when I'd get a bucket of water and do half the woodwork in a room or something; I said it was a kind of therapy, you know what I mean?" Anne speaks of making formal dresses for her daughter, taking mending to do at church meetings, cooking, and doing laundry before the days of automatic washers and dryers and permanent press clothing. She says she thinks more is expected of women today because of labor-saving devices. "They assume you're going to do more in the community; then they just assumed you'd be a housewife." All of the women currently have at least occasional paid help with cleaning.
It seems clear that paid productive activity in the community is work in the minds of these women and that unpaid productive activity in the community, while variable, can, at least for the purposes of the following discussion, be considered work. Household productive activity may or may not be considered work by these women, but judging from the fact that most say little about it, it is not an issue of significance, at least not at this point in their lives.

**Work Experiences**

Julia, eighty-five, defines herself as a teacher, as she has every right to do. She taught in a one-room school after two years of college, filled in for a year as a college instructor when her major professor took a year’s leave of absence, and taught English at four different high schools over her career. During most of her high school teaching experience, she also served as adviser to either the school yearbook or newspaper. She remembers fondly the comments of the principal of the last school she taught at before retirement. She and the principal were chatting in the town bank when some people he knew joined the conversation, and he introduced Julia.

...and I don’t recall exactly what they said, but he said, "Oh, she teaches well, because she wants to. She is a good teacher, and she enjoys teaching. She likes to teach. She can teach." [laughs] So he
went on, you know, kind of complimentary remarks. So I think I enjoyed teaching maybe more than anything I could have done.

During the next interview she says, "and as I had told you once before" and repeats the story, adding, "I just was really thrilled....because he made these people know that I, that it was in me, I guess, to be a good teacher." Julia says she is glad she became a teacher even though she did not make as much money as teachers do today. Her salary for her last year of teaching in 1969 was twelve thousand dollars. She remarks that at the time of our interviews, teachers are starting their careers with salaries of seventeen thousand dollars; in contrast, her starting salary in the one-room school where she began her career was ninety-four dollars a month.

Julia tells several stories about successful teaching experiences, often repeating a favorite story with only slight variations. She remembers with pride the effective way she taught her classes.

I liked teaching. People who go into teaching and then complain all the time about it--I think they’re not very much help, and I think they make trouble for themselves instead....So I would go back over there on Sunday or evenings or sometimes at school, run them off [packets of supplementary information], and then I would say, "Well, today I have some, you know, a little collection for you," or funny names I’d figure out, and I don’t whether they, well, I think many of them used it, so I tried to improve the textbook, and they had, for the senior English,
we would just arrange the chairs in a circle, so they would talk to each other. I didn’t do all the talking. They’d get into arguments about what he was trying to do, how well he had done what he did and so on and so forth. So they liked that kind of conversation. It kept me in the background sometimes which was good.

Another of her success stories involves a student she once taught who chose to be in her class a second year after he had failed the first time.

I was in Millgrove for four or six years, and I had taught junior English there, and I remember I had one boy—he was a tall, gangly boy, I can just see him—and he failed the test, he just didn’t—so the next year he popped into my room, and I said, "Well, don’t you want somebody else to teach you this year?" He said, "No, I want to be in your class again." Surprisingly, he did very well that year, but he, I suppose he was growing up, he was, he just kind of didn’t know what he was doing, and so he failed, and then he finished very well, and I always thought that was a compliment that he wanted me back, even though I failed him the year before. So I enjoyed him that year...

She remembers enjoying her teaching experience in each school.

...and then I came to Rockwood, and I had a good school there, but I don’t know, something about Jefferson, and I stayed longer, and I really enjoyed teaching, well, I enjoyed teaching everywhere I did teach, but I enjoyed it especially, I think, at Jefferson...

Julia is concerned about how the students felt about her, and tells several stories that seem intended to
illustrate the fact that although she may have been seen as a strict teacher, she cared about her students and she hoped that care was evident.

...one day we entered that contest that one of the big schools in the East, I don't know which one it was now, but [a student] got a scholarship for what she had done. So when she came in—so I hugged her, and she was so startled, and she said, "Mrs. Anderson hugged me!" I thought she deserved it, so I certainly would've hugged my own child, if I'd have it, so maybe I was kind of stern sometimes, but sometimes, [laughs] I wasn't apparently, so we, I don't know—I think I insisted that they try to do the homework and so forth, but I tried to do it in a friendly way, really, so I must have managed [laughs] once in awhile not to be the stern teacher.

One of her students went on to study journalism in college and then to become a widely-published newspaper columnist and the author of several popular books about, among other things, his experiences growing up. He has mentioned her in his books, sent her a copy of a book, and thanked her in print and in public. She has taken much pleasure over the years in following his career. Although she is careful to attribute his success to his college training, she mentions that both of his parents "insist that I have been a great influence on him" and that he "was very grateful; he really was very grateful."

After discussing some of the problems she sees in schools today, she says:
...of course, there are many good schools today too. They didn't all go down when I quit [laughs]. I was, I liked to teach, I was proud to tell people I was a teacher, and I hope that everybody else who teaches feels the same way.

Writing has been part of Julia's life since she was in high school. She had a part-time job on the town newspaper, worked on her high school yearbook and college newspaper, and was adviser to high school yearbook and newspaper staffs when she was teaching. She has been able to draw on the skills she developed to write a history of her family, which she presented to them as a Christmas gift in 1976. She and her husband were in the process of writing the history of his family when he died suddenly. At the urging of his brother, she completed the research and writing.

Well, it's been kind of interesting work to do, and I was kind of lost when he died, and so this kept me immersed in the Andersons, and so that's how I spent the years after he was gone.

Julia has continued her interest in journalism by writing and editing the newspaper which is published about three times a year by her retirement community. One of her favorite stories is of being asked to take this job.

I hadn't been here very long, well, I'd been here part of a year, and one day, I was walking down the wall, hall in the other tower, building and when Mr. Glen, Mr. Lucas came along and he touched my
shoulder and said, "I want you to do 'The Echoes.'" I was kind of shocked, and so this is the last one [that] they are going to get next—going to get this Friday.

Julia is one of the fortunate women who has a life-long interest which she has been able to continue in retirement.

Emily, eighty-four, began teaching fifth grade when she had completed part of her college education, earning seventy-five dollars a month the first year. She taught for three years, continuing to teach during the year after she was married. Following her teaching experience she was a homemaker for many years, rejoining the work force again when she was sixty-two or sixty-three. I learned about this work experience indirectly when I asked her how she got started in the bridge group she had talked about.

As I say, I’ve never been afraid evidently to do anything. But my husband was a registered engineer, professional engineer, and he was head of the placement service that the Ohio Society of Professional Engineers had downtown, and the woman that was running it quit, and he asked me if I didn’t want to go down and be there to answer the phone. I’d never done any office work of any kind, but I went down and the first thing I knew, I was doing it. [laughs] and that’s where I met Lillian, this friend of mine that had the Franklin County Engineers, and we have been friends now for quite a few years, and she belongs to this bridge group. She wanted to know if I didn’t want to fill in. So I’ve been filling in, and she picks me up and takes me and takes me home. I love to play bridge.
In a later interview she speaks about her willingness to try new things and learn new skills:

I am very prone to take on something I think I can do regardless of whether I have done it before. When I went down to take over the Engineer's Placement Service, I had never done any office work, but I just never thought of not doing it, and I learned to type. I taught myself how to type.

She worked there two or three years, and then when they "closed that out," she worked for the Engineering Society part-time. She went on to say:

I typed and I was the head of membership, and took in the new members and filed their cards, and you know I liked to file. Nobody else liked to file. I liked to stuff envelopes. I don't know whether that was easy or not, but I just enjoyed doing it, and they used to [say], when I'd go upstairs—"Do you want to stuff envelopes or file?" [laughs]

She enjoyed her day. She worked until noon, had lunch and browsed at a department store, and then took the bus home, arriving by 2:00.

When the business moved to a new location, she was not sure she wanted to go, but when her husband said, "Well, we can always find somebody to take your place," she moved with the business. She does not remember how long she worked there, "I don't know, you know, the years kind of go by, and I forget."
After her husband, who had heart problems, retired, she took care of him at home for many years until his death. Once I asked her if she had ever been depressed, and she said, "I was very depressed after my husband died. But I don't think anybody knew it." Later I asked her how she worked herself out of her depression, and she said,

I just kept on like I was doing, and of course, Carol opened this [the restaurant] right after that, so I was out here helping decorate. She would paint the chairs and things like that. Then my sister from...Kentucky came out to live with me.

The restaurant, owned and run by her daughter, opened shortly after Emily's husband died, and she has worked there from the beginning. She says that if she had had the money as a younger woman, she would have chosen to own a tearoom, so she feels that this opportunity to participate in her daughter's business is a perfect way for her to keep active.

And I always said I would never handle money. But that's about the only thing I could do. It was that or else. And I tell them I am not responsible, and if it's not in there, I don't have it. [LH: Well, you like doing it, I guess.] Yes, I don't know what I would do if I didn't, I'm not one to just sit at home; I never have been, and yet I am limited to what I can do now.

She is usually at the restaurant from 10:00 until 3:00, and feels free to take an occasional day off when she
wants to play bridge. "...I can just say, you know, I can't come tomorrow. Now, of course, if it's an emergency, I always come." Her job offers considerable flexibility, and over the years she has modified her tasks to fit her energy level and walking ability.

...usually I have somebody out there with me, and they take people in and seat them. But if they are not around, I take them in. I don't move as easy as I used. When I go in there and want to help out, they say, "You go sit down," [laughs] and I go sit down. I find I'm slowing down, but I know I am, and I try not to do what I can't do.

Emily seems to take great pleasure in the social aspects of work. She has a job to go to each day where she is needed, and she has the opportunity to use her pleasant personality and ease with people as she greets the guests at the restaurant. She is a favorite with regular customers who know her by name and stop to chat if she is not too busy.

Anne, eighty-four, prefers to talk about the present, but she did tell a little about her work experiences. I learned a little more by reading the comments in the letters written by her friends and church members, which were given as a gift when she left her long-time home in Tennessee to come to Central Ohio to live in a retirement community near her older son and his family.
After Anne graduated from college, she taught freshman and sophomore English and girls' physical education for two years. She had not trained to be a teacher and says she ended up with the job because it "was available." She adds:

Well, I came along in the generation where the girl taught until she got married, and I had to fill that gap in between graduating from college until my fiancé earned enough money so we could get married, so that's why I taught school. I taught one year after I was married too which was a great shock. Women did not teach after they got married. I can still see that school superintendent saying, inquiring, "Doesn't your husband have a job?" Then came the war, and they were very glad to let women teach.

After those two years of teaching, most of Anne's work was as a volunteer.

... raising children. Doing community service type things in my church and in the community. Never anything for pay. Just temporarily, I filled in at the Girl Scout office for the executive and that, just until they could find somebody. That was the only time I worked for pay.

Anne, like other women of her day, managed the heavy work of her household without labor-saving equipment. She mentions at one point doing the laundry before going out to work in the morning. When I question her about what this involved, she describes an arduous process that began with lighting the water heater in the basement and went
on to include pulling the washer out of the pantry, shaving bar soap to make flakes, heating dishpans of hot water further on the stove and filling the washer, washing the clothes, draining the washer into a scrub bucket and emptying it on the driveway, filling the washer with rinse water and rinsing the clothes, draining and emptying the water again, using a crank wringer to wring out the clothes, putting the washer away and then hanging the clothes up—on the line in the yard most of the year, but on lines in the third floor attic in the winter. When I comment on the amount of work involved, she says, "I was young then."

Her comments on the kind of volunteer work she did reflect changes in racial integration and in attitudes toward race over the years.

I was very interested in community centers, and [our town] had two that I was ever involved in, on the board of, and I was eventually president of each of them in turn. One, and of course, one was in a Negro neighborhood, and near a Negro housing project. Originally our housing projects were all segregated. We had one community center right across the street from a big Negro housing project, and they had a white director, but before they segregated, they had a black girl, which seemed like the right thing to do, but that's what I started with. Then we had a white community center--isn't that awful to be saying that?--white community center near a white housing project.
The centers sponsored Head Start programs, after school interest groups, and camping programs. She especially enjoyed the camping programs and spoke with enthusiasm about working to get improvements made. She even got her children, who were by then grown and away from home, involved. "Every time they came home, they got stuck with doing something. When John had leave in the Navy, I had him down painting the inside of a swimming pool."

She was also active in the scouting program and served as Commissioner of Girl Scouts. She worked toward getting a camp site for the scouts and is proud of her participation in securing a better wage for staff members.

When I came on board with the Girl Scouts, they didn’t have any personnel policies or, for their staff, and they were supported by the old Community Chest. And the men on that thought a woman getting—a professional woman getting eighteen hundred dollars, oh, that was magnificent. And that was a hard nut to crack, but we finally did it by writing staff descriptions of what jobs were needed and your education you had to have for that and the training you had to have and experience. We got them to accept that. Well, then after they accepted it, then we hired them. I can just see those old geezers yet. They equated a woman staff for Girl Scouts with their secretaries. They just thought a woman getting eighteen hundred dollars was getting a lot of money, so it took a little maneuvering to get around that.

Much of her volunteer time was spent with her church. She and her family helped to found the church, becoming members before there was a building. She sang in the
choir, taught Sunday School, chaired a women's circle, and served on the board of the Women's Society.

Since she moved to a retirement community she has searched for stimulating activities to occupy her time, and recently she was asked to become a member of the Religious Activities Committee and was pleased to see her appointment and acceptance in the community bulletin.

Laura, eighty-two, finished college during the Depression and returned to her hometown in Virginia to teach science in a girls' school which drew students from the United States and around the world. She earned sixty dollars a month and received room and board.

She completed her master's degree in the summers and eventually returned to school full time to earn a Ph.D. in psychology (interrupting her studies from time to time to earn enough money to continue).

She had several jobs during the next period of her career. In the two she talks most about she worked as a psychologist in institutions. The stories she tells about these experiences focus on the changes for the better that she was able to put into effect and her desire to move on once she had done that.

At a state school for the retarded she developed a team approach to solving discipline problems. She was eventually made head of the psychology department and the
guidance department. After five years, when many of the problems had been solved, she moved on to GIS, Girls Industrial School.

When she began the GIS job, she remembers asking for weekend duty to see what was going on.

It was terrible. I've never seen so many windows go out in my life. Kids were drinking bleach in order to get out of there and get down to the hospital--anything to get out. I had one couple of girls who had a suicide pact to stab each other.... But you couldn't blame the attendants because they didn't have enough--these women were on all week with thirty of these kids in the cottage, most of them confined with nothing to do, stuff like that. Well, anyway we went through that whole process. So, I stayed each place I guess about five years. It took about three or four to get the thing turned around.

She decided to leave GIS when she found herself being drawn more and more into administrative work and realized that she was "was getting farther and farther from the things I liked to do." She says she knew it was time to quit when she entered her office one day and found "two big containers of floor cleaner about this high of different brands and a note on there saying, 'Which should we use?' I thought, 'Now what am I doing?' and I resigned."

She later became chief of the psychology section of the Bureau of Mental Retardation, a position she held until state budget cuts made the job seem too tenuous,
and then she sought other work.

After a brief stint with another agency, she was informed that the counseling center at the university was being reorganized, and she was asked to work in the new program. She stayed twelve years, although she says the job changed every five years as a result of administrative changes.

In the counseling center she found the opportunity to work with women, many of whom were from thirty to sixty years old, who were coming to campus and needed support to cope with the system. She conducted workshops which helped women clarify their goals.

...see at that time, things were a little different. Women were just beginning--it was the beginning of really--a lot of awfully angry women, a lot of very confused people, because not much was open to them then. And so I had a workshop I called "Where Do I Go From Here?" That really appealed to a lot of people....And many times, I had people say, I didn’t know that you could sit down and talk to other people like this....It was a growth experience for me, and I think it was for most of them.

When she was about sixty, she decided that she would retire at sixty-five. She speaks of the depression that followed that decision and how she came to understand what it meant and cope with it.

...I think the thing that really influenced me about getting old was my grandmother came to live with us when she was about fifty-five, and she took trips,
and she went to New York, and she did this and that and the other thing, but what I remember the most about her was sitting in our living room with a blanket over her knees, saying, "This is the longest day I ever spent," and it made a great impression on me.

She first attempted to deal with the depression by visiting a few friends who had retired to see how they were handling their new situation, and she found that they were preoccupied with financial matters. She decided that if she got her financial affairs in order, she might feel better, but, having done this, she was still depressed.

Then one day I was driving home from the university, going up Durbin Street, and it was just like a sudden—in color, full color, a picture of my grandmother sitting there, and then I knew what I was dreading was that when I got old I'd be sitting in a rocking chair bored to death and saying that too. So then when I got that straightened out, I got over it—my depression. So then I decided that when I retired, I was going to retire to something, and that's when I decided to have a private practice and continue with this women's consultation service and workshops and things like that until I didn't want to do that anymore, and that's what I did, and that eased it off...

The work she did with women on campus is an aspect of her career that was especially satisfying, and she is pleased that her contribution has been recognized.

Not long ago, I guess a year or two ago, I got a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ohio Psychological Association, the women, and I guess, they look at me, the women, as being sort of a pioneer because I was involved in this thing on
campus when the women's movement was at its height and was instrumental in getting the services established and for the first time...

She has since done a number of different kinds of workshops designed to meet the specific needs of the college or service organizations that request her services. Some of the workshops were for pay and some volunteer. She does some consulting work for the staff of a rehabilitation center, and she still has a few private clients. She recently closed her office and now meets the clients she still sees in her home.

A whole new area of involvement opened up to Laura when she agreed to serve as president of the residents' association of her community and found that the office included being the residents' representative to the local council (similar to a local board of trustees). She eventually came to serve a term on the corporate Board of Directors, a group responsible for seven related retirement communities. When the seven representatives of the retirement communities also decided to meet for discussions, she found herself even more involved.

This work, which is strictly voluntary, takes a lot of time—last year she attended sixty-six meetings. "But," she states, "I've learned an awful lot." She enjoys the feeling of accomplishment she gets as she contributes what
she knows firsthand about aging. She has found her work in this area satisfying, but says:

...but I'm ready to get out of it now, you know. Somebody else comes along and can take it over. I guess I like being a pioneer, starting things and getting them established, if you want to say established, and I'm ready to go on and do something else.

She says each time she leaves a job she wonders if she will be able to find another one as satisfying, and this is somewhat the way she is feeling now. Before she began this involvement, she thought that her most rewarding work was behind her, and this experience was a great surprise. Now leaving it and being even older, she wonders if she has had her last significant work adventure.

Margaret, eighty-five, has had a number of jobs through the years; she has enjoyed most of them and worked hard at all of them.

She had always wanted to be a nurse like her admired Aunt Sue, and with her doctor's recommendation she began nurses' training after high school. She worked in the hospital during the day and took classes at night, earning fifteen dollars a month. In spite of having previously been quite healthy, while she was in training she got one illness after another and eventually had to leave training before completing the program. "That's been my sorrow and
regret all my life that I didn’t finish training, but I nursed for a real long time."

She worked as a nurse before she was married, and then during the Depression, she took jobs whenever she could find work. She tells of caring for two people with pneumonia, staying with them all day, going home for two or three hours to have dinner with her four young children, and going back to spend the night—all for twenty-five dollars a week.

Margaret was a hard worker and was happy for any kind of work during the Depression. When a friend’s father offered her a job cooking for his farmhands two days a week for a dollar a day and as many vegetables as she wanted to take home, and even allowed her to bring her children along, she was glad to accept.

I did that for a couple of summers, and it really helped us an awful lot because they had—and every once in awhile when they, they would butcher and put some meat in for me and all, and I was always grateful for that. I’d never had to do anything like that in my life, but I sure wasn’t too proud to do it, you know, and I was just very happy about that. It helped us out so much.

Margaret’s husband was less interested in working than she was, and when she decided to go to northern Ohio to look for work he was not willing to go. She went without him, and eventually they were divorced.
I guess maybe one of the happiest times in my life was when I went to northern Ohio during the, in 1942, and went around applying for different jobs, and that was when the war started, and I was hired at Tobin Manufacturing, and I worked there seven years. They made airplane parts there. It had been an axle plant, and they turned, the government took it over, and they made airplane parts, and I was an inspector, and I interviewed people for jobs for hiring, and so forth, and I just loved that there. That was just great. I thought that was so nice. I enjoyed that.

She knew that the job would not last forever, and she took a correspondence course in hotel management so she would be ready for another job; nevertheless, she was devastated when she was laid off.

I was one of the very last ones to be left out, and I cried the day I left because I loved it there, and I loved all the people, and they kept it very high grade. Mr. Maring, who was the president of the Tobin Manufacturing, before women started to come into the plant he had the men assemble at a meeting, and he said--I can remember this well--"These women that are coming in to work here are wives and sweethearts of the men who are fighting our war, and there is to be no insulting remarks or no off-color things, stories and so forth." He said, "I don't care how much seniority you have, you will be let go if you don't treat these women with respect," and so forth. And it was kept that way, pretty much so...

At this time she still had two of her four children living at home. She felt guilty taking welfare, so she quickly accepted a job supervising housemaids at a large hotel. She "just loved it," but she couldn't support her family on the low wages. When she resigned, the
management of the hotel offered to fly her to California to help open a new hotel there because, as she says, "My work had been so satisfactory, which I was very pleased about." Because of her responsibility to her children, she was afraid to take the risk, and she has often wondered how her life might have been different if she had accepted the offer.

At some time after she left the factory, Margaret married a man she had met while she worked there. They had only been married three years when he died suddenly of a heart attack. She went into a serious depression, which was alleviated only when she went back to work.

Oh, it was terrible, just three years we were married, and I went into depression, and my family worried about me, and I just didn't, I couldn't move or do anything. I just kind of got clear out of it....I couldn't help it for awhile, then the best thing was work and getting out into the work force again, and that's when I went to work at Montgomery Ward.

By this time Margaret had gone to live in a small town with her parents to help with their care. Her father had serious heart problems and died a few months later. She has a number of stories about working in the catalog department at Montgomery Ward.

This was a farming community over there, and farmers would come in in the spring especially, this time of year, when it was time almost for planting, and
they would order farm machinery and all kinds of equipment....Anyhow, I loved these old farmers. They'd come in and they were kind of slow, and, you know, they would take their time and pick out. [She stops to ask if this is what I want to hear.] And so, I would talk to them and help them with their orders....So, I increased their business one hundred and ten percent that first year that I was there because I just was older, and I took time with them and so forth, and they liked me, and they'd come back in.

Two of her other favorite stories from this period involve standing up for her rights against the store manager. In one detailed story of events that take place over many days she resists leaving her purse in an unlocked area several floors from her work station. The other women watch with interest but do not join her protest. One of the men teases her about "giving the old man a hard time," and she asks him what he would do if the boss asked him to leave his wallet upstairs. He says, "I'd tell him to go to Hell." She replies, "I'm not saying it, but that's what I'm really doing." She is, of course, victorious. In another story her boss wants to get her out of jury duty because her absence will disrupt business, but she insists on serving because her father had always told her "this is a matter of patriotism and loyalty to your country and so forth." She does serve and gets her pay and a letter of commendation from the corporation. These stories and another in which she
figures measurements wrong and ends up with a warehouse full of fencing but manages eventually to sell it with no loss of profit are told lightheartedly in a way that emphasizes the fact that she was a valuable employee, had a good time, and did not compromise her high standards.

After this episode in her career, she did some home nursing and helped care for family members. Eventually she was again looking for something to do, and an acquaintance suggested that she consider being a college housemother.

She accepted a position in a freshman girls' dormitory on the campus of a small college and found, of course, that she loved the job. "I can remember going to the dining room and walking in when [the students] were all new, and they'd all look at you, you know, you were the housemother, and it gave me such a good feeling."

She told story after story about experiences she remembered from her days as a housemother. Most of the stories were happy memories of occasions when she had been able to help a girl or solve a problem. She remembered a time when she was able to convince an abusive parent who was a minister in a fundamentalist church that he could trust his daughter and a time when she embarrassed roommates who fought over who should empty the wastebasket by emptying it herself. Occasionally there was a story
of regret at what she had done, as in her memory of telling a white girl and her Black boyfriend who came to her for advice that marriage would be too difficult and they should stop dating. She summarizes her experiences by saying:

Well, I had real happy memories of my years at Union, I’ll tell you. Everything was just fun for me and a challenge in a way, and many, many nice kids went out of that dorm, I’ll tell you. I loved them all.

After being a housemother in a girls’ dormitory for seven years, her nephew convinced her to come to his college and be the housemother in his fraternity house. She went for an interview and was accepted immediately.

She found dealing with boys different from dealing with girls, but the same good-humored approach seemed to work. She was realistic about changing their attitudes, but she was glad when they listened to her opinions.

I don’t mean to be bragging, but they loved to sit at my table. They took turns, six people sat at the tables, and they would come and take me out to dinner, and they loved to sit at my table, and we would talk about different things, and they were all too busy studying and working to read the newspapers, and I would try to keep them up on current events, what was going on and so forth in the world.

In one of her favorite stories the boys give her a T-shirt to match theirs—with a naked woman on it.
I said, "Thank you, that's very thoughtful of you," and I went back in my apartment. That afternoon I had some blue ruffled lace, or maybe I ruffled it, but anyhow, I made little pants and a little bra, and I stitched it on my little girl, lady, and the next morning when it was time for them to come in for coffee and start coming from class, I dressed and put my little T-shirt on and went out. They just loved that, they just loved that, Linda, you know [laughs].

Because of the combination of the fact that she was ready to retire and the permissiveness that was becoming part of college living, Margaret resigned from her position after three years.

A couple times, I heard of them taking showers together, some of them, and one night I walked out, or one morning I walked out, and you could see a couple of the rooms...and there was a girl in bed with a guy, and I just hated this all. I hated that. I don't think I'm a moralist or narrow-minded, but I just didn't like that. So I wrote a letter to the Dean of Men who was my boss and to the president, and I said, "You people allow these things to pass, you go to your homes at night, you have no connection with the college, with the campus. As a Christian woman and a mother and a grandmother, I cannot stand this, and I'm handing my resignation in." Well, they had me up at the office a couple times coaxing me to stay, but I was ready to quit anyhow, I mustn't be unfair, I was ready to quit.

That was her last paid employment. In recent years she has been active in her church, serving as deacon and as a member of the mission committee. She enjoys making visits to people she knows in retirement and nursing
homes, sometimes taking along homemade baked goods.

Catherine, eighty-seven, began her career teaching high school, but she found that "it just seemed as if that wasn't the kind of thing that I was meant to do, so to speak." For the next three years between teaching and marriage, she worked as a Girl Reserve Secretary in the YWCA doing program planning and supervision for high school groups in southern New Jersey.

I was young and energetic and had a very happy relationship with a lot of these people all over the state, that part of the state, and it was during those years that I met my husband, who at that time was doing a special piece of work for the government at a laboratory in Brighton, New Jersey, which is in the part of the state that I was working.

After her marriage, Catherine came to Central Ohio with her husband when he accepted a full professorship at a large university, and she did volunteer work which centered around her concept of "working toward the Christian ideal." The institutional hub of her activity during her early adulthood was the YWCA. The YWCA's ideals matched her own, and although much of her work was as a representative of the YWCA, some of it grew out of interests developed there.

Several times she described someone she admired as "a prodigious worker," and the label could aptly be applied to her. During the Depression she secured WPA money and
instituted a domestic training program for young women who could not find employment. The training center was set up in a house in which several women who were employed in the community actually lived. The house was run as a laboratory, and women and girls of various ages were trained in cooking and house management skills.

You see, they were paid something to come to take this training, and although I don't recall the exact period of time, it was some little time. They received certificates that they had satisfactorily completed this training, and it made it possible that some standard of pay and living conditions could be set up, and these people were very much in demand, because they were really very well trained.

She was also involved through the YWCA in trying to secure minimum wage legislation, saying, "I guess without looking it up, I wouldn't want to cite the year, something like 1938 or something, when the first minimum wage nationally was established, it was twenty-five cents an hour [laughs]...it's just something you can hardly conceive today." In Ohio the law called for wage boards made up of employees, employers, and public representatives, who heard testimony and then made proposals for setting minimum wages.

...I was asked and did serve as a public member of a wage board. Now we thought we had made great progress when we established, and finally were able to get it accepted, a wage of forty cents an hour for women and minors working in the restaurants,
[laughs] so that is kind of an example of where you start on these things in great contrast to where we are today...

She recalls with amusement being called "the darling of the do-gooders" in a restaurant industry magazine.

Later she became involved in working toward fair employment practices and served on an Ohio commission which heard complaints brought against the defense industry concerning employment discrimination based on race.

...it was maybe famous just to those of us who were so concerned about the issue, an Executive Order 8802— I'll never forget this — that Franklin Roosevelt issued that there was not to be any discrimination because of race or color in defense industries....and now that Executive Order was carried out state by state through the Department of Employment Services, and in each state commissions were set up to hear cases of discrimination that would be brought before a given industry.... I remember being called and being asked to serve on that commission, and when it was first started, I think I was the only woman on it, but it does, I suppose, show something of the amount of commitment that I had, that I was known enough to be asked to serve on that state commission that heard these cases, and that certainly was a very interesting experience also.

In 1955 she and civil rights leader Dorothy Height, who was at that point working for the YWCA, traveled around the country doing public affairs workshops for the YWCA and, in the days before the major thrust of civil rights legislation, presenting an example of a Black woman
and a white woman working and traveling together. When Dorothy Height was honored at a banquet in New York on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of her work in civil rights a few years ago, Catherine was invited and enjoyed being part of a group that included "practically every civil rights leader you’ve ever heard of."

She continued to work for the YWCA at the local, state, and national levels, saying in our interviews about the amount of work she did:

...I’ve said many times, I was really, back in those days, you know, I was a full-time volunteer, and I had enough professional background that I could bring something to it, but I always felt my life was so enriched by the philosophy that the YWCA had that it was worth every bit of it...

A few years ago, the YWCA asked Catherine to speak about the work of the organization in the 1930s and 1940s, and a video tape was made of her presentation. In recognition of her contribution to the goals of the YWCA, a volunteer award, presented every year to a worthy recipient, has been named in her honor.

Catherine’s second major area of volunteer work has been her involvement with her church and its concerns. In her position as chairman of the Social Action Committee, she headed a group which surveyed the needs of the community and in 1945 started the city’s first
interracial nursery school, which served the neighborhood around the church.

I can still see us spreading that [census tract information] out, getting down on the floor and looking at that whole area, and by any indices that you could think about whether it was health or health services or recreation or education, anything at all, the census tract in which our church was located was the least served of any in the entire community, so of course, we rather quickly decided there certainly was something we could decide to do there... and rather soon we decided we would like to establish a neighborhood nursery school, and that’s what we did in 1945. That was the first interracial nursery school in the city.... It was very successful from the beginning.

In another part of her capacity as chairman of the Social Action Committee, she wrote articles for her church bulletin, always directing the attention of the congregation to issues before the state legislature or Congress which she thought should be of interest to those with a Christian concern about the world.

She also chaired major committees, such as a committee on benevolent giving and the adult education committee, and was president of the Women’s Guild. When her church allowed women to become deacons, she was among the first chosen, eventually being elected senior deacon.

In the late 1960s she was president of Church Women United, an ecumenical organization of church women. In speaking about the many community projects that the
of these things can't be done today is that there's just not that many volunteers. Every organization be it a church-related one or a community-related organization has trouble today finding volunteers, because women are now being professionally employed, so in a sense, in spite of hearing today so much about volunteerism and how much it's needed, I don't think there's anywhere nearly as much of it as there used to be. There are those people who think that it's really a loss as far as community service goes. Volunteers, I suppose, bring a quality of a kind of a commitment and belief in it, or they wouldn't be doing it, so it probably does add a certain dimension that maybe you miss when you don't have it.

Her talents continue to be in demand in her church. About five years ago when the church members had an open meeting to consider their involvement in the community, she was talked into attending even though she had stated that she had done her last big job in the church.

So anyway, there I was, and by the next week, [laughs] they'd all decided that I had to be chairman of this committee, and I thought it was ridiculous, but they kept talking to me, and in the end, I did it....Well, it was a wonderful group, just really marvelous group. We had the most marvelous esprit de corps in that group, and we met very faithfully for a period of time...

She is pleased that the committee reports led to work with Habitat for Humanity, but in spite of this successful
venture, she plans to limit her contributions to more casual activities from this point on. One activity that she includes in this category is speaking to new membership classes about the history of the pastorates of the church, an activity that gives her the opportunity to continue to become acquainted with new people.

Conclusion

Table 5, page 191, summarizes the work experiences of the women, pointing out their first careers and the variety of paid and volunteer work they did in the community throughout their lives.

Work—both paid and volunteer—is a significant part of the lives of these six women. Not only did they spend many years of their lives working, but it is clear that work provides a great deal of the satisfaction they experience as they look back over their lives.

These women's lives show a variety of work patterns. Julia, Laura, and Margaret were employed all or almost all of their adult lives, and work for them was essential to their support. Emily was employed at three different periods in her life: she worked for a few years as a young woman, went to work at a different job later in life, and began work at a new job after the death of her husband. To her a large part of the importance of working seems to be having a meaningful activity to participate in and
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<tr>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td>nurse</td>
<td>paid</td>
<td>nurse, factory worker, office worker, housemother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>unpaid</td>
<td>volunteer worker: YWCA, church, community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>paid</td>
<td>paid/teacher, psychologist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emily</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>paid</td>
<td>paid/office worker, hostess, cashier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>unpaid</td>
<td>paid/volunteer worker: church, Girl Scouts, community</td>
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being with people. Catherine and Anne worked for a few years in paid positions and worked extensively as volunteers in their churches and communities; their volunteer work allowed them to use their organizational skills and contribute toward social goals they value. All of the women except Margaret taught in schools or colleges at some time in their lives, but only Julia considered teaching her principal life’s work.

As these women look back on their lives, they remember with pleasure a variety of work experiences. Some have been fortunate enough to have work that lends itself to modification and can be continued in old age. Julia has continued to use her writing and editing skills in writing family histories and her community newsletter. Laura has been able to use her group skills in working with the retirement home administration and her counseling skills in both group and individual work. Catherine continues to be able to use her organizational skills and experience to help her church. Emily is, in her eighties, fulfilling at least a part of her dream to have a tea room. Margaret may be using some of the skills she developed as a housemother in dealing with her tenants, but in reality this is a small part of her life. More significant, perhaps is that she deals with her life today with the same joyful approach that she brought to every job she had
from factory worker to nurse. Anne has had difficulty finding a way to use her organizational skills since she moved to her new home, but she looks forward to her new position on the Religious Activities Committee of her retirement community.
CHAPTER VIII

FAMILY

Introduction

As these six women look back at their families of orientation, there are a number of similarities. Each of the women spent most of her childhood in a two-parent family in which the father was the principal income earner and the mother was responsible for the home. (The mother of one woman taught school for a period of time when her children were older.) With one exception they came from small families: four came from families with two children, one came from a family of three, and one from a family of ten living children. All of the women had at least one grandparent who either lived nearby or had considerable contact. These women think of family life in childhood as being, for the most part, happy and secure.

There is more variety in the family situations of the women in their middle years. One woman never married. One woman at forty-nine married a man who had two grown children by a previous marriage. Three women married and had two or three children. Another married, had four
children, divorced, and was widowed after a brief second marriage. Contact with extended family and responsibility for aging parents or other relatives varied.

In their eighties none of the women is still married. Two of the women have only a few close relatives still living; the rest have many. The four women who had children have from three to eleven grandchildren, and three of the women have great-grandchildren. Most find at least some of their family members live at considerable distance from them. Although they value family connections, the part that family plays in their lives varies greatly at this point.

Family

Family tradition is important to Catherine, eighty-seven, and she knows stories of her great-grandfather's going from poor boy to gentleman farmer and her father's success as a pioneer in the poultry business, winning the grand prize at the Madison Square Gardens Poultry Show when he was eighteen and again fifty years later. He developed a technique for shipping day-old chicks long distances to other poultry farms and received acclaim as "the dean of the poultry industry." She remembers her mother's ability to manage a large household and still have time to help the community doctor in emergencies.
I think one thing that was unusual about my parents, several of us in our family have said this so often, particularly in that era that one parent, you know, was kind of a dominant person. Both of our parents were very strong personalities, and I think that was always very evident....I think my mother to have managed everything was a very extraordinary woman.

Catherine was born on the farm that her great-grandfather had bought and where both her grandfather and father were born. The oldest of twelve children, six girls and six boys, she was born when her mother was twenty and her father was twenty-five. One child died as an infant and another as a child, but the remaining ten children lived to adulthood.

My own childhood, I think, probably, now I’m speaking of my early childhood, I think it was very unusual probably, because it was of two extremes. I was either very involved, according to my grandmother, from the time I could walk, [laughs] with little jobs and duties for the family, or I was taken by my grandmother to [her] older brother’s in New York where I was surrounded by adults....In retrospect, I realize my grandmother was probably disappointed that my mother married so young, and secondly, I’m sure she didn’t approve of such a large family, and so I think she gave up on her own daughter, and espoused my cause [laughs] because I can remember her, when she would visit me, complaining that I was always blamed for any mischief the younger children would get into, and that I had to work all the time. One of the things that she would say, "From the time Catherine could walk, she was put on a stool and taught how to wash dishes." So I think in her way of compensating me for this, which she thought was more than a child should do, she would take me off to New York.
While visiting in New York City, Catherine spent her time in the company of adults, the extended family of her great-uncle. She remembers herself, dressed in a pinafore, going into the formal parlor over and over to watch the cuckoo clock strike and admire the peacock feathers in two vases on the fireplace mantel.

As she grew up, she continued to have responsibilities for her younger brothers and sisters, and she believes that the praise and attention she received in her village for being such a good little girl and helping her mother kept her from resenting her duties. She was in college when her youngest brother, twenty-two years younger than she, was born. After college she postponed graduate school and began to work.

...because I was offered all kinds of grants and fellowships to go abroad or here or wherever, anything I would do, and I just was determined I was going to work. I had this determination I wanted to work and do things for my younger brothers and sisters, and so really nothing really deterred me from it.

It was during these early working years in New Jersey that she met her future husband, an entomologist, who was thirteen years older than she. He had grown up in Illinois, the son of Swedish immigrants. Catherine remembers his telling her about his early interest in insects.
...when he was a young boy, he would go out with all the equipment that looked as if he were going fishing, but he'd have with him his things for collecting insects, because people would tease him so if they found out he was collecting insects.

He had come New Jersey to teach at a university, and at the time she met him he was working on a federal government project.

They were married two years later and came to the Midwest where her husband had accepted a position as a full professor at a large university. The work he had come to the university to do could not be done because the Depression made it impossible to get funds, so he searched for a project that could be done under the conditions that then prevailed and found his life's work.

...in the end, he published a two-volume work for the identification of larvae of insects, and it's been used all over the world. It was an absolutely monumental work. It took twenty-five years all together.

Home and its associations with family mean a great deal to Catherine. She still lives, as she has for sixty years, in the house that she and her husband moved to soon after they came to Central Ohio. In 1935 her son Mark was born, and Michael was born four years later. It was also during the 1930s that several of Catherine's siblings lived with her and her husband while they were students...
at the university, helping out with chores and such tasks as taking the baby for a stroll while Catherine prepared dinner.

I'm sure that I prepared dinner, but afterwards, and during the years that my brother, Richard, was here, he and I evidently did the clean up after dinner, and I know we used to kind of play games while we were doing it. For instance, we had conversations in which we would quote lines from Shakespeare plays back and forth in our conversation. Also, in our family, there had been several of us who, I suppose you'd call them rhymesters, and maybe we would just think them up spontaneously and have conversations that way, so they were really very pleasant times.

Although sometimes acquaintances questioned "in not the kindest manner" how she could do all the volunteer work that she did and still "do the proper things for my children," she remembers that she planned carefully so that she could almost always be there when they came home for lunch and that they would have "brief but wonderful little conversations." She speaks of the family doctor calling the household "the most cooperative family I've ever known," and of a woman who helped with the housework for many years saying, "I tell everybody that I've never known anybody who appreciated their children as much as you do."

The family had many outdoor interests. Catherine's favorite summer memories include picnics, outings, and weeks spent at a lake in New Hampshire. In 1948 her
husband had a six-week commitment at a university in Minnesota, and then he joined the family for a vacation.

...I had gone east in June to go to my twenty-fifth college reunion...and the boys, they were young in 1948, they went with me. Somehow or another it was then decided that we would spend that summer...near Jaffrey, New Hampshire...on Thorndike Pond....So we were there that whole summer. It was one of the greatest summers we ever had really, and I think back at a lot of funny--it was a pretty primitive kind of camp. The only bathing facility we had was that little lake, and it was pretty cold when you first went there,...and one of the funniest things that my younger son, Michael, could do was to do a takeoff of me plunging into that cold water, but anyway, it was quite wonderful.

She remembers each boy’s participation in the Prairie Trek (a summer-long camping and nature study experience), and a seven-week vacation the family took to national parks.

...in 1950, we had a major [trip] for which we had saved and planned for a long time. We had decided, my husband and I thought that that would be the year when the boys would be old enough to enjoy and really appreciate everything we saw, and still be young enough to be willing to go with the family, and I guess I have to say that must have been one thing we did right. Mark was fifteen, and Michael was eleven. We were gone seven weeks and never seemed hurried, but we did, it was mainly visiting national parks with a few other things included...

She is pleased about the fact that although neither son followed his father into entomology--the older is a professor of history and the younger, a landscape
architect—an interest in nature is evident in either their vocations or avocations.

...and as a family, we really liked outdoor things too....My husband could add so much to that sort of thing because he knew birds and wild flowers and trees as well as insects and so that was very interesting. And although neither one of our sons became entomologists, they both have tremendous interest in outdoor things.

Catherine took an interest in her husband's career and was able to describe in detail his major professors, their careers, his contribution to his profession, and his students. She says of his graduate students, "...I think I could say almost without exception [they] distinguished themselves in entomology and became chairmen of departments and various and sundry things and always felt so warmly toward him." They often entertained his students at dinner, and she is still in touch with some of them.

After her husband retired from the university, he spent a number of years as a visiting professor in different parts of the country, and Catherine accompanied him much of the time. He was eighty-three when he died.

Catherine is a great admirer of her sons and daughter-in-law and has stories about each which show his or her special qualities. Although her sons and their families now live in the East, their strong relationship with her
continues through letters, telephone calls, and visits.

I think I’m fortunate that both of my sons write letters to me. People tell me that’s unusual, [laughs] and they’re very good about it, and the older one who’s chairman of the history department at [an eastern college], maybe once every two weeks, he writes a long letter, and then I feel guilty that he’s taken time to do it, although it’s wonderful to get them. And I’ve had— they have the son and the daughter—and since Christmas, I’ve had wonderful letters from both of them. Ellen’s now in London. She wrote a long letter after she was kind of settled in there, telling me about what she was doing and everything, and Matthew, [a college freshman], he’s very clever. He wrote such a nice letter, and both of them in their note, both of them thanked me for all the effort that I put into having them [for a visit at Christmas] and all that I’d done. Now I think that’s rather unusual. A lot of young people don’t think of anything like that, you know.

She acknowledges her great pride in her six grandchildren, who range in age from eleven to twenty-one, saying with a laugh, "Did I show you the pictures of my grandchildren?" Her stories about them highlight their unusual intelligence, personality, consideration, creativity, physical skills, business acumen, sense of adventure, and social consciousness. Although she can laugh at herself, it is clear that she feels that if her friends could only know these remarkable children, they would see that she is not exaggerating.

Eight of Catherine’s siblings are still living, and she speaks of occasional visits, including a recent one
from her youngest brother, who is in his mid-sixties.

Catherine says that people occasionally ask her why she doesn’t move back East where she has family, and she responds that her life centers here now; she adds, "So here I am with no family anywhere near, but very content and enjoying the fact that my family like to come here, which they do."

Emily, eighty-four, knows some family history, but wishes she knew more. "I’m so sorry I did not ask more questions when I was able to get answers. But you know, I wasn’t interested at the time." Her father’s family settled in West Virginia, where a town now bears the family name. The old family home has been restored and is being used as a restaurant, and Emily and her daughter and grandchildren have been to see it.

Her father and mother lived in a small town on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River, and it was here that Emily was born. Her sister Harriet was seven years old at the time. She remembers a story about an old cherry sideboard being floated down the river from Pittsburgh. She had the six-foot-long piece of furniture in her home for many years, and when she moved to a smaller home, she handed it down to her grandson, who had the only dining room big enough to hold it.
Her father worked in agricultural sales and traveled in his work. When the children were older, her mother became a teacher, having been certified by test; Emily remembers that her mother rode a train to work each day.

Emily has many memories of spending time at her aunt’s house. Her mother and her aunt were close, and since the families lived in adjoining towns when Emily was young, they could spend a lot of time together. Her uncle owned a small railroad, and their house, complete with a cook and a yardman, was right on the Ohio River.

She and her cousin Gordon, who was seven months younger than she, were close friends throughout childhood, and many of her memories of childhood involve him. When they were seven, they began an annual tradition of decorating the Christmas tree together at Gordon’s house, where the family celebration took place. They walked to school together, played jackstraws and tiddlywinks, and had a treehouse in a favorite tree. In spite of their close childhood friendship, they drifted apart as adults. Emily says that after he moved to Florida and took a job with a bank, "We didn’t have any correspondence; I’m a very poor correspondent." He is no longer living.

Emily’s memories of her parents include a conversation with her father about the modern practices of smoking and bobbing one’s hair.
That was not too well thought of at that time, bobbing your hair, especially. He said, well, he would much rather his daughter would bob her hair than smoke; I think I had it cut that day [laughs].

She learned her lifetime love of bridge from her parents, who played whatever game of cards was popular at the time and were happy to teach her.

I can't remember any time I wasn't playing bridge. My mother and father played bridge, and I used to watch them; that's how I got started. That was back in 1917, and I used to play with them sometimes just for fun. Then they played 500. Then we played bridge, and then when duplicate came on, we started in that. I don't know, I've just always liked cards.

The man who became her husband was a college student co-oping in her hometown. They met when the young man she was currently dating introduced them as they stood in line at a movie theater. They began to date, and soon the old boyfriend was forgotten.

Her wedding story shows her family to be as fun-loving and easy-going as she is. Her boyfriend picked her up from the school where she was teaching one afternoon, and they decided to get married that evening.

So I went home, [laughs] and my aunt was at the house....She went home to get her cook, and my sister went to the florist, and they had a regular bridal bouquet made up. She went to the bakery and bought all the cookies he had, [laughs] and they invited people. And we must have had about thirty people, I suppose, to the wedding that night, and
none of them knew they were coming to a wedding [laughs].

In addition to putting the wedding together and inviting their friends to what the friends thought was an evening of bridge, both she and her mother found time to buy new dresses.

Yes, and my father came home, and he was rather put out. He said nobody ever told him anything. They said, well, they didn’t know this to tell him [laughs].

When the minister was seen approaching the house, her mother made a show of having everyone put away the cards because of this "unexpected" visit, and the surprised guests eventually realized that they had been invited to a wedding.

Emily continued to teach for a year after she was married, and she and her husband lived with her parents. Not long after she was married, her father died of a heart attack; he was fifty-four. Her daughter Carol was born, and they continued to live with her mother until her daughter was five. At that time her husband was transferred, and they moved to a small town in Ohio.

They moved frequently as her husband, an industrial engineer, received promotions, and Emily enjoyed getting to know people in each new town.
When Carol was ten, Paul, Jr. was born. About that time Emily's mother, who was sixty-four, developed leukemia. She was hospitalized after the diagnosis and lived only six weeks.

In spite of the difference in age, the children were good friends. "They could squabble just like they would—and I would get mad at them, and they'd laugh." Emily remembers that Carol loved reading. "Every time I went anyplace, I would bring a book back for Carol, or if she would have some money saved up, she would buy a book." Paul, Jr., on the other hand liked erector sets. "He still likes to do things with his hands."

Emily and Paul seem to have had a good life together, raising their children and doing some traveling with friends when they could. They established a tradition of making twenty or thirty pounds of fruitcake at Christmas. "...Paul and I would usually stay most of Thanksgiving Day cutting up the fruit and making it. It took me to midnight to get it all baked."

When her husband became ill, she cared for him at home for five years. "He was not a bed invalid, but he couldn't get out either, just heart trouble." He died eight years before the time of our interviews, when he was seventy-two.
Emily's life centers on her family. Although she does not see her son Paul, Jr. often, she keeps in touch with him by telephone. He and his wife live in Florida and have a son who is getting married soon. The whole northern contingent of the family hopes to go down for the wedding. Emily is very close to her daughter Carol, who lives in a nearby town. She works at her daughter's restaurant about five hours a day and says she sees more of her now than she ever has in her life.

Carol and her husband have a son and daughter, Erik and Lisa, and each of them has two children, giving Carol four great-grandchildren between the ages of one-and-a-half and six years old. Emily's own mother never wanted to be called grandmother (or mother), but Emily loves being a grandmother and great-grandmother.

And I think that's one reason, when mine came along, I wanted them to call me grandmother. Now my great-grandchildren call me "GG" for great-grandmother.... Because great-grandmother is an awful mouthful for little ones. And they seem to have fun calling me GG.

Emily takes great pleasure in her great-grandchildren's artwork, and her refrigerator always has at least one of their drawings hanging on it.

I don't know if I told you about the drawing that my great-granddaughter did for me. Well, she's great...She brought a picture, and it had a bridge--
all different colors—and up here were people, and she said that was my bridge group. Now that was her idea of a bridge group [laughs].

She describes Erik’s wife Susan as a lovely woman who "makes wonderful soup, and she always brings me some, or she brings me other things that they have had, which I like, because I do not like to cook for one person."

Emily, Carol, and Erik keep in touch by telephone as well as in person.

Paul, my son, makes fun of us, because of the way we keep tabs on each other here in [town]. When Carol goes somewhere, she calls me when she gets back, and I call her if I’ve been some place, and we call Erik.

If Carol cannot reach Emily when she thinks she should be able to, she calls one of Emily’s neighbors, who has a key to the house. One night when Emily had left the telephone off the hook, she awoke to find the neighbor in her bedroom, checking to make sure she was all right.

Emily enjoys seeing her family having fun together.

Oh, on Christmas you should see us. I just get over in the corner and sit, but they seem to have fun together, and Lisa and her family live [about two hours away] and Erik and his family live here in [town]. So with Carol here, Lisa is up here quite often, and we’re all together, a very close-knit family which I feel very grateful for.
Emily's sister Harriet, who is seven years older than she, is still living in her own apartment in Indiana. Emily regrets that they live too far apart to visit often. "We're just sorry that we can't get together any more often than we do. We all went down for her ninetieth birthday last year." Her sister has severe arthritis but otherwise "seems to be getting along all right." Emily spoke poignantly of the problems of getting together now that they are old.

She won't travel by herself, and I won't either. I don't know why when you get older, you lose so much of your--I don't know what you'd call it, I won't say ability, that isn't it--your confidence. You lose so much confidence in yourself. Now why, I don't know, you would think it would be the other way around.

She believes that the older you get, the more important children are, but she worries a little that she might be a problem for her daughter.

I feel sorry for her sometimes. I tell her she has five grandchildren instead of four. I'm the other one. They are very thoughtful of me, I'm very fortunate.

Laura, eighty-two, was surrounded by family in her childhood but at eighty-two has little family left. She was born in Mexico, where her father, who was English, and her mother had gone to live soon after they were married. Her father worked for the railroad, and they lived in
Mexico until Laura was three. Political unrest made her parents decide to return to Illinois, where her father took another position with the railroad. Soon after they returned, her father, who was riding in a hand car with other railroad executives, was killed in a head-on collision. After his death, she and her mother went to live with her maternal grandparents and an aunt and uncle. "And, I think my mother was just out of it for about two years. She was very upset. My aunt, I think, paid more attention to me than my mother."

Her grandfather, concerned about his daughter's depression, arranged for a visit to an old friend of his in Virginia, who had children about her age, and her mother met a young man in whom she became interested. After she returned to Illinois, he visited a few times, and then the courtship was interrupted when her grandfather got sick and had to retire, taking the family to California where they owned orange groves.

The young couple, who decided by mail to marry, met in Chicago for the wedding, and Laura was her mother's attendant. The new family moved to Virginia to live.

I never thought it was sort of an unusual childhood, but I think it must have been. At least at the time it didn't seem unusual. I didn't know anybody lived any other way. But, I was living with five adults and I, my—when mother married my stepfather, we moved in with his mother and
sister....When we moved,...they moved with us, and then finally they decided they wanted to go back to Hamilton, and my grandmother from California came and moved in with us [laughs].

During this time Laura was also traveling to spend time with grandparents. She went to California for a few months to visit when her grandfather was sick and again to stay with her grandmother when her grandfather died. When she was five she went to England for eight months to visit her paternal grandmother.

The moving and traveling stopped when she reached high school age. "That's the first time that I really put down roots." Her family seemed more cosmopolitan than some of the other families in their town, and her mother encouraged her to think for herself--but only about some matters as she later came to see.

Anyway, I wore knickers, white linen knickers--that was the style--and that wasn't quite acceptable to some of the people. And I know the principal of our school said--[laughs] I went down to play basketball, and he had motioned me off the court and came over, and he said, "Child, don't you know that women in men's clothing is an abomination in the sight of the Lord." [laughs] Well, this sort of took me aback. I went home and I told my mother, and she sort of laughed, and she said, "Well, that's the way some people feel, but you don't have to feel that way" [laughs].

While she was in high school, her half brother was born. "Then I went off to college so I really, for the
next four years when he was growing up, I didn’t, except when I was home on vacation, I didn’t have much contact with him."

Laura’s mother was happy to have her go to college, but not for academic reasons.

I think the only reason I really got to college—because none of the women in my family went to college—the men did but not the women. And I think the only reason I got to college is that my mother felt that she had lived in larger places and had more ambitions for me and so she wanted me to. I think she thought I would meet more eligible men [laughs]. She didn’t—college didn’t mean a thing to her [laughs]. She was a very bright woman and a very charming woman. But, you know, you didn’t, you didn’t do that sort of thing. So, I think it was social, purely social.

Laura began her college studies as a journalism major, but what she studied was of no concern to her mother. "I wasn’t going to use it anyway, was the general idea." She eventually changed her major to psychology, and after she graduated, she went back home to teach in a high school/junior college, getting her master’s degree by means of summer study.

Her stepfather died in his fifties, leaving a distraught wife and a fourteen-year-old son. Laura postponed for a year her opportunity to begin doctoral work in order to be available to her family, but began her studies the following year. Her mother’s reaction to her
decision was "Are you out of your head. Do you know what
you are doing? I need you here."

I think it was because she thought it took me away
from home. She wanted me at home. Now, when my
grandmother, when my grandfather died, my
grandmother came to live with us. You know, in
those days, that's exactly what happened. They had
no other choices. And, so, I think my mother
thought if I didn't get married, someplace that she
could come, I had better stay down there and live
with her. I think that's the sort of thing. I am
not sure, but I think that's it. That's one of the
things I have never resolved.

On the Friday before the Monday on which her general
examination for the Ph.D. was to begin, she got a
telephone call from the hospital. Her mother had been
admitted for tests, but her mental state was so bad the
doctors were concerned. Laura's mother wanted her at her
side, so she took the train from Central Ohio to Virginia.

...the minute I walked into the room, my mother
just got, she was just herself again and was the
whole time I was there. And, here I was, you know,
they kept wanting me to stay... until they did the
test; then they wanted the results of the test.
And I said, I have got an examination. Well, we
can't guarantee what your mother will do. [laughs]
So, I stayed until Sunday. Sunday night I took the
train back, and I went to the exam the next day.

Because of the trauma of her weekend and the loss of
sleep the night before the examination began, she did not
pass the first day's material. Her committee learned of
her ordeal and allowed her to repeat that day's test, and
she received her degree.

And after I got my degree, my mother, I think, was very proud of the fact that I had done it. But she never wanted to know what I did. And, she never, she never wanted to talk about what I did. So, that was it.

Some years later Laura’s mother had a series of small strokes, and Laura took a three-month leave of absence to be with her. When the time came for her to go back to work, she arranged for twenty-four-hour-a-day care for her mother and visited every three weeks. Her mother stopped talking, and Laura attributed her loss of speech to the strokes. Once when Laura was leaving, her mother was asleep, and she left without saying goodbye.

Well, the next time I came back, I was, I kept talking to her you know, not expecting any response, and all of a sudden out of the clear sky she says, "Don’t ever leave here again without saying goodbye to me." And I nearly fell off the stool [laugh]. But, I think that really she thought when I came back down there, and I was there that much that I was going to stay. And, I tried to tell her that I couldn’t. I didn’t have any means. I didn’t have any money. And, she certainly didn’t have any to give me. And, then, I couldn’t have survived in that small town. And, that was the way it was until the day she died. We never resolved this thing.

Laura has been almost a surrogate mother for her half brother Grant, who is fourteen years younger than she. Grant lived in their family home in Virginia for many years. When he could no longer manage, he moved to a
retirement home, and in recent weeks he has moved to a
nursing home. Laura is directing his care with the help
of some people still in Virginia. She and her brother
talk on the phone each week, and she tries to go to see
him each year.

Her only other relatives are cousins who live in
Georgia—her mother's brother's daughter and her two
daughters. They keep in touch and exchange Christmas
presents but do not get together very often. "They came
up and helped me with the house when I closed it up. But,
I don't see them very often. Once about every five years
or something like that."

Laura closed her family home in Virginia about six
months before our interviews because it became clear that
Grant was not going to be living there again. As she went
through old family possessions that had been stored in the
attic, memories enveloped her; she experienced some
sadness in thinking about the fact that most of her family
had died, but she also was reminded of some happy times.

All the things that these things stirred up,...for
instance, one was a little crocheted, tightly-
crocheted thing you put around your neck, and it had
a snap on it, a little collar, and it had a dickey
down the front. And I think as long as I could
remember, my mother, as a family joke, my mother--
we'd go up to the attic every so often to clear
things out, and my mother would give this to my
grandmother, and the next year, my grandmother would
give it back. This got to be a family joke. Well,
little things like this. Well, what it stirred up was, it was almost like I was going back and living in another era, another thing, just memories just came flooding in, you know, and I really didn’t know what world I belonged in there for awhile.

Julia, eighty-five, mentions her mother only in passing, but she seems to admire her father. She says that although he was on a salary "it wasn’t very big, and I think he was not paid what he was worth..." He was an elder in the United Presbyterian Church for most of his life, and she sees the attendance of the other elders at his funeral as a fitting tribute.

Her paternal grandparents lived fifty miles away--too far to go in the winter for Christmas--but she enjoyed the time she spent at their house in the summer. In speaking of her grandmother’s death she says, "I loved her so, and Grandpa was important too. I spent lots of summers there, and I got quite a bit of the village life when I went to visit them."

Julia has only one sibling, a sister, Claire, who is two years younger than she, and Julia felt that as the older daughter, she received more of their father’s attention than Claire did.

I think my father missed having a boy, so he kind of made a special, he kind of made, took me to games and things like that, basketball games. He’d say let’s go tonight or something, and it affected my sister, that dad picked on me. He didn’t realize
that he was making a selection that he liked me better than Claire, but she thought that, so it was too bad. And I tried to tell her that it wasn’t really, but I liked, I was in high school before she was, so I was going to the high school games, and he wanted to go to the high school games, so he would take me.

Their lives were quite different: Julia went to college, and Claire did not; Julia married at forty-nine and did not have children, and Claire married young and had three children; and Julia moved away from home after college, and Claire continued to live in their hometown until she was in her eighties. In recent years Claire has begun to be confused and can no longer live alone. Although she is not happy about leaving her home, she has come to stay with her daughter Connie, who lives close to Julia’s retirement community. It is not clear how often the sisters see each other, apparently whenever Julia visits Connie and her husband, but Julia worries about her sister.

So she seems to be settled, and she has given up her apartment, so she wouldn’t have any place else to go. It’s a very sad sort of situation, and I don’t know what’s going to happen to her.

Julia has given Claire a subscription to Reader’s Digest in large print and recently bought her a large-print Bible.
...and she called me the day it came, and she was so thrilled to have it. Of course, she doesn’t see well enough that she can read her own Bible, so when I found this, I ordered one, the three volumes.

The most important relationship in her life appears to have been her marriage, which occurred late in life. Her friend Sarah invited her to Christmas Eve dinner along with Sarah’s husband’s brother Arthur, because Julia and Arthur had been childhood classmates.

I had known Arthur a long time, because I sat behind him in the fifth grade. I sat behind him in the fifth grade, and he always had--the one thing that I remember about him is that he always came in the classroom--he had stopped in the washroom, and he had put water on his hair, and the water ran down his neck, and I used to watch the water run down his neck.

In high school she had worked for the town newspaper Arthur’s father owned and had become friends with his parents.

The dinner must have been successful as an opportunity to become reacquainted, because the next summer when she was working on a graduate degree in summer school and living in a university dormitory, she and Arthur had dinner together almost every night. "...but it ended up that I got married, married him, so that was my love affair. We really were very happy together."
They were married when she was forty-nine. Arthur, who was divorced, had two grown children by his first marriage. They both worked and shared living expenses.

Arthur and I were married why, you know, we kept separate bank accounts, but we joined, we paid the prices, the cost of living together, so it was all right, I wasn't sposing, supposing that Arthur would have everything, and I'd be taken care of, I just, we just shared it.

Arthur had a heart attack and retired about three or four years before Julia. After Julia retired, they began to take a trip each fall, usually to England with side trips to other countries, frequently Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. Julia had taught English literature for most of her career, and that and the fact that Arthur had Welsh ancestors and Julia, Scotch-Irish ancestors gave their travel an extra dimension. When Julia thinks of the first years after retirement, it is the travel and planning for travel that she remembers.

Arthur, who reluctantly made the first trip, was enthusiastic about the later ones, but plans for what would have been their last trip were abandoned when Arthur unexpectedly said that he did not think they should go. Julia later felt that this was an indication that even then he was not feeling well. He died the following March of a heart attack. Julia has pleasant memories of their
years together. "Well, we had a good marriage, a good fun, we had a lot of fun, and we did things together and so on. So, I missed him, but I knew it couldn't be helped."

Julia wrote a family history for the children in her family and presented it to them for Christmas. She and Arthur had started to work on his family history and after he died, she completed it, saying that it kept her immersed in his family.

Julia’s closest relationship in her later years is with her niece Connie, her sister Claire’s daughter. It is Connie who provides most of her transportation, invites her to spend the holidays, and is available for advice and help with decision-making.

Margaret, eighty-five, has nothing but pleasant memories as she looks back on her early childhood. She greatly admires her father, a Methodist minister, seeing him as wise and compassionate in dealing with his family and his congregation. She credits both her parents, but especially her father, with instilling in her good values.

In one of the few stories she tells about her mother, her mother takes her to a missionary meeting at someone’s home, and she is given a silver thimble to play with. When the thimble is discovered at her home days later, she is forced to admit that she took it, and her mother
marches her back to confess. "That was my first lesson in 'Thou shalt not steal'" [laughs].

She tells many stories about her father—his interest in hearing about the children's school day at the dinner table each night, his success in counseling parishioners, his compassion for the downtrodden. In one favorite story, her father comes home one day and says he has seen in the newspaper that the Mississippi River has flooded and people have escaped the waters with only the clothes on their backs. They hold a family meeting, and her father suggests that they take the money they would have spent on Christmas and buy clothes to send to the flood victims.

So that afternoon, my mother and my father and my sister and I went out, and we shopped for these people, and we bought sweaters and socks and underwear and stuff and came back, and I’ll never forget, and see I was only in first or second grade in school, and we packed these boxes on the dining room table and all went to the post office and mailed them.

There were no Christmas presents that year, but the children learned to sacrifice for others.

Even though the family had little money, her father thought the girls should learn social graces by practicing good manners in a formal setting, and so occasionally he would take the family out to eat.
...every once in awhile, my father would come in from his study, and he'd say, "I want you girls to get dressed up tonight. I'm going to take you out to dinner." He thought that was part of doing something for your children, taking you out to eat, where you had to mind your manners and so forth, and so we would go out, get dressed up then, and that was an exciting time. We'd go over to the hotel; we could walk from our place and eat at the hotel. How different things are today.

At this point the family consisted of only her, her parents, and her sister, who was six years older. She says little about her sister in childhood—they were probably too far apart in age to have much in common—but as adults they became friends.

The peaceful nature of family life seemed evident in the duets her mother and father played after dinner each night. Both of her parents were college graduates and both were musicians. Her mother had majored in voice and piano and her father played the trombone and the euphonium. "...every night after supper was over...they would play a little music, you know. I just accepted that. I thought it happened in every home."

Margaret remembers everything as idyllic, but perhaps it was not so. When she was in fourth grade, her father became sick. "He had kind of a nervous breakdown, and he lost weight, and he wasn't well..." They moved to Ohio to a farm her mother had inherited from her father after he and her mother retired to town. It was here that her
sister, nine years younger, was born. Her father spent two years recuperating, and when he returned to the ministry, he changed denominations. From this point on they were members of the Presbyterian Church.

Margaret was close to her grandparents. She cherishes an early memory of walking hand in hand with her maternal grandfather after he met the family at the train and feeling that nothing could hurt her while she was holding his hand.

Her maternal grandmother had suffered a number of small strokes which affected her ability to walk. Each morning she was helped to her chair in the living room, and there she spent her day, reading her Bible or chatting with anyone who had time to chat. When her mother would scold her, Margaret’s grandmother would call her over to her chair:

She would motion to me...her chair was over by the big secretary...and she would open that drawer and get out a pink peppermint and give it to me with my mother not knowing. Just kind of a well, I feel sorry for you honey. Here, here’s a little peppermint. And, you know, when I went to Union [the college where she was housemother], I kept peppermints, and when the girls would come in with problems and crying and tearful, I would give them a peppermint...

Her maternal grandparents were Ohio farmers, but her paternal grandmother had come from Virginia and was a
southern lady.

...she always had pretty clothes, she did lots of hand work and embroidery and stuff like that, and it was always a joy when she came to our house. And I can remember so well, I was going someplace one time, and I was whistling, and she said to me, "Now, ladies do not whistle." [laughs] It's funny to hear things like that now, you know. She was a delightful person, and I adored her [laughs].

She remembers telling people with pride that her grandmother was a cousin of Stonewall Jackson and having her father stop her from bragging by saying he thought he remembered a horse thief somewhere in the family.

Although her childhood seemed close to perfect to her, her adult life was difficult. She married a man just back from World War I; he was still in uniform when she met him. They had four children, two girls and two boys. The family experienced hard times during the Depression.

...my husband went to work one morning, and it was boarded up. We heard rumors, but we didn't believe it or didn't want to. And here we were, there wasn't any unemployment money then, it was just--we were just tossed out to the wolves.

She remembers feeling sad when she had to tell her son Warren she couldn't give him the few cents he wanted to go to the movies and her pride when she later saw him washing windows at the bus station to earn the money for himself. "So they learned very early on to go out and
work, and they've all been real good workers, you know."

She found that her husband was not as interested in working as she was, and she often had to support the family. When their children were older, she decided to go to northern Ohio to find work, and when he would not go with her, they were divorced.

After working in northern Ohio for a while, she married again. Her second husband had contracted malaria during the war and was not too well. He died of a heart attack after they had been married only three years. At this point she became depressed and found it difficult to get involved in anything.

The next year she went to live with her parents because she and her sisters were worried about them. She took a job in the small town where they lived and her depression faded. Her father had angina and had increasing difficulty breathing. One day after a morning spent with Margaret and her son Larry, who was visiting, he became ill. Margaret called a doctor.

...and I finally got one that hadn't attended him and didn't know anything. I just told him he had angina. Daddy—or the doctor said, "I think we better take him to the hospital." Daddy looked up at me, and I knew what he was saying, "Please don't let them do this." He started to cough—and this was after the doctor left—he started to cough, and I raised him up, and of course, I knew from nurse's training, if you did that, you were very likely to end the thing for them, so but he did. He just took
one or two gasps and he was gone, but I always was
glad that I didn’t send him to the hospital,
although he might have lived a little longer, but
it was inevitable.

Margaret continued to work until she could no longer
leave her mother alone at home, and then she quit to take
care of her. She bought a house in the town where her
older sister lived and took her mother there. Her older
daughter Dorothy and her two children came to live with
her after Dorothy’s separation from her husband, and
Margaret shared in the care of her mother until she died
at eighty-nine.

Margaret was very fond of her younger sister Frances
and Frances’s husband Jim, who taught botany at a
university in Tennessee. Margaret visited them frequently
and joined them and their friends for trips in the Smokey
Mountains. She remembers the shock the whole family
experienced when Jim drowned while on a botany expedition
in Costa Rica, and she speaks of how much she misses
Frances, who later died of leukemia.

...in just four or five years, she was gone, and she
wasn’t that old, and it seemed like she never got
the right treatment. Maybe I’m just thinking that,
but I don’t really know. She was my younger sister,
and I visited with her an awful lot, and I’ve missed
her so terribly.
Most difficult for Margaret was the death of her younger daughter Barbara, who died at age fifty of cancer. "I’ve missed her so. She was, aside from being my daughter, she was my good friend." Barbara, a kindergarten teacher, had severe pain after being bumped by a child on the playground. When she went to the hospital, she was diagnosed with advanced ovarian cancer.

And we went right up to see, to the hospital, and I’ll never forget when we walked in, and I sat down beside her, she said, "Mom, I may not make this." Oh, it was just terrible, and from then on, she went to Cleveland Clinic for chemotherapy, and it nearly killed her, the chemotherapy. She’d be so deathly sick for so long afterward, and she lived about a year.

Margaret’s oldest daughter Dorothy married a widower whom Margaret likes very much and moved into his house. Margaret is now renting Dorothy’s house, and Dorothy’s son lives in the second floor apartment while waiting for his own house to be built. Dorothy and her husband live nearby.

Although Margaret has a large family, there are a number of family members that she seldom gets to see. Her son Larry lives in Montana and is not able to visit.

So, I’ve been out there several times, but they can’t get away to come here. My son and his wife have a log cabin, and they have animals. They had horses, they don’t have cows or anything like that, but they have dogs and horses and so forth, and it’s
just hard for them to get away. So I've been out there to see them.

She has eleven grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren, and she wishes she could see them more often. "I hate it. I hate them being so far apart, because you do not get to see them." She remembers how much her grandparents meant to her and she laments the fact that she sees her grandchildren and great-grandchildren so seldom and cannot have that kind of a relationship with them. She attempts to keep in touch over the distances and enjoys any opportunity she has to spend time with them.

In the summertime, my granddaughter and her husband have a cottage, in fact they have two cottages, his parents have a cottage too, up by Lake Lee up in Michigan, and this is one thing I look forward to, and I was there last summer for a week, and they have three little children, and there's boats, and they go fishing, and they do all sorts of things. I get myself ensconced in a nice comfortable chair and watch it all.

Another grandson called recently to say that he would be working in a nearby town and would rent a car and drive up to see her. She was thrilled. "Isn't that great? Oh, I love him. He's a great guy. Yes, I'm very fond of him."

Anne, eighty-four, says that she does not remember much from her childhood, and she has only a few memories about
her family from that period. One memory is of going to Chicago on the train for a family reunion at Thanksgiving. She was about ten at the time and remembers the fun of going up and down the aisle passing out the box lunches they had brought with them.

She tells of the family's "one great adventure"—a trip East by train from their home in northern Illinois. They went to Niagara Falls, visited relatives in Pennsylvania, and toured Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

We were a family of four pulling into the train station with—my mother and brother and I sat in the station while my father went out and reconnoitered and found a hotel room. Then we all traipsed to the hotel room. None of this making reservations ahead of time.

By the time she was in high school, the family had been extended to include her paternal grandfather, a niece, a maiden sister of her mother, and some nursing help. The only stories she relates from high school days are about her courtship.

That's where I met my husband, in high school. We were assigned partners in physics, and I never knew what was going on in physics. He'd always say don't you remember physics so and so, and I'd--and of course, that was one of the things he majored in in college--and I didn't remember anything, but that's where I met him, and we had a good time in high school. Nothing outstanding particularly.
They went to movies on most dates. The first talking movies were in a town twelve miles away, and going that distance in a car required that her boyfriend, later to be her husband, find a high school teacher and his wife to go along as chaperons.

The romance lasted through her college years in Iowa and his in Illinois. After they graduated they worked a year to save money and then got married. Her husband supported the family, and Anne’s domains were children, church, and community. Their children, two boys and a girl, were all born in Illinois while her husband worked as alumni secretary of his college.

The family moved to Tennessee when Anne’s husband took a job with the Methodist Church. Anne and her family helped to establish a new church in their community, getting involved in activities from choir to committees. "Because of being in on the beginning of a church, it meant a lot to the whole family, and it still does."

Anne found that raising three children in the days of the Depression called for ingenuity, and she remembers with pleasure scheming to make a simple Christmas seem festive.

So we made a big thing of making elaborate wrappings, make the wrappings look interesting or having clues in boxes so they wandered up to the attic and down to the basement and that sort of
thing. We tried to extend it somewhat.

The Christmas the children got bicycles required the efforts of the whole family, who pooled their resources to come up with the fourteen dollars each gift cost.

...but I can remember the Christmas they each got a bicycle. It took what we had, what they had, what the grandparents had scraped together to buy them each a bicycle. As I recall, they cost about fourteen dollars a piece, but that was a huge sum for us to get together. It took all of our resources.

I asked her about family activities, and she reminded me that "they grew up in the Depression so there was a limit to what you did, or what we did." She remembers playing board games with one child, reading to another, and watching a third go off to play with his dog. She was an attentive mother. She sewed her daughter dresses in the latest style—bouffant skirts, strapless tops with boning, and endless starched petticoats.

Oh, to make one of those dresses with those skirts that went around forever, and then they get underwear or slips, you had to make the slip too. Then you made one slip that you starched, you know about that...

She wrote to her older son daily while he served in the Korean Conflict.
Well, when Ron was in the service, I wrote to him every day, so that meant, the dinkiest little item was in the letters, and he's got them all. [LH: That's great.] I told him if you don't get a letter, it's not my fault, Uncle Sam has let you down.

She mentions that she was ironing for four men because her father was living with them. When I ask about this, she explains that her mother had died much earlier, and her father had come to live with them after being badly burned in a trash fire.

He died in '56, so he must have been with us about five years, but because he had this extensive burning with skin grafting, and then he had to take, he did very well in the winter time, but as soon as we had warm—that was before air conditioning—then that new skin would all slough off. [LH: Oh, how horrible.] Yes, it was. He had to be so careful to avoid infection. He never complained, but it consumed a lot of his time and mine.

Anne’s husband worked for the Methodist Church for much of his life, promoting the devotional guide, *The Upper Room*. They went to Methodist conferences every four years, giving her the opportunity to visit such cities as Denver, Baltimore, and San Diego.

Her husband had a stroke, and they moved from their house to an apartment. She tells of his walking to a nearby shopping center and having to call her when he could not remember the way home. She helped him to be as active as he could be.
...he could no longer drive, and so his activities were limited to what I could help him participate in. He kept up his membership in his Kiwanis Club, so I could take him to that meeting, and they ate together, and they had a program and everything. Then, the senior citizens had a men's discussion group or something like that, and I could take him to that, and he would stay and have lunch at the senior citizen [center], which I encouraged him, because for a while he saw somebody besides me, which I thought was good.

They were married fifty-three years. I learned of a fiftieth anniversary celebration as I was looking through a scrapbook of letters from friends which had been assembled as a going away gift to Anne when she left her home church. When I asked her, she told me a little about it.

We had, our children had an open house at our church which is a logical place to have it, and then it was an open invitation, anyone—They had, we had a worship service in our chapel in which our children each participated in the service, and then they had a reception afterwards.

She describes it as "a very nice affair." She points out a small gold clock that was a gift for that anniversary and says how much she enjoys it. At another time she mentions that one of the large prints on her wall was also a golden anniversary present.

After her husband died she continued to live in the apartment, but eventually she had to consider other arrangements. Her younger son, Dan, suggested that she
move to a retirement community near his home, and after
a weekend visit to the facility, she moved in.

She has been living in the retirement center for about
six months when our interviews begin.

It just seemed prudent. First, I lived in [a large
city in] Tennessee and didn’t have a chick or child
within six hundred miles, and it seemed prudent not
to keep relying on friends to, well, I’ve given up
driving, and I did have a maid, but she wasn’t
available on weekends to take me to the church or
things like that. So, it seem prudent to move
closer to some family.

Her daughter Carolyn and her husband, who live in
Texas, have two daughters. Their son died, and Anne
values highly a photograph of the whole family taken a
number of years ago in California, which includes both him
and her husband, saying, "I’m real glad I’ve got that
picture." Carolyn is employed and has not made the trip
to Ohio, and Anne says of her efforts to bring this about,
"I’m trying to get them to come and visit the Terrace [her
retirement community] in the spring, because it’s so
pretty here in the spring." She especially wants to see
her two-year-old great-granddaughter and thinks about how
she could get her daughter’s family to come to see her or
arrange a way to go see them.

The one in Texas has a grand daughter, so I have a
great-granddaughter, child, but I don’t get to see
her, and I’ve been trying to maneuver, thinking in
my mind how it can be, because her--my daughter works, and her husband works and so, it isn't going to be very convenient for them to have me come and see them, and I've been trying to see if Ron could go with me, and we could stay at a hotel or something, just so I could see them.

Her limitations have also kept her from visiting her brother, seven years younger than she, who still lives in their hometown in Illinois. At the time of our interviews he was recovering from brain surgery. She was concerned about how he was doing and checked with his wife from time to time. She said she had not seen him for a long time because of the difficulty of traveling to get there.

She depends heavily on her family now that she has moved away from her hometown. Her family, especially her sons and her younger son's wife, seem very attentive. The younger son Dan and his wife Lynne live in a nearby town and see her frequently. They take her to their home for visits, take her to dentist and doctor appointments, run errands, do her taxes, keep her bird feeder filled, and take her out to dinner for special occasions. Lynne tries to make even a trip to the dentist special by stopping afterward for the fast food sandwich and drink Anne enjoys and then, "she'll go park in the sun down by the Olentangy [River] so I'll feel like I've had a picnic." For her eighty-fourth birthday her family took her to a waterfront restaurant for her favorite meal of
scallops. She pronounced the evening "a very festive occasion—I enjoyed it and appreciated it."

She is interested in the activities of her grandchildren. Although Dan and Lynne's two children are both away at college most of the year, she keeps in touch through their parents and an occasional letter; their trips, romances, choices, and achievements all provide interesting news. Her grandson Kevin has been accepted at three different graduate schools, and she is watching with interest as he makes his choice. Her granddaughter Michelle, a sophomore in college, is a math major and a basketball star and has recently been recognized nationally as a scholar-athlete. Anne is proud but modest. "She didn't get that from this side of the family." She adds later, "Her mother was Phi Beta Kappa. It's nice that some of it stayed with her."

Although Dan and Lynne are helpful in many ways on a constant basis, they have other obligations. (Anne is quite proud of the fact that they are both college professors.) When Ron, the "California son," comes, he is hers almost entirely, and she plans ahead to make the most of every minute of his visit. When I come for an interview the week after Ron has visited, she already misses him.
...it's been so great. And then don't tell me, when you've had him here for four days in a row and with a car and willing to use a wheelchair, it's ruinous to have him disappear. [LH: You really miss him.] All of a sudden, I'm back where I was, sitting here in my room, but it was great that I could be with him, and that my children gave him a car for us to use.

They drove around doing nothing special, but for Anne it was a pleasure to "get out and see the world." The weather was too snowy for them to be able to do some of the sight-seeing she had in mind, but she was delighted that her son ate his meals with her, even arriving for breakfast some mornings. In speaking of the help he gave her during his visit, she says:

Oh, dear. All the things of trying to take care of an aged parent. I'm very fortunate that there is a facility like this. Because with my family here both working full tilt, and it isn't like [their jobs are] a nine-to-five thing, you know....So they couldn't handle me in their home unless they hired somebody.

I suggest that this arrangement gives her some independence too. Her response is an unenthusiastic "Right." She goes on, summing up her evaluation of the situation and showing the spirit that keeps her trying to make a satisfying life for herself in her new environment:

So, it's very fortunate to have this facility. Also, as much as I hated to leave everything that I was associated with [at home] for forty years, I had no family there. It seemed prudent--prudence
Conclusion

Table 6, on page 240, summarizes the family lives of the six women, highlighting facts about their families of orientation and procreation in order to make comparison among the women easier. In addition Appendix C discuss kinship and presents genealogical tables of the primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, and quinary relatives (Murdock 1949:14,95) mentioned in the interviews. Although the lives of these women within their families of orientation were in many ways similar, life choices and life circumstances led to diverse mid-life family patterns. All of the women had family responsibilities, but the number and intensity of these responsibilities varied considerably among the women and from time to time within the life of each woman. Four of the women had children of their own to care for, and one acted at times like a surrogate mother for her half brother. Several spent long periods caring for a parent or parents, and some cared for other relatives.

In late life some of these women have children and grandchildren; some do not. Distance from family makes a difference in the kind of relationship these women have with their families. Four of the women have family
### TABLE 6

**FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS**

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<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Julia</th>
<th>Margaret</th>
<th>Catherine</th>
<th>Laura</th>
<th>Emily</th>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>n.s.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>c. 1981</td>
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<td><strong>Death of children</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Age of parents at death</strong></td>
<td>n.s.</td>
<td>m 89</td>
<td>f 80</td>
<td>f 78</td>
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<td><strong># Grandchildren</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td><strong># Great-grandchildren</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td><strong>Siblings living at time of interviews</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>8</td>
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*n.s. = not stated; m = mother; f = father; s = son; d = daughter*
members living within a twenty-minute drive and see them frequently. Two have no relatives nearby. One, even in her eighties, has responsibility for her younger half brother who is not well.

These six women are part of the senior generation of their families, and they have many decades of family life to look back on. Although the family experience of each is different, each shows the significance of family by the stories she tells.
NOTE:

1. The family of orientation consists of the family into which the woman is born, that is, the woman, her parents and her siblings. The family of procreation consists of the woman, her husband, and their children (Murdock 1949:13).

I use the general term family as the women who participated in the study used it: family a) may be either nuclear family to which the woman may belong in her lifetime (the family of orientation or the family of procreation); or b) it may be members of the wider group of affinal (relatives by marriage), consanguineal (relatives by direct line, sometimes called "blood relatives"), and legally adopted relatives. Members of the family may be of any generation.
CHAPTER IX
FRIENDS

Introduction

The most constant themes of friendship in the lives of these six women are those of maintaining friendships over long periods of time, losing old friends, and making new ones. Friends, as determined from the context in which the women used the word, are non-relatives for whom they feel affection and with whom they participate in activities now or have participated in activities in the past. Several women speak of long-term friendships in the past or current friendships which have lasted for decades. Others tell of old friends who have died and of friendships made more difficult by distance. Visits which have helped to maintain long-distance friendships through the years become more difficult in old age, and in several instances, either a woman or her friend has moved to live near relatives recently, making visits unlikely, if not impossible. New, younger friends are valued, even considered a blessing, but cannot replace the life-long friends of the past.
Friends

All through her life Catherine, eighty-seven, has made and kept many friends, and her philosophy of friendship is explicit:

Now I think that friendships do have to be cultivated. I never thought of it, or I would have kind of searched it out maybe before you came, but Georgia O'Keeffe has a wonderful quotation about that. When somebody asked her why she made these flowers so large, I really can't remember the exact words at all, but she said it's so that people would see them; otherwise, they wouldn't, and they would pay attention to them, because it was like friends, if you didn't pay attention to them and look at them and cultivate them, the friendship would die away...

Catherine notes that none of her friends from her early years is still alive. Her good friend from childhood died a number of years ago; she had became "quite an accomplished amateur artist," and a scene she painted hangs over Catherine's mantel. Her "bosom friend" from high school days, with whom she spent so much time that some people knew both their names "but didn't know which was which," died of cancer when she was forty. Catherine and a third friend, Elizabeth, began their friendship in high school and college and kept up with each other's lives through the years. Elizabeth died at sixty, but her daughter is a member of Catherine's church, and Catherine sits with her each Sunday and keeps up with the news about Elizabeth's grandchildren.
The loss of friends her own age was poignantly evident when she attended her class reunion at an eastern university.

But when I went back to my sixty-fifth college class reunion, not a single one of my close college friends were still living, except a person who was not in my class, she was in the class ahead of me, and she is still living, and seems to be very active. I don’t see her, but we correspond quite a bit, a really very interesting person and very unusual person actually.

Catherine hopes to find a way to visit another one of her long-time friends. She met Charlotte, who is a year younger than she, through her association with the YWCA, and says, "I suppose I’d have to say that it’s been one of my closest friendships throughout all these years."

When Charlotte and her husband left the city after a few years, the friendship continued by correspondence and yearly visits. In her later years Charlotte has not been well, and when her husband died three years ago, she moved to Pennsylvania to be near her daughter.

...it’s only something like 328 miles over to [her town], where I did drive once a few years ago, but I don’t do that anymore alone, you know, so I haven’t seen her now for a couple of years, because I keep thinking of how I’m going to devise a way to get over, because she’s not physically able to come here. But we still are in touch with one another by letter, and occasionally we have a good telephone visit.
Although Catherine has many friends, only a few are her own age, and she is saddened by the loss of this special kind of relationship.

...when you live to my age, [friendship] takes a different kind of turn, I would say. You see, I have very, very few friends in my age range who are still living, and with one or two exceptions, the ones that are here in [the city] are not well. They’re not well physically or in other ways, so that I’ve been realizing, especially this year, I don’t have very much of a kind of a companionable kind of a friendship with people my own age anymore, and I suppose that’s understandable. And although I have a number of younger friends who are very, very good to me, I guess you could say, it’s not quite the same.

She mentioned to George, a younger friend, that she would like to see the movie Driving Miss Daisy, and his response was that she should call up a girlfriend and go. She says that he did not understand, and she did not try to explain the situation to him.

I thought he just doesn’t know. That sounds so simple to him, but that’s not simple to me. I can’t think of a so-called girlfriend of my age that—one, the ones that are still living, most of them, they wouldn’t know there was a film by that name going on; two, they probably would not be able to go even if I drove and took them. I suppose if I made the long explanation, and they were able to go, they might be interested. So you see, that kind of thing that you just take for granted at some time in your life doesn’t exist as time goes on.

Catherine has a life-long interest in art, especially the work of Mary Cassatt, and in earlier years she
frequently found a friend or two who wanted to drive to an art museum in another city for the day. Another interest took her and her friends even further; Willa Cather is her favorite author, and a few years ago when she learned that Death Comes for the Archbishop was to be the subject of a seminar in Red Cloud, Nebraska, she gathered a few friends to make the journey, taking side trips along the way.

Friendship was the starting point for a more elaborate adventure in the early 1960s, when Catherine’s husband and sons convinced her to accept a long-standing invitation from friends who were working in India. She spent a month visiting and touring with them, and included a visit to the Middle East on the way over and to Europe on the way back.

Catherine has friends in her neighborhood—some close, some casual—and she invited all of them when her friend George insisted on giving a party to celebrate her eighty-fifth birthday. Catherine calls herself a rhymester, and those who know her best were not surprised to get an invitation which began: "Sakes alive, I’m eighty-five and no family here to celebrate; So come to call, bring nothing at all, May 31 is the date..." She added the postscript, "I’ve lived in this house almost sixty years, please don’t add to the clutter" and was pleased when each
guest arrived bearing a single long-stemmed rose to contribute to a bouquet.

Her annual Christmas Eve party was a tradition with family and friends for fifty years, as was an informal Fourth of July party for several decades. Other parties had well-developed themes and invitations written in original rhyme. She continues to welcome friends into her home for meetings and special occasions, but finds getting ready for such events takes more long-term planning now.

Catherine has many younger friends who stop by for coffee, invite her to lunch, or suggest that they go to a concert together, but Catherine herself does not feel as free to issue invitations to her younger friends as she would to friends her own age.

I just feel overwhelming grateful for this kind of thing, but they have their lives that are busy and so I'm much more reluctant to initiate things, because I don't want to intrude upon their lives. It's somewhat different.

She values these friends, saying, "Hardly a day passes that I don't think, 'Isn't it just a miracle that I do have some younger friends?'" She continues to make new friends, and when she accepted what she assumes to have been her last chairmanship of a church committee a few years ago, she met a number of new people, three or four of whom have become "admiring friends" of hers. She
makes a point of welcoming visitors she sees at church, and it is by this means that she met Janet, almost forty years younger than she, who has become a new member of her church and a new friend. She shows the same eagerness to make and keep friends that she has shown all her life because, as she says, "You can't overestimate the importance of friends in your life."

Emily, eighty-four, and her family moved frequently during her school years, although most of the moves were within the same general area along the Ohio River. She enjoyed moving, saying, "Well, it was a new experience every time. It took awhile to make friends, but soon you had friends."

In high school Emily was part of a group of four girls who did everything together, including getting up at 5:00 in the morning to play tennis on the one tennis court in town. She says, "Yes, we played a lot. The boys always lined the court."

On Friday nights she and her friends usually had dates for the movies, an entertainment which cost fifteen or twenty-five cents. They and their dates would walk the few blocks to the movie and then walk home. On Saturday nights they would get together at someone's house.

...and of course, the boys would come around, and we would make fudge, and one of them played the
piano, and we would play piano and sing until about 9:30 or 10:00, and they would all go home. That was a big—we loved doing that.

One of these friends moved to Florida and has since died, but Emily is still in touch with the other two.

After she was married, Emily was part of a social scene that included afternoon tea parties for twenty or thirty women held in friends’ homes. She remembers the parties with pleasure: "Oh, they were fun. You got acquainted with people, and you had time to talk with them, catch up with the families." Bridge parties for forty or fifty, which might take place at a hotel or tea room, were also popular. Once a month a group of her friends might get together to shop in a larger city nearby. They would drive into the city together, separate to shop, meet for lunch, and shop again until time to go home. All of these events were occasions for dressy clothes, hats, and gloves.

She and her husband were part of a group of friends who socialized together for many years. About thirty years ago, in the years after their children were grown, these friends used to plan a trip the weekend after Labor Day each year.

...one year we went to Jekyll Island, Georgia, and one year we went up to, I don’t remember the name of the camp in Ohio, a couple of them, and we would
spend the weekend. We would go on Friday night, and we would be there Saturday and we would leave Sunday. We had a good time doing that. We went to Lebanon, Pennsylvania one time, Hershey [laughs].

Their most elaborate trip took them to Hawaii for two weeks with three other couples when they were about sixty. "...we had a delightful time. We had a bus that took just the four couples of us places over in Hawaii. We went to all four islands. It was fun being with the group." Emily has pleasant memories of the good times she and her husband had with this group of friends, but she says, "Of course, now they have all separated and gone their different ways or are not here anymore, which is sad."

Before the trip to Hawaii, she traveled to Europe with a friend. Her husband had to go to England on business, and he suggested that she go to Europe at the same time.

...the three of us--this woman from Jefferson and I who've been friends for years went over to England, and we left Ralph there, and then we went to Holland and Switzerland and France. Came home just right before Christmas. It was fun being over there, and seeing all their Christmas decorations and shopping was fun.

She has a friend that she has lunch with every Sunday. "...it helps pass Sunday. I don't know what you would do if you don't have any friends." About ten years ago she and this friend took trips to Bermuda and Alaska.
Emily loves to play bridge and finds herself filling in at a bridge group in which most of the women are much younger than she.

They are telling me about their children and maybe their grandchildren, but never their great-grandchildren. I guess maybe I don’t act too old is how I get away with it. I’m still interested in things.

Her job in her daughter’s restaurant brings her in contact with many people, and although usually she does not know their names, they recognize her when they see her and stop to say hello.

...whenever I go to the grocery, so many people will stop and talk, I have no idea who they are, oh, but I know I’ve seen them. So, we just converse like old friends, which is nice.

Laura, eighty-two, does not remember having children as friends when she was a young child, saying, "I was really inundated with adults for a long time." Although she had playmates when she lived with her relatives in California and friends at school during the periods that her family was in Virginia, the first lasting friendships she made were in high school. It was at this time that she and Sarah became friends. Her mother and Sarah’s mother agreed on issues of adolescent social life, and the girls were allowed to have friends in for music and
dancing. She and Sarah started college at two different schools, but after two years Sarah transferred to Laura's university, and they were together again.

Although Laura had friends her own age as a young woman, she was strongly influenced by two women professors who encouraged her interest in psychology and later became her friends. She also became friends with the women she taught with during her early teaching career in a private high school/junior college.

...I guess most of the people that really influenced me were the older people, not necessarily old enough to be my mother, but they were older than I was, and I learned a lot from them, because I found out that you could do things, learn to do things and that there were other things in life than what I had been used to...

Laura's work has been important to her, and she has had a number of different positions over the years. Many of her relationships were professional associations.

...then as I got into my work as a psychologist, then I had a lot of colleagues I could talk to and there was a lot of support back and forth in that way. Then as I began to do more work in workshops and so on, it turns out that a lot of the people that I worked with, I don't know, there just seemed to be sort of a tie between us, you know.

She found that work opened one kind of network but limited another:
And I’ve talked to other women that have devoted their lives to a profession—the friends that you make are either in the profession or where you meet them at various meetings and boards...It’s an entirely different world from the world of the woman who stays at home. And I know that when I retired, I didn’t really know my neighbors on either side. I didn’t have time, I came home, I was exhausted, and I didn’t want to be social. After I retired, I began to get acquainted with them over the back fence and talk with them, things like that.

Her relationship with a younger woman, Sandy, began as a collegial one and has developed into a valued friendship.

I consider Sandy a very good friend of mine, and we worked together at the university. Friends in different situations and so on, I value very highly and so but now it turns out, most of them are younger. This is an interesting thing. I’ve got good friends that are my age, but one of the things I said about coming down here [to an apartment in a retirement community], and Sandy laughed at this too, I realized suddenly I didn’t have, I hadn’t in my working life, or really in my life since I had gotten my Ph.D. and so on, I really had not worked with anybody older than myself, and in fact, as time went on, I was the oldest one. Now this didn’t dawn on me particularly because nobody else acted like it, you know, but when I went to move in here, I told Sandy, I said, "I’ve got to learn to live with people my age."

When I ask Laura if she actually found it difficult to get along with people her own age, she responds, "Well, not after—it took a little while, but I—I’ve got some very good friends here, and I’m not having any trouble now."
Laura has excellent social skills and knows how to go about meeting people. She has found that everyone who moves into her retirement community is looking for friends.

There are people I don’t know in the building yet, but sooner or later I’m going to know them. And if necessary, they wouldn’t think it was funny if I came up and said, "I just thought I wanted to come over and get acquainted with you."

She walks out her door and finds someone to invite to go out to dinner or to play Trivial Pursuit. She recently joined a video club and is collecting classic movies.

Oh, we’re having a Saturday night movie in my apartment [laughs]. Four or five of them come down and eat popcorn and watch a movie. Last Saturday night we watched Around the World in 80 Days, and I hadn’t seen that for years....

In spite of the new friends she has met and the opportunities to continue to meet new people, Laura mourns the loss of old friends.

But, the losses that you—for instance, friends, family—I’ve made lots of new friends, but there’s something about a person that’s known you since when, way back, that has a perspective on your life that other people don’t have. It’s the loss of that type of thing that makes it a little difficult sometimes. And I think that in spite of all that—I’ve talked to several people about this—in spite of the fact that you have all the new friends and have people to do things with, and you’re not lonely in that sense, the sense of having lost contact, you don’t lose it necessarily—I don’t know how to say
this—the fact that other people are not there that
knew you then and you knew and have that whole basis
of—loses some sense of your identity, in a sense.

Julia, eighty-five, speaks very little of friends, but
the fact that I did not ask her directly about the subject
and the fact that she was hospitalized for surgery after
participating in six interviews makes it difficult to
evaluate the importance of friends in her life. Although
I visited her three more times, in the hospital and in the
health center of her apartment community, our
conversations did not lend themselves to this kind of
reminiscence. The only friend she speaks of from the
period of time before she came to the retirement community
is a roommate from her early teaching days, who joined her
in playing in a German band in the town in which they
taught. The only other person Julia identifies as a
friend is the woman across the hall from her apartment in
the retirement community. She mentions a conversation
with her and also says that her friend helps her with
grocery shopping, and sometimes brings her mail. Julia
does make a general statement about the people in her
retirement community:

It's been, it's a nice, a very nice place, and it's
friendly, and people are—there are all kinds of
people here as you might expect. But they get—
you see them a lot or sometimes you see close
friends and a lot of friends.
She adds a comment about the people on her floor:

Yes, I’m on the eighth floor and the last apartment on this floor. And there are nice people up here too. So, and people are, I think, every group is a little different, but I’ve enjoyed it.

Margaret, eighty-five, speaks of many friends throughout her life, starting with stories about Nora, her first-grade friend. In one story they sing a duet in the church Christmas program wearing matching dresses, and in another Nora gives Margaret a bloody nose when Margaret insists that her family owns the church where her father preaches.

One of the friends she talks about is Charlotte, a country girl from her father’s congregation, who went to Washington, D.C., found a good job, and married a reporter for a major newspaper. In time, Margaret says, they became millionaires, and Charlotte loved to have her visit, paying her way to fly to their home in Florida and back. Margaret enjoyed the friendship and remembers with pleasure her friend’s saying, "It’s just heaven when you’re here."

One of Margaret’s oldest friendships goes back to the days when Margaret and Mary were in nurse’s training together. Mary, who lives two hours from Margaret, has never driven, but Margaret has visited her many times over
the years. Within the last year Mary has left her home to go to live near her daughter in Michigan.

...and so this summer, this past summer, Mary would write to me, and she'd say, "Margaret, Gail is trying to get me to go to Michigan where I can be near them, and I don't want to leave [her present home]. I've lived here all these years." She would go on, and I would write to her, and so this fall, it happened. They took her up and found a very nice place for her to have kind of independent living and yet somebody to look after her. Well, I haven't heard from her for a couple months; I'm worried about her. I'm going to call Gail and see what the condition is. She may have--she's older than I am--the change and all, you know, may have been too much for her.

Even if Mary had not moved, now that Margaret no longer drives, a visit would have required a driver and would have been difficult to arrange. Margaret knows that a visit to Mary's new home in Michigan is highly unlikely.

Margaret speaks of a friend who had broken her hip three weeks earlier. She had been to visit this friend and her husband, who is in his nineties, at the retirement home where they are currently living.

I'm sure it's quite expensive, but it's just wonderful, and now they're just going to stay there, both of them for awhile, and see if she, they, she can go back home. I'm not sure at all whether she can or not. But they're in there.

The Parish Care committee of her church visits people in nursing homes regularly, and recently Margaret was
invited to go along.

I love to do that. These are people that I’ve known for years, and I baked some hot cross buns— it was just before Easter—and I took a little basket of hot cross buns and gave them each one. And now I have one real good friend that has Alzheimer’s disease, and she’s in a nursing home over there... and bless her heart, she’s such a wonderful person and so intelligent, and here she is over there.... And when I go to see her, she’ll say, "Oh, I knew you were coming," and she puts her arms around me and hugs me, and I don’t know how much of that is real. She knows my face, I think, and recognizes that, but we’ll sit and talk for quite a little while, kind of, you know, out of line, she doesn’t have any concentration or anything, but anyhow, I enjoy visiting her.

She speaks of still another friend who has recently moved to a nursing home.

I have a friend who is, used to be principal of the school...a lovely person, and she’s finally had to go to the nursing home because she couldn’t walk by herself, so she finally, the time comes and you give up, and she’s, I think, pretty happy. She has a nice room over there, and she has so much attention from people. She was very popular and had lots of friends. It’s the ones who are neglected that you feel sorry for, and people who are just lying, waiting to die. This is all, your heart aches for them.

She shows a great deal of insight as she talks about the contribution she makes in going to see her friends and others she has known from church.

You see, I still like to go there and visit with them, and I know it makes you almost feel humble to see how glad they are to see you, because you don’t
feel like you’re really doing anything much. I just go with somebody that’s going over there, but they are so happy to see you. [LH: A little variety in their lives.] Uh huh, something coming in from outside and some connection with the way they used to live and the way it used to be for them.

Many of her friends are younger than she, including a friend from her church, "one of my dear friends," who has a high school age son whose activities and interests Margaret follows. She also speaks of a friend who invited her to accompany her on an errand and then have lunch and tour the campus where she used to be a housemother. Friends regularly pick her up for church, and she mentions a neighbor who brought her a piece of his fortieth birthday cake. She is also part of an adoptive grandparent program at her church and as a result has a young "granddaughter" who visits from time to time.

Margaret kept in touch over the years with Veronica, one of girls from Union College, who was a junior counselor in the dormitory where she was housemother.

Yes, she used to write me at Christmas time. She’d write that Christmas letter she sent, and all the things she was involved in--she was on the school board out there, she did this, she did that, and it just sounded like go, go, go.

She was thrilled when Veronica, now a woman with high school and college age children, moved back to town and renewed their friendship. It was through Veronica that
I met Margaret, and in our interviews she frequently mentioned her interest in Veronica and her family.

When I asked Anne, eighty-four, about her friendships, she said:

I never maintained any relationship with people I knew in college. We came out in the Depression, and you just didn't go see people, and they didn't go see people. So, my friendships have all been since then and were related to the church....When I moved here, the people in the church all wrote me notes expressing their appreciation for knowing me and that sort of thing. I've got a whole book of notes. Wasn't that thoughtful?

She had often mentioned how much she missed the forty years of social relationships she had left behind when she moved to a retirement community near her son. Although I was sympathetic, it was not until she invited me to look at the scrapbook that she had been given by her old friends that I understood the extent of her loss. In the scrapbook, which had been presented to her at a reception following her last Sunday in her home church, were letter after letter extolling her leadership, her guidance, and her cooking. Even allowing for the laudatory nature of this kind of collection, it was clear that over the years she had made many friends and built up a devoted following. The letters speak of her love of Canasta, her generosity in chauffeuring people to meetings, and her interest in politics, social issues, book reviews, and
Bible study. They also offer personal tributes: "I love you for being one of the pillars of my childhood and adolescence and for serving us a fabulous hamloaf when we met in your house about 1957," and "Your keen intellect and avid interest in so many things...made your enthusiasm spell over to all of us. We wanted to help and be part of your plans."

At the farewell service the minister said, "Is [her new city] ready for Anne?" When I find reference to this in the scrapbook and read it out loud, she responds, "I wish I could have lived up to those expectations, but there's no--at least I haven't found any way to exert any influence anywhere."

In her hometown Anne had no trouble establishing a social life. A friend from church came several times a week to play Scrabble, and every Sunday night a widow much younger than she and a couple from church came to play cards. They each brought a sandwich, and she served salad and dessert. Anne recently learned that the widow, now in her sixties, is remarrying; she would love to go to the wedding, but her handicaps make the prospect seem impossible.

I don't have any place to stay. I'd have to go to a hotel, and one of my children would surely have to go with me, so I think maybe that's too much, but I would enjoy it.
She says that most of her friends in her hometown were from church, and she did not have many friends in the neighborhood where she raised her family, but she seems to have known everyone in her section of the apartment complex where she lived later.

The one lady who lived across from me was the kind that visited, and she would gather up all the neighborhood news and come over every afternoon and give me a run down of what the neighborhood news was. Because there was one young woman who was obviously being courted by several gentlemen, so I’d get the scoop on them, and one was an older lady who made the most yummy angel food cakes and coffee cakes, so when you were in her good favor, you were a recipient of some of these goodies.

In contrast to the rich friendships she had in her hometown, she finds meeting people, let alone making friends, difficult in her new environment, the assisted-living area of her retirement community.

There really isn’t much of a way to make friends. I feel that is perhaps a weak point here. You are assigned a seat in the dining room, and those people you see three times a day, and that’s about the extent of who you know by name.

She has enjoyed cards and board games all her life and had anticipated finding others in her new community who shared her interest.

I like board games, so the lady in charge of projects here offered to start board games. We’ve got this beautiful room down here, you know, at the
end of the hall, to start board games down there. Not a solitary soul was interested in anything—jigsaw, canasta, anything.

She says she has tried leaving the door open and one or two people have ventured in "but almost everybody here is on a walker or in a wheelchair which doesn't, isn't conducive for them to visit." She has attended various groups from Great Decisions to a conversation group to Bible study, but she has not found these groups to be a way to meet people. It seems possible that the skills necessary to meet people and make friends in her new environment are different from those needed to make friends in her hometown, and she finds it difficult because of her present limitations, to adapt to the new situation.

A colleague of her son has come to visit several times, and a couple who are friends of her son and his wife sometimes stop by, bringing news of politics and social issues. In spite of visitors and the attentions of her family, she is often lonely: "But the most disastrous thing is that most days except at meals, I don't have anybody to talk to."

Her next door neighbor, whom she refers to as Dr. Martin, has been in the hospital and has recently returned to her apartment. Before her illness, Dr. Martin had come
to visit a few times bringing the opportunity for the kind of stimulating conversation Anne craves. "...but she’s a very smart and intelligent person, and I enjoyed her visits so much because she kind of enlarged my vision a little, and I miss her very much." When I inquire about Dr. Martin during a later visit, Anne responds, "She’s home and walking very carefully, and I haven’t felt free to disturb her because it looked like she is having all she can do to hang on." Later she adds:

But she’s the only one that I have met here who is, you know, intellectually involved, really. But she apparently reads a lot and professionally has a lot of [unclear]. She’s a very interesting person.

There are occasionally some signs that she is finding companionship. When I ask in an early interview about dining arrangements, she says that there is assigned seating in the dining room and that she does not have much in common with the four women at her table. Early in the sixth interview, however, she says:

... we sit at tables for four, you know, at the dining room, and we’re all old ladies, but we’re a silly bunch. This morning, Tom, the man in charge of dispensing medicine, said, "It was good to hear your laughter." He said, "Usually, all we ever hear at that dining room is complaints." We laugh over very inconsequential things. I thought that was interesting. His comment was, "All we ever hear is complaints."
Later she added:

Well, one of our members belongs to a sewing circle, a sewing group, or sewing something, and it was her turn to entertain them, and all the things she went through deciding on her refreshments, and how she was going--she wanted orange juice--and how she was going--and what she was going to put orange juice in, and how she was going to get cookies, and what not. So we had a nice time advising her.

They laughed about how to get around the fact that the woman did not have enough chairs for her guests and no longer had the trays, pitchers, or even glasses and plates to serve refreshments in the way she once would have, and they joked about sitting on the floor and serving juice in cans with straws.

Although they were having a good time, they were dealing with a serious problem: how could this woman continue to be a full member of her group, taking a turn as hostess, under these limited circumstances? The experience may also represent a compromise for Anne. She does not get the discussion of political and social issues she misses so much, but she is able to enjoy the camaraderie of the conversation.

She speaks of moving away from her hometown:

I don't know whether if I'd, I'd do it again, if I'd know what it entailed, because you give up all your forty years worth of friends and your church and
everything and you’re just kind of warehoused. At least, that’s what I feel it is. You’re warehoused nicely, but you just lost forty years of personal contact, and there’s no way to pick that up.

I suggest, trying to comfort her, that it takes time to build new relationships. She, more experienced than I, will not accept my platitude and offers her own resolution:

But you don’t—you see, I had that established [at home] before I got in my predicament, so I had a reservoir of people, and I don’t have that here. I miss that, but one has to adapt, I guess.

The loss of her friendship network at a point in her life when she finds it difficult to rebuild it is a real threat to Anne’s sense of well-being. She has no friends in her current environment who knew her as a vigorous, competent woman, and she must try to adapt to this environment at a time when she is struggling with physical limitations.

**Conclusion**

Although Anne’s loss is greater than that of the other five women, they too have had to deal with significant change. The loss of friends their own age with whom they have shared cohort experiences and with whom they can have free and egalitarian relationships is one of the most difficult life experiences for these women. However, the
maintenance of long-time friendships attests to the value of friends in their lives, and the resourcefulness they show as they continue to add new, younger friends to their networks speaks to their ability to negotiate the sometimes sensitive area of cross-generational friendship.
Objectives of the Study

As noted in the introduction, the four objectives of this study are to preserve the life histories of these elders who were born between 1902 and 1907 and whose lives come close to spanning the twentieth century, to give voice to women in their eighties, to use life history to place old age in the context of life as a whole, and to see which experiences and attitudes are shared within this group of six women and which are specific to individual women.

The first objective, to preserve the life history of elders in the twentieth century, has been met in terms of the collection of data; it is not yet fully met in terms of interpreting and reporting. The data collected in recording the lives of the women are extensive and rich, and although I have outlined their lives as a whole and presented the major issues to which they give importance, there are aspects of their stories which are yet to be told. For example, each woman’s life could be presented
individually in a form which would allow fuller exploration of the many stories which show values and philosophy of life, mentioned only briefly in this study. There are also data which would support the consideration of specific topics, such as their views on society's expectations for women, their participation in mainline Protestant churches, and the geographic mobility shown in their lives and the lives of their families.

These women's lives span the twentieth century, and even though they cannot be said to represent their cohort as a whole, as women of their century, their concerns are reflections of the concerns of the broader society during the period of their lives. One example of the way in which life history illuminates these women's lives in a particular time and place is the concern that three of the women show with issues of race. In the title of his recent book Studs Terkel, social commentator and Pulitzer Prize-winning author, has characterized race as "the American obsession" (1992), and the power of this issue is evident in the unsolicited stories which surfaced as these women talked about their lives.

The emergence of these stories as an integral part of the life history is significant because if the women had been responding directly to questions about race I might have suspected that the answers were platitudes (after all
these Christian women know what they are supposed to believe about race), but since the stories appeared in the context of the life as a whole and are distributed throughout the lives of the women, they seem more meaningful. In listening to the stories, I did not feel that there was any more impression management evident in them than in the life histories in general, but in any case, the fact that they wanted their lives to be recorded as women who are opposed to racial discrimination is in itself significant.

Most of Catherine’s stories concerning race have appeared in summary form in earlier sections: teaching Sunday school in a Black church while she was in college, working on racially integrated YWCA committees and boards in the 1930s and 1940s, chairing a committee which started the first interracial nursery school in her city in 1945, serving on the Ohio commission which heard defense industry cases concerning racial discrimination, and presenting public affairs workshops with national civil rights leader Dorothy Height and attending the fiftieth anniversary banquet in her honor.

Her philosophy can perhaps be summarized in a comment she makes about a "watershed experience" the summer after her sophomore year in college, when she attended a YWCA conference and for the first time associated with people
from different countries and heard internationally famous religious leaders speak.

...and I can remember coming away from there with a tremendous sense that you could have a real world community and a--I don't think I really ever had any, well, any prejudices about race or color or nationality, but I think it was a much more positive thing, a really great appreciation of all peoples...

Anne, as mentioned earlier, was involved with community centers in her hometown. In thinking back to the fact that the town had a white community center and a Black community center, she remarked, "Isn't it awful to be saying that?" Although both centers were connected with the Methodist Church, they were financed separately and had separate programs and facilities. She became more involved with the Black program and spoke with enthusiasm about its campgrounds and camping program.

Another occasion in which race entered Anne's story was when she spoke of the woman who had worked for her in her hometown and had provided the transportation that meant so much to her. In the summer this woman would bring her daughter Sue Ann to work with her, and Anne mentions enjoying her company. Anne had received a note from Sue Ann and was trying to decide if the fourth grader was too old for the stuffed toy she had seen in the small store in her retirement center. She added:
I appreciate the little girl remembering me. She and I, it was real interesting, we'd go out on these errands and come home with—she always had fish and I had a hamburger and milk shake—but her mother would never sit down in the dining room with us. She always ate in the kitchen. [LH: That's interesting.] They were Black, of course, but that didn't make any difference to me, but her mother felt that it just wasn't her place to eat in the dining room. [LH: But she let the little girl eat in the dining room.] Yes, they proved to be lifesavers, the two of them, for me.

Margaret's misgivings about advising the white girl in her dormitory and her Black boyfriend not to marry have already been mentioned, as has her story about visiting her friend Charlotte in Florida. The rest of the second story concerns Charlotte's husband John.

And John, I must tell you this, John was born in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and we would be watching T.V., and if someone like Bill Cosby or someone came on, John would say, "Now what's that nigger doing on television. They're just taking over television." This embarrassed Charlotte, because she knew how I wouldn't ascribe to that kind of behavior, and she'd say, "Oh, John, honey, you mustn't call them niggers," and he said, "They do where I come from." [laughs] I never will forget that. He couldn't stand to see somebody, a Black person, making money and performing and entertaining and so forth.

She went on to say that John would tip Black servers generously in restaurants and did not hesitate to replace the storm-damaged roof on their maid's house, adding, "See the benevolence, the spirit of giving was great, but it was in a paternalistic manner..."
She told of a similar feeling of paternalism toward Blacks that made her sister uncomfortable when she moved from Ohio to Tennessee, and added a story about Amelia, a Black woman who cleaned for her sister and had come to the house without being asked to help when her sister’s husband died. Relatives from the North invited Amelia to join the family at the table after the memorial service, and Margaret’s sense that Amelia was uncomfortable with the invitation was confirmed when Amelia told Margaret’s sister later that she just could not do that.

A recent report she had heard about three white boys in a nearby college being suspended for yelling racial insults in their dormitory was upsetting to Margaret, and she commented, "...but when you stop to think about why anybody would do this in this day and age, in 1989, it’s amazing." She added later, going back to her disbelief at the behavior of these young men:

I can’t associate in my mind, in my thinking that this is still going on with young people today, because young people are mighty independent today as a rule, and they think in more modern terms than I would and older people, and it just amazes me. I don’t—whether this has anything to do with money and status, social status, I don’t know.

It is only by collecting the life histories of these women as they choose to tell them that such serendipitous data comes to light, enriching the women’s stories and
documenting individual experiences with racial prejudice at their time in history.

Another topic which reflects the period of time in which the women live is the Depression. It seems likely that sixty years later this period has been at least somewhat idealized in their minds. Laura, Julia, and Emily say they were affected very little by the Depression, although, as mentioned previously, the job Laura was to take after graduation was no longer available, and she had to go back to Virginia to teach. Catherine's husband's work changed because the funds needed to carry out his original research plans were no longer available, and some of Catherine's work in the community was in response to the hard economic times others were experiencing. She also suggests that many of her thrifty habits can be traced back to Depression days.

Anne and Margaret both talk about the fact that "everyone was in the same boat" during these years, making the situation more bearable. Anne's stories show the skillful managing by which she and her family got through the difficult days, but Margaret's stories show an extremely stressful period. Margaret's family was the only one of the six in which there was not steady employment during the Depression; she worked at whatever jobs she could find, and her husband worked for WPA. In
addition, Margaret had surgery for cancer during this period. In spite of all her troubles, she points out that her children learned self-reliance and self-esteem by working, and that her son Warren's memory of the Depression is of the wonderful bread pudding she made.

Economic information in general is one indication of how life is lived at a particular period of time, and although financial matters are not stressed in the life histories, from time to time comments are made about money. These comments include, in addition to data mentioned in previous chapters, Laura's story of discrimination (in the early 1960s when she worked at the university, two men she worked with whose rank was lower than hers were paid the same amount she was because they had families to support) and her comment that she is glad she has insurance to cover her large medical bills. Anne mentions managing money carefully while their children were in college. Catherine speaks of planning and saving for a trip when her children were young, and several times she compares prices now and earlier in her life, saying she is often surprised when she learns how much something costs today.

Margaret has the most to say about financial matters, probably because she has had the least economic security in her adult life. She tells stories that show that she
believes that money is much less important than strong values, but she worries about not being able to afford to move to a retirement home if the time comes that she cannot live alone. The lack of emphasis on economic data in the life histories of the other women is probably due to the fact that, although not wealthy, they do not see themselves as having financial problems, and the fact that, as mentioned previously, specific financial information is not normally discussed in conversation in this culture.

The second objective of the study, as stated in the introduction, to give voice to women who might not otherwise be heard, has been met, with the reservations noted above. Margaret Blackman speaks to this issue in discussing the value of life history:

By its very nature, the life history confers a large measure of ethnographic authority on the life history subject, and, accordingly, it has become a meaningful genre for empowering and giving voice to those who have been regarded as silent or suppressed. It is hardly surprising, for example, that women's life history, biography, and autobiography...are flourishing (1991:57).

Each woman in the study determined not only the topics and the emphasis, but also the style of the interview. With the informant in charge, the presentation became an extension of her personality and experience, and resembled
a lecture, a story-telling session, or a conversation, as she saw fit.

By giving voice to women in their eighties, the life history reveals the meaning of old age for them. They indicate that it means activity in spite of physical problems, and responsible, thoughtful decisions which maximize independence but take into account reality. It means looking back to work in earlier years with satisfaction, and when possible, continuing meaningful work-related activity in old age. Old age means living with family situations which are the results of earlier life events and mourning the loss of friends their own age, while making new younger friends.

The qualitative, open-ended interview is an appropriate vehicle for collecting information from older informants because it allows them to draw on whatever memories are available to them, a factor which is especially important when looking back many decades. Eena Job (1983:370) also found this to be true in doing interviews with people eighty and over. She let her subjects determine the pace of the interviews and to a great extent the topics, and in spite of the difficulty of dealing with the "richness but looseness of material" which resulted, she believes the amount and the quality of the data justify the strategy.
Using life histories has allowed me to meet the third objective of the study, that of considering the later years of the women in the context of their lives as a whole. Gordon Streib and Robert Binstock (1990) point out that there has been increased interest concerning context in aging during the last decade, and Philip Silverman (1987:13) attests to its importance, saying, "Increasingly there have been calls for research designs that are more holistic and provide contextually sensitive data of greater importance in gaining insight into a number of life course issues....It might be more useful to concentrate on small samples of people and bring into the analysis data from a much broader range of variables."

The context of old age includes decisions made earlier in life. Decisions to marry or not and opportunities to have children or not may not have affected satisfaction in old age for the women (Allen 1989; Houser, Berkman, and Beckman 1984), but they are likely to have made a difference in the way the women experience life in old age.

Earlier circumstances beyond their control, both historical and personal, affect the context of old age. The women's later lives were not directly affected by World War II (unless the assumption is made that had Margaret's second husband not been unwell after developing
malaria in the Pacific, he might have lived longer). As noted, the Depression is remembered with distress only by Margaret, who seems to be the woman most affected in terms of family hardship; in addition there are hints that the difficult economic times may have contributed to the breakup of her first marriage.

More personal situations also affect the context of old age for the women. For example, the deaths of Margaret’s daughter and two sisters affect the companionship and support she has in old age; all of those with children are affected by choices the children make about where they live as adults; and the amount of retirement income a woman has to live on in old age is dependent, to a great extent, on her own earlier work history or that of her husband.

The women’s stories about their lives in the present show that context continues to alter the experience of aging. Aging in one’s own home is a different experience from aging in a retirement community. Aging in one’s home community is different from moving to a new community in old age. And the aging experience differs for those who drive or do not, and for those who have access to safe, convenient transportation and have the mobility to be able to use it.
Looking at the later years of the women in the context of their lives as a whole allows this study to make a contribution to the ongoing conversation about disengagement (Cumming and Henry 1961). Maddox (1968), in an early response to the theory, and Busse and Maddox (1985), in reviewing the Duke Longitudinal Studies of Normal Aging, report that activity levels in late life are strongly related to those in early life. The life histories of these six women support this contention. All were actively engaged in their younger years, and no one is disengaged in her later years—in the sense meant by Cumming and Henry of a mutual, willing, and beneficial drawing apart of the old individual and society.

The fourth objective, to determine shared and individual life experiences and attitudes, is perhaps the goal most fully explored in this study, as it looks at the issues of concern to these six women.

Lawrence Watson (1989) discusses the problem of trying to determine whether the various elements in a life history are evidence of individuality or if they are typical of the culture. He gives an example from his own fieldwork in which he collected the life history of a Guajiro woman and considered her interest in evil and her concern with sexuality and punishment as uniquely characteristic of her as an individual. Only later did
he learn that these interests were characteristic of the Guajiro culture as a whole. He suggests, as an improvement in methodology, "If we have other life histories by persons from the same group—who are of the same sex, age, and roughly the same social position—we can establish a baseline from which to assess unusual or special features in one or another account" (1989:319).

This set of six life histories meets Watson's criteria and can be used to look at similarities and differences within the group. The issues which form the core of the interviews with the six women—physical condition, independence, work, family, and friends—thus provide a way to compare their lives.

To begin with, these women have their long lives in common, and have relatives, not necessarily parents, who have lived long lives. Beall (1987:85) reports that long-lived parents had long-lived children "in populations as diverse as fourteenth to nineteenth-century China, seventeenth to nineteenth-century Finland and Sweden, and eighteenth to nineteenth century United States" and that gender also makes a difference, with women living longer than men "in virtually all populations studied." Catherine's mother lived to be seventy-eight, her father to be ninety-two, and nine of her siblings lived to adulthood, the first one dying a few years ago at eighty-
three. Although Laura’s father died in an accident as a young man, and her mother died at seventy-four, her paternal grandmother lived to be one hundred and five. Both of Emily’s parents died young, her father at fifty-four of a heart attack and her mother at sixty-four of leukemia, but her older sister is still living in her own apartment at ninety. Anne’s mother lived to be sixty and her father to be eighty, and Margaret’s father lived to be eighty and her mother to be eighty-nine.

These women have good attitudes toward their physical condition; they are not overly concerned with minor ailments, but they pay attention to major problems. They maintain relationships with physicians they admire and trust (most physician stories are stories of attentive care) and do what they can to maintain, and when possible improve, their condition. Five of them note that they do not have the energy that they used to have. Each attempts to plan her day and her week in order to space her activities, but this is more essential for some than others. Each pushes herself a little to do things even when she may not feel quite up to it, affecting a compromise between what she would like to do and what would be comfortable. As Catherine says laughingly about her resistance toward giving up the hosting of an annual Christmas luncheon which has become almost too much to
manage, "You know you hate to come to that." These women have always been active and enthusiastic about life, and they do not want to stop now.

The health of these women is somewhat precarious. They live with chronic problems which could go on for years as they are now or suddenly become life-threatening. All are less steady on their feet than they used to be, and all but one use a cane or walker at least some of the time. Health is not all downhill, however, even at this point in life. Laura is at this time feeling much better and has much more mobility than she had a few months ago, as a result of learning to manage her muscle pain with an exercise program.

The area of strongest agreement among the women is the wish to live as long as they can be reasonably independent but not to linger in a dependent state. No one feared death; all feared disability. Although they all came from moderately to strongly religious backgrounds, no one spoke of belief in an afterlife. Because these unstructured interviews were guided by the issues raised by the women themselves, and this topic was not mentioned, I can do no more than note its absence.

Clark and Anderson (1967) find that the old people in their sample have two basic goals—survival and self-esteem. In the United States, self-esteem is linked to
independence, and this eventually presents a problem for people when the time comes that they need to modify their way of life. Concerns about independence for these women centered around the issues of driving and housing.

Driving is a powerful symbol of independence. [See Susan Eisenhandler’s (1990) discussion of the driver’s license as, in Goffman’s terms, a disidentifier of old age.] Two women had given up driving completely. Anne, because of her severe arthritis, had not been able to drive for some time and thought of her transportation problems in terms of the lack of a readily available driver. Margaret, who had given up driving a year or two before, mentioned not driving or the problems associated with not driving in every interview; this was clearly a serious loss for her.

Julia was not driving at the time of our interviews but still saw the possibility of driving again if her surgery was successful. Although she died of pneumonia within weeks of the surgery, its results were not as successful as she had hoped, and in all likelihood she would not have been able to drive again.

Three of the women still drive. Emily drives only occasionally but values highly the feeling of independence that having a car gives her. Catherine drives whenever she needs to. Although recently she finds many occasions
when others are willing to provide transportation, she is aware of the fact that if she wants to continue driving, she needs to take opportunities to drive. Laura drives frequently, even continuing to drive to Virginia to visit her brother.

At this time, each of the women is in a housing situation which accommodates a different level of independence, and each is for the time being comfortable with that level. Laura, Julia, and Anne are living in retirement communities which provide levels of assistance appropriate to the needs of the residents. Their accommodations are at three different levels: Laura lives in an independent living situation; Julia’s situation could be termed independent living with services; and Anne lives in an assisted-living apartment. [See Appendix D for a more complete explanation.] Each of them feels secure in the knowledge that if she comes to the point at which she needs additional services, these services will be available on site, and she will have to move only within the community to receive them.

Emily seems to be managing well in an apartment and does not mention any concerns about what will happen if she can no longer live there.

Two of the women do have concerns about their living situations. Catherine, who has lived in her home for
sixty years, feels strongly about not moving to a retirement community. She has decided to stay in her own home and states that she accepts the risks involved in doing that. Margaret loves the house she rents from her daughter and says that she worries every day about what will happen if she can no longer stay there. She does not want to go to live with one of her children, but feels that her limited income will not allow her to move to a retirement community.

Work, paid and volunteer, is an important part of the life history of all of the women, but the meaning of work is their lives differs. As mentioned previously, Julia, Laura, and Margaret supported themselves, and in Margaret’s case her family, for all or most of their lives. Emily does not speak of the office work she did in her later years and the work she does now in her daughter’s restaurant in terms of money earned but rather in terms of pleasant activity. Catherine and Anne, whose most significant work was community service, speak of work in terms of goals achieved and personal satisfaction. Margaret, Laura, and Emily all discuss work as an antidote for depression, Margaret and Emily using work to deal with depression following the deaths of their husbands and Laura overcoming depression about approaching retirement by deciding to continue to work beyond the end of her
employment at the university.

The importance of work to older women is supported by data from the Duke Longitudinal Study of Normal Aging. Busse and Maddox (1985) cite Fox (1975) who compares three groups of older women who were participants in the Duke study and finds that "psychological well-being is positively related to labor force participation" (Busse and Maddox 1985:91). Working women have the highest life satisfaction rating, followed by retired women, and then life-long housewives.

Although Anne and Emily talk about their work and speak of it with pleasure, they talk about it less than the others do; Anne focuses mostly on the present in her interviews, and Emily worked very little until the later years of her life. For Laura who did not marry, for Julia who married late and did not have children, and for Margaret who had four children, work stories predominate as they talk about their lives. Catherine’s story is somewhat more balanced in its presentation of work, family, and friends, but she gives considerable elaboration to discussion of her volunteer work through her church and the YWCA.

Most of these women have been able to adapt life-long interests developed during their working lives to provide satisfying and stimulating activities in which they can
continue to participate in their eighties.

Family has had different meanings at different points of life for these women. All started life as much-loved children in secure, two-parent families. Their family lives diverged the most during their middle years when life choices and life contingencies brought a variety of family experiences and family responsibilities with both their families of orientation and families of procreation. In their later years the characteristics of their family lives are more similar in that all are now unmarried, but the amount of family that they have and the location of family are quite varied.

Death has been a part of the family experience of these women; most significantly, all of the women who were married have outlived their husbands. Of their fifteen siblings (including a half brother) who survived childhood, only three have died, but these losses have not been evenly distributed: two sisters and a daughter of Margaret have died.

Clark and Anderson (1967:387) report that one of the major cultural problems of American aging is "how to replace collateral relationships, which are bound to atrophy through illness and death, with lineal ones." This is a significant problem in relation to friendship for this group of women. In most cases these women have
cultivated and maintained friendships throughout the years; one of the most difficult losses they face in their later years is that of old friends and friends their own age to death and to distance. Most continue to add new friends to their networks but stress that although they value these new friends, these relationships do not replicate or replace the ones which have ended.

The data show that at this point in the lives of the six women the issue of work has largely become one of continuing a modified form of earlier activity into their eighties, but the issues of physical condition, independence, family, and friends are still evolving, and the necessity of coping with change is almost constant. The data show also that aging is an individual process and that there is room for each woman, as a social actor, to exert influence on the kind of old age she will experience.

The Cultural Construction of Old Age

The cultural construction of old age, a widely acknowledged concept (Clark and Anderson 1967; Keith 1980; Counts and Counts 1985; Sankar 1987; Silverman 1987; Fry 1988; Rubinstein 1990), has significance for this study because if old age is more than chronology, or even biology, then it is open to the contestation and negotiation of these women as social actors.
Even the meaning of death can be negotiated. At what point was Julia, who was put on life support system but was unresponsive, dead? Because she had participated in the decision about what death would mean for her by signing a living will, an action by which she negotiated the terms of her death, she was removed from life support and soon died.

To emphasize the cultural construction of old age is not to imply that biology does not matter, but to assert that what old age means is also significant. For example, the use of a cane or walker is a strong marker of the disability associated with old age, but the women's well-being might be improved if this image could be modified. All but one of the women use a cane or walker some of the time, but each makes use of this assistance as little as possible, in several cases confining the use to walking out of doors where the surface might be uneven. Margaret and Emily acknowledge that they probably should use a cane more than they do; Anne speaks of using a regular cane in the past in spite of her physician's belief that she should use a three-pronged cane. The stigma of the use of assistance as a sign of disability may have serious consequences for these women. Because of their efforts to postpone making use of assistance which would make walking more steady, they risk falls and serious injury.
I watched several women come close to falling as they took a misstep in their homes. Margaret had, a year previous to our interviews, fallen and broken her hip, and during the interview period had a serious fall in her yard, admitting afterward that she should have been using her cane or walker.

**Gender and Old Age**

Gender is important in the experience of old age in the United States (Longino 1988) and more widely (Counts and Counts 1985). [See also Simić and Myerhoff 1978.] Longino, in comparing the lives of men and women eighty-five and older on the basis of 1980 census-derived data, finds that women are much less likely to be married and living independently than men, and that dependent men are more likely to be cared for by their wives at home and thus are less likely be found in nursing homes.

These facts are borne out in the lives of these women. The women who were married have all had the experience of outliving their husbands. Therefore, although their husbands lived their old age as part of a married couple and were cared for by their wives if they became ill, the widows in this group will not have that experience.

None of the women in the study indicates that she had an interest in marrying in her later years, but for the older woman who chooses to marry, the unequal sex ratio
in older age groups reduces this possibility.

Anthropology of women stresses the role of women as social actors, and these six life histories show the ability of women to continue this role into the ninth decade. In reviewing anthropological studies of women from 1977 to 1987, Carol Mukhopadhyay and Patricia Higgins (1988:465) support this idea and suggest the importance of looking at the lives of women over the entire life course:

Regardless of the topic or regional focus, women cross-culturally are acquiring a more complex and richer profile. There is a growing tendency to see women as agents rather than passive pawns in male-dominated structures; to consider the strategies women use to manipulate and work within the prevailing "reality" of their lives and societies; to recognize that women in any culture play many roles, simultaneously and over the course of a lifetime; and to realize that focusing on women solely as wives (especially brides) and (young) mothers overemphasizes the limitations on women's powers and sphere of action, even for the most male-dominated cultures....Biographical and autobiographical studies have been especially helpful in enriching and contextualizing our understanding of women's lives.

Another issue of gender and age is that of androgyny in old age. Counts and Counts (1985) in Aging and Its Transformations cite Gutmann, Grunes, and Griffin (1980), who see androgyny as normal in late life, as gender differences are neutralized (1985:8). In contrast, Counts and Counts, having subjected the studies on Pacific
societies which appear in their book to close scrutiny, find that androgyny is not characteristic of any of the societies included in their volume. Androgyny is not remotely descriptive of the women in this study, who carry on with their roles as women in their ninth decade.

Life history is an effective vehicle for the study of gender in old age and the study of gender over the life course; the lives of these six women contribute to this understanding.

The Self in Old Age

Interest in the self has a long history and a recent resurgence, but its use as a cultural domain is not without problems. Geoffrey White (1991:33) says in discussing the difficulty of talking about the self, "Yet like its kindred concept 'culture,' self is both intractable and indispensable. Its generativity lies in the fact that it resists an easy semantic accounting."

In spite of this difficulty, there is general agreement on the self as culturally constructed by anthropologists representing a wide range of perspectives (Hallowell 1955b; Shweder 1984; Crapanzano 1980; Marcus 1991).

As I indicated in the introduction, my use of the term self comes from Hallowell (1955b) in which the self is a psychobiological base which is variously elaborated in different cultures. Hallowell suggests that in order to
get an insider’s view, it is necessary to understand the self in its behavioral environment and that this is made possible by looking at the five basic orientations which culture provides—self, object, spaciotemporal, motivational, and normative.

The orientation that comes into play strongly in this study is motivational orientation, or "the orientation of the self towards the objects of its behavioral environment with reference to the satisfaction of its needs" (1955:100). As their stories show, the six women have experienced physical and social changes and have had to find new ways to meet old needs and ways to meet new needs which have developed in late life. By understanding the motivational orientation of the women, it is possible to better understand their sense of self.

Clark and Anderson (1967:232-233) in studying American men and women from sixty to ninety-four found six underlying themes, the satisfaction of which resulted in the "Good Life": 1) Sufficient autonomy to permit continued integrity of the self; 2) Agreeable relationships with other people, some of whom are willing to provide help when needed without losing respect for the recipient; 3) A reasonable amount of personal comfort in body, mind, and physical environment; 4) Stimulation of the mind and imagination in ways that are not overtaxing
of physical strength; 5) Sufficient movement to permit variety in the surroundings; 6) Some degree of passionate involvement with life, to escape preoccupation with death."

These conditions seem to be met for most of the women, although some have temporary or permanent limitations. Julia finds some of these themes unrealized in her life, but she is buoyed by the hope that surgery will improve her situation, and Anne, who has limitations imposed by arthritis, can still satisfy several of these conditions. Laura had reported low morale ("I felt like I was a hundred years old") when what turned out to be a temporary problem prevented her from moving around. Her situation and her morale have improved, but she says she is surprised, as she looks back on that period of time, at how strongly she was affected by immobility.

Hallowell (1955b:102-103) says that it is necessary to understand the culturally constituted threats to the self in order to understand behavior. In order to function as competent adults in their later years, these women must cope with threats to the self in the form of physical and social losses. In addition, Job (1984) suggests that one of the challenges to the old is the ageism which equates increased age with increased inferiority.
These women contest the negative images of aging. Laura, speaks most directly to this issue when she says, "...there are a lot of myths about aging that I think haunt you when you get older, and if you didn’t have the myths, I think your life would be a lot simpler." I ask her for an example, and she responds:

Well, I think one of them is that, you know, you’re a certain age and now you are over the hill, and the thing to do is just withdraw and let people take care of you—now you’ve hit that age. That’s one of the biggest ones.

They also contest models from the past. Emily, who works several hours every day, comments, "I remember when I was a child, your grandmother sat in a chair or she stayed home. She didn’t—I don’t think one ever went out to work."

Margaret speaks of the way her grandmothers dressed and then says:

That’s one of the things that I always want to keep going is to have nice clean clothes and to take good care of myself that way. I just remember old people years and years ago, they all kind of looked the same, and they all dressed kind of the same, you know.

Laura says, speaking of her grandmother, "What I remember most about her was sitting in our living room with a blanket over her knees, saying, ‘This is the
These women must do more than contest the negative stereotypes and negative models of old age; they must negotiate a satisfying way of life for themselves, one which takes into account the reality that they are no longer young, but that redefines old in a way in which they can include themselves as competent adults living worthwhile lives.

One of the ways they do this is to concentrate on the positive aspects of their lives. Anne, who has the least physical mobility of all the women, frequently comments that although she feels "warehoused" in the living situation she is in, she is fortunate because her family comes to see her, and so many people in her retirement community have no one come to visit them. Margaret says, "I'm thankful every day that I don't have Alzheimer's disease and [am not] shut up in a room some place and that I still enjoy doing things."

Laura deals with the physical problems she experiences by labeling them "nuisances" or "life-threatening," and no matter how uncomfortable the problem, if she is not going to die from it, its importance is minimized.

Many of the women are skilled at taking advantage of opportunities for social interaction. For example, Laura, as mentioned previously, has joined a video club and
invites friends to movie parties; she also makes bread in her breadmaking machine (Laura loves technological gadgets) and gives it to friends, who reciprocate with their specialties. Julia is more limited in mobility and energy, nevertheless, when I took banana bread to her on one of my visits, she invited a neighbor to a tea party that afternoon, using the bread as an excuse.

The three women who have moved to retirement communities have negotiated, to the extent of their abilities, the terms of their living situation. Laura speaks directly to this decision, saying that she wanted to make the decision for herself and that she wanted to place herself in a situation so that if she had to go to a nursing home, she would be where she knows people. Anne spent a weekend at the retirement community where she eventually went to live before making up her mind to move there, and Julia was also able to make a choice for herself, choosing a retirement community across town but near her closest relatives. The services available at different levels of care in retirement communities make the identification of need a negotiable factor. For example, a woman can choose to regard the services available to her as amenities rather than as evidence of inability to take care of these needs on her own.
The strong sense of self expressed by these women supports the findings of Sharon Kaufman in *The Ageless Self*. Kaufman (1986:149), in studying women and men over seventy, states that "the construction of coherent, unified sense of self is an ongoing process." She points out that the old are themselves in old age, that is "they express a sense of self that is ageless—an identity that maintains continuity despite the physical and social changes that come with old age" (1986:7). This is certainly true of the women in this study. Their lives show continuity in the way that they define themselves, in their values, and in their philosophies. One indication of a strong sense of self is the fact that all of these women chose to participate in this life history project. They wanted to tell their stories, and although they did not necessarily see their lives as extraordinary, they did see them as interesting and worthwhile.

**Life History as a Cultural Product**

Each of the life histories is a cultural product in several ways. First, although life history is a genre which would not be familiar to individuals in every culture, it was a familiar form to these women; no one needed an explanation of what I was asking her to do. Two of the women had previously been called upon as experts based on their life experiences: Margaret had been asked
to speak to a class at a university near her home about being an old woman, and Catherine had been asked to speak to church membership classes about the early pastors of her church and also to make a presentation to the YWCA about the activities of the organization in the 1930s and 1940s. Julia had researched genealogies and written family histories for both her husband’s family and hers. Laura had conducted a workshop in her retirement community in which she encouraged people to write and share autobiographical stories. Several women asked for copies of their tapes for their families; one asked for a copy for herself because of her own interest in aging; and one woman’s family had asked her to make tapes about "what life was like back then." These women were comfortable with the life history form and saw their contribution as valuable.

Second, my very utilitarian interest in using the data from the interviews to write a dissertation made cultural sense to the women also. Laura, who has a doctoral degree in psychology, asked me several times about what I was going to do with the data, and after her participation in the study was over, she read a book on qualitative research so that she could better understand what I was doing. Catherine wrote a thesis for her master’s degree almost sixty years ago and has a son who has earned a
Ph.D. All of the women are familiar with research of this nature, have an understanding of their stories as a contribution to my study, and were eager to be of help. As mentioned earlier, Julia, who abandoned her doctoral studies almost fifty years earlier because of health problems, speaks to this point most directly. When I thank her at the end of one interview she says, "I’m glad to. I don’t have a Ph.D., but I can help you get yours."

Third, and perhaps most important, the life histories that developed out of these interviews are the product of a cultural interaction between each woman and me. Although my intent was to let each woman tell her story as she wanted to tell it, and I tried to make the process as opened ended as possible, I am aware that my coming to the encounter with the expectations I brought and being the person I am had an effect on what I was told. I know that their trying to speak about what they thought I was interested in affected what they told me, because I was occasionally asked, "Is this the kind of thing you want?"

I can only guess what effect I had coming to this situation as a fifty-year-old white woman instead of a thirty-year-old black man or a person of any description nearer or farther from the age of these women, but my sense is that my being a woman made our conversations more personal than they might otherwise have been, and I play
in my imagination with a new form of life history that might have been created if I had been eighty-five and we had been sharing our life stories.

Others have written about the effect of the personal characteristics of the researcher on the life history situation. Margaret Blackman (1982:15), for instance, is certain that her informant Florence Davidson "could not have told her story to a man," but in contrast, Lawrence Watson (Watson and Watson-Franke 1985:74) speaks of "the mutual understanding, rapport, and camaraderie" that developed among himself, his female Guajiro informant, and his translator.

In a cross-cultural research encounter, the researcher can assume the role of a child or an uninformed person, and thus from a position of naïveté ask questions which might otherwise be improper, protected by the assumption that she does not know any better. These roles are not available to the native anthropologist. Because these women and I quickly settled into a companionable exchange, I felt restricted to asking each woman only the kinds of questions which I would have been able to ask her if we had been friends having a conversation under other circumstances—in other words, limited to what was appropriate in our culture. At the same time I tried to make sure that I did not assume similarities and did not
lead the women with my questions or responses.

The experience of Tien-Tai Wu (1990), a Taiwanese anthropologist, who received part of her education in the United States and returned to Taiwan to do research, is instructive. Wu found that while she could not pretend to be naive about the culture and was criticized for asking questions she should have known better than to ask, she could nevertheless not assume that her understanding of the concepts she was interested in, such as inequality, would be the same as that of her informants.

The life histories which these six women and I produced are an intertwining of our interests and expectations— a cultural production, through and through.

Reflections

When I began the collection of these six life histories, I expected valuable data, and I was not disappointed; what I did not anticipate was that what I learned would change the way I view life. I have benefited greatly from listening to six women who have not only had rich and varied life experiences but who have integrated these experiences in a way that enables them to meet the challenges of their ninth decade with wisdom and courage.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW DATES FOR SIX WOMEN

Julia (85 years old)

1st interview 11/15/88
2nd interview 11/22/88
3rd interview 11/29/88
4th interview 12/6/88
5th interview 12/13/88
6th interview 12/20/88
hospital visit 1/10/89
health center visit 1/19/89
health center visit 1/26/89
funeral 2/2/89

Julia had surgery after we had completed six interviews. I visited her in the hospital and in the health center of her retirement community but did not tape record these visits. She died before we could resume the interviews.
Margaret (85 years old)
1st interview 3/2/89
2nd interview 3/9/89
3rd interview 3/16/89
4th interview 4/6/89
5th interview 4/14/89
6th interview 4/20/89

Because Margaret lived an hour's drive from me and because she was quite able to participate in long interviews, we usually talked for two hours or more. After the sixth interview I told her that I would continue to visit but would probably not tape record any more conversations. She had a stroke shortly after this time. I have visited her twelve times at the nursing home where she now lives but have not tape recorded or interviewed.
Catherine (87 years old)
1st interview 10/5/89
2nd interview 10/12/89
3rd interview 10/19/89
4th interview 10/26/89
5th interview 11/2/89
6th interview 11/9/89
7th interview 11/16/89
8th interview 11/29/89
9th interview 1/11/90
10th interview 1/25/90

Catherine and I completed ten interviews. We continue to get together from time to time for a special activity or for lunch. She recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday, and I was pleased to be invited to a reception in her honor.
Laura (82 years old)

1st interview 12/5/89
2nd interview 12/13/89
3rd interview 12/19/89
4th interview 1/8/90
5th interview 1/19/90
6th interview 1/24/90
7th interview 2/7/90
8th interview 2/14/90
9th interview 2/22/90
10th interview 3/1/90

Laura and I completed ten interviews. We have gone shopping together and have lunch together occasionally. I was honored to be invited to her eighty-fifth birthday party.
Anne (84 years old)

1st interview 2/2/90
2nd interview 2/9/90
3rd interview 2/16/90
4th interview 2/21/90
5th interview 2/28/90
6th interview 3/7/90
7th interview 3/15/90
8th interview 3/21/90
9th interview 3/28/90
10th interview 4/4/90

Anne and I completed ten interviews. I continued to visit her at her apartment and at the health center of her retirement community after our interviews were finished. She died recently after a brief illness, and I attended her memorial service.
Emily (84 years old)

1st interview 2/6/90
2nd interview 2/13/90
3rd interview 2/20/90
4th interview 2/27/90
5th interview 3/6/90
6th interview 3/20/90

Emily did not want to commit to participating in ten interviews because she thought she would run out of things to say. We agreed that we would meet six times and then see if there was more to tell. After six interviews I had collected enough data to complete the study. I stop by to visit Emily at the restaurant occasionally, and we have a few minutes of conversation.
I ended my interviews with these six women from two to three-and-a-half years ago, and these years have brought many changes.

Julia, as I have indicated, died a few weeks after her hip surgery. She was eighty-five. I attended her funeral in the town in which she had grown up, and although the occasion was a sad one, I enjoyed hearing admiring stories about Aunt Julie when she was young.

Margaret had a stroke shortly after our interviews were completed and now lives in a nursing home. She had hopes of recuperating enough to be able to go home, but her therapy was not successful, and she has stopped starting sentences with "If I'm able to go home,..." She is confined to a bed or wheelchair, and although she can carry on a brief conversation, she is weak and no longer shows her usual ebullient personality.

Her daughter visits almost daily, reads novels to her and her roommate, manicures her nails, and sees to it that Margaret, who was always careful about her clothes, has
a supply of pretty nightgowns and bedjackets. Her room is decorated with cards and plants.

Margaret has had good and bad spells over the years, including a time when she fell out of her wheelchair and was badly bruised, but at eighty-eight her condition seems stable.

Catherine's health has been good in the period since our interviews. She now has a middle-aged man from her church boarding in her home, a situation which seems to have benefits for both of them and which gives comfort to her children who live six hundred miles away. Her children respect and encourage her independence, and unlike many families of older women, encourage her to keep driving.

Another brother died this year as did two friends who were near her own age. She was asked to speak at the memorial service for one of the friends.

She recently celebrated her ninetieth birthday with a reception at the YWCA hosted by her children. Her sons made speeches in her honor, and she responded with brief remarks and was proud to introduce her six grandchildren, other family members, and all those who had traveled to attend the party. A YWCA fund was established in her honor to be used to further the issues of social justice to which she is committed.
Anne continued to have severe problems with arthritis and had to move from the assisted-living area of her retirement community to the health center. Although this meant a smaller, less home-like room, to which she could take only a few of her possessions, she seemed to adjust well. In this environment activities such as bingo and group sings were provided, and she seemed willing to participate in this level of activity. Her personality and sense of humor were still evident, and I got the impression that she was a favorite with the staff. She died recently at age eighty-six. As she had planned, there was a memorial service at her retirement community, followed by a service in her hometown.

I stop in to see Emily at work from time to time. At eighty-seven she still appears to be in good health and is always impeccably dressed in stylish, contemporary outfits. She says she has "slowed down some," and in the last year she has moved from her apartment to a retirement community.

Laura continues to do well. Earlier this year I was invited to her eighty-fifth birthday party at the home of a mutual friend. Laura had made up the guest list, which included people from her retirement community and others, ranging in age from perhaps forty to early eighties. The party was a formal and elegant dinner, and Laura seemed
to feel properly honored by the occasion.

Her half brother died this year, and now her only relatives are three cousins who live out of state. When I talked to her recently she was looking forward to a visit from them.

When Laura’s fifteen-year-old cat died, she got a new one through a senior citizen program sponsored by a cat food company, which pays the considerable costs for shots and neutering, and she is enjoying her new pet’s lively personality.
APPENDIX C

KINSHIP

David Schneider (1972) states that if we are to look at kinship cross-culturally using a symbols and meanings definition of culture, then we must find out what kinship is for each culture studied, rather than deciding ahead of time what kinship is and fitting the kinship grid over the culture. The charts which follow are a step toward that goal; they cannot be said to show what kinship is in American culture because the data were not elicited in response to questions about kinship, such as who are your relatives, or who are your kin, or whom would you invite to your wedding; all were embedded in the story of the person’s life. They do show, however, as inclusively as possible, the relationship of people to whom each informant applied kinship terms, consanguinely and affinally. The consanguineal or affinal relationship may be close (sister or sister-in-law) or distant (daughter-in-law’s mother, or half brother’s uncle), and every possible relationship was included, even when it was not clear whether or not the person referred to was considered
kin or was considered kin of kin. Some individuals who appear on the chart were mentioned in story after story and played an important part in the life of the informant, for example, a son; some were mentioned in passing and seemed to have little importance, for example, the former wife of a nephew. The original transcripts of the interviews make it possible to see the context in which each person is mentioned; unfortunately, the fact that not all the data from the interviews appear in this document limits the extent to which this can be ascertained within the dissertation.

The group of individuals on each chart has some characteristics of a kindred because it is ego-centered, bilateral, and non-corporate. In other respects, however, it does not meet the criteria for a kindred because the extent to which reciprocal relationships exist is not clear, and the place in a kindred for ancestors, especially those long dead or not personally known by the woman is questionable.

The discussion of kindred in the literature supports the previous statement, but still leaves the exact characteristics of a kindred in doubt. Buchler and Selby (1968:87) define a kindred as "people who have someone in common as a relative" and suggest that affines may or may not be included but that they usually are. They cite
Blehr (1963) who makes a distinction between kith and kindred. Blehr (1963:271) uses kith to mean "persons related by consanguineal and/or affinal ties involving mutual obligations" and reserves kin for a similar group with consanguineal ties. Murdock (1949:56-57) says of the kindred:

In our own society, where its members are collectively called "kinfolk" and "relatives," it includes that group of near kinsmen who may be expected to be present and participant on important ceremonial occasions, such as weddings, christenings, funerals, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, and "family reunions."

Buchler and Selby (1968:89), however, make a distinction between relatives and kindred, saying that a kindred is "a set of all relatives which the informant feels to be of special significance for his security..."

Carol Stack (1974:54-55) in studying inner-city Black families does not include all relatives in a kindred either, saying, "The choice of which relatives an individual draws into her personal kindred is by no means mechanical," but she does not restrict kindred only to relatives, stating:

Personal kindreds of adults are ego-centered networks of essential kin. These networks are not residential units or observable groups, and they change participants, for example, when friends 'fall out' with one another. From an individual’s viewpoint personal kindreds comprise the people who
are socially recognized as having reciprocal responsibilities. These people become acting and reacting participants for some focal purpose.

A crucial aspect of kindred, according to Buchler and Selby (1968:89) is that "the difference between the kindred and one's relatives consists in the informant's mind." There may well be a kindred within each of these groups, but each woman would determine which individuals she considers relatives, which she considers kindred, and which she considers merely kin of kin. Data from the interviews may indicate that a particular person is part of a woman's personal kindred (as determined by the reciprocal rights and obligations mentioned in the interviews), but it is not possible to exclude people who are mentioned in the interviews from the kindred on this basis or to be sure that everyone in the kindred is mentioned in the interviews.

George Murdock (1949:14, 94-95) offers one way to categorize the individuals mentioned in the interviews: they are the primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, and quinary relatives of the subject of the interviews. According to Murdock, primary relatives are a person's parents, siblings, spouse, and children; secondary relatives are the primary relatives of these individuals, and so on. A look at the following genealogical charts
shows that some of the women mention in their interviews individuals who range from primary to quinary relatives.

Schneider and Homans (1955:1194) state that the American kinship system has bilateral descent and that the nuclear family and the kindred are basic kin groups. They suggest (1955:1204) that the nuclear family is of central importance in the kinship system of the United States because "it is, after all, one of only two kin groups in the system, and the evidence suggests that the other, the loose, amorphous kindred, tends to vary in importance from time to time in the life-history of any given nuclear family, from region to region, from class to class, and from ethnic group to ethnic group." They state also (1955:1194) that monogamous marriage, and neolocal residence characterize American kinship and that there is no succession to an office through kinship, and inheritance is "by testamentary disposition."

These characteristics of American kinship are true in general for the data presented here. Descent is bilateral rather than agnatic (patrilineal) or uterine (matrilineal) in American families. The charts include as many as three generations of ancestors and as many as three generations of descendants, all bilateral. There is no evidence in the women's stories that they attempt to construct a
uterine family in the sense that Margery Wolf (1974, 1975, 1985) uses the term: a family, based on affection, composed of a woman and her children (most importantly sons) and grandchildren with which the woman contests the power of the male dominated patrilineal family. The stories told by these women show the nuclear family to be the most important kin group, and the existence of the kindred, although not specified (kindred is an etic term), is implied. For example, Catherine shows pictures of those who attended her grandson's high school graduation, an event in which she participated as a member of his kindred. Current and retrospective network studies would be required to elicit specific data about reciprocal relationships throughout the lives of these women. Monogamous marriage is characteristic of these families, and, as expected there is no mention of succession through kinship. Neolocal residence, while the basic type of residence during most of the lifetime of each of the women, was modified from time to time in order to accommodate a particular situation. For example, Emily and her husband lived with her parents at the beginning of their marriage and their first child was born during this time; Laura and her mother went to live with her mother's family after Laura's father died, and Laura had other relatives living with her family of orientation at
various times. During their adult lives three of the women lived with their parents or had parents living in their homes for periods of time in order to provide care for the parents. Catherine had siblings living with her; Margaret lived with a sibling to help with her care and also had a daughter and the daughter’s children living with her for a time.

As mentioned above, Schneider and Homans (1955:1194) state that inheritance is by testamentary disposition, and this is true if there is a will. If a person dies intestate (that is, without a will) in the United States, inheritance is determined by state law. Inheritance received is mentioned only in two cases: Margaret mentions that her grandfather left a farm to each of his children, including her mother (this may not be an inheritance in the strict sense of the word because her grandfather was still alive, although retired, at the time her mother took possession of the farm); Catherine mentions that her father inherited a farm from his grandfather. In terms of what they will leave to others, Anne talks about having given many possessions to family members when she moved to the retirement community; Catherine mentions that she is trying to give away some possessions now (principally books) and speaks of a list which tells where she wants other possessions to go after her death; Laura has given
some possessions to the university from which she received her degree and at which she taught, and she plans to contribute papers and other scholarly materials to the university.

In general then, the data from these interviews support Schneider and Homan's (1955) view of American kinship.

It is of some interest to see who is mentioned in these women's stories. In the ascending generations, three women mention parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents; three mention only parents and grandparents. This is not to say that they would not be able to go back further in naming ancestors, because Julia, who speaks of only parents and grandparents, can trace her father's family back to Ireland in the 1700s, and others have family stories about ancestors who are not specifically identified. In almost all cases when a great-grandparent is mentioned, it is in a story that was told to the informant as a child.

Sisters and brothers are referred to, although in the case of Catherine who had eight living siblings, they are not mentioned individually. Husbands are mentioned and in every case (except for Margaret's second husband), at least one parent of the husband is mentioned. Children are mentioned; their spouses are usually mentioned. Grandchildren are mentioned at least numerically ("I have
eleven grandchildren"), as are great-grandchildren.
Lineal relationships are more completely included than are collateral, and consanguineal relatives are more evident than affinal ones.

The genealogical charts which follow are not intended to show the "family tree" of each woman. Instead they are intended to indicate the relatives (in Murdock's [1949] sense of primary, secondary, tertiary, quaternary, and quinary relatives) who were mentioned in the interviews. Relatives who were mentioned but who cannot, on the basis of the interview data, be connected to the chart are listed separately on the page.
Also mentioned:
1) Julia's cousins

- ego; △ male; ○ female; □ sex not stated;
  = marriage; ↳ divorce; △ adopted; □ deceased

FIGURE 1. RELATIVES MENTIONED IN INTERVIEWS WITH JULIA
Also mentioned:
1) Craig Davis, grandson
2) Tomay, grandson; wife Cheryl; two great-granddaughters
3) granddaughter in Florida
4) nephew who invited her to be housemother
5) niece Peggy in Florida; 1st husband; 2nd husband
6) cousin from Louisiana

* ego; △ male; ○ female; □ sex not stated;
= marriage; ✂ divorce; ◇ adopted; ○ deceased

FIGURE 2. RELATIVES MENTIONED IN INTERVIEWS WITH MARGARET
FIGURE 3. RELATIVES MENTIONED IN INTERVIEWS WITH CATHERINE
Also mentioned:
1) Aunt Ross, a cousin of maternal grandfather
2) a great-great uncle, William Todd Grant

ego; △ male; ○ female; □ sex not stated;
= marriage; ≠ divorce; () adopted; ◊ deceased

FIGURE 4. RELATIVES MENTIONED IN INTERVIEWS WITH LAURA
• ego; △ male; ○ female; □ sex not stated; = marriage; ≠ divorce; ◊ adopted; ▲ deceased

FIGURE 5. RELATIVES MENTIONED IN INTERVIEWS WITH EMILY
Also mentioned:
1) mother's invalid niece

• ego; △ male; ○ female; □ sex not stated;
= marriage; ≠ divorce; • adopted; Q deceased

FIGURE 6. RELATIVES MENTIONED IN INTERVIEWS WITH ANNE
APPENDIX D

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

The three retirement communities in which women in this study live have several levels of care which allow the residents to maintain as much independence as possible while having their needs met. (Data in this section are abstracted from information provided by the retirement communities.) While each community has its own definitions, and the same label does not necessarily mean the same level of care in two different communities, the following descriptions will serve as a guide to the tables which follow:

1) Independent living residences are much like any apartment in an apartment complex. Residents cook their own meals and do their own laundry, but services are available if they are needed. For example, a resident who usually cooks her own meals might choose to purchase a meal ticket and eat in the dining room from time to time.

2) Independent living with services is independent living with the addition of meals in a dining room,
housekeeping, linen service, and in some cases personal laundry service.

3) Personal care or assisted living offers a range of help as needed with taking medication, bathing, walking, dressing, and other activities of daily living.

4) Health care provides assistance with activities of daily living in a setting in which nursing care is available.

Table 7 shows the levels of care available in the communities in which three of the women live.

Entrance fees and monthly fees vary greatly among retirement communities due to some of the same factors which affect prices for houses and apartments in the wider community. It is not unusual for fees to vary within a single retirement community for a particular type of accommodation, for example, a one-bedroom apartment, based on the age of the unit or particular amenities. In addition to monthly rates, personal care or assisted-living levels of care often charge a daily fee based on the amount of assistance the person needs.

Table 8 gives entrance fees and monthly fees for a one-bedroom apartment and a studio apartment. Four different listings are given because two different types of accommodation are listed for Emerson Lowell, which, although it is one community has independent living in
Emerson and independent living with services and personal care in Lowell.

Services are quite similar in the three retirement communities and are designed to meet the needs of the residents as well as to provide social activities. Table 9 compares selected services included in the monthly fee in four different situations; the accommodations for Linden Terrace, Lowell, and Chatham Woods are independent living with services, and those in Emerson are independent living.

**TABLE 7**

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES - LEVELS OF CARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of care</th>
<th>Linden Terrace</th>
<th>Emerson-Lowell</th>
<th>Chatham Woods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent Living</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Living with Services</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisted Living/Personal Care</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Center</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fee</td>
<td>Linden Terrace</td>
<td>Emerson</td>
<td>Lowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Fee, One Bedroom</td>
<td>$49,500-$55,500</td>
<td>$47,900-$52,000</td>
<td>$48,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Fee, One Bedroom</td>
<td>$1,320-$2,400</td>
<td>$570</td>
<td>$1,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Fee, Studio</td>
<td>$19,500-$25,500</td>
<td>$23,700 and up</td>
<td>$23,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Fee, Studio</td>
<td>$1,160-$1,220</td>
<td>$520</td>
<td>$1,030</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes 3 meals  ** includes no meals
### TABLE 9

**RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES - SERVICES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Linden Terrace</th>
<th>Emerson</th>
<th>Lowell</th>
<th>Chatham Woods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recreational Facilities</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Services</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Services</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resident Association</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Housekeeping</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linens provided and laundered</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Laundry Service</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Provided</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Ablon, Joan  

Akiyama, Hiroko, Toni Antonucci, and Ruth Campbell

Allen, Katherine R.

Amoss, Pamela, and Stevan Harrell

Anderson, Barbara Gallatin

Anderson, Rufus

Atkins, G. Lawrence

Barer, Barbara M.
Beall, Cynthia M.

Bernard, H. Russell

Bernstein, Gail Lee

Binstock, Robert H.

Blackman, Margaret B.

Blehr, Otto

Bould, Sally, Beverly Sanborn, and Laura Reif

Buchler, Ira R., and Henry A. Selby

Busse, Ewald W., and George L. Maddox

Carles, Émilie (as told to Robert Destanque)
Caughey, John L.  

Clark Margaret, and Barbara Anderson  

Colson, Elizabeth  

Columbus Dispatch  

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Goffman, Erving

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Hallowell, A. Irving


Lewis, Oscar


Lewis, Oscar, Ruth Lewis, and Susan Rigdon


Longino, Charles F., Jr.

Lopata, Helena Znaniecka

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Lurie, Nancy Oestreich

Maddox, George L.

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Manton, Kenneth G., and Beth J. Soldo

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Marshall, Victor W.

Matthews, Sarah H.


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Soldo, Beth J., and Kenneth G. Manton

Stack, Carol
Strange, Heather, Michele Teitelbaum, and Contributors

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Suzman, Richard, and Matilda White Riley

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Torrey, Barbara Boyle

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