

CHANGES IN ACTIVITY OF OLDER PEOPLE,  
BENZIE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.  
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## ABSTRACT

### CHANGES IN ACTIVITY OF OLDER PEOPLE: BENZIE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

by Jeannette Bond Shadko

This descriptive study was designed to gain familiarity with the characteristics of men and women over 65 who live in Benzie County, Michigan.

Changes were identified in activities that related to work, family and social roles. An attempt was made to ascertain their satisfactions with their lives past and present.

A primary objective of the study was to achieve new insights into the needs of older people in order to develop more meaningful programs for this age group by the Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies concerned with educational programs.

Literature reviewed suggested seven basic needs of older people: adjustment to a new income level; care of health; suitable housing and living arrangements; family associations; social contacts with friends and neighbors; creative use of time; and acceptance of the reality of death.

This study centered around changes in work, family and social activities and the older people's perception of their own satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life.

A structured interview using an interview schedule completed by the researcher was used to gather data. A self report index was used to collect data about life satisfaction.

A list of the older people in Benzie County was obtained from the county's supervisors.

The population was composed of 918 persons, over 65 (427 men and 491 women). One hundred people (50 men and 50 women) were randomly selected for the survey.

Data were hand scored by the researcher. Life satisfaction scores were determined using the coding system developed for the index. The researcher and an independent coder categorized the responses for the index.

Biographical information was analyzed and described. Activities were categorized according to a pre-determined classification for activities. Comparisons were made between past and present activities in work, family and social roles. Comparisons were made between men and women.

The majority of the sample were married. More than three-fourths of the men but a little less than half of the women were married. There were more than three times as many widows as widowers.

More of each sex lived in the country. Nearly the same number of men and women lived in the country as lived in town. More than 90 percent of each sex lived in their own homes.

Only six percent of the men and ten percent of the women lived with children.

Less than 20 percent of either sex expressed any desire to change their present living arrangements.

The majority of respondents, 66 percent of the men and 86 percent of the women, saw their health as good or fair.

Male respondents had completed a median of 8.6 years of schooling. Female respondents had completed a median of 9.5 school years. This was one year less for each sex than the average for Benzie residents 25 years and older.

Although well past retirement age, 37 percent of the respondents continued to work for pay. Twenty percent of the men continued to work full time. Another 22 percent were working part time. None of the women were working full time. Thirty-two percent were working part time. The largest numbers of men had worked in agricultural and skilled jobs. The largest numbers of women had worked in clerical and unskilled jobs. Most of the men still working full time were in agricultural jobs. Both men and women 65 tended to drift into unskilled kinds of occupations.

Men said they continued to work mainly because they liked to work. Women said they worked for economic and social reasons. They felt they were needed.

Less than half of each sex reported making plans for retirement. Of those who had made plans a majority

of the men and a larger majority of the women said they had been able to follow their plans.

These people had frequent contacts with children and other family members. A majority of them also had frequent contacts with friends.

Men said activities they enjoyed most were those concerned with other people, recreational activities, and their work. Women said the ones they enjoyed most were recreational activities and those concerned with other people.

After 65 years of age participation by both men and women in formal social activities decreased. The drop was greater for men than for women. The data suggested many of the respondents were becoming less community centered and more home centered in their later years.

Men's and women's responses to the Life Satisfaction Index indicated that older residents of Benzie County, men and women, were predominantly positive in their attitudes.

This study suggests the need for the Cooperative Extension Service and other educational agencies to use several ways of reaching older people. These ways might include home visits, short newsletters, radio and television programs. The older age group could be included in programs for other adults. Older people should not always be isolated as a group. Older people need to be helped and

motivated to help themselves and each other.

Younger people, adults and children, should be conditioned to look on old age as a part of life, as a time with opportunities and satisfactions of its own.

CHANGES IN ACTIVITY OF OLDER PEOPLE:  
BENZIE COUNTY, MICHIGAN

By  
Jeannette Bond Shadko

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Our twentieth-century Western society prides itself in having a major concern for the individual and corporate needs of its members. There is concern that, wherever possible, services and facilities be provided that will assist individual members to function at their greatest possible capacity, thereby making a contribution to society.

A large segment of society is composed of senior citizens. . . . Due to population growth and new medical advances, both the absolute and the relative size of this segment of society is increasing rapidly. These and other factors have generated special concern for the problems of the aging.<sup>1</sup>

Nine percent of Michigan's population is over 65 years of age. Benzie County is a small county in the northern part of the state. Twelve and six-tenths percent of the county's population is 65 years old or older. Benzie is in the highest quarter of counties in Michigan in its number of older residents.<sup>2</sup>

The Cooperative Extension Service of Michigan State

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<sup>1</sup>United Community Services of Grand Rapids and Kent County. Characteristics and Needs of Senior Citizens in Kent County, Michigan. A survey conducted by the Planning Division in Cooperation with the Michigan Department of Health (Grand Rapids, Kent County: United Community Services, 1964), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Allan Beegle et al., Michigan Population, 1960, Selected Characteristics and Changes, Special Bulletin 438, 1962. Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Michigan State University, Agricultural Experiment Station, East Lansing, Michigan, pp. 30-31.

University carries on a major part of its homemaking educational program through extension study clubs. Benzie study clubs have many members in the older age group.

Extension Home Economists are interested in learning more about the changing needs and roles--work, family and social--of these older people. A study of their activities, past and present, and a study of satisfactions or dissatisfactions of their lives, past and present, could lead to better program planning by the Cooperative Extension Service and other adult educational agencies within the county.

Such a study could also lead to more constructive program planning for younger people as they prepare for the later years.

### Objectives

Objectives of the study are:

1. To gain familiarity with the characteristics of this age group in Benzie County.
2. To identify changes in the activities of older people as they relate to work, family and social roles.
3. To identify satisfaction or dissatisfaction with these activities past and present.
4. To achieve new insights in order to formulate more precise research problems.

5. To achieve new insights in order to develop more meaningful programs for older people by the Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies concerned with educational programs.

This is a descriptive study intended to portray accurately the characteristics of a particular group.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Claire Selltiz et al., Research Methods in Social Relations (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), p. 50.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Much has been said and written on the subject of aging and older people. Interest in this age group has developed in fairly recent times.

During the 1920's a few articles about older people appeared in the Journal of Home Economics. In a 1933 issue of this journal a book called Salvaging Old Age<sup>1</sup> was mentioned. The title of this book may suggest the nature of the philosophy of the times. During the late 30's and 40's there was a progressive increase in the number of books, articles in periodicals, and studies of needs and concerns of older people. In the 50's the information available on aging increased greatly in quantity as people began to realize that growing numbers of persons were living beyond the age of 65.

Serious studies of the aging probably began in the 1940's. The Division of Gerontology, University of Michigan, was a pioneer in the study of aging people and the aging process. In 1948 the Governor of Michigan appointed

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<sup>1</sup>Lillian J. Martin and Clare DeGruchy, Books and Periodicals, "Salvaging Old Age," in: Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 22, May, 1930, p. 411.



an interdepartmental committee on aging. This led to a study committee, then to a council and eventually to the establishment of the present Michigan Commission on Aging in 1960.<sup>1</sup>

The first studies focused on financial situations and needs, health and housing. However, as early as 1950 Donahue and Tibbetts<sup>2</sup> identified other problems of older people in addition to physical ones. They suggested the need for: opportunities to take part in activities which give the satisfaction of continued creativity; for companionship, relationships which provide emotional security; and for opportunities for continued usefulness in society.

There is general agreement in the literature about the basic needs of older people. Duvall indicated there are seven developmental needs.

(1) One of the most crucial adjustments of aging family members is the adjustment to a new income level. Some members may need to continue to work for financial reasons. It may be desirable for others to continue working for psychological and social reasons.

(2) Good health care means daily care and periodic health examinations. Regular exercise and an adequate diet

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<sup>1</sup>Michigan Commission on Aging, A Report on the Governor's Task Forces on Aging (Lansing, Michigan: Commission on Aging, 1964), p. A3.

<sup>2</sup>Wilma Donahue, Clark Tibbitts (Ed.), Planning the Older Years (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950), p. 3.

are as important as in the earlier years of life. Health care can take an increasingly larger part of the older person's income.

(3) Housing and living arrangements may need to be changed to adapt physical arrangements to health and economic situations. Home for older people should be a safe and pleasant place.

(4) Family associations are one of the greatest sources of emotional support in the later years of life. After retirement the older person's most important satisfactions may come from meaningful relationships with other family members.

(5) There is a continued need for social contacts and social responsibilities. To enjoy old friends and make new ones is important throughout life. The older person should also be a citizen of his community.

(6) The meaningful, creative use of time calls for a continuance of special interests and a development of new interests. Such activities help the older person find recognition and esteem for his accomplishments. They help him to keep on feeling useful and important.

(7) There is a need to face death for oneself and members of one's family, death as a part of life, death as inevitable. The older person can accept constructively the reality of death.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Evelyn M. Duvall, Family Development (2nd ed.)

This study therefore centered around three areas of change in work, family and social activities of older persons living in Benzie County. A brief review of literature regarding these three areas follows.

### Work Activities

In some cultures older people have a prescribed role. They take a well defined part in work and leisure activities. They do not do hard physical work but they are a necessary part of the total activity pattern.

Rural communities in the United States have traditionally had a prescribed place for older persons. However, over the past thirty years changes have been so rapid that a prescribed role for all people, including the aging, rarely exists.

Smith<sup>1</sup> suggests that the aged have to find a new role. Often it is a non-economic role in a society which highly values an economic one.

Hunter and Maurice<sup>2</sup> report that in the American

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(Philadelphia and New York: The J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), pp. 438-40.

<sup>1</sup>William M. Smith, "Old Age: So Old Nobody Wants You," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 41, December, 1949, p. 308.

<sup>2</sup>Woodrow Hunter and Helen Maurice, Older People Tell Their Story, Report of a Survey of the Needs of Older People Undertaken in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Recommendations for Community Action. Developed by a Local Forum on Aging, University of Michigan, Institute for Human Adjustment, Division of Gerontology (Ann Arbor: Brown-Brumfield, Inc., 1953), p. 17.

society it is work that gives meaning to existence. Work is a sign of worth in the eyes of the family and the community. It structures an individual's and a family's social life.

Many older people need to work for financial reasons. As they grow older they find it hard or impossible to get work. This seriously frustrates them in their efforts to remain productive, self-reliant and respected members of their family and community.

People are encouraged to retire at 65 or 62 to a leisure they have never learned to value or use. Too often this can mean doing little or nothing in a society that has long placed much value on being active and productive.<sup>1</sup>

Today we are moving toward a leisure oriented society where withdrawal from work does not mean withdrawal from life but an opportunity for self expression, for creativity, and for community service.<sup>2</sup> Can usefulness now take a different form? Can this new form become as meaningful as work?

Michelon<sup>3</sup> stated that the objective of further

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<sup>1</sup>Michigan Commission on Aging, A Report on the Governor's Task Forces on Aging. Michigan Commission on Aging. (Lansing, Michigan, 1965), p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>L. C. Michelon, "The New Leisure Class," The American Journal of Sociology, Vol. LIX, No. 4, January, 1954, p. 378.

education is not to make the positive meanings of work negative but to develop a positive appreciation of retirement opportunities. Older persons must transfer old meanings to new activities and must find some new meanings, new satisfactions in the retired role.

A study<sup>1</sup> conducted by the National Commission on Aging showed that most people want to continue to work as long as they are able. The Commission surveyed 47 large companies (10,000 or more employees).

Other surveys<sup>2</sup> taken by the Social Security Administration, University Research groups, The Twentieth Century Fund, National Opinion Survey Organizations, and some industrial firms indicated 50% or more of workers do not want to retire at 65. The reason most often given was financial need. Other reasons given were: liked the job, wanted to keep busy; liked the familiar routine; enjoyed the associations; found work a source of recognition and status; work was an opportunity for creative endeavor; work gave a purpose to life; and some reported feeling better mentally and physically when working.

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<sup>1</sup>National Committee on Aging, Work Attitudes at Age 65 Survey, A Survey of 254 U.S. Corporations, National Committee on Aging, New York City, New York, 1959, pp. 3-5 (In: Background Paper on Education for Aging, White House Conference on Aging, p. 42).

<sup>2</sup>Eugene A. Friedman, "The Good Use of Leisure. The Work of Leisure," In: Wilma Donahue et al. (editors), Free Time: Challenge to Later Maturity (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1958), p. 121.

It would seem that many people have a negative attitude toward retirement. They avoid serious planning for it. However, since 1950, retirement studies<sup>1</sup> seem to show a consistently lower percentage of workers who do not want to retire. There is also some evidence to suggest that employees of companies with systematic programs of pre-retirement counseling over a period of years have more favorable attitudes toward retirement than workers in companies without this kind of program.<sup>2</sup>

The Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania took a survey<sup>3</sup> of its employees approaching retirement in 1952. A majority had thought about retirement and had talked it over with others, but few had made any definite plans. The company found that those who had made plans were finding the plans worked out as they had hoped. Those who had not made plans did not seem to be so fortunate.

The retirement role as a separate role has been less quickly accepted by farmers. It has been a more gradual process for them. The use of modern mechanized procedures has reduced the number of useful tasks older people

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 121-22.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>The Benefit Office of the Bell Telephone Company of Pennsylvania: Survey on Preparation for Retirement, January, 1950. In: Background Paper on Education for Aging, White House Conference on Aging, pp. 43-44.

have traditionally performed in rural areas.

In a study<sup>1</sup> of 575 farm people, less than one-third had made definite plans for retirement. However, 85 percent planned to retire.

### Family Activities

The family is the first and most important source of comfort and psychological support. Family relationships are a vital factor in a satisfying old age.

Schorr<sup>2</sup> has stated there is a growing body of evidence to show that only about 15 percent of aging parents live more than a short ride from some child. About 50 percent live within walking distance or a short ride. About one-third live with a child.

More than two out of three older parents see their children at least once a week. If they cannot visit they keep in touch by telephone, sometimes daily.

A Cornell study<sup>3</sup> of retirement used a sample of

<sup>1</sup>Howard M. Sauer, Jeanne C. Biggar, "Plans, Attitudes on Retirement and Social Security," Farm and Home Research, Vol. XV, No. 3, 1964. Agricultural Experiment Station, South Dakota State University, Brookings, South Dakota.

<sup>2</sup>Alvin L. Schorr, "Filial Responsibility and the Aging," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 54, No. 4, April, 1962, p. 273. In: Alvin L. Schorr, Filial Responsibility in the Modern American Family (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 6. And: Ethel Shanos, "Living Arrangements of Older People in the United States," The Gerontologist, 1, No. 1, March, 1961, pp. 27-29.

<sup>3</sup>Gordon F. Streib and Wayne E. Thompson, "The Older

2300 people. They found a large majority of the older parents in their sample had frequent contacts with their children's families. Three out of four saw children often; 70 percent saw grandchildren often. One-third were with brothers and sisters often. One-fourth saw nieces and nephews often. Twelve percent were in frequent touch with cousins.

Reynolds and McKinney,<sup>1</sup> reporting on the 1950 White House Conference on Aging, suggested that personal patterns of adjustment in family relationships which are characteristic of both one's youth and middle age determine the type and quality of family relations in old age. Among the characteristics they assumed to be helpful to successful aging were: a large family; strong kinship ties; a family well integrated into community life; preservation of some individual property rights and other personal privileges; opportunities to contribute to society; and some stability in integration between traditional and changing values.

Albrecht<sup>2</sup> and Duvall<sup>3</sup> state that maintaining close

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Person in a Family Context," in: Clark Tibbetts, ed., Handbook of Social Gerontology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), p. 476.

<sup>1</sup>Lucille W. Reynolds, Florence McKinney, "Report from the 1950 Conference on Aging," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 43, January, 1951, pp. 42-43.

<sup>2</sup>Ruth Albrecht, "Relationships of Older Parents with Their Children," Marriage and Family Living, Vol. XVI, No. 1, February, 1954, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Duvall, II, p. 464.



and meaningful contacts with family members can be a most rewarding task of the later years.

As the individual ages the family decreases in size. Some members may move far away, some die. Children go to homes of their own.

Knowledgeable parents have encouraged their children's autonomy and growth through the years. These parents find new relationships with mature children and grandchildren. They accept and welcome in-laws as members of the family. At the same time these kinds of parents have continued their own development with interests in addition to their families.

#### Social Activities

Man cannot live by himself. He is a part of society. Continuous social contact helps to maintain his mental health.

There are several social adjustments and maladjustments to old age. These include a range of behaviors from withdrawal to overinvolvement.<sup>1</sup>

The Kent County Survey<sup>2</sup> found that the desire for

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<sup>1</sup>Michigan Commission on Aging, p. G16.

<sup>2</sup>United Community Services of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Characteristics and Needs of Senior Citizens in Kent County, Michigan. A Survey Conducted by the Planning Division of the United Community Services of Grand Rapids and Kent County in Cooperation with the Michigan Department of Mental Health, 1964, p. 50.

companionship is very great in older people. Many of the people they surveyed would like a central meeting place available for use and someone to visit them occasionally. They wanted contacts with other older people in addition to contacts with their children and other family members. The meaningful use of their time was another important concern<sup>1</sup> of older persons. New routines, fellowship with old and new friends, following old interests and choosing some new leisure activities can help the aging to find new satisfactions to take the place of old ones, and can help them to find old satisfactions in new activities.

Old age tends to make people more like what they already are. Preparation for the later years begins in youth. Living each stage of life completely helps one move on more easily to the next stage, accepting it, enjoying its special satisfactions and meeting its problems.

There seems to be some agreement among many authorities that most older people are happiest who have learned how to play when they were young, who developed interests and skills that enable them to enjoy increased leisure time after retirement.<sup>2</sup>

Attempts have been made to define and measure the

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<sup>1</sup>Michigan Commission on Aging, p. L3.

<sup>2</sup>Esther McGinnis, "Age Is Meant for Living," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 42, January, 1950, pp. 9-12.

psychological well being of older people. This has been done with the intention of developing and using a measure as an operational definition of aging. Measures of satisfaction with life in the later years have been attempted.<sup>1</sup>

Feelings of satisfaction seem to be related to how well the older person adjusts to this period in his life. The researcher was interested in discovering whether or not older citizens in Benzie County viewed their present situation positively or negatively; whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with their lives past and present.

### Methodology

There have been three general points of view in approaches to the problem of defining and measuring successful aging:

1. Active social participation throughout life increases well being in later years. Cabot<sup>2</sup> found that with some exceptions older men and women serving as volunteers for a large variety of causes had begun this type of service before the age of 45.

2. The most successful aging life styles may not vary from those of the persons' middle years. This could

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<sup>1</sup>Bernice L. Neugarten, Robert J. Havighurst, and Sheldon S. Tobin, "The Measurement of Life Satisfaction," Journal of Gerontology, Vol. 16, No. 2, April, 1961, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Natolie Harris Cabot, You Can't Count on Dying (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 241.

be interpreted to mean that those who were little involved in social kinds of activities through the early and middle years of life might continue to find this a satisfactory life style in old age.

3. A third assumption is concerned with the individual's own evaluation of his present and past life, his satisfactions, his happiness.

There are scales and activity scores for measuring the social acceptability of the older persons' behavior.<sup>1</sup> However, it may not be appropriate to measure well being in old age by the same standards that are applied to middle age.

The process of "growing," not "getting," old could make it more intelligent to give up or modify some of the activities of the early and middle years of life.

Other measures have been used that take into account the person's associations with family, friends, formal and informal groups but also use his feelings of importance and satisfaction and his emotional stability as a point of reference.<sup>2</sup>

Several instruments<sup>3</sup> that attempt to measure successful aging have been developed and tested since 1949.

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-43.

The Kansas City Study of Adult Life<sup>1</sup> was concerned with leisure activities of four social class groups: upper and upper middle, lower middle, upper-lower and lower. Havighurst<sup>2</sup> noted that activities for upper and middle classes included formal associations, participation in sports and gardening (mainly flowers). Lower-middle and upper-lower classes favored manipulative activities and watching TV. Lower-lower classes preferred visiting friends and relatives and gardening (mainly vegetable).

Each socio-economic group<sup>3</sup> found different meanings in leisure. Upper and middle classes said: "It gives me a chance to achieve something." "It is a benefit to society." Lower-middle classes said: "It brings me in contact with friends." Working class people said, "It helps to make the time pass," and lower class people stressed, "It helps me financially." Upper and middle class people tended to be community centered in their leisure time activities. Lower middle and lower classes were inclined to be home centered in leisure activities. There were, however, many exceptions.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert J. Havighurst, "The Nature and Values of Meaningful Free Time Activity." In: R. W. Kleemeier (ed.), Aging and Leisure, A Research Perspective into the Meaningful Use of Time (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 314-18.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 315-16.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 317-18.

In the Kansas City study<sup>1</sup> the investigators attempted to develop a measure that would use the individual's own evaluations as a point of reference--one that would be relatively independent of activity or social participation levels.

A second purpose of the investigations was to develop a short, easily administered instrument that could be used in other studies. Using data from this study, five components<sup>2</sup> of psychological well being were defined: (1) He takes pleasure from the round of activities that make up his daily life. (2) Regards life as meaningful and accepts that which life has been. (3) Feels he has succeeded in achieving his major goals. (4) Holds a positive image of self. (5) Maintains happy and optimistic attitudes and mood.

As a result of the Kansas City study<sup>3</sup> two self-report instruments were devised that could be used separately or together--The Life Satisfaction Index A<sup>4</sup> and The Life Satisfaction Index B.<sup>5</sup>

Investigators note that direct self reports, even

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-42.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

though carefully measured, can be expected to agree only partially with the evaluations of life satisfactions made by an outside observer.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the study was to find ways in which the Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies concerned with the total welfare of older people could help to make the later years of life not merely bearable or comfortable but really meaningful for the older people themselves and for society. Currently the Cooperative Extension Service has viewed problems of the older population as ones that could be handled in special groups or meetings.

The literature raised questions concerning some stereotypes of older people. Are older persons really different than other adults? Are there stages in the lives of older citizens? Do changes in the aging affect their style of living?

The review of literature led the author to consider an investigation of their satisfaction with life and the kinds of changes that take place in activities relevant to the three most important human roles for men and women as they pass from middle age, the productive years, through the later years of the life cycle.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 142.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

This chapter deals with the development of the instrument, the selection of the sample, gathering of the data, coding and analysis of the data.

Data were gathered by the researcher in a structured interview. A self report index was used to collect data about life satisfaction.

#### Development of the Instrument

An interview schedule (see Appendix, p. 85) using fixed alternative and open ended questions was designed. Items were formulated and selected which were specifically related to the activity changes to be studied.

The interview schedule consisted of 25 questions. The first part requested information about the respondent's work, family and social activities at the present time compared with these activities ten or fifteen years ago.

The second part solicited data on how the respondents looked at life, their satisfaction with life in the past and the present.

The third part asked for information concerning age, marital status, education, physical living arrangements and state of health.



Four questions (Nos. 1 to 4) were asked to obtain information about the respondent's work activities at the present time and in the past. If the respondents were presently working, their reasons for working were sought.

Eight questions (Nos. 5 through 12) were asked to learn about changing activities in family and community.

One open-ended question (No. 5) asked how time was spent the previous day from the time of getting up until the time of going to bed.

Two questions (Nos. 8 and 9) were asked concerning satisfactions with daily activities. The respondents were asked to check (No. 10) a list of 26 activities most people say they do daily, weekly, monthly or yearly.

Two questions (Nos. 11 and 12) attempted to ascertain membership in organizations now and in the past and kinds of participation in these organizations. One question (No. 13) requested information on plans made in the past for retirement and if these plans had been carried out. Respondents were asked what recommendations (No. 14) they would make to persons aged 40 to 50 years old in planning for the later years.

A measurement of life satisfaction (No. 15), the Life Satisfaction Index A,<sup>1</sup> was used to determine feelings about life in general and to measure to some extent satisfaction or dissatisfaction with past and present roles.

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, XVI, p. 141.

The interview schedule was pretested by administering it to two women in an adjoining county and to a man in another adjoining county. The purpose of the pre-test was to check clarity of the questions, to ascertain the difficulty of comprehension and to insure that the data could be gathered. No important changes were made in the instrument as a result of the pre-test.

### Selection of the Sample

A list of the total population of older people in Benzie County was obtained from the 13 township and village supervisors. The population was composed of 918 persons, 427 men and 491 women. One hundred people, 50 men and 50 women, were randomly selected<sup>1</sup> for the survey. These people met the following qualifications:

(1) Were over 65 years of age.

(2) Lived at home or under homelike conditions.

Institutionalized persons were not included in this sample of the population. (Havighurst and Albrecht<sup>2</sup> report that less than five percent of all older people are living in

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<sup>1</sup>M. G. Kendall and B. B. Smith, Tables of Random Sampling Numbers, Tracts for Computers XXIV (London: Cambridge University Press, 1939), pp. 23-24 and 142-43.

<sup>2</sup>Robert J. Havighurst and Ruth Albrecht, Older People (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1953), p. 9. In: Iva M. Bader and Adeline M. Hoffman, "Research in Aging," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 58, No. 1, January, 1966, p. 10.

institutions for the aged. Herzog<sup>1</sup> estimates that an additional five to ten percent are disabled and are being cared for at home by relatives and friends. This leaves 85 to 90 percent of people over 65 who are living independently and it points out the desirability for seeking representative samples of the total population of older people.)

(3) Were residents of the county for six months or more of the year.

Out of the original selection of 100 men and women, four persons refused to take part in the survey. One additional person did not keep an appointment for an interview. The refusal rate for this survey, then, was five percent. Consequently, using the same table of random numbers, five additional names were drawn.

#### Collection of Data

Data were gathered on an interview schedule completed by the researcher during a personal interview with each respondent in his home setting.

Few appointments were prearranged. Occasionally it was inconvenient for the person to have an interview at the time of contact, so another time was scheduled.

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<sup>1</sup>A. Herzog, "Portrait of Our Senior Citizens," New York Times Magazine, November 4, 1962, pp. 23-46. In: Iva M. Bader and Adeline M. Hoffman, "Research in Aging," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 58, No. 1, January, 1966, p. 10.

Some telephone appointments were made when the interviewer was unable to find anyone at home after three to four personal calls.

Most people were alone during the interview. In some cases, there were one or more persons present.

Items in the schedule were read to the respondent. Responses were recorded in the words of the respondent. Where necessary the interviewer explained the question in greater detail to the respondent.

The interviews were conducted during a three month period from August 10 to November 20, 1965. Interview time ranged from 45 minutes to two hours and 15 minutes.

#### Coding and Analysis of Data

Data were hand-scored by the researcher. The coding system developed by Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin<sup>1</sup> was used for determining life satisfaction scores. (See Scoring Key, Appendix, p. 84.) The researcher and an independent coder, a teacher, categorized the responses for these scores. There was high agreement between the coders.

The two coders disagreed on 33 out of 800 answers for the men and they disagreed on 38 out of 800 answers for the women. The answers in question were rechecked on the original interview schedules. The coders then made a final decision on classification.

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, XVI, p. 141.

Biographical information such as age, marital status, education, place of residence, living arrangements and employment were analyzed and described.

Activities were categorized according to Sorokin's<sup>1</sup> classification for activities. These were:

1. Activities directly satisfying physiological needs.
2. Activities of economic and chore nature as means to other ends.
3. Societal activities concerned with the interaction of the individual with others.
4. Religious activities such as attending services or religious ceremonies.
5. Artistic activities which involved active participation in the arts and crafts.
6. Intellectual activities including attending lectures, reading, studying, or going to school.
7. Miscellaneous pleasurable activities or activities of a pleasurable character pursued for their own value.

Comparisons were made between past and present activities in work, family and social roles. Comparisons were made between men and women.

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<sup>1</sup>Pitirim A. Sorokin and Clarence Q. Berger, Time Budgets of Human Behavior (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939), p. 89.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This chapter describes the sample, and views changes in three areas of activity for older people: work, family and social. The chapter includes a self evaluation of the respondent's attitude toward his life past and present.

#### Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of 50 men and 50 women over the age of 65 who were residents of Benzie County, Michigan, during 1965.

The ages of the respondents ranged from 65 to 90. There were more older men than women in this sample: 24 percent were men 80 years or over as compared with 12 percent of women in the over 80 group.

Table 1. Age Groups

Age Groups	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
65 - 69	15	30	18	36
70 - 74	13	26	16	32
75 - 79	10	20	10	20
80 - 84	7	14	3	6
85 - 89	4	8	2	4
90 -	1	2	0	0
No answer	0	0	1*	2
Total	50	100	50	100

\*One woman avoided telling her age.

The majority of the sample were married. There were more than three times as many widows as widowers.

Table 2. Marital Status

Marital Status	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Married	39	78	23	46
Never Married	2	4	2	4
Widowed	7	14	25	50
Divorced or Separated	2	4	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100

This sample follows the same trend as the general population in Benzie County and the State of Michigan.

Of Benzie County persons over 14 years of age in 1961, 70.1 percent of the men and 69.6 percent of the women were married. Four and four-tenths percent of the men and 12.7 percent of the women were widowed.<sup>1</sup> One-half of one percent more of the men than of the women were married. There were nearly three times as many widowed women as men.

State of Michigan statistics<sup>2</sup> in 1961 list 59.5 percent of men over 65 and 30.7 percent of women over 65 as married. Thirty and one-tenth percent of Michigan men

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960. General Population Characteristics, Michigan. Final Report PC (1)-24B, pp. 24-153, Table 28 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961).

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Census of Population: 1960. Detailed Characteristics, Michigan. Final Report PC (1)-24D, pp. 24-403, Table 105 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1961).

over 65 and 60.6 percent of women over 65 were widowed. Nearly twice as many men as women in the older age group were married. Twice as many women as men were widowed.

This sample also follows the trend of older citizens in urban areas in Michigan. In the Grand Rapids Study<sup>1</sup> 65 percent of the men and 19.8 percent of the women were married. Twenty-five percent of the men and 61.5 percent of the women were widowed. Two and one-half times as many women as men were widowed.

The Kalamazoo Study<sup>2</sup> reported that 65 percent of the men and 16 percent of the women were married while 24 percent of the men and 61 percent of the women were widowed. Two and one-half times as many women as men were widowed.

The data indicated that the typical older Benzie man was married; the typical older Benzie woman was widowed. In general, this seems to be characteristic of the older population in Michigan.

More respondents lived in the country rather than in town; 60 percent were country dwellers. Sex seemed to make no difference as to place of residence.

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<sup>1</sup>Hunter and Maurice, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Kalamazoo Committee on Aging. A Report prepared by William D. Allen and Samuel V. Bennett, Survey of Senior Citizens in Kalamazoo (Kalamazoo: Western Michigan University, 1961), p. 5.



Table 3. Place of Residence

Residence	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Town	19	38	21	42
Country	31	62	29	58
Total	50	100	50	100

The majority of respondents were year-round residents of Benzie County. Only 13 percent left the county during the winter season.

Table 4. Seasonal Residence

Season	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Year around	45	90	42	84
Away in winter	5	10	8	16
Total	50	100	50	100

These older people mentioned five kinds of reasons for choosing to live in the county.

Table 5. Reasons Given for Living in Benzie County

Reasons	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Family	30	60	36	72
Social	6	12	4	8
Recreation	8	16	5	10
Work	4	8	3	6
Health	2	4	1	2
No answer	0	0	1	2
Total	50	100	50	100

Included in family reasons were such things as: born here or brought here by family, came to live with or near children, came to help or care for parents, and husband's or wife's home was here.

Other respondents said they had chosen Benzie County because: they had friends here; they wanted a place in the country; they had been here to vacation, hunt or fish and decided to retire in the area; one man was transferred to a job in the county; one had lost his city job during the depression. Three people had respiratory conditions that seemed to be improved by northern Michigan's climate.

One woman and two men came from Norway. Norwegians make up the largest ethnic group in Benzie County. One woman came from Canada. Several respondents came from neighboring states. However, most of those who migrated into the county were from Michigan counties and most of these people were from nearby counties.

One man said he was here "accidental like"--he and his wife grew up in the same back yard in Illinois. Her family came up here and he tagged along. He's "never been sorry."

A very high percentage of these people said they liked living in their neighborhoods.

Table 6. Number of Men and Women who Liked or Disliked Living in Present Neighborhood

Attitude toward Neighborhood	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Liked	46	92	45	90
Disliked	0	0	2	4
Indirect Answer	0	0	1	2
No Answer	4	8	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100

Men and women both mentioned the beauty of the country, good neighbors and relatives, and convenience to stores and post office as reasons for liking their neighborhoods.

Two of the men had lived over 70 years in the same place.

One woman said, "Yes, I like it here. It's where we sunk our roots."

Respondents were asked to give suggestions for improving their neighborhoods.

The greatest number of both men and women said their neighborhoods were all right as they were. The next ranked suggestion from both men and women gave more close neighbors and more neighborly relations as a need.

Men thought somewhat in terms of economic needs, more work opportunities and better wages. Women tended to think more in terms of physical improvements for the home and community.

Table 7. Kinds of Suggestions Given for Improving Neighborhoods

Suggestions	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
<u>Social</u>				
More close neighbors and more neighborly relations	6	12	6	12
More contact with church	1	2	0	0
Better law enforcement and town management	1	2	1	2
<u>Work</u>				
Need small firms to give more employment	5	10	0	0
Need higher wages	2	4	0	0
<u>Physical Improvement</u>				
Homes	3	6	4	8
Roads	1	2	3	6
Mail route	0	0	1	2
Neighborhood is all right as it is	10	20	13	26
No suggestions given	8	16	14	28
No answer	13	26	10	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>52*</b>	<b>104</b>

\*One woman made three suggestions.

Donahue and Tibbetts<sup>1</sup> say older people need living arrangements that are more than a shelter and that furnish opportunities for relationships with other people and opportunities for privacy. Benzie County older people indicated that their living arrangements met these criteria. Most of the respondents lived in individual, private

<sup>1</sup>Donahue and Tibbetts, p. 3.

residences. Only two women lived in apartments. Four persons, two men and two women, lived in trailers.

Table 8. Housing

Housing	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
House	48	96	46	92
Apartment	0	0	2*	4
Trailer	2	4	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100

\*One woman's apartment is part of a house. She cares for the entire house.

Few men or women expressed a desire to change present living arrangements.

Table 9. Number of Persons Desiring to Change Living Arrangements

Desired Change	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	9	18	8	16
No	38	76	40	80
Maybe	1	2	0	0
In the future	2	4	1	2
No answer	0	0	1	2
Total	50	100	50	100

Reasons given for wanting to change were: present home too large; present home needed improvement; farm too much work; a warmer climate is needed for the winter; and a desire to be nearer stores, church and post office.

One man and four women had recently changed living

arrangements. The man moved from a larger house to a smaller one on the same road, but nearer the main highway.

One woman moved into a smaller house. Two women moved into trailers. One woman moved from town to country.

Few respondents lived with children or other relatives. The majority lived with their spouse or alone. More than twice as many women as men lived alone.

Table 10. Persons Sharing Living Arrangements

Persons	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Spouse	37	74	23	46
Alone	8	16	17	34
Children	3	6	5	10
Relatives	2	4	4	8
Other	0	0	1	2
Total	50	100	50	100

The majority of the respondents viewed their state of health as being "good" or "fair." Only 11 percent assessed it as "poor" while 13 percent assessed their health as "very good."

Table 11. Statements Concerning Health

Health	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Very good	8	16	5	10
Good	21	42	29	58
Fair	12	24	14	28
Poor	9	18	2	4
Total	50	100	50	100

Women had a little more schooling than men. More women than men had attended college. Twice as many women as men had taken special courses.

Table 12. Education

Years in School	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Elementary School				
8 years	19	38	15	30
7 or less	12	24	7	14
High School				
4 years	5	10	7	14
3 or less	8	16	8	16
College				
Master's degree	1	2	1	2
Bachelor's degree	0	0	5	10
3 years or less	5	10	3	6
Special Courses*	8	16	17	34

\*Special courses and training included business, nurse's training, librarian, county normal, trade school and others.

Figures from the 1960 Census<sup>1</sup> credit Benzie County males of 25 years and older with 9.9 median school years completed. Benzie County females of 25 years and older had completed 10.9 median school years.

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census. U.S. Census of Population: 1960. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan, Final Report PC (1)-24C, p. 24-301, Table 83 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962).

In this sample male respondents 65 years and older had completed a median of 8.6 years of schooling. Female respondents of 65 and over had completed a median of 9.58 school years.

Men gave three reasons for not getting more education: helping at home on the farm, going into the army for World War I, and lack of money.

Women mentioned: helping at home, poor health, and "too far to walk to high school" as reasons for not getting more schooling. One woman said she completed the 8th grade after her own boy went to school.

Comments from men respondents included:

"I missed education greatly through the years."

"I took courses after I began to see the value in education."

One person commented that he "had gone only through the 3rd grade and had gotten so I could spell out words and read pretty well but I never could figure much."

#### Changes in Work Activities

A comparison was made of work activities of the respondents at the time of the interview and of their recall of work activities in the past, ten or fifteen years ago.



Table 13. Past and Present Occupations<sup>1</sup>

Occupations	<u>Past</u>				<u>Present</u>			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Professional and Managerial	6	12	9	18	0	0	1	2
Clerical	1	2	11	22	1	2	2	4
Service	0	0	4	8	1	2	0	0
Agriculture, Horti- culture, Forestry, Fishing	15	30	5	10	7	14	1	2
Skilled	12	24	1	2	3	6	1	2
Semi-skilled	8	16	1	2	1	2	0	0
Unskilled	8	16	14	28	3	6	8	16
Unemployed	0	0	5	10	34	68	37	74

All of the men and all but one of the women in the professional category had dropped out of these occupations. Eighty-two percent of the women had dropped out of clerical occupations. Most of those who had been employed in skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled jobs had retired. Four times as many women over 65 were working in unskilled jobs than were engaged in any other kind of work.

Only those classified in Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry and Fishing continued to work in the same occupation after the age of 65.

<sup>1</sup>Classifications from Dictionary of Occupational Titles, Volume 11, Occupational Classification, Second Edition, Federal Security Agency, Social Security Administration Bureau of Employment Security, March, 1949 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office), p. ix.

During their working years more women than men were in professional and managerial occupations, in clerical occupations and in unskilled jobs. The largest single group of men were in agricultural, horticultural, forestry and fishing occupations; the next largest number were in skilled jobs.

Many of the women had worked before marriage. Others had worked only after marriage. Some of the women who did professional work before marriage (teaching, nursing, etc.) worked at unskilled jobs during their married years.

Eleven women mentioned working from four to 18 years in the county's canning plants. This work is seasonal. It averages about four months per year.

Five women had never worked outside their homes at any kind of a regular job for pay. Only one said she had never worked for pay.

One woman said she had been a homemaker 53 years. One woman helped her husband in their hardware store for 50 years. Another sewed at home for others for 50 years.

One woman taught school, retired and then became a librarian for a few years. She is now the county truant officer and does several part time jobs. (These are regular once-a-month kinds of jobs.)

Ninety-five percent of the group had worked for pay during their lifetime. Although well past retirement age, 37 percent of the respondents continued to work for pay.

Table 14. Continued to Work After Retirement Age

Working	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes (full time)	10	20	0	0
No	29	58	34	68
Part time or occasionally (some degree of regu- larity)	11	22	16	32
Total	50	100	50	100

Ten men but none of the women reported still working full time. Eleven men and 16 women reported working part time or occasionally.

Women who were presently working mentioned taking care of older people, taking care of grandchildren while their mothers worked, and doing laundry work for others. One said she was still working actively on their own fruit farm.

The number of years spent in work as reported by the men varied from 10-14 years to 60-64 years. The number of years women spent in work varied from none to 50-54 years.

Seventy-four percent of the 50 men worked over 25 years each. There seemed to be some unreported lapses in working time in several of the responses. The depression of 1933 to 1938 could have been a factor. Some men may not have been working during a part of those years or they could have been working at jobs they preferred not to report.

Table 15. Years Spent in Work

Years	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
0	0	0	1	2
1-4	0	0	3	6
5-9	0	0	10	20
10-14	3	6	3	6
15-19	5	10	4	8
20-24	5	10	5	10
25-29	8	16	1	2
30-34	10	20	1	2
35-39	3	6	3	6
40-44	5	10	3	6
45-49	3	6	1	2
50-54	5	10	2	4
55-59	1	2	0	0
60-64	2	4	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100

\*Women who worked in fruit packing plants off and on for 20 (or more) years were allowed four months per year.

The mean (average) number of working years for men was 33.4. For women the mean was 19.9 years.

Individuals continued to work for economic, social and personal reasons. The majority of the men presently working did so primarily because they enjoyed working. Women worked for social and economic reasons. Several persons gave more than one reason for continuing to work.

More women than men said they were working for economic reasons. Three times as many men as women said they liked to work. Three men said they worked for something to do. Two men admitted they did not enjoy retirement.

One man had a special goal of saving for grandchildren's college funds.

Table 16. Reasons Given for Present Employment

Reasons	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Economic	4	8	6	12
Social (needed; liked the company)	5	10	7	14
Personal (liked the job)	13	26	4	8
None given	0	0	3	6

Respondents were asked if they had made plans for retirement, if they had been able to follow their plans, and what kind of advice they would give to younger people in planning for this stage of life.

Less than half of each sex reported making definite plans for retirement.

Table 17. Number Who Planned for Retirement

Planned	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Yes	20	40	17	34
No	29	58	33	66
Not retired	9*	18	6*	12
No answer	1	2	0	0

\*Duplicates

Of those who had made plans not all were able to follow their plans. Eleven of the 20 men who had made plans

said they were able to follow them. Fifteen of the women who had made plans said they were able to follow them.

The kinds of plans made for retirement were classified in ten categories.

Table 18. Kinds of Plans Made for Retirement

Plans	Men	Women
Wanted to keep on working	10	4
Wanted to travel	7	10
Buy resort property	6	3
Build a home	0	4
Have a home in a rural area	2	0
Stay right here	0	3
Hunt and fish	1	0
Read	0	1*
Sew, knit	0	2
Work for social security	0	1

\*One woman said, "I wanted to read, sew and travel as much as I could. I didn't retire until I was 71. I've spent a lot of time in the hospital but I have and will follow these plans as much as I can. I'm not going to get old in my mind."

Other women commented that they "planned as they went along" or "didn't think that far ahead" or "intended to keep on with their work."

Men said they "didn't expect to have to" or "didn't want to retire" or were "too busy working to plan."

Respondents were asked if they would offer any advice to people in the 40-to-50 year age group as they make plans for the later years of life.

Their suggestions included: check financial

arrangements; keep up an interest in something such as work, recreation, hobbies and travel; take care of health; be thinking of a suitable place to live; help others in church and community; and prepare emotionally for the years of retirement.

#### Changes in Family and Social Activities

Respondents were asked to check common activities done often, occasionally or never.

Sixty-four percent of the men and 60 percent of the women said they see children and other relatives often--daily, weekly or every two weeks. Thirty-four percent of the men and 36 percent of the women saw children and other relatives occasionally, once a month to once a year. Distance seemed to be the only factor involved when people did not see children or other relatives often.

Four percent of the women said they had no relatives. They were the last of their families. These women did see their friends often.

Both men and women visited and entertained relatives and friends. Contacts with friends were important. Four percent of the men and 26 percent of the women said they regularly use the phone for visiting.

The Kalamazoo Study<sup>1</sup> of 1961 reported that of those who had telephones 34 percent of the men and 70 percent

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<sup>1</sup>Allen and Bennett, p. 22.

Table 19. Frequency of Participation in Specified Activities

Activity	Often		Occasionally		Never		No Answer									
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women								
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %								
<b>Chores</b>																
Housework	22	44	50	100	22	44	0	0	1	2	0	0				
Gardenwork	14	28	18	36	25	50	23	46	10	20	9	18	1	2	0	0
<b>Family and Friends</b>																
See children and relatives	32	64	30	60	17	34	18	36	0	0	2	4	1	2	0	0
Visit friends and relatives	10	20	11	22	33	66	37	74	5	10	2	4	2	4	0	0
Entertain friends and relatives	13	26	13	26	34	68	37	74	2	4	0	0	1	2	0	0
Talk with friends	30	60	34	68	18	36	16	32	1	2	0	0	1	2	0	0
Write letters	7	14	13	26	22	44	36	72	19	38	1	2	2	4	0	0
<b>Recreation (Active)</b>																
Hunt, fish, and golf	1	2	0	0	24	48	9	18	24	48	41	82	1	2	0	0
Take walks	12	24	15	30	18	36	22	44	19	38	13	26	1	2	0	0
Travel	9	18	15	30	21	42	21	42	15	30	8	16	5	10	6	12
Church work	6	12	5	10	15	30	24	48	24	48	17	34	5	10	4	8
<b>Recreation (Passive)</b>																
Attend church	13	26	15	30	17	34	21	42	19	38	14	28	1	2	0	0
Attend club meetings	3	6	6	12	13	26	21	42	33	66	23	46	1	2	0	0
Attend sports events	0	0	0	0	15	30	10	20	34	68	40	80	1	2	0	0
Go for car rides	11	22	18	36	36	72	30	60	2	4	2	4	1	2	0	0
Go to library	0	0	1	2	6	12	5	10	38	76	43	86	6	12	1	2
Go to movies	1	2	0	0	10	20	17	34	38	76	32	64	1	2	1	2
Listen to radio	7	14	8	16	36	72	33	66	6	12	9	18	1	2	0	0
Watch TV	12	24	19	38	35	70	25	50	2	4	6	12	1	2	0	0
Play cards and games	5	10	6	12	25	50	24	48	19	38	20	40	1	2	0	0
Read	20	40	17	34	23	46	29	58	2	4	1	2	5	10	3	6
Sew, knit, crochet	0	0	42	84	5	10	10	20	4	8	8	16	41	82	0	0
Sit and think	10	20	5	10	24	48	19	38	9	18	23	46	7	14	3	6



of the women used the phone to visit friends, family members and neighbors.

Seven percent of the men and 13 percent of the women wrote letters weekly. However, 22 percent of the men and 36 percent of the women wrote letters occasionally (monthly). Nineteen percent of the men and one percent of the women said they never wrote letters.

Most recreational activities fell in the passive category. The most frequent active recreational activity mentioned was walking. Twenty-four percent of the men and 30 percent of the women walked often. Eighteen percent of the men and 22 percent of the women walked occasionally. This left 36 percent of the men and 26 percent of the women who said they never took walks. Many of these mentioned that they had enough walking in household, garden or other chore activities. A few respondents, both men and women, said it was not as easy for them to walk as it used to be.

Eighty-four percent of the women did sewing, knitting or crocheting. Some women did all three. Five men admitted they mended or sewed on buttons.

Reading headed the list of passive recreational activities, with 40 percent of the men and 34 percent of the women doing some reading daily. One man read two hours a day. Forty-six percent of the men and 58 percent of the women read occasionally. Four percent of the men and two percent of the women said they never did any reading.

Men were more apt to read newspapers and magazines. Women read books as well as newspapers and magazines. Some of the respondents mentioned that it was harder on their eyes to read as they grew older.

Though a high percentage of them read, few of the respondents went to the library. One man said he had "never been in the community library" three-quarters of a mile from his home.

Twenty-four percent of the men and 38 percent of the women watched television often. Seventy percent of the men and 50 percent of the women watched it occasionally. Only four percent of the men and 12 percent of the women said they never watched television.

Seventy-two percent of the men and 66 percent of the women listened to the radio occasionally. They liked it for sports and news. A few people listened to the radio often. They liked to listen as they worked in the house or yard.

Not many of either sex attended movies. "Not since TV" was a frequent reply to this question.

Twenty-six percent of the men and 30 percent of the women attended church often. Thirty-four percent of the men and 42 percent of the women attended occasionally. Thirty-eight percent of the men and 28 percent of the women said they never go to church. Some of this last group listened to church services on radio or television.

A few of each sex said they like to "sit and think" often. Many do it occasionally, while a goodly number said they never do this. Several said they do their thinking as they work.

Respondents were asked how they had spent the day before the interview. Their activities were categorized according to Sorokin's<sup>1</sup> classification for activities.

Table 20. Activities of Previous Day Reported

Activities	<u>Men</u> Number	<u>Women</u> Number
Satisfying Physiological Needs	16	35
Economic and Chore Nature	64	54
Societal	20	41
Religious	2	3
Artistic	0	20*
Intellectual	9	12
Recreational and Pleasurable	61	31

\*Sewing, knitting, crocheting, quilting. Some of this could have been mending--and been more properly classified under activities of an economic and chore nature.

Physiological activities included meal preparation, baking, resting and visiting doctor or dentist.

Activities of an economic and chore nature included work at a job; house repair and building; care of garden and yard; care of pets, poultry and livestock; doing errands; buying groceries; and care of the car.

<sup>1</sup>Sorokin and Berger, p. 89.

Societal activities given were visiting and having visitors, helping others, writing letters and attending meetings. More than twice as many women (20 percent) as men (eight percent) reported helping others.

Men reported 61 recreational or pleasurable kinds of activities and women reported 31. These activities included listening to the radio (10 percent of the men and four percent of the women); watching television (64 percent of the men and 48 percent of the women); playing cards, fishing and golfing. Twenty-eight percent of the men and 16 percent of the women said they "loafed" or "sat" a part of the day.

The greatest number of activities reported by men were in the economic and chore group (64) and in the recreational group (61). Thirty percent of the 50 men had worked on the job the day before their interview.

The greatest number of activities reported by women were in the economic and chore group (54), satisfying physiological needs (35), and recreational activities (31).

Eighty-six percent of the men and 74 percent of the women described the day before they were interviewed as typical of their days. Of those who reported the day as "not typical," men said:

- "Went fishing."
- "Spend other days on public service, Kiwanis, etc."
- "Go someplace."
- "Help friends."
- "Different things come up."
- "Don't go to a sale every day."
- "Keep books for a service club and for a church."

Women said:

"Don't always go to a birthday party--or a ladies' aid."

"Often go to committee and library board meetings."

"Some days I work hard all day."

"Harvested berries."

"Generally sew more in the afternoon."

"Evenings usually work cross stitch, crochet and sew rags for rugs."

"It's according to the time of year. In the spring there are cottages to clean."

"Don't do storm windows every day."

Twenty-six men and 35 women said their weekends were different from week days. Seven men and 15 women "always" went to church. Sixteen men and 19 women were apt to have company or go visiting. Two men and eight women might go out to dinner. Four men and nine women went for a ride or took a trip. Others spoke of sleeping later on weekends, watching television, fishing, picking and arranging flowers, and weekend shopping. Several reported they often engaged in more than one of these activities on weekends.

Respondents were asked what activity they had enjoyed most on the day previous to the interview.

The greatest number of men, 26 percent, reported they enjoyed most those activities concerned with other people such as visiting with family, friends or relatives, caring for or playing with grandchildren. Recreational activities were second in number, 24 percent. Twenty-two percent of the men enjoyed most their work activities.

Table 21. Kinds of Activities<sup>1</sup> Reported as Enjoyed Most

Activities	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Physiological	8	16	8	16
Economic	11	22	4	8
Societal	13	26	10	20
Religious	0	0	3	6
Artistic	0	0	7	14
Intellectual	1	2	1	2
Recreational or Pleasurable	12	24	14	28
No answer	5	10	3	6
Total	50	100	50	100

The greatest number of women, 28 percent, gave activities in the recreational categories as the ones they enjoyed most. Twenty percent enjoyed societal activities concerned with family, friends and relatives.

Four percent of the men and two percent of the women said "coming home from a trip" was the thing they had liked most. Four percent of the men and six percent of the women found the greatest satisfaction in a ride. Six percent of the men enjoyed listening to a ball game on the radio. Four percent of the women liked "bird watching." Four percent of the women liked "being outdoors" while two percent of the men enjoyed a day on the farm.

A few made general statements such as, "I enjoyed

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

the whole day," or "I enjoy life every day."

Respondents were asked to indicate what they would do today if they could do anything they would like to do.

Table 22. Kinds of Activities<sup>1</sup> They Would Like Most To Do

Activities	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Physiological	5	10	6	12
Economic	19	38	5	10
Societal	2	4	11	22
Religious	0	0	0	0
Artistic	0	0	5	10
Intellectual	0	0	1	2
Recreational or Pleasurable	17	34	14	28
Uncertain	7	14	8	16
Total	50	100	50	100

Six percent of the men and eight percent of the women wanted to sleep, rest, sit or do nothing.

Thirty-eight percent of the men but only six percent of the women preferred to work. For the women this meant housework, baking or work in the yard.

Four percent of the men and 22 percent of the women would choose activities concerned with others. This does not seem to agree with the men's report of what they enjoyed most the day before (see Table 21).

Thirty-four percent of the men and 28 percent of

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

the women would prefer activities in the recreational group. Fishing was the most frequent choice for 20 percent of the men. Traveling (14 percent) and going for a ride (10 percent) were the most desired choices for women. Four percent of the men mentioned hunting, four percent bowling, four percent golf, and four percent watching a ball game. One woman mentioned fishing, another doing jigsaw puzzles.

One man commented, "I'm satisfied." Another said, "I don't know what I would do." One woman said, "I'm doing just what I want to do." Another said, "I'm not very fussy. I like just the routine things." A few said, "I couldn't say."

Eighty-four percent of the men and 74 percent of the women said daily life was different for them 10 to 15 years ago.

Table 23. Differences Stated in Life Ten to Fifteen Years Ago

Differences	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Working	29	58	16	32
Husband working	--	--	8	16
Spouse alive	4	8	8	16
Farming	7	14	3	6
Able to work, get around and travel	7	14	9	18
Could drive car	1	2	0	0
Living in own home	2	4	1	2
Active in community	4	8	3	6
Spent time with old friends	1	2	0	0
Responsible for children	0	0	4	8
Responsible for grand- children	0	0	2	4
No answer	0	0	0	0



Respondents mentioned 11 important areas of change in their routines during the past 10 to 15 years. The primary change was in the work role. Eighty percent of the men and 100 percent of the women were no longer working outside their homes at a full time job (see Table 14).

#### Changes in Formal Social Activities

Respondents were asked for information concerning their part in formal social activities now and at the time when they were in the 40-to-50 year age group.

Table 24. Number of Persons Participating in Formal Social Activities, Past and Present

Activities	<u>Past</u>				<u>Present</u>			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Fraternal Groups	32	64	23	46	15	30	16	32
Church	23	46	37	74	14	28	32	64
Church Connected Groups	11	22	36	78	8	16	23	46
Veterans Groups	15	30	10	20	8	16	8	16
Card and Social Clubs	8	16	17	34	3	6	8	16
Groups for Older People	0	0	1	2	0	0	4	8
Neighbor Groups	13	26	27	54	12	24	18	36
Other	4	8	12	24	1	2	3	6
None	6	12	5	10	21	42	8	16

At the time of the survey the greatest number of men were active in: fraternal organizations, in church attendance and church connected groups, neighborhood groups, and veteran's organizations. Women were most active in: church attendance, church connected groups, neighborhood

groups, and fraternal organizations.

Participation in neighborhood groups was about the same past and present for the men. The women decreased their participation in neighborhood groups in later years. Both men and women dropped out of fraternal and veteran's organizations. Both sexes dropped out of church-connected groups. More men than women dropped church attendance. Participation in card and social clubs dropped by over half for both sexes.

The number of both men and women who did not belong to any organized group increased at the age of 65 and over. However, more than three times as many men, 42 percent, did not belong to any organization after the age of 65, as there were, 12 percent, who had not belonged to any organization at the age of 40 or 50.

Table 25. Number of Organizations Belonged to by Individuals

Number	<u>Past</u>				<u>Present</u>			
	Men		Women		Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
None	6	12	5	10	21	42	8	16
One	17	34	5	10	12	24	10	20
Two	11	22	9	18	9	18	12	24
Three	5	10	8	16	5	10	8	16
Four	7	14	8	16	1	2	7	14
Five	2	4	8	16	0	0	3	6
Six	0	0	4	8	2	4	0	0
Seven	1	2	3	6	0	0	1	2
Eight	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Nine	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100	50	100	50	100

Respondents were asked about the number and kinds of offices and special responsibilities they had held or were holding in organized groups.

Table 26. Number of Persons Holding or Having Held Office in Social Organizations

Organizations	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
Fraternal organizations	14	28	12	24
Church and church connected groups	2	4	16	32
Veteran's organizations	5	10	1	2
Card and or social clubs	0	0	1	2
Clubs or centers for older people	0	0	1	2
Organizations of same nationality	0	0	0	0
Neighborhood clubs	3	6	5	10
Other	3	6	4	8
None mentioned	35	70	29	58

There were several men and women who went through all the offices in fraternal organizations.

Seventy percent of the men and 58 percent of the women did not report that they were holding or had ever held an office in a social organization.

One man reported having held a total of seven offices in various club groups. One woman reported having held a total of five offices.

Both men and women were concerned with activities of benefit to youth such as teaching Sunday School classes,

helping with teenage parties and sponsoring little league ball teams.

Table 27. Number of Special Group Activities per Individual

Number	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
None	35	70	29	58
One	7	14	11	22
Two	4	8	6	12
Three	2	4	2	4
Four	1	2	1	2
Five	0	0	1	2
Six	0	0	0	0
Seven	1	2	0	0

There was a good deal of donation of labor by men for community improvement and church repair. Much work was done by women for bazaars, church dinners, sewing for charitable purposes, collecting funds and work in neighborhood improvement associations.

Some mentioned their contribution as giving financial support or entertaining the group.

The self-rating Life Satisfaction Index A<sup>1</sup> was used to obtain the respondents' own evaluation of their happiness and of their satisfactions with life past and present.

The index includes statements about life in general that people feel differently about.

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, XVI, p. 141.

**Table 28.** Number of Respondents Agreeing, Disagreeing or Uncertain about Life Satisfaction Statements

Statements	Men						Women						Total					
	A			D			A			D			A			D		
	No.	%	Ans.	No.	%	Ans.	No.	%	Ans.	No.	%	Ans.	No.	%	Ans.	No.	%	Ans.
1. As one grows older, things seem better than I thought they would be.	29	58	12	24	16	8	29	58	13	26	13	0	58	20	21	1		1
2. I feel I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.	26	52	15	30	12	6	34	68	11	22	10	0	60	26	11	3		3
3. This is the dreariest time of my life.	11	22	33	66	8	4	13	26	36	72	2	0	24	69	5	2		2
4. My life could be happier than it is now.	26	52	22	44	2	1	18	36	30	60	2	0	44	52	3	1		1
5. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.	6	12	41	82	2	2	1	2	49	98	0	0	7	90	1	2		2
6. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.	28	56	12	24	16	8	33	66	5	10	12	0	61	17	20	2		2
7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.	40	80	6	12	4	2	48	96	2	4	0	0	88	8	2	2		2
8. I feel old and somewhat tired.	27	54	21	42	0	0	22	44	25	50	2	1	49	46	2	3		3
9. I feel my age, but it does not bother me.	31	62	18	36	0	0	34	68	15	30	1	0	65	33	1	1		1

Table 28 (continued)

Statements	Men						Women						Total		
	A		D		U		A		D		U		Total		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
10. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.	46		2		0		2	40	9	0	1	86	11	0	3
11. I would not change my past life even if I could.	33		15		1		1	33	10	5	2	66	25	6	3
12. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life.	11		35		3		1	6	40	3	1	17	75	6	2
13. Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance.	24		1		18		7	27	5	16	2	51	6	34	9
14. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.	48		2		36		14	54	10	32	4	51	6	34	9
15. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.	20		26		2		2	12	34	3	1	32	60	5	3
16. In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.	40		52		4		4	24	68	6	2	32	60	5	3
	10		37		1		2	4	45	0	1	14	82	1	3
	20		74		2		4	8	90	0	2	14	82	1	3
	19		22		6		3	8	26	14	2	27	48	20	5
	38		44		12		6	16	52	28	4	27	48	20	5

These statements were read to each person in the survey. They were asked if they agreed, disagreed or were uncertain about the statements.

Men and women were in close agreement in their answers to four statements (1, 3, 9 and 11, Table 28). Fifty-eight percent of the men and 58 percent of the women said life seems better than they thought it would be as they grew older. One man said he would like to live to be 100-- so many interesting things are going to happen.

One woman said, "Little things don't bother you like they did when you were younger."

Another said, "We're not conscious of being old, we're so active. We're not sitting around thinking about it."

Sixty-six percent of the men and 72 percent of the women did not think this was the dreariest time of their lives. Two or three women mentioned that "it is dreary when you are alone."

One man said he is "not plumb satisfied with settin' around. I can't do hard work but I keep busy."

Sixty-two percent of the men and 68 percent of the women admitted they feel their age but it doesn't bother them. Several said they are more tired at the end of a day or they get tired more easily than they used to.

Equal numbers of men and women, 66 percent, felt they probably would not change their past lives even if they could.

Men made these statements:

"I would like to live my life over."

"Not about my family I wouldn't change."

"You can see where you made some mistakes but Lord's sake you're making them all the time anyway."

"In some ways it could have been better--can't kick."

Women made these statements:

"There are things I would change."

"No, I wouldn't, I've had a happy life. Husband's folks were real nice. Had a healthy bunch of kids. We had a good time together."

"Yes, I would change a lot of things."

Respondents, men and women, were in fairly close agreement on five statements (6, 8, 12, 13 and 16, Table 28).

Fifty-six percent of the men and 66 percent of the women expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen in the future. One man said, "Nice things are going to happen all the time. You can do a whole lot toward making them that way." Another said, "That's what I look forward to through family and friends."

Women said:

"I don't know, I just kinda take things as they come."

"I have so many unexpected pleasures happen. I'm always looking forward to something."

Fifty-four percent of the men and 44 percent of the women agreed they do feel old and somewhat tired--at least occasionally. One man said, "I don't feel old or tired beyond reason."

Women said:

"If I do a hard day's work it tells on me, otherwise I don't feel too bad."



"I don't know as I feel any tireder now than when I was taking care of my family."

"There are times when we are all tired. Tiredness is a good feeling."

Seventy percent of the men and 80 percent of the women did not think they had made more foolish decisions during their lifetimes than the average person.

Men said:

"I probably made a few but I thought they were all right at the time."

"Gosh, I've made 'em!"

Women said:

"I don't know that I have, I'm pretty careful."

"I don't think I have. I never make snap decisions."

"A good share of decisions are made for you."

Nearly half the men (48 percent) and over half (54 percent) of the women were willing to state they felt they made a good appearance in life compared with others their age. Several respondents said this was a statement others should answer for them.

Forty-four percent of the men and 52 percent of the women said the lot of the average man is not getting worse.

Men said:

"There is more help for people."

"Living standards are better."

"Machinery does the work, we work shorter hours."

"The opportunity is here as never before. It's up to you."

"Nobody is satisfied. Neighbors used to get along. Now the whole world's in an uproar."

"Physical needs are pretty well taken care of. Tensions and frustrations are greater. Emphasis is on the material today."

"Costs more to live."

"It's a different world. Today if you don't have it they'll give it to you."

Women said:

"With all the advantages we have today it ought to be getting better."

"Excluding war the outlook is better than it has ever been in history."

"It's better for old folks."

"It's about the same as you look back in history."

"Every generation says the world is getting worse."

"People expect too much."

"I think they do too much for people."

"It's worse for young folks--in debt so much."

Three women said: "It is getting worse morally."

Men differed from women in their agreement or disagreement with statements 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 14, and 15 (Table 28).

Fifty-two percent of the men and 68 percent of the women felt they had gotten more breaks in life than other people.

Men said:

"Maybe because I took them."

"I've gotten my share. If you get your share you don't worry about what the other fellow's getting."

"Lost one of my daughters at 19. A financial and emotional burden. Wore my wife out traveling around trying to get help for her."

Women said:

"We all have our share of good and bad."

"Breaks a person has depends somewhat on them."

"Had so many good friends and a nice family and interesting work."

"Had good health."

Fifty-two percent of the men and 36 percent of the women felt their lives could be happier than they are right now.

Men said:

"If I wasn't retired, I'd be happier."

"There are times when things could be better and times when they could be a heck of a lot worse."

A woman commented: "Most people's lives could be happier in some ways."

Eighty-two percent of the men and 98 percent of the women said the things they do are not boring or monotonous.

One man said, "I've always been one never to make it boresome."

Some women said, "It is monotonous if no one is around."

Both men and women said, "I don't do things if they're boring."

Eighty percent of the men and 96 percent of the women said the things they do are as interesting to them as they ever were.

Men said:

"When I do something I take an interest in it."

"I enjoyed my work. There is not quite the satisfaction in the things I do now."

Two women said they enjoy things more now:

"I have more time to concentrate."

"I have more time to figure them out."

Ninety-two percent of the men and 80 percent of the women said they are fairly well satisfied as they look back over their lives.

One man said: "I've had a good full life."

One woman said: "I raised my family and they all turned out well. I don't know why I wouldn't be satisfied."

Another woman said: "I think we should have the feeling we coulda done better."

Fifty-two percent of the men and 68 percent of the women were sure they have gotten most of the important things they wanted in life.

Men said:

"I got all the essentials. Lots of things I wanted-- afterward they were no loss."

"I think I got everything that's really important."

"Most important thing is your wife and family."

Women said:

"I didn't get a lot of things I wanted but I lived decently."

"I have health and family."

Seventy-four percent of the men and 90 percent of the women said they do not get down in the dumps too often compared with other people.

Two women reported:

"Sometimes I get sad moments."

"I don't get down in the dumps too often. Too occupied, I don't let myself, when I feel it coming I get a pan of soapy water and start housecleaning."

Individual satisfaction scores were obtained by counting the positive statements using the scoring key developed for this measurement<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix, p. 84).

Women scored somewhat higher in the life satisfaction measurement. Twice as many women as men had scores in the highest category. Ninety percent of the women and 78 percent of the men had positive scores on half or more of the 16 statements. None of the women had scores in the lowest category. However, four percent of the men had scores in this category.

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, XVI, p. 141.

Table 29. Range of Positive Attitudes as Indicated by Life Satisfaction Index Scores

Range	Men		Women	
	No.	%	No.	%
14 to 16	5	10	10	20
11 to 13	24	48	22	44
8 to 10	10	20	13	26
5 to 7	6	12	4	8
2 to 4	3	6	1	2
0 to 1	2	4	0	0
Total	50	100	50	100
Mean (ave.)	10.04		11.3	

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The major objectives of this study were:

1. To gain familiarity with the characteristics of this age group in Benzie County, Michigan.
2. To identify changes in the activities of older people as they relate to work, family and social roles.
3. To identify general satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the roles, past and present, of older persons in Benzie County.
4. To achieve new insights in order to formulate more precise research problems.
5. To achieve new insights, in order to develop more meaningful programs for older people, by the Cooperative Extension Service and other agencies concerned with educational programs.

#### Discussion

Data gathered in this study indicated older people in Benzie County were similar to the general adult population of the county and similar to the general population of older people in Michigan.

Most older men were married. Nearly three times

as many women as men were widowed.

The majority, 74 percent, of the men and less than half, 46 percent, of the women lived with their spouse. More than twice as many women as men lived alone. Few of these people lived with children or other relatives. Six percent of the men and 10 percent of the women lived with children.

Over 90 percent of both sexes lived in their own homes. Less than 20 percent of each sex had a desire to change housing. Those who desired a change gave physical and economic reasons such as the home or farm was too large and required too much work, or needed improvement.

Some had recently made changes in living arrangements. More older men and women lived in the country rather than in town. Nearly equal numbers of each sex lived in the country. Nearly equal numbers of each sex lived in town.

The largest number of each sex had completed elementary school. More women than men had completed high school. More women than men had completed college. Twice as many women as men had taken special courses.

The median years of schooling for both men and women was about one year less than the median for the general population<sup>1</sup> 25 years and older in Benzie County.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Michigan, p. 24-301, Table 83.

Both men and women viewed their health positively. Nearly half the men and over half the women said their health was good. An additional 16 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women said their health was very good.

In most of these characteristics Benzie's older people followed the general trend for the total population of the county and the state. Other studies done in Michigan reported similar trends.

#### Work Role

Work roles decreased after the age of 65. Both men and women dropped out of professional occupations and tended to drift into unskilled jobs.

Benzie is a rural county but there seemed to be a certain amount of work for older people. A number of the respondents in this study were involved in some kind of paid work activity at the time of the survey.

One-fifth of the men were working full time. Another fifth were working part time. Fourteen of the 15 men, who had been engaged in agriculture and related industries, reported they were continuing to work full or part time.

None of the women were working full time at the time of the interviews. Thirty-two percent were working part time. A majority of them were working in unskilled kinds of jobs. The women's most important work role had been that of homemaker and housekeeper. The need for this



work role continues throughout a lifetime. However, there was less physical work for women to do as the family decreased in size.

Men continued to work for several reasons, but mainly because they liked to work. Some of them (retired and about to retire) said they wished they could continue to work.

Women tended to work more for economic, and for social reasons. They said they were needed. Some women said they had always enjoyed doing their housework.

Less than half of each sex had made plans for retirement. Half the men and over three-fourths of the women who reported making plans were able to carry out their plans. Twenty percent of the men had hoped to keep on working. Twenty percent of the women had wanted to travel.

Some of these people offered advice to persons in the 40 to 50 year age group as they looked toward retirement. Their suggestions included: check financial arrangements; keep up some interests; take care of health; plan for a suitable place to live; help others; and prepare emotionally for retirement.

Men noted the greatest change in their lives from 10 to 15 years ago was in the work role. Most of them had left full time jobs.

Women noted three significant changes in their lives from 10 to 15 years ago. All of those who had worked had

left full time employment. Sixteen percent of the women had husbands who were now retired. Another 16 percent had become widows.

### Family Role

Contacts with family members were frequent for both men and women. Most of these people had children living near them. Several lived next door or across the road from children or other relatives. Some of the respondents had children nearby and also some children who were far away. There were few children living at home in this age group.

There was strong indication that parents and children were keeping in close touch with each other, that families continued to be involved in close relationships throughout the later years.

The respondents visited others. They had visitors, both relatives and friends. They wrote letters. Two men and several women used the telephone regularly for visits with children, other family members and friends.

### Social Roles

Retirement meant a change in social relationships. In many instances on-the-job relationships might be the only ones a man had in addition to family ones. As people grew older some friends and neighbors were gradually removed by sickness and death. Some moved to other neighborhoods.

When respondents were asked if they liked the area

where they lived 90 percent of both men and women said they liked their neighborhoods because of good neighbors and relatives, and convenient facilities. A few suggestions were given for improving neighborhoods. Twelve percent of both men and women said they would have liked more close neighbors and more neighborly relations. Men also suggested the need for more employment opportunities in the county.

Respondents were asked to report the activity of the previous day they had enjoyed most. One-fourth of the men mentioned activities concerned with other people such as visiting with family members, friends and relatives. Another fourth mentioned recreational activities. Nearly a fourth said they had enjoyed their work most, of all the previous day's activities. Over one-fourth of the women enjoyed recreational kinds of activities. One-fifth of the women enjoyed societal activities concerned with family, friends and relatives.

When asked what they would do if they could do anything they wanted to, 38 percent of the men and 10 percent of the women preferred to work. Some of this work for men meant building or repair work on their own homes. For the women it meant work in their homes or yard. Thirty-four percent of the men and 28 percent of the women said they would like best activities in the recreational category. Four percent of the men and 22 percent of the women chose activities concerned with others. The men's choice seemed

to conflict with their report of having enjoyed most the day before those activities concerned with family, friends and relatives.

These older people found television and radio excellent sources of contact with the outside world. Worldwide news kept them up to date. They were entertained. They could discuss the programs with other people. This seemed to give them a feeling of being involved with the mainstream of life at least as an observer, if they were not able to be active participants.

Participation in formal social activities decreased due to loss of mobility and apparently to loss of motivation. More than three times as many men did not belong to any organization after the age of 65, as there were who had not belonged to any organization at the age of 40 or 50. The drop in organization membership for women was not as dramatic.

A few people may have joined more organizations and taken a more active part after retirement when they had more time.

The evidence suggested that most of these people were becoming less community centered and more home centered in their later years.

#### Life Satisfaction

Many studies, concerned with problems of older people, have led to a rather general belief that most of

our aging population is apt to see the later years as sad, lonely, useless ones. Data from this study seem to contradict this stereotype. Older residents of Benzie County had a predominantly positive attitude toward their lives past and present. Most of them had been and were actively involved with others through family, friends, some work, some social activities, radio and television.

It is possible that many of the respondents did not have very high expectations. They may have been resigned to, or simply accepted, the aging process with its particular problems. On the other hand, they may have been realistic in their attitude toward life.

#### Suggestions for Research

Characteristics and needs among the age group studied differed somewhat. Because there is a full generation between the 65 year olds and the 90 year olds it appears appropriate that the data could be analyzed to discover whether the differences are related to age.

A follow-up study of the respondents might be conducted in 1970 and again in 1975 to determine changes in work, family and social roles and satisfactions or dissatisfactions with life. The present study could provide the benchmark data for determining actual changes in roles.

The data from this study could be further analyzed to find out if the people who were not involved in social kinds of activities at the time of the survey, or had never

been involved, were the ones who seemed more dissatisfied.

More than one-third of the women respondents had been members of extension clubs at some time in their adult lives. Research needs to be done to determine if extension education helped them to prepare for the later years of life.

#### Implications for the Cooperative Extension Service and Other Educational Agencies

Educators need to look at the changing roles of oldsters and help them in making adjustments. They need to study ways in which existing educational resources can be used to help older people.

The problems of the aging need to be studied and solved in relation to the needs of society as a whole. Planning should be done for all ages in relation to each other. All ages should be involved in the planning.

Few Benzie senior citizens were seeking any group activities in addition to the ones in which they were already involved. Many older people will not join groups. Educational groups may attempt to reach them individually or through those groupings that have interest for the older person, i.e., family or neighbors.

Work has been a primary value in our culture. A clear-cut distinction between work and non-work is disappearing. And with this disappearance goes some of the sense of guilt and social abandonment that have affected some

retired persons in the past. Older people have decreased their work role but they still need to contribute to society. Through helping coming generations of older people see opportunities in retirement that will give them the satisfactions they have been getting from work may be an important task for educational groups that work with youth.

Can families do more to help older members adjust to the process of aging? Can families do more to encourage, to motivate older people, to find and use available resources in themselves and in the community? Cooperative extension could tailor programs that have appeal across generations rather than for specific age groups.

There is a tendency to think old people are able to do only what they are doing now. Could the proper environment, the opportunity and perhaps above all the motivation give greater possibilities for participation by the aging?

Dorothy Lee<sup>1</sup> says we need to rear a generation that does not think of old age as a special category. Old age is a part of living. We have to encourage children of all ages to accept old age as a part of life and old people as a part of their lives. All ages need to develop a better understanding of the aging process and a better

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy Lee, "Attitudes and Values: Family, Community, Individual," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 54, October, 1962, pp. 691-93.

appreciation of older people's abilities and possibilities. Old age can be a "growing old" process rather than a "getting old" process.

It would help children to understand oldsters better if they had more contact with older people in natural ways--perhaps in stories and in school books. Scout troops and 4H clubs could develop projects that would offer direct involvement with the older citizens in the community. In turn, the older people could offer some help with youngsters. Some might adopt grandchildren in the neighborhood if their own grandchildren are far away. Some might help in community action programs concerned with children.

Involvement in social activity has a high priority value in our society. However, there are many older people who may need to be helped to feel it is their right not to be involved in too much activity if this is their choice. Continuous involvement in social groups outside the family during all stages of life might not be the most desirable goal for everyone. Ways of reaching the older person through television, radio, or newsletters may be explored.

Many of the current planned educational programs for older people are activity programs. As the person grows older and unable to take part, is he thrown back on inner resources he may not have? Ways of assisting persons early in life to build the inner resources needed to carry them through the last years of life are needed.



Older people want some social contacts with all ages. Church groups, extension clubs, senior citizen and other neighborhood groups are good agencies for these kinds of contacts. Programs need to be developed that cut across age groups.

The Cooperative Extension Service could reach older people through home visits, short newsletters, and radio and television programs with homemaking information for all age groups, and for men as well as women. Older people should not always be isolated as an audience; they should be included as a part of the total adult audience. However, some programs concerning special needs of older people could be specifically scheduled for them.

The many widows and widowers in this study suggest the need for information on home management, money management and legal management for older people who are alone. Other subjects of interest to older people include foods and nutrition, energy saving measures, gardening, clothing, health, safety, family relationships, and creative hobbies for leisure time.

Extension workers can cooperate with churches, health agencies, Farm Bureau, Grange, senior citizen groups and community agencies to help older people. Educators should survey older people to find their special abilities, then help them find constructive outlets for these abilities.

Several women in this sample of the population had

been teachers or nurses before marriage. Their knowledge and skills could be useful in Extension classes and workshops and in the 4H program.

The best preparation for old age may be meeting today's problems realistically. Educators can help younger and middle aged people to prepare for a meaningful old age by helping them to see old age as a part of a total life.

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A P P E N D I X

LIFE SATISFACTION INDEX

SCORING KEY<sup>1</sup>

Statement	1 - agree
	2 - a
	3 - disagree
	4 - d
	5 - d
	6 - d
	7 - a
	8 - d
	9 - a
	10 - a
	11 - a
	12 - d
	13 - a
	14 - d
	15 - d
	16 - d

Score 1 positive point for each response marked in accordance with the above key.

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<sup>1</sup>Neugarten, Havighurst and Tobin, XVI, p. 141.



Jeannette Shadko  
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Beulah, Michigan

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I am interested in learning more about you and what you are doing these days. Could I visit with you about what you are doing now compared to what you used to do?

1. What kind of work did you do when you were working?  
(Write down as completely as possible the description of work)

2. How long did you hold this job?

3. Are you presently working for pay?

4. If working, why are you working now?

5. How did you spend your time yesterday - from when you got up until you went to bed?

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
6:00 a.m. 6:30	
6:30 " 7:00	
7:00 " 7:30	
7:30 " 8:00	
8:00 " 8:30	
8:30 " 9:00	
9:00 " 9:30	
9:30 " 10:00	
10:00 " 10:30	
10:30 " 11:00	
11:00 " 11:30	

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
11:30 a.m. 12:00	
12:00 " 1:00	
1:00 p.m. 1:30	
1:30 " 2:00	
2:00 " 2:30	
2:30 " 3:00	
3:00 " 3:30	
3:30 " 4:00	
4:00 " 4:30	
4:30 " 5:00	
5:00 " 5:30	
5:30 " 6:00	

<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>
6:00 p.m. 6:30	
6:30 " 7:00	
7:00 " 7:30	
7:30 " 8:00	
8:00 " 8:30	
8:30 " 9:00	
9:00 " 9:30	
9:30 " 10:00	
10:00 " 10:30	
10:30 " 11:00	
11:00 " 11:30	
11:30 " 12:00	

6. Is the day you described typical of what you do every day? If not, how is it different? Is the weekend different?
7. Is the daily life you just described different than life as you remember it 10-15 years ago?  
How?
8. Of all things you did yesterday, what did you enjoy most?
9. What would you like to do today if you could do anything you wanted to?

10. I'm going to read a lot of things people say they do.  
 Would you tell me if you do these things - (if daily -  
 note hours)

    Daily    Weekly    Monthly    Yearly    Never

See your children,  
 grandchildren or  
 other relatives

Write letters to  
 family or friends

Go visit friends  
 or relatives

Entertain rela-  
 tives or friends  
 in your home

Attend church  
 services

Attend union,  
 club or lodge  
 meetings

Go to see sports  
 events

Go to the movies

Listen to the radio

Watch television

Talk with friends

Take walks

Daily   Weekly   Monthly   Yearly   Never

Work in and  
around the house

Work in the  
garden or yard

Play cards or  
other table games

Go for rides in  
car

Go to a bar,  
pool room

Go hunting,  
fishing or  
play golf

Work on a hobby  
(SPECIFY)

Just sit and think  
about things

Sew, knit,  
crochet

Attend classes at  
a school or center

Spend time at  
the library

Help in church work

Other

11. Some people spend time working with special groups. Would you tell me which of these groups you take part in today and what you do.

Belong Now	What I do	Belonged at age 40-50
---------------	-----------	--------------------------

- a. Fraternal organizations or lodges
- b. Church
- c. Church connected groups
- d. Veterans; organizations
- e. Card clubs; women's or men's social clubs
- f. Club or center for older people
- g. Organizations of people of the same nationality
- h. Neighborhood clubs; community centers; neighborhood improvement associations
- i. Other (WHAT)
- j. None

12. I'd like to have you think back to when you were 40 or 50 years old and tell me which of the organizations above you belonged to. (CHECK right hand column above.)



13. When you were younger, say 10-15 years ago, what plans had you made for retirement?

Did you follow them?	If not, Why not?
Yes ___ No ___	

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

14. What would you advise a person of 40 or 50 to do about retirement?

15. Now I'd like to ask you some questions about life in general. Different people feel differently about things. I'd like to know how you feel. Will you tell me if you agree or disagree with the following ideas? If you're not sure, one way or another, tell me that too.

AGREE    DISAGREE    OTHER

- |   |       |
|---|-------|
| 1. As one grows older, things seem better than I thought they would be.               | _____ |
| 2. I feel I have gotten more of the breaks in life than most of the people I know.    | _____ |
| 3. This is the dreariest time of my life.   | _____ |
| 4. My life could be happier than it is now.   | _____ |
| 5. Most of the things I do are boring or monotonous.                                  | _____ |
| 6. I expect some interesting and pleasant things to happen to me in the future.       | _____ |
| 7. The things I do are as interesting to me as they ever were.                        | _____ |
| 8. I feel old and somewhat tired.   | _____ |
| 9. I feel my age, but it does not bother me.  | _____ |
| 10. As I look back on my life, I am fairly well satisfied.                            | _____ |
| 11. I would not change my past life even if I could.                                  | _____ |
| 12. Compared to other people my age, I've made a lot of foolish decisions in my life. | _____ |
| 13. Compared to other people my age, I make a good appearance.                        | _____ |

AGREE    DISAGREE    OTHER

14. When I think back over my life, I didn't get most of the important things I wanted.

---

15. Compared to other people, I get down in the dumps too often.

---

16. In spite of what some people say, the lot of the average man is getting worse, not better.

---

NOYES

16. Do you like living in this neighborhood?

Comments?

17. If not satisfied, what could be done to improve this neighborhood?

18. Have you any desire to change your living arrangements?

YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

Why?

19. Now I need to know a little bit about you. Would you tell me:

What age group you fit in?

AGE GROUP

65 - 69 \_\_\_\_\_  
 70 - 74 \_\_\_\_\_  
 75 - 79 \_\_\_\_\_  
 80 - 84 \_\_\_\_\_  
 90 - up \_\_\_\_\_

20. Whether or not you were:

Married \_\_\_\_\_  
 Widowed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Divorced \_\_\_\_\_  
 or  
 Separated \_\_\_\_\_  
 Never married \_\_\_\_\_

21. Your schooling?

<u>Education</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Elementary School	_____	_____
High School	_____	_____
College	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____

## 22. Living arrangements (Check one)

- House  
 Apartment  
 Room, in a house  
 Private home for elderly  
 Trailer

## 23. Living with: (check one)

- Husband or wife  
 Alone  
 Children  
 Daughter  
 Son  
 Relatives  
 Friends  
 Other

## 24. Place of residence

- Town  
 Country  
 Year-round residence

Why did you choose Benzie County?

## 25. Description of state of health of the individual.

Thank you for your time.

Schedule Number

Name

Address

Sex M \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

Date of interview

Day of Week

Length of Interview

1965

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