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A photographic exploration of the aged in a small Iowa town

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A photographic exploration of the
aged in a small Iowa town

by

Robert L. Stockfield

A Thesis Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Signatures have been redacted for privacy

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa

1976

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Theme and Purpose	1
B. Aging	1
C. Visual Communication	2
D. The Aged in Iowa	3
II. DISCUSSION OF THEORY-VISUAL COMMUNICATION	6
A. Communication in Social Systems	6
B. Visual Thinking	9
C. Photographic Communication	11
III. APPLICATION OF THEORY	18
A. Early Photographic Developments	18
B. Early Documentation	19
C. The Documentary Tradition	20
D. Recent Trends in Documentary Photography	29
E. The Photojournalism Tradition	30
F. The Photographic Story and the Documentary Essay: Comparison and Contrast	36
IV. DISCUSSION OF THEORY--GERONTOLOGY	45
A. Roles in Society	45
B. Age Stratification and Isolation	47
C. Socialization Trends	51
D. Nonverbal Communication	55

	Page
V. METHODOLOGY	60
VI. A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF THE AGED IN A SMALL IOWA TOWN	63
VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY	71
VIII. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	75

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Theme and Purpose

This thesis attempts to demonstrate that an analysis of a sociological situation or a social problem is greatly enhanced through the use of visual communication, which can express certain qualitative factors that statistical and verbal measurements cannot. The sociological situation in this study is the problems of the aged in society, and how they are solved in a particular community. A photographic study of old persons successfully interacting in an age segregated community accompanies the text.

The text of this thesis seeks to prove no theories. Rather, it surveys and discusses theories which are then demonstrated through documentary photographs.

B. Aging

Hochschild (1973) says that society has very short lived norms compared to its longer life expectancies. The relative differences have created greater age stratification than ever before. The aged are outcasts in a young, work-oriented society; they are relegated to lower status and left out of the mainstream. In Iowa, the major social problems are those of aging. Iowa is a leading state in the percentage of old

persons (Powers and Golinaux, 1972), many of whom seek small towns in which to live. Perhaps many old persons find such communities conducive to a good life based on their socio-economic situations.

Sociologist Gordon Streib (1972) described the four major factors affecting the happiness of the aged: financial resources, emotional health, physical health and social resources. Old persons who possess these resources have the weapons to combat isolation. These elements are usually measured quantitatively, using statistics and sociological jargon. However, in a small Iowa town--Derby--such measurements cannot depict the quality with which old persons possess these elements. Such qualitative measurements can be better shown visually; in this case, through the use of photographs. In Derby, as in many other small Iowa towns, old persons discover they can satisfy their emotional and physical needs in age separated communities (These are communities where persons of various age groups mingle with primarily those of the same groups.). The aged thwart isolation through interaction with persons they can easily communicate with.

C. Visual Communication

Visual communication becomes integral to the conceptualization of social problems through the application of empathy

theory (Berlo, 1965), whereby the audience can receive information visually, interpret it, and understand the roles the aged must play. It might also be added here that the problems the aged face are representative of the problems of all persons in society, in varying degrees.

The use of visual (analogic) communication and its interpretation through digital communication is a basis for this study (Analogic and Digital Communication are explained and discussed in Chapter IV, section D). When studying this social situation, visual information is interpreted and is complemented by verbal and statistical data for greater interpretation.

Photography is the device, or medium used for visual communication in this thesis.

D. The Aged in Iowa

Iowa has had a large, rapid growth of its older population (65 and over). In 1930, there were 184,000 old persons in the state, which was 7.5 percent of the population. By 1970, there were 350,000 old persons, which was 12.4 percent of the state population (Powers, 1972). These figures are greater than those for the nation. In the United States, according to 1970 census data, 9.9 percent of the population was over 65. Furthermore, the median age in Iowa was 28.8, compared to 28.1 in the nation (Julius, 1970). Iowa was second only to Florida in its percentage of old persons (Powers, 1972, p. 2).

There are more old Americans today than ever before (Powers and Golinaux, 1972). The 9.9 percent national figure is a great increase from the 3 percent figure of 1930. The average U.S. life expectancy is over 70. This is because more persons are reaching old age--primarily a result of better nutrition, hygiene and health care than ever before.

However, large portions of the old are poor. In 1970, 40 percent couldn't keep up with inflation (Powers and Golinaux, 1972). Without financial resources, taking care of basic needs is a major problem. Another problem for the aged is isolation. With the decline in the importance of the extended family, the activities of the aged have changed from a family and friendship base to more reclusive types of home activities.

Nonmetropolitan areas in Iowa have high percentages of old persons (Powers and Golinaux, 1972). The community which serves as the subject of the photographs is Derby, a town of about 161 persons in Lucas County in south central Iowa. In Derby, 25.5 percent of the people are over 65, and the median age is 39.6 (Julius, 1970). Census data shows that the percentage of old persons in many Iowa towns will increase in the next decades. Despite the fact that many of these towns have low economic standards of living, many old persons find them good communities in which to live (Powers and Golinaux, 1972). It is important to investigate the quality of life in small towns to help prepare for the future.

In Chapter II, there is a discussion of communication in social systems and visual and photographic communication. In Chapter III, the history of documentary photography and current use of it are discussed. There is a discussion of how the documentary essay is created and how documentary photography is used to communicate. Chapter IV discusses the problems of the aged and how they are solved in communities which become dominated by old persons. Measurements are qualitative rather than quantitative--the quality of life is difficult to measure in statistics in socioeconomic tables, but it can be readily seen through the visual medium of photography. Chapter V discusses the methodology in building this thesis, and Chapter VI is the documentary essay: a photographic exploration of the aged in a small Iowa town.

II. DISCUSSION OF THEORY-VISUAL COMMUNICATION

A. Communication in Social Systems

Social systems develop through man's need to relate his behavior to that of others. Berlo (1965) contends that members of social systems manifest collections of interdependent goals, primarily through role playing and interaction. Interaction occurs when two individuals make inferences about their roles and take the roles of the other at the same time. There is a process of role-taking--inference--role-taking--inference wherein each actor adjusts to social situations by basing his inferences on new data so he may create his identity in accord with the expectations of others.

Berlo (1965) says that interaction is both a goal and the process of communication. It can be analyzed in a social system by studying the patterns of communication. In communication there is the attempt to couple two persons through the production and reception of messages which have meaning for both. As role expectations become interdependent, two persons may become sender and receiver enmeshed in the communicative process. According to Loomis (1960, pp. 13-19), communication is that process by which information, decisions and directions pass through the system, transmitted by role players (actors). It provides the data upon which beliefs are obtained and attitudes and values (sentiments) are formed. These beliefs

and sentiments become the norms of the system, upon which persons infer and assume roles.

Watzlawick et al. (1967, pp. 126-7) hold that the process of communication is circular, for actors interact based greatly on the expectations of what their roles should be. Of course, persons in a complex society have several roles. Multiple roles create ambiguity in role expectations, and make communication (interaction) limited and sometimes impossible (Berlo, 1965, p. 156).

Berlo (1965, pp. 157-8) contends that when interaction is desired in such situations, as is most commonly the situation, the individuals examine the pertinent reference groups, that is, the groups (sets of role expectations) which satisfy the goals of the interaction. According to Watzlawick et al. (1967, pp. 19-22), patterns of communication hold together these sets of role expectations.

In mass society, communication may be complex and difficult because roles in some groups conflict with norms of other groups (Berlo, 1965, pp. 158-60). There may be a breakdown of communication as persons who see themselves in conflicting roles cannot communicate. That is, actors may have a conflict in how they see their roles and what the group expectations are. In order to successfully communicate, persons must redefine the role expectations of their sub-systems, or adopt other reference groups. Whereas social systems are produced

through communication (which enables people to work and live together), the social system in turn determines the communication of its members. There exists then a model of communication based on circularity and feedback (Berlo, 1965, pp. 147-50). Predictions of behavior can be made from knowledge of group norms and from persons' roles; and norms and roles can be predicted from behavioral patterns.

People do not actively communicate. They engage in, or become part of communication. Watzlawick et al. (1967, p. 127) demonstrate the impossibility of not communicating by explaining that all communication is interactional behavior--which cannot not exist. Results are not caused by initial conditioning, but rather by the nature of the process. Thus, words or silence, activity or inactivity all have message value, and evoke some response. The equanimity of the source's message intent with the receiver's interpretation is secondary. It is the interaction which defines the communication. (However, communication may be considered successful when there is such equanimity.) Communication is thus a vehicle for manifesting behavioral relationships. It contains content and relationship aspects, which convey information and impose behavior (define relationships).

B. Visual Thinking

Derby is an example of a town where old people run those agencies that have replaced the extended family in satisfying needs. Old persons operate the major places where other old persons congregate: the restaurant, post office, general store, tavern, antique shop. By operating these places, they assure a homophilious community of the aged, where according to Hochschild (1973, pp. 30-34), interaction patterns are healthy and successful (These ideas are discussed in Chapter IV). The quality of life, predicated on successful interaction (healthy social contacts) and a lack of loneliness among Derby's old people, can be recognized visually. The interaction--patterns of communication--among the old people running the town's establishments is overt and easy to perceive.

Arnheim (1969, p. 13) says that whereas perception and thinking are usually considered separately, they must be unified to enable visual thinking. Perception is not an intellectual operation. It is a mode of behavior, which achieves at a sensory level what in the realm of reasoning is known as understanding.

Arnheim (1969) contends that visual thinking is exemplified by selective perception, whereby individuals perceive certain properties in what they see in order to fulfill needs of various roles. A perceptual act is never isolated. It is the most recent phase of a flow of innumerable similar acts,

performed in the past and surviving in the memory.

Perceptions are selectively based on experiences. That is, the present moment is not isolated, but is greatly influenced by the past (Arnheim, 1965, p. 30). The syntactics of communication are the processes by which the individual defines his perceptions (Watzlawick et al., 1967, pp. 59-71). He adds experiences--thought processes (cognition)--to perception--to make his perceptions selective and thereby role fulfilling. The world as it is perceived therefore changes according to cognition--based on one's experiences. After perception there may be "confirmation, reappraisal, change completion, correction, deepening of understanding" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 13).

Berlo (1965) says that theories of empathy explain these occurrences. According to Solomon Asch's inference theory of empathy, man has first hand knowledge of his own behavior. He makes predictions about the behavior of others based on his interpretation and projection of his own behavior. That is, based on his own experiences, man makes inferences about the internal states of others. According to George Mead's theory of inference, the concept of self is developed through communication. Infants, children and even adults learn roles through imitation of the behavior of others. From this they develop behavioristic sets of expectations. Whichever viewpoint is adhered to, empathy facilitates communications. This occurs initially in nonverbal communication where persons

actively and selectively perceive behavior in others and interpret it to satisfy their expectations and reinforce their values (Watzlawick et al., 1967). Thus, empathy becomes an integral part of the process of visual thinking.

In understanding the world and their roles in it, people rely greatly on visual thinking. Arnheim (1965, pp. 9-11) holds that vision is not just a mechanical recording of elements. It entails the grasping of significant structural patterns, which reveal the expressive patterns (or themes) of images.

Expression refers to those features of a person's external appearance and behavior which enable an observer to learn what the person is thinking and feeling. Facilitated by the viewer's sense of empathy, it is the primary content of vision in everyday life (Arnheim, 1965, p. 368).

Everything in the world exists in context. When an image of an object changes, it is either because the object or its context (surroundings) change. "To see an object means to tell its properties from those imposed upon it by its setting and by the observer" (Arnheim, 1969, p. 54).

C. Photographic Communication

A picture is a statement about visual qualities. The incompleteness and ambiguity of a picture compel the viewer to interpret what he sees (Arnheim, 1969, p. 137). Though empathy

is a determining factor in interpreting pictures, there are several other factors, as well. In a picture, the viewer's attention is fixed on a smaller plane. He is seeking to understand a smaller perceptual area which has a definite structure.

The juxtaposition of objects in a picture is important because it affects the cognition of what the viewer perceives. That is, he forms concepts after he perceives the shape. Arnheim (1965) holds that, "Only to the extent that a scene can be seen as a configuration of clear-cut directions, sizes, geometric shapes, and colors, can it be said that it is actually perceived." A photograph that is balanced is perceptually pleasing, because the observer experiences a feeling of equilibrium (or balance) in his own body by some kind of spontaneous analogy.

In perceiving a composition, the viewer perceives its parts (Arnheim, 1965, p. 83). He constructs such parts as coming together into a structural unity as balanced as he can make it. Often a whole figure is suggested from a representative sampling of some part or parts. This may occur with the overlapping of shapes. One shape may be partly covered by another and the viewer completes the image. The overlapping may convey to the eye that the shapes or figures belong together--are in harmony.

In overlapping, the relationship formed may be a union impairing the completeness of at least one of the parties.

Arnheim (1965, p. 93) says tension is depicted in such photographs. There may be the conflict between man and his environment (e.g.: a picture of a man in prison behind the bars of his cell). Thus, overlapping communicates as elements are arranged into patterns that reveal characteristics of objects in fresh relationships (Arnheim, 1965, p. 83).

Arnheim (1965) and Bether (1963) contend that salient structural features are expressive wherein depth and volume are created by diagonal lines, triangles and overlapping planes. The type of space representations in a given culture will influence the observer. Shapes and directions in pictures have emotional and organizing effects. According to Arnheim and Bether, as man seeks to maintain order, he stands vertically, falls at an angle and rests horizontally. Vertical lines and vertical spaces in pictures create stability and dignity. Horizontal lines and spaces convey rest, peace and speed. Diagonal lines are dynamic and unstable, but become stable when supported by opposing diagonals. A variety of curves and angles convey confusion and a difficulty to relate. Triangles convey stability. Flowing curves create fluid and easy movement and a variety of feelings and emotions. They may be graceful, opulent, gay, or sad. In photographs, as in life, order must have accent and variety to convey messages.

Arnheim (1965) sees perspective as an important factor in visual perception and thinking. A central perspective creates

an image of a world that has a center. A strong center of interest creates a base from which activity emanates and to which existence is referred. Selective focusing and depth and relative size perspective enable various elements of compositions to dominate other elements. The closer the camera, the greater the convergence in a composition, creating greater distinctions among objects of interest.

Communicators say light is an important communicative device (Arnheim, 1965, pp. 260-3; Bether, 1963). In everyday experience, light exists as an indicator of space. Dark and shaded areas convey depth and volume. Light intensities and distributions determine spatial values. Bright areas tend to protrude in a photograph.

Light may create or destroy the unity of a composition; it may create excitement through harsh contrast; it may represent the conflict between good and evil, as the Bible assigns light to godliness, truth, virtue and salvation, and darkness to the Devil. (Similar symbolism is also found in Chinese and Persian philosophies) (Arnheim, 1965, p. 263). Generally, light values add emphasis to dark pictures and vice-versa. A bright area in a dark picture may offer a glimmer of hope or life (Bether, 1963, p. 38), as in the case of a community of old people in Derby, Iowa. Dark highlights in a light background are striking to older persons who represent the isolation and end of life. Such darkness may convey the societal

rejection many old persons suffer.

Arnheim (1965, pp. 331-49) contends that motion has the most attention grabbing visual appeal. It may be implied when objects in a photograph are not identical but the sequence of their activities creates a sense of unity. In perceiving motion, the viewer sees two systems, interrelationships, being displaced in regard to each other. It may upset the order of things, depending on the direction and speed of the movement. The dynamics of a composition are successful only when the movement of detailed areas fits the movement of the whole. In implied movement, the element of displacement is supplied by the observer. In any case, movement creates directed tension; it makes the visual image alive and exciting. Tension is created through a deformation of shapes--a deviation from what the observer expects. Movement is a poignant area in a visual study of the aged, because time, the dimension of age, is a factor of movement and change.

According to Arnheim (1965, p. 376), the aspiration of any perceived image is expression. As tension is built by various elements of perceiving, such as conflict and concordance, approach and withdrawal, expansion and contraction, and rising and falling, it contributes to expression. These forces may be interpreted by the viewer as symbols of power that control human destinies.

Vision is very articulate, as it provides inexhaustible information about objects (Arnheim, 1969, pp. 20-23). However,

vision is also selective. No stimulus can be reacted to unless it is perceived. Furthermore, visual sense must be given patterned stimulation. That is, social adjustment, serenity and thought capacity are impaired unless visual senses are stimulated. This applies visual thinking to man's need for confirmation. According to Watzlawick et al. (1967, pp. 85-90), the world as it is perceived changes according to cognition (interpretation)--based on man's experiences. After perception and initial confirmation, there may be disconfirmation, confirmation or correction of the society.

As discussed, the photograph is a statement, a selective view, of visual qualities of life. The selective view forces the viewer to bring his experiences to the photograph. He perceives it nonverbally and interprets it.

The photographer records relationships. He sees objects in certain juxtapositions, in certain contexts, that contain certain perceptual (composition and lighting) elements that express certain abstract conceptualizations about life. The photographer presents an image of the world in a way not previously seen. He may accentuate ordinary features of life--the commonplace--so that they become special. Photographs regulate the amount of perceptual abstraction the viewer must make to successfully receive messages. The power of all visual representation derives primarily from the properties directly inherent in the medium and secondarily from what the properties

suggest indirectly.

The documentary photograph may have lasting interest because the image of man represents such abstract quality as dignity (through oppression and resistance, outward directness and inward containment, and coping with the harshness of life) (Arnheim, 1965, p. 77). The documentary photograph is relevant to human life as it represents the inherent nature--beauty and truth--of events and things in the world.

III. APPLICATION OF THEORY

A. Early Photographic Developments

The history of photography is not precise. The development of the camera preceded the photographic process by several hundred years, but was somewhat useless because photochemistry was not developed until about the mid-nineteenth century.

The first successful photograph was taken by Nicéphore Niépce on a pewter plate in 1826 (Gernsheim, 1965, p. 20). Louis Daguerre improved the process and introduced the daguerrotype in 1839. In this process, he reduced the exposure time from eight hours to 20-30 minutes, and learned how to fix the image on a copper plate using a solution of salt (Gernsheim, 1965, p. 22).

In 1841, William Henry Fox Talbot invented the Calotype, wherein prints were made on paper (Gernsheim, 1965, p. 31). This enabled any number of positive prints to be made.

The first news photographs were in the 1840's, when Samuel Morse (commonly known as the inventor of the telegraph) took group shots of his Yale University class reunion. European photographers in similar manner shot military ceremonies, various groups, and on one occasion a fire in Hamburg, Germany. The first writer-photographer team was Gustave Flaubert and Madame DuCamp, who in 1849, studied the sculpture and architecture of Egypt. Likewise, English photographers took their

cameras on expeditions to the Orient and Africa, documenting life in the tradition of game hunters (Schuneman, 1972, pp. 35-46).

B. Early Documentation

The first photographic reportage is attributed to Roger Fenton who in 1855 produced 360 photographs of the Crimean War (Gernsheim, 1965, pp. 139-40). The first photo reportage portrait was by Robert Howlett in 1857 (Gernsheim, 1965, p. 124). The closeup in photo interviews was developed by Julia Margaret Cameron, who exposed the inner qualities of her famous friends in her photographs. She made large head studies which revealed the character (or lack of it) in her subjects (Gernsheim, 1965, p. 158).

However, most early photography was either portrait work or used by artists as a basis for painting. A successful New York portrait photographer named Matthew Brady was another of the first to use the camera as a tool for communicating when he amassed a group of photographers who proceeded to document the Civil War. Seven thousand of these photographs are in the National Archives of the Library of Congress (Horan, 1955, pp. 35-59). Despite current popularity of his photographs, Brady found no market for them during or after the war, and went broke from his project. However, Brady did photograph several presidents. Lincoln attributed Brady's 1860 photograph

of him as a factor in his presidential victory, for it portrayed him in a dignified manner, rather than as an uncouth backwoods person (Horan, 1955, pp. 35-59; Rothstein, 1956, p. 3).

Several of Brady's photographers continued their careers in the Old West. Timothy O'Sullivan and Alexander Gardner photographed the landscapes and documented much of the growth of the west. The photographs of the Yellowstone area in Wyoming in the 1870's by William H. Jackson helped convince the United States Congress of the need for a national park system to preserve several outstanding areas of the United States (Rothstein, 1956, p. 11).

A major problem of early photographers was the limitation of photochemistry. Relying primarily on a wet plate process, individual photographs were the rule, and mass reproduction was unheard of.

C. The Documentary Tradition

With the introduction of the dry plate process, the documentary tradition grew in the late 1880's, when a socially concerned police court reporter for the New York Tribune and the Evening Sun found that he could use photographs as an effective communicative weapon (Pollack, 1969, pp. 298-300). Jacob Riis was outraged by the slum conditions in New York's Shantytown where people were crowded into tenements and death

and sickness rates were high. Riis wrote expository articles and complained to city health officials--with almost no results. He then discovered the camera, used it to record slum conditions and published his photographs in newspapers and Scribner's Magazine (1889), and published two books, How the Other Half Lives (1890), and Children of the Poor (1892) (Time-Life, 1972, pp. 46-48).

The photographs communicated a distinct message. Theodore Roosevelt, the new police commissioner of New York, left Riis a note: "I have read your book and I have come to help" (Time-Life, 1972, p. 46). Roosevelt and other city officials pursued a massive effort to clean up the slums. Riis' message was received, interpreted and acted upon. Where words had failed to communicate, the nonverbal, photographic image carried a message whereby viewers could interpret, empathize with, and translate their feelings into remedial actions.

Other documentarians at the turn of the century include Jaques-Henri Latrique and Eugène Atget. As a child, Latrique began creating a chronicle of his happy family life. He used the camera to create visual records of family histories, and made the family photo album a work of documentary art (Time-Life, 1972, p. 28). Atget was an early master of commenting with his camera on what he saw in everyday life. He photographed parks in Paris, and was able to blend the "reality of the scene with its deeper meaning as part of the city" (Time-

Life, 1972, p. 13).

Another photographer shooting in the city was Alfred Stieglitz, who in the 1890's photographed life on New York City streets. Stieglitz' purpose was to gain recognition for photography as a fine art. Although his idea was to emulate the current vogue in painting, his street scenes proved that everyday scenes are the basis for effective pictures (Gernsheim, 1965, pp. 172-89). Despite his ambition to promote photography as a fine art, his work is noted as some of the finest documentary photography. Stieglitz was one of the first photographers to use a hand held camera (Doty, 1974, p. 14). His pictures in the streets "expressed the dynamics of urban life in a harmonious relationship of line and form," and were a "means of releasing his personal feelings" (Doty, 1974, p. 14).

Through Camera Notes, the publication of the Camera Club of New York, Stieglitz sought to publish photographs which showed "the development of an organic idea, the evolution of an inward principle; a picture rather than a photograph" (Doty, 1974, p. 14). Stieglitz wanted photography recognized as "a distinctive medium of individual expression" (Doty, 1974, p. 14).

In 1902, Stieglitz found the Photo-Secession in New York, a group dedicated to his philosophies. They used the quarterly publication, Camera Work, from 1903-17, to exhibit their work and gain recognition for photography as a medium for expression (Gernsheim, 1965, p. 188-9). The efforts of Stieglitz created

the opportunity for other early photographers--Paul Strand, Edward Steichen, Imogene Cunningham--to gain recognition.

Although the Photo-Secession was a very popular movement in the early twentieth century, not all documentary photographers worked within its structure.

A social worker named Lewis Hine created some of the best documentary photography shooting early twentieth century immigrants in America. "There were two things I wanted to do. I wanted to show the things that had to be corrected. I wanted to show the things that had to be appreciated," Hine said (Gutman, 1974, p. 5). "If I could tell the story in words, I wouldn't have to lug a camera" (Time-Life, 1972, p. 56).

Hine biographer Judith Gutman (1974, pp. 44-48) contends that Hine did not fit into the formal world of photography. While Stieglitz' Camera Club and Photo-Secession sought to perfect photography as an art form and gain recognition for it as such, Hine strived to use photography as a vehicle for creating social change. Newly arrived in New York, awed by the modern industrial city with its flowing hordes of immigrants, and outraged by the exploitation of workers, Hine earned a master's degree in sociology from Columbia University and set out with his camera to expose social problems (Gutman, 1967). Hine travelled the United States (12,000 miles in 1913 alone), photographing children and adults and their relationships to the industrial society in which they struggled to exist. Hine photographed the immigrants at Ellis Island in

New York. In 1905, he became an investigator for the National Child Labor Committee and exposed child-abusing labor practices in glass works in Indiana and West Virginia, night markets in Ohio and cotton mills in North Carolina. In 1907, he photographed Blacks in the slums of Washington, D.C., and in 1908, he photographed children at play in the streets of several cities (Gutman, 1967, pp. 16-19).

Hine's technique was to photograph the individual in his environment. At a social work conference in 1909, he said, "the picture is a symbol that brings one immediately into close touch with reality. . . it is often more effective than reality because in the picture non-essential and conflicting interests have been eliminated" (Gutman, 1967, p. 19).

Hine put people against the background they existed in. Photographing workers in the 1920's and the building of the Empire State Building in the early 1930's, he purported to show "the true dignity and integrity of labor" and explore how "work itself has become one of the deepest satisfactions" in the new industrial society (Gutman, 1974, pp. 44-48). Hine's photographs depict the conflicts of individual lives--the youthful naturalness of the children cast in the harsh mechanical reality of the factories. His effort was to expose chaos in the world in the hope of creating social order. His artistic expression was predicated upon conflict in what he perceived. Social conflict created visual, artistic conflict.

Hine created a new art form: "interpretive" photography, later called documentary. It consisted of a flat, fiery arrangement of people, and he used light and form to capture what he saw as basic, humanistic conflict shattering his image of a natural world.

Other photographers followed in the documentary tradition. A student of both Stieglitz and Hine, Paul Strand spent a career documenting the lives of working people in several nations. He often spent months getting acquainted with his subjects and their dwellings. Photographing greatly in Europe, his works show individuals in their struggles against oppression. Discussing photography, Strand said, "It is one thing to photograph people, and it is another to make others care about them by revealing the core of their humanness" (Time-Life, 1972, p. 133).

Another documentary photographer, André Kertész, developed an informal, personal style of photographing ordinary people in various facets of their lives. Kertész sought to keep a journal of his life, and photographed people and places as he came into contact with them. He explained a basic principle guiding his work: "If I do not have the contact, I do not touch" (Time-Life, 1972, p. 125).

Kertész' disciple, Henri Cartier-Bresson, carried to his work a similar concern for every phase of human activity--whether work or play, love or war. Bresson's work is based on

capturing a selected segment of life at the "decisive moment." "His genius is to sense when a combination of expressions and postures communicates his message, and in that instant, to record the reality, refined and concentrated, of the pleasures and pains of ordinary experience" (Time-Life, 1972, p. 123).

Documentary photography made advances in the 1920's and 30's. In New York, the Film and Photo League (later shortened to Photo League) was formed in 1928 (Time-Life, 1972). Its purpose was to record events of social significance not covered by the commercial press, such as street demonstrations, strikes, picket lines and confrontations. The streets became the studio for the League, which organized speakers, classes, exhibits all around interpretive photography. The League's teachers demanded students' involvement with their world. Instructor Sol Liebsohn said, "Unless you feel involvement with people, you should not photograph them at all." The aim of the League's school was "to help the student develop a personal approach ... to make his individual interpretation of his immediate world," according to Sid Grossman, photography instructor.

By early thirties, the term documentary photography was commonly used, as photographers sought to document social relationships (Hicks, 1973). The greatest such effort was a project of the Farm Security Administration. Under the direction of Roy Stryker, the F.S.A. hired several photographers to document rural life in America during the depression. The

problems (and lifestyles) of farm people were shown to city people in 270,000 photographs made in the 1930's and early 40's (Stryker, 1973, pp. 7-9; Time-Life, 1972, pp. 66-83).

The F.S.A. provided a photographic record of how America worked, lived, slept, ate and played; it showed the floods, the drought and the depression, and the dignity and strength of character of the people living through it. The photographs attempted to show to the American people the plight of migratory workers, farmers and other rural people hurt by the depression. The need for federal farm relief programs was documented, and farmers became more aware of the available federal programs.

F.S.A. photographer Dorothea Lange (1970, p. 28) said, "Documentary photography records the social scene of our time. It mirrors the present and documents for the future. Its focus is man and his relation to mankind. It records customs at work, war, play; activities of the day; cycles of the seasons; the span of a life."

The documentary tradition is well exemplified by the work of W. Eugene Smith. Initially a photo journalist, Smith deviated from strict journalistic tradition by letting his philosophy influence his work (a discussion of the differences between the documentary and journalistic styles of photography is in the last section of this chapter). "My principal concern is for an honesty of interpretation to be arrived at by careful

study and through the utmost possible sensitivity of understanding" (Bauries, 1967, p. 12). Smith's philosophy is evident in his essays on a "Spanish Village," when he traveled 7500 miles just to find the right locale for his study; "Nurse Midwife" and "Pittsburgh," where he moved to the location of his studies to become part of the lives of his subjects (Bauries, 1967).

Several documentarians created the International Center for Concerned Photographers to institutionalize their social concern for the world's problems (Capa, 1972, p. 1). Of Life war photographer Robert Capa, John Steinbeck wrote, "Capa's pictures were made in his brain--the camera only completed them. Capa knew . . . you cannot photograph war because it is largely an emotion. But he did photograph that emotion by shooting beside it. He could show the horror of a whole people in the face of a child. His camera caught and held emotion" (Capa, 1974a, p. 123).

Roman Vishniac recorded the lives of the European Jews in the 1930's. He wrote, "At night, the time was free, and people sat by candlelight and studied the Talmud. It was very dark, but I wanted the pictures. They were not too good technically, but they remind me and will remind people after me what life was like forty years ago" (Capa, 1974b).

A documentary photograph may gain meaning and communicate more as time goes on. As people experience more, they have

more to put into the documentary photograph--greater interpretation. Family portraits from the 19th century, snapshots of immigrants, and photographs of old towns may all have documentary value today. The test of a documentary photograph is its ability to maintain expressiveness through time.

Another concerned photographer was Dan Weiner, who commented, "Mine is the first generation that can say that our understanding of the world and concepts of the forces and direction of society have been shaped not through the literary or the auditory, but the visual. Those of us who matured in the thirties felt the full impact of the newly developed visual media: the picture magazine and newspaper, the newsreel, the documentary still photograph and film. All of these provided a communication and a sense of shape to the social and economic problems of the day. The breadlines, the dust bowls, the rise of Hitler became sharp realities to me, more through the photograph than the printed word. This has produced a generation of photographers like myself whose restless lens keeps probing at the central issues of our day and who have pushed the photographic horizons farther and deeper into the shape of the world and men's relation to one another" (Capa, 1974c, p. 37).

D. Recent Trends in Documentary Photography

Contemporary documentary photographers have documented relationships in a contemporary society. To many viewers they

have become critics of an affluent, complacent society (Time-Life, 1972, pp. 164-90).

In 1958, Robert Frank published The Americans (Frank, 1958), a collection of photographs which represented a new concept in documentary photography. Frank's photographs combined with the prose of Jack Kerouac to show the tedium of ordinary Americans in everyday life, seeking but not reaching the American dream. It was an introspective work, examining the emotions and interpersonal relationships of private lives, by showing homes, families and friends. Whereas the documentary tradition had been to document social reality, Frank was attempting to communicate psychological reality. His work led to a turning inward of many photographers (Time-Life, p. 15).

The most recent trend has been for photographers to document their personal experiences, such as Bill Owens' studies of suburban living. Several who shoot quickly, almost as a reflexive action are Garry Winogrand, Lee Freidlander, Robert Frank. Their technique is to shoot before the mind has much time to analyze or rearrange what it sees. This may be their reaction to a society which doesn't give them a great deal of time to think about what they see (Time-Life, 1972, pp. 164-90, 214-15).

E. The Photojournalism Tradition

In the late 19th century, part of the documentary tradition branched into what may be considered the photojournalism

tradition. Journalistic photography has been more oriented to publication in news journals, and has been distinguished as such. Although much journalistic photography has endured in the documentary tradition, it's original intent was that of reporting on events, places and people (a comparison of the journalistic and documentary traditions is made in the following section of this chapter).

The inception of photojournalism came with the development of the halftone process, about 1880. This process enabled photographs to be printed in newspapers on regular press runs. Halftones first appeared in the New York Daily Graphic (Hicks, 1973, p. 23).

Despite the growth of interpretive photography, photojournalism was stilted throughout the first decades of the twentieth century. Newspapers used pictures, but not selectively. Using view cameras, with 4" x 5" sheet film, usually only one exposure was made of an event. Compositions were stagnant, with persons posed and looking at the camera. Picture agencies formed between 1919 and 1927 (Hearst's International News Photos; The New York Times' World Wide News Photos; Acme Newspictures, later, UPI; and the Associated Press News Photo Service) (Hicks, 1973, p. 25). Editors used photographs to dress up, or liven pages of papers, but with no discernment as to news value, or telling a story. Many shots were pictures of pretty girls, babies, politicians and other persons posed, and changes in seasons. The photograph was

second in value to written matter, and was often cancelled for a story (Hicks, 1973, pp. 25-27).

Time magazine began in 1923; it used many photographs, and experimented with picture pages (Hicks, 1973, pp. 37-9). The major criterion used for photographs by Time editors was that of their news presentation: an orderly arrangement and continuous flow had to be adhered to. However, photographs and photographic pages were usually haphazardly put together, and reproductions were very poor.

The first real journalistic use of picture stories in periodicals was by the German publishers, House of Ullstein, in Berlin, in the mid 1920's (Hicks, 1973, pp. 32-7). The House of Ullstein published five daily newspapers and several magazines. Kurt Safranski, editor of the monthly Die Dame (Germany's answer to Vogue) and weekly Illustrierte Zeitung (circ.: 2,000,000) was aware that pictures could show readers things they might not see otherwise. Safranski saw the photograph had power over words to pull readers into a story. He used many pictures of events and people, instead of one. This was made possible with the invention of the Leica, the first 35 mm camera (Hicks, 1973, pp. 29-32). The Leica's small format enabled many shots on a roll of film, quick advancing of the film, and viewing through the camera at eye level.

Erich Salomon, who worked for the House of Ullstein, used the Ermanox and the Leica to photograph famous people (mostly

statesmen) in many European and American cities. He was the first photographer to shoot candidly, and use such photographs in periodicals (Hicks, 1973, pp. 29-32; Pollack, 1969, pp. 370-77).

A Berlin art dealer, Alfred Flechtheim, introduced the principle of the third effect, whereby two selected pictures combined can create a meaning greater than the sum of the individual pictures. This occurs through the reader's interpretation of the photographs. Through this principle, basic layouts had purpose and meaning (Hicks, 1973, pp. 33-4).

The term photojournalism was adopted in 1928 (Hicks, 1973) and Salomon's and Safranski's ideas spread to America with the creation of Fortune Magazine in 1930 (Hicks, 1973). Fortune grew out of Time's need to cover the enormous amount of financial news in that era. Its editors hired industrial photographer Margaret Bourke-White, who captured the greatness and enormity of the modern industrial age in her photographs. Bourke-White visited Europe, and recruited Salomon for Fortune as a guest photographer. His techniques caught on in America, particularly after the Leica was refined in 1932 with the built-in rangefinder, exposure meter and interchangeable lenses (Hicks, 1973, pp. 38-41; Pollack, 1969, pp. 388-90).

Although Time and Fortune used photographs and even had photographic pages, neither was particularly dedicated to the photo story in place of words. The idea for such a magazine

was conceived in 1934, and two years later Life magazine began publication, with its first issue November 23, 1936 (Hicks, 1973, pp. 38-45; Pollack, 1967, pp. 371-77). Life combined several concepts into the photo story: Salomon's candid technique and unique view of subjects, Flechtheim's principle of third effect, Time's orderly arrangement and continuous flow of news, Fortune's special qualities of its subject matter, and German photographer Alfred Eisenstadt's point of view (news angle) in photographing a story. Using the same basic formula, Look magazine began publication in 1937 (Schuneman, 1972, p. 15).

Life and Look were based on group journalism, wherein the interaction of writer, photographer, art director and editor combine as a group to create photojournalism. Individuality was secondary to the group process of carrying out the philosophy of the publication, which was to create a photo story with appeal to a mass audience (Schuneman, 1972, p. 15).

Life and Look editors learned that photographs could be laid out to create picture stories, and words would complement them. Their formula called for the fusion of headlines, photographs, captions and text (Hicks, 1973, pp. 38-45). The reader brought his own experiences to what he viewed, and provided enough information to create a greater meaning. The formula at Life was successful for 36 years.

Photojournalists with the need for individual expression have worked in the documentary tradition. In 1936-7, Bourke-White collaborated with author Erskine Caldwell on the book, You Have Seen Their Faces, a documentary account of sharecroppers lives in the South. Bourke-White's pictures in Faces are "an assortment of devastating images of environmental, social and personal decay . . . she organized the casual bits and pieces of human existence into pictures that speak volumes about poverty, ignorance and injustice" (Callahan, 1972, p. 15). The book consists of photographs and prose. Criticizing the book, Sean Callahan said that Bourke-White's photos "invite a visual reading independent of the text. Today, when the written material seems dated and only of marginal interest, the visual may still be read with fascination" (Callahan, 1972, p. 15).

Walker Evans' collaboration with James Agee on Let Us Now Praise Famous Men (1941; Doty, 1974) was of a similar nature. Evans was fired from the Farm Security Administration because he could not work under the journalistic dictates of F.S.A. director Roy Stryker (Stryker, 1973). He was able to apply his philosophy and develop his personal message working as an independent documentary photographer. The book documents social realities of life in the rural South.

W. Eugene Smith's philosophy, mentioned earlier in this chapter, cost him opportunities to work for Life magazine as he

almost always attempted to impose his philosophy into his work (Bauries, 1967, p. 11). With his "Country Doctor" essay, Smith deviated from the Life practice of scripting stories from their offices in New York. He thereby gained more freedom to express himself through his photographs. Smith's involvement with his subject matter enabled him to do this successfully, but he eventually was impelled to separate from the journalistic impositions made on him at Life (Bauries, 1967).

The practice of documentary and journalistic photography, and the creation of essays in both traditions, is discussed in the next section.

F. The Photographic Story and the Documentary
Essay: Comparison and Contrast

The distinctions between the journalistic and documentary styles of photographic reportage are mainly those of intent, approach, final use and depth of insight. While the distinctions do exist, they are vague at best, for journalistic photography may be considered documentary with the passage of time or a change in usage, and the documentary photograph might in a like manner be used in a journalistic fashion.

Depth of insight may be the area of greatest distinction between the documentary and journalistic styles of photography. In journalistic photography, the photographer attempts to report on events or reveal select happenings in the world. The documentary photographer goes beyond recording as objectively

as possible events of the day; he is consciously lending his philosophy to it and commenting on it. The documentary photograph is a visual representation of a deeply felt moment. As such, the documentary photographer must understand the social forces present in a scene. Former Farm Security Administration and Look photographer Arthur Rothstein (Schuneman, 1972, p. 193) commented that, "It is necessary for the documentary photographer to know enough about the subject to capture its significance in relation to its surroundings."

Criteria for journalistic photographs and photo stories are primarily the same as those for journalistic writing. The photo story is probably intended for a mass audience, or some segment of one. It is subject to the factor of timeliness, as is journalistic writing.

The modern journalistic photo story may be based on what Hicks (Schuneman, 1972, pp. 35-46) calls the Life formula of fusion: "word and picture mediums collaborate to create a unity of effect . . . good headlines plus good photographs plus good captions . . . the whole meaning is greater than the sum of the parts."

The final product may be the result of the "group journalism" process discussed in the previous section, whereby various persons--editor, layout man, writer, photographer--combine their ideas and efforts to create a story. It is therefore a story of a publication, not an individual.

The journalistic photo story or the documentary essay must begin with an idea, which may on some level be to reveal or interpret some event or place or way of life. Hicks (1973, pp. 48-52) says that a purpose for doing the story must be realized, and a point of view must be adopted, so there will be meaning and direction in the work. For either approach, research is an essential ingredient. The photographer must know as much as possible about his subject matter so he will be able to relate to it and become involved with it. In any interaction, a person communicates most effectively (has his message received the way he intended it) when his experiences enable him to relate to the other, with whom he is interacting. Experiences are simulated through research on the subject matter, learning as much about it as is necessary to recognize and understand its characteristics.

Objectivity and accuracy are basic principles involved in photographic reporting. However, in the documentary tradition, objectivity is set aside as the photographer brings his philosophy to his work. W. Eugene Smith (Lyons, 1966, p. 103) contends that photographic reportage can be honest and selective, but not objective. He maintains that the journalistic photographer can have no other than a personal approach (this belief caused Smith to quit his position at Life magazine, for he felt he could not work freely and with total integrity). "The inspiration for the interpretation should come from a

study of the people or places to be photographed . . . the mind should remain open and free from prejudice . . . the photographer should never try to force the subject matter into his or the editor's preconceived notion" (Lyons, 1966, p. 104).

Smith criticized the expectations of his editors saying that, "Too often, the assignment is given, the photographer reads the instructions and the suggestions (of the editors), and then follows them without much more thought--except to photograph as closely as possible to what he believes are the desires of his editors. All too frequently, due to faulty research, to inadequate knowledge or to the preconceived notions just mentioned, the directional theme of the assignment is a misconception of the living actuality. But because he does not wish to offend the editors who pay him his bread money, the photographer frequently tries to make his story conform to someone else's shortsighted or warped judgment" (Lyons, 1966, p. 104).

Whether he is working in the journalistic or documentary tradition, the photographer develops a more refined orientation from the research. As Smith points out, the point of view will more likely be the photographer's and may be a stronger influence in documentary work.

From the research, the photographer may find his purpose for doing the story is reinforced, redefined or negated. The photographer (or his editor) must write a shooting script which

will outline what the photographer must shoot to tell his story (Hicks, 1973, pp. 49-55; Stryker, 1973, pp. 12-16, 188-9). The script provides a frame of reference for the photographer; it reminds him what he is looking for. He may deviate from it, explore other ideas for pictures, but it will be his basic shooting guide.

The approach in documentary photography and photo-journalism differs in a manner consistent with other factors. Because there is generally a greater depth of expression and more of a timelessness sought in documentary photography, there must be a greater involvement of the photographer with his subject matter. This distinction is manifest in the work of the great documentary photographers: W. Eugene Smith (whose involvement with his subject is mentioned in the preceding section), Robert Capa, Dorothea Lange, and many others who became so enmeshed with their subjects that they lived their lives for the time that they worked with them. The expediencies required in news photography do not allow such involvement.

After the shooting is finished, photographs are edited to determine which ones best communicate the intended message. Several criteria are used to select pictures. Each usable photograph must be technically sound; it must be in focus, well printed and compositionally sound. Each picture should be expressive by itself; it has to carry the intended message.

However, editing criteria differ according to the intent and use of the photographs. In documentary photography, each photograph will carry a message, and should be able to stand on its own merit as telling a story. Also, words are secondary to the photographs in getting across the message.

In journalistic photography, Hicks (1973, pp. 58-62) says there may be a combination of good photographs and pictures which help tell the story. That is, poor photographs are more likely to be included if they work with the other pictures to tell the story better. Layout and words are more important factors in telling the story than in documentary photography. Combining the photographs, using the principle of the third effect (discussed in the previous section) in layout, and creating orderly arrangements of photographs and words to create a continuous flow of ideas are integral to good photo-journalism (Hicks, 1973, pp. 63-79).

Several of the elements in creating a photo story are based on audience needs. A story for one type of publication may not effectively communicate with the readers of another. Therefore, different points of views (resulting in different shooting scripts, pictures, layouts, writeups) may be followed for different audiences.

The most effective photographic stories are oriented for select audiences, whose responses may be predicted. The reader should be impelled to interpret what he sees by drawing from

his own experiences and providing additional information to comprehend the story. Different audiences will bring different experiences to the picture stories and interpret them differently. It is a basic tenet of purposive communications that messages be encoded in such a manner (and sent through select media) that certain audiences will decode and retain the initial meanings (Berlo, 1965). The final question may be, "Will the message interest the reader?"

Audience needs and response have varying influences on documentary and journalistic photography. In both forms, photographs are intended to influence an audience. However, in documentary photography, overt behavior (such as social change) may be the intended response, as a point of view is put across. In journalistic photography, the intended response is more likely to be continued readership of the publication.

Arthur Siegel (Lyons, 1966, p. 88) holds that documentary photography entails "the endeavor to influence human behavior by giving a deeper understanding of the social process."

Truth and accuracy are essential in both documentary and journalistic photography. However, the documentary technique may entail greater endeavor, for there is greater depth of meaning sought and greater interpretation made. Siegel said that the major documentary works of the last fifty years (1900-50) mostly place "emphasis on a particular segment of the social process," ranging from "a study done in terms of man's

daily routine to the complex picture of a nation gripped by economic depression." There are "intense studies of wars and racial conflicts, problems of agriculture and industry, transportation and communication . . . subtle works dealing with the symbols of past and present cultures and with the spiritual relationships existing between men" (Lyons, 1966, p. 88).

There is a different factor of time in documentary photography than in photojournalism. The documentary photograph is essentially timeless; its meaning may actually increase with time as man brings greater experience to the photograph. Relatively few verbal cues are needed to express its meaning. There may be no or little news value in a documentary photograph. However, the journalistic photograph may gain in documentary value, as is evident with the war reportage of Robert Capa, the photo essays of Eugene Smith, Margaret Bourke-White, and many other photographers. Arthur Rothstein (Schuneman, 1972, p. 191) commented that, "All photojournalists are documentary photographers, but not all documentary photographers are photojournalists." The news photograph becomes a documentary photograph as it gains uniqueness of expression through the passage of time.

The documentary style thus allows the photographer to bring his point of view to his work. It is a medium through which he may probe social situations and examine events and ways of life. The documentary style demands depth of insight

as the photographer attempts to expose and interpret what he observes.

The use of the documentary style of photography in this thesis is discussed in Chapter V, Methodology.

IV. DISCUSSION OF THEORY--GERONTOLOGY

A. Roles in Society

In discussing the behavioral relationship of the aged to society, sociologist Gordon Streib (Streib and Thompson, 1960, p. 447) says, "the influence of social norms pervades almost all human conduct, and necessarily so, for the presence of social norms is essential for orderly human social intercourse."

Streib holds that norms create a basis for interaction among members of groups in society. Individuals learn and follow social norms to become interacting members of various social groups. Social norms "are generally considered to be prescriptions for or prohibitions against attitudes, beliefs or behavior" (Streib and Thompson, 1960, p. 447). Norms are what a person should believe and how he should act. By following social norms, persons act in similar ways, and become similar. According to the theory of homophily (Lazarsfeld and Merton, 1954, p. 54), communication is most successful when interacting individuals are similar.

This is important because patterns of communication hold groups together. Streib and Thompson (1960, p. 447) hold that it is a basic tenet of social psychology that the effects of the institutional order of mass society and of people's psychological processes are greatly mediated by interpersonal behavior. (It was explained in Chapter II how the phrases

"patterns of communication" and "interpersonal behavior" are used interchangeably).

There is a tendency for norms to cluster together into institutions. As norms become institutionalized, they create stability, orderly growth and maintenance in society (Streib and Thompson, 1960, p. 456).

Biddle and Thomas (1966) say that the way individuals adhere to norms in society is by learning and performing roles. By playing certain roles, persons gain acceptance of themselves and others and function as members of social groups.

A person's self-concept depends greatly on his roles, which include sex, age, occupation, family and other areas where he seeks identity.

People do not necessarily choose roles. They learn and act out roles that may be expected of them in certain groups. This is necessary for acceptance in groups.

Loether (1967) contends that a person's role of old age is mostly involuntary. The involuntary nature of this role is unchallenged because an old person's appearance offers overt evidence that he is part of this role complex. That is, an old person must play the role of an old person.

In traditional societies, increasing age means increasing prestige. Old societies are based on extended families, of which the grandparents were considered to be the leaders. This has changed in America. Contemporary society is youth oriented, conferring status on the young, the strong, the healthy

(Loether, 1967, pp. 5-7).

Today in the United States, the nuclear family, consisting of two generations, has replaced the extended family. This change has eradicated the role of grandfather as patriarch of the family, commanding respect and obedience from other family members (Loether, 1967, p. 7).

Sociologists (Cottrell, 1960; Loether, 1967) attribute the dominance of a technological society to the fact that the modern market measures people as a commodity. There is no place in it for the unemployable, aged, widowed, disabled or mentally incompetent. The market has helped destroy the need and usefulness of the family as an agency to care for those whose services have no price measured value.

Modern society, a "high-energy" technological society, has emerged through the weakening of those elements of the social structure upon which the aged relied to secure their needs. The traditional family was economically and socially self-sufficient. Skills needed in modern society are produced outside the family. In a technological, production oriented society it is inevitable that the children of the families would leave, and assume roles in other, production oriented groups (Cottrell, 1960, pp. 109-16).

B. Age Stratification and Isolation

According to Cottrell (1960, p. 110), wherein lifespans have grown longer, the duration of "norms" in society has

shortened in this faster-paced, quickly changing technological society. Old people are living with institutional norms developed in a far distant past. Their political awareness is based on historical events. Many of them have roots in small town, rural America. They are now very much out of the mainstream of (economic) society.

Williams (1960, pp. 288-9) holds that with the lowering of status in the social hierarchy, old persons (particularly men) become less authoritative, more submissive and generally less dominant in their later years. There are changes in ego qualities. Personalities become more constricted as individuals become more detached from their mastery of affairs.

Men structure their lives around jobs. Women structure their lives around families. Retirement and the independence of their children present major adjustments for old people to make (Loether, 1967, pp. 10-11). A grandfather and grandmother may be given such elementary roles as baby sitters and playmates to their grandchildren.

Loether (1967, pp. 10-11) contends that the family role changes of old age--separation from the family, lack of responsibility to the family--mean that old people with families have new freedom. In old age, married persons must adjust to spending time together again. Their freedom may mean more time to pursue leisure activities, but it also brings with it more time to be filled with activities yet to be learned.

Marriage is a central point in the lives of old persons who have a living spouse. It often draws old people closer together in their later years (Atchley, 1972, p. 294). By age seventy, a majority of older women are widows; by age eighty-five, a majority of men are widowers. Death of the spouse often causes a preoccupation with grief, a tendency toward worry and unhappiness, and a greater fear of death than when people were married. Mortality and suicide rates increase. However, a common pattern in widowhood is to seek other persons with the same social situation for companionship (Atchley, 1972, p. 298).

Old age may mean isolation. National surveys have shown that old people are alone over half the time. Sociologists cite this as a major problem. Isolation has side effects of greater vulnerability to illness, malnutrition and loneliness, and increased social distance between generations (Atchley, 1972, p. 195). Loneliness that comes with the rejection from society may be the greatest problem of aging (Hochschild, 1973, p. 18). Loneliness can make life empty. It makes people more susceptible to unhappiness and mental illness.

There are several factors bearing on the isolation of the aged: There is a lack of work in a work oriented society (ironically the work ethic is strongest among the oldest) (Hochschild, 1973, pp. 19-21). The old therefore become socially detached from a work oriented society, and consequently lack traditional resources for meeting people and

making friends.

According to Hochschild (1973, p. 21) the old are noticeably poor and uneducated in an affluent and educated society.

Kinship ties are weakened. It has been mentioned how this is a result of the dissipation of the extended family, wherein younger members find sustenance outside the family unit.

Hochschild (1973, p. 22) contends that in an age stratified society, the aged create a large subculture, but one that is conferred to a low status.

In addition, the functions of the family for the old are transferred to specialized agencies, such as nursing homes, senior citizens centers, and sometimes quasi-families, such as old age communities (Hochschild, 1973, pp. 24-25).

As mentioned previously, the writings of Gordon Streib (1972, pp. 5-19) discuss four major resources old persons need to maintain vitality: physical health, economic resources, social relations and emotional health. These resources are linked with specific needs as nutrition, housing, transportation, clothing, and leisure time activities (e.g., economic resources enable good nutrition which leads to good health). Streib contends that the extent to which old persons can overcome problems in these areas will correlate to their ability to cope with crises that arise.

An area where there are great needs is that of social contacts. Healthy social contacts mitigate isolation and

relieve the sense of rejection in society. Barron (1961) contends that most problems of the aged are not physical, and can be linked to old persons' abilities to maintain social contacts. (In the example of nutrition, if old persons are without social contact, their isolation and consequent loneliness may lead them to ignore their nutrition needs, and lead to failing health. Their physical and emotional health resources would then be failing). Without social contacts, there may be no impetus to achieve any other resources necessary for vitality in old age.

C. Socialization Trends

Hochschild (1973, pp. 26-28) contends that certain trends in friendship have grown out of the factors of isolation of the aged. Friendships are often limited among old people to other people with leisure--people the same age. As the old become isolated from the mainstream of society, new friendships become necessary.

Loether (1967, p. 6) says that individuals assume the role of old age involuntarily. Their behavioral expectations are uncertain. They are newly involved in a role complex they know little about, and are part of a subculture to which they may have previously conferred low status.

Hochschild (1973, p. 64) says that as a community becomes more age stratified, friendship bonds arise among persons of

the same stratum. That is, persons in age groups with common interests unite. In old age communities, relationships are defined by friendship bonds. They involve reciprocity and similarity among people. Loether (1967, p. 14) affirms that in old age, as role complexes change, people prefer to associate with others like themselves. Interpersonal relations develop among people with common attitudes and interests. Friendships develop among people playing similar roles. The principle of homophily is satisfied.

Powers and Golinaux (1972) hold that old persons have the best outlook when they can compare themselves to the situation of other old persons favorably.

In all communities there is a need for persons with certain skills. In a community of old persons, certain services are essential: medical, civic, housing, and transportation. It may be helpful to remember that the problems of the aged are the intensification of the problems of all age groups.

The family structure is replaced by bureaucratic service agencies, the success of which affects the happiness of old people (Hochschild, 1973, p. 26). However, the old people themselves are usually overlooked to fill needed community skills and provide services. The need to maintain social contacts is thwarted.

Isolation decreases in communities of old persons (as compared to age integrated communities), according to Hochschild (1973, p. 78). A communal living situation allows

old persons some measure of dignity. Whereas they may not feel equal in a youth-oriented society, in a community of their peers they are equal and can face their problems together.

Hochschild (1973, pp. 70-72) holds that among themselves, the old have no need to defend their values. Their ways are not old fashioned. Community activities and mingling among the aged cannot be measured qualitatively. Old persons may enjoy a life with very few activities if what they are doing they are doing with friends. Their major need in activities may be for confirmation.

Bultena and Wood (1969) have shown that persons in age segregated communities have more friends and higher morale than in age integrated communities. Interviews were conducted with 521 retired males who moved from the midwest to Arizona. Modified Life Satisfaction Scales were applied to random samples of 322 retired men in age segregated (retirement) communities and 199 retired men in age integrated (regular) communities in Arizona. In the age segregated community 58% of the men said they had perceived no decline in close friends, compared to 34% in the age integrated community. In the age segregated community, 11% of the men said they felt dissatisfaction with the number of friends they had made in the new community, compared to 25% in the age integrated community.

According to the study, greater homogeneity in age, socio-economic status and value orientations toward the role of

retirement in planned retirement communities rather than regular communities was seen as facilitating social interaction and the formation of new friendship ties. Finding new friends to replace those through death, illness or as a result of relocation expedited an environment in which neighbor evidence common characteristics and values. "Planned retirement communities . . . serve as a supportive reference group" for retired persons (Bultena and Wood, 1969, p. 215).

Such patterns demonstrate how the aged may build order out of the ambiguity as they adapt their social system--their community--to their old age roles.

This is demonstrated in Derby, Iowa. In Derby, there are many friendship bonds among older persons; and relatively few sibling or parent-child bonds. The major services in the town (the Post Office, restaurant, general store) are run by and for old persons (or persons close to old age). These services are the institutions which replace the extended family.

In Derby, the community is defined greatly by reciprocal relationships among the many old persons. The aged have assumed similar roles which is demonstrated by how smoothly interactions occur. How interactions--patterns of communication--occur and are observed visually is explained in the next section.

D. Nonverbal Communication

As mentioned in Chapter II, communication is a vehicle for manifesting behavioral relationships. It contains content and relationship aspects, which convey information and impose behavior (define relationships). These are known as the "report" and "command" aspects of communication (Watzlawick et al., 1967). The report aspect of a message conveys information; it is the content of human communication. The command qualifies the message--defines how it is to be taken; it deals with the relationships between communicants. While the report conveys the data of communication, the command aspect of communication is a metacommunication, or communication about the communication.

According to Watzlawick et al. (1967), the report, or data of communication, may be the information conveyed with symbols--words, or elements of photographic compositions. The command or relationship aspect of communication (metacommunication) is nonverbal communication. It provides the context in which communication takes place. This is greatly linked with the problem of awareness of self and others. Symbols communicated between persons--words--carry greater meaning when a context is provided, such as a tone of voice or certain gestures.

Watzlawick et al. (1967, pp. 60-66) bring the content and relationship aspects of communication to another level: digital and analogic communication. Digital communication is primarily

the content aspect of communication. Analogic communication is primarily the relationship aspect of communication. It is mostly nonverbal, including posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection, and the cadence, sequence and rhythm of words. Analogic communication in animals includes vocalizations, intentions and mood signs, which define the nature of relationships.

Watzlawick contends that digital communication exists only in humans. It entails a higher form of abstracting concepts than does analogic communication. Man is the only organism known to use both analogic and digital modes of communication, and he uses them in a complementary relationship. These two orders of communication exist side by side in individuals, who translate from one to the other. To discuss relationships, for example, requires translation from analogic to digital communication. But only analogic communication can provide the context for digital communication. Whenever relationship is the central factor in communication, digital language may be almost meaningless.

This discussion of communication can be applied to the situation of the aged. The context of interactions among old persons is manifest through analogic communication. The behavior of the aged cannot be ignored, but it can only be understood in its context. The old must be considered as a sub-group of a social system--a social group with little status and several problems. The interactions of the old make sense

when regarded as the interactions of members of a particular group which has its own necessary (behavioral) patterns of communication.

In a community of the aged, old persons get many nonverbal cues to create a context for communication. They recognize other old persons as such (members of the same sub-group performing similar roles). Nonverbal cues include the physical deterioration of the body in old age, similar dress habits, and familiar gestures.

In terms of communication, old persons have created communities so they may have groups in which to communicate. Among themselves, they can communicate while maintaining roles they are comfortable in. Friendship bonds are created among old people who have much in common. They share similar status in society, as members of a social group which has been relegated to a lower status as its activities fall outside the mainstream of society. Age segregated (including communal) living situations enable old people to maintain dignity. Whereas they may feel unequal in a youth-oriented society, they are among peers in an age segregated society.

Persons interrelate greatly to satisfy their need for confirmation. Confirmation--or recognition--is a strong social purpose among the aged (as well as others). William James (Watzlawick, 1967, pp. 85-86) said the cruelest punishment for a person is to go unnoticed in society (disconfirmation or imperviousness).

According to Berlo (1965, p. 125), the concept of self develops through communication. As the old assume their new roles, old expectations are violated, and self-concepts deteriorate. Among themselves, with no need to defend values, communication can more easily be successful. Behavioral expectations are similar, roles are reinforced and homophily is satisfied, thus enabling a community to have successful interaction among its members.

Much of this communication is analogic. Old persons in a community of peers communicate visually when they see others they believe to have like value systems. They are visually perceiving (analogically receiving) messages that they are among people who will confirm their roles. With this basis, digital communication occurs more easily. People who perceive themselves as similar are more likely to discuss their relationships.

These factors are important in photographing old people in a community such as Derby. In a verbal or statistical analysis of their living situation, there may be barriers to successful communication. The context provided for communication is not conducive to old persons discussing relationships among themselves. However, photographing old persons may reveal qualitative factors of their lives and show interrelationships among persons more easily. The camera records symbols that define relationships among persons (Arnheim, 1965).

Because the symbols are visual--elements of compositions--they reveal more than words and statistics might about the quality of life in the old age community.

V. METHODOLOGY

To create a documentary essay of photographs on the aged in a small Iowa town, certain factors had to be considered and investigated. The author had to do sufficient research in the areas of gerontology, visual communication and documentary photography, and had to find and investigate the town and its people to make sure they presented a workable model for the photographic exploration.

The research was academic; the intent was to survey existing data and theories in each area, so that the author would have a theoretical background which provided him with the basis to analyze his observations about the aged and small town living. Through the research, the author learned how documentary photography could be used to investigate a social situation and reveal qualitative aspects of behavior patterns that could not be measured sociometrically.

Finding and investigating the town was more subjective. Derby was picked for several reasons. Its small size and high percentage of old persons made it a relatively easy case to work with. An analysis of the population characteristics (Julius, 1970) revealed that of the 161 persons living in Derby, 41 (25.5 percent) were over 65, 32 (19.9 percent) were between 45-64 (23 of these persons--14.3 percent of the town's population were between 55-64), 28 (17.4 percent) were between 25-44, and the remaining 60 persons (37.2 percent) were under 25. With

such a high percentage of old persons (25.5 percent over 65; almost 40 percent over 55), it was easy to determine there was a community of old persons in the town. Another reason for using Derby for the study was that its location made it accessible from Ames.

The author informally spent several days with the townspeople, mingling, visiting and learning their lifestyles. Once he became familiar and friendly with them, he photographed them freely, using 35 mm cameras, interchangeable lenses (no flash was used) and on rare occasions a tripod. The author shot about 40 rolls of film (about 1400 exposures) and printed about 150 pictures. The final selection was made from those 150 prints, and slide copies were made for thesis presentation.

Information about the people and their lifestyles was gathered mainly through the photographs and the process of photographing. Although written data are provided to help set the context of the photographs, the author intends that the photographs be considered individually to provide a document of a social situation--aging in a small midwestern town--that will endure the passage of time.

The basic plan included both photographing and interviewing people in Derby. The author included a cassette recorder on his first trip to Derby. However, the cassette recorder was disregarded after two days, because it became too cumbersome a mechanical device to operate along with the photographic

equipment.

Despite the time spent in Derby, friendships the author made were relatively superficial. The author believes that people in Derby revealed more through their nonverbal behavior about the quality of their lives than they would have through interviews. Further, he contends that, the unobtrusive camera is less imposing and therefore less inhibiting than the tape recorder or pen and pencil (in the interview situation). For these reasons, the author holds that documentary photographs reveal more about the quality of life and happiness of people than does the journalistic combination of words and photographs.

Working in the documentary tradition, the author brought his philosophy to the social situation--that the aged find happiness in an age segregated community when they are able to control the social situation themselves. The author intends to depict the isolation of old individuals, the decay and potential desolation of the town, and the happiness that occurs through the dynamics of social contact--based on satisfying individual needs for social confirmation.

VI. A PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPLORATION OF THE
AGED IN A SMALL IOWA TOWN

Among the problems of the aged, isolation and a lack of importance may be the greatest. Sociologists have indicated that most problems of aging do not concern health and physical needs, but are rather problems in human relations and are controllable. Without contact with other persons, and without much importance to others in the world, old persons become lonely and unhappy, and tend to disregard many of their other needs.

Many old persons are overcoming these problems, though, by living in small towns where there are other old persons with similar interests and needs. In the town of Derby, Iowa, old persons not only comprise a core of the community, they actually maintain the business district of the town and provide the vitality that keeps the town thriving as a community.

Derby is a town of about 161 persons in Lucas County in southern Iowa. It is a rural town in an area that has experienced a shift in agriculture from all purpose farms to cow and calf operations. This specialized agriculture requires fewer farmers, and has caused an out-migration resulting in a declining number of persons in farming. Southern Iowa also had an economic base in coal mining, but the resource has been mostly used up, leaving many communities abandoned or much less populated than before. In addition, the area is often plagued

by drought, and consequently it suffers from poverty, as the agriculture is not productive enough to bring prosperity to it.

Derby consists mostly of a few small businesses on a physically decaying main street. On one side there is a restaurant, post office, general store, antique shop, game parlor with dilapidated pool tables, and service station. There are also abandoned stores and a closed opera house. On the other side there is a park. Nearby, there is a feed company, the largest business in Derby; a tavern; a beauty shop; some closed churches and an abandoned schoolhouse. The rest of Derby consists of residences--mostly old houses and farms.

Except for a volunteer fire department, there are no special buildings for civic facilities, such as police, or the mayor, who operate from their homes. Drinking water comes from the town pump on Main Street. While there is running water for washing, people from the restaurant and nearby businesses and homes hand pump and carry their drinking supply in buckets. The rest of Derby consists of residences, mostly old houses and farms. There is no hospital or doctor in Derby. The nearest health facilities are about ten miles away in Chariton. The nearest shopping district is about eight miles away in Humeston. There is a cemetery outside of town.

More than one-fourth of the people in Derby are over 65 years old, about two and one-half times the national average,

which is indicative of a trend for retired farmers to move into small towns. This trend is a result of two factors: harsh winters and the weakening of the extended family. With harsh winters, old persons can tend to their needs better in towns. With the attraction of jobs and activities elsewhere for younger people, families are separated, and the aged are often without kinship ties in the area in which they live. By moving to small towns, old people find others like themselves, develop friendships, and satisfy their needs for social contacts.

In Derby, there are many friendship bonds among older persons, and relatively few parent-child bonds. The community is defined by these friendships among the old persons, and their happiness is affirmed by sociologists who say that old people find greater happiness in communities of their peers. This contrasts with age integrated (or mixed) communities, where old people form a sub-group with little value or use to the functioning of the community, and are relegated to a lower status and greatly ignored. Under such conditions, isolation and loneliness are common conditions leading to unhappiness in old age.

Most of the old people in Derby live on social security, a meager sustenance wage for those dependent on it. From this, they must take care of their essential needs: food, clothing, shelter, transportation, medical care and socializing. However, old persons find that they can take care of their needs

more easily than they could in another type community. Because Derby is a small, rural town, the basic cost of living is inexpensive. Housing, food and civic services are cheaper than elsewhere.

In many other communities, there are agencies or institutions which take care of the needs of the aged. However, they often serve to isolate old persons from society, so that even when physical needs are taken care of, loneliness can make the lives of old persons unhappy.

In Derby, old persons operate those institutions which serve other old persons: the businesses and public service facilities. The Derby restaurant is run by and for old persons; it serves family style meals for less money than it would cost to eat at home. The restaurant is furnished with old, home-style furniture, much of which is antique, and decorated with many artifacts of old homes, such as old mirrors, wall hangings, vases, lamps and kitchen implements. The kitchen is old fashioned, with old refrigerators, storage cabinets, work tables and kitchen tools. The dishes are washed by old people in large, old sinks by hand, conjuring memories of old home lives. There is a smorgasbord several times a week, and patrons dine and engage avidly in conversation. The smorgasbord is good enough to draw people from other communities, and often there are busloads of people from old age homes in other counties who come to Derby to dine as well as socialize.

The post office is a busy place in town, as people meet there every morning to receive and discuss their mail. The postmaster is a retired farmer who followed his father in the position in 1949.

Civic officials are mostly retired farmers. The antique shop, the tavern, the general store and the service station are all operations of either old persons or extended families.

The businesses serve mainly as places for socialization. They enable old persons to exist in an age segregated community --that is, a community of old persons. Living in such a community enable them to interact freely with one another, for they are among people with similar value and interests. This is the major attraction of a town like Derby.

The social life in Derby is simple. It consists mostly of standing on Main Street or sitting in the restaurant or general store talking with friends. Chatting and doing nothing special with persons of like interests make life fuller and more interesting than it would be if individuals were by themselves. On Thursday nights once a month, the women's Gossip Club meets at the Derby restaurant to discuss the events of the past weeks. The third of every month is a big event as social security checks arrive at the post office, which is a congregating place even on normal days.

Because they are important people in Derby, old persons have little trouble finding transportation to neighboring towns

to obtain medical services or to shop. Many old persons frequently visit Humeston, a nearby town with a shopping district. It provides an atmosphere similar to Derby, with many old persons operating and patronizing the businesses. On Saturday evenings in the summer, many old persons go to auctions in nearby Lucas. The contentment and ease of old people in Derby is evident through nonverbal communication. It can be seen in their faces, their interactions, and their habits. The old people of Derby retain the dress and socializing customs of their younger years. The old values exist, through which old people confirm one another's importance. There is some isolation among people in Derby; the potential for isolation exists in almost any community and some may desire it. However, when isolation in Derby exists, it may be by the choice of the individual, and based on a knowledge that such choice is his.

The people of Derby have found and created a community that has enabled them to use their older years to make new friendships and enjoy the simple pleasures of life. The most important factor in their happiness is that among each other, the old people of Derby maintain their dignity, and avoid the loneliness of isolation and resultant depression that plagues many old persons in more cosmopolitan, age-integrated communities.

Captions for Photographs

1. Main Street; Derby, Iowa
2. The post office, Main Street
3. The general store and post office in Derby
4. The general store
5. Old woman in Derby
6. Gutted store on Main Street
7. Old man, child and dog
8. Old man on Main Street
9. Old men mingling outside the restaurant
10. Old men in Derby
11. Outside the general store
12. Old farm on outskirts of town
13. Old farmer and his dog
14. Shorty and his dog
15. Old woman on porch swing
16. Old woman with flower
17. The post office
18. Old woman at post office picking up her social security check
19. Outside the post office
20. Outside the restaurant
21. Outside the restaurant
22. The Derby restaurant
23. The Derby restaurant

24. The Derby restaurant
25. The Derby restaurant
26. The Derby restaurant
27. The Derby restaurant
28. The Derby restaurant
29. The town pump
30. Drinking water
31. Supplying water for the restaurant
32. The women's gossip club at the Derby restaurant
33. Member of the gossip club
34. The antique shop and its proprietor, Main Street
35. Shopping in nearby Humeston
36. Shopping in nearby Humeston
37. The Saturday night auction in Lucas
38. The Saturday night auction in Lucas
39. The Saturday night auction in Lucas
40. The Saturday night auction in Lucas
41. Growing old in Derby
42. An invitation to return

All photographs are by the author, and were taken between May and August, 1975. Slide copies of the photographs were made for thesis presentation.

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