

HOPE AS EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES  
OF OLDER ADULTS

By

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HOPE AS EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES  
OF OLDER ADULTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The number of persons over 65 is increasing. Almost 1.9 million persons celebrated their 65th birthday in 1998. In the same year, about 1.75 million persons died, resulting in a net increase of 145,000 (396 per day) additional persons over 65 years of age (Administration on Aging, n.d.).

While increased longevity is a result of public health and other successes, the incidence of chronic health conditions has tended to rise in later years of life. Recent statistics indicated that 34.9 percent of individuals over the age of 80 years reported that they needed some assistance due to functional declines. Much lower rates of assistance needs were reported at lower ages (Administration on Aging, n.d.). Many older adults over 65 years of age are living in independent settings and are capable of participating in the life of the community. Consequently, even if assistance is needed, most older adults continue to live in the community and participate in the life of that community.

A growing concern in the health care professions is the reported social isolation, depression, and hopelessness experienced by the elderly. Incidence rates of symptoms of depression have been reported at 8-20 percent of older adults in the community and up to 37 percent of those who receive primary care ( Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Institutes of Health, 1999).



Suicide rates for persons 65 and older are higher than for any other age group—nearly twice the national average. Even more alarming, the suicide rate for persons 85 and over is the highest of all. Statistics provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate the following information about late life suicide rates. The suicide rate for individuals ages 85 years old and older is about 21 suicides per 100,000, a rate about twice, the national rate. “The high suicide rate among older people is largely accounted for by white men, whose suicide rate at age 85 and above is about 65 per 100,000” (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Institutes of Health, 1999, p. 47).

Statistics on the mental and physical health of older adults are readily available. Older adult issues are a growing industry. Geriatric professionals are ready and anxious to tell older adults how to improve every area of their lives. At the same time, both statistical and anecdotal information regarding the incidence of depression, isolation and hopelessness in this age group are significant. Professional advice suggests that a partial solution to overcoming loneliness and isolation may be “by recommending meaningful engagement with the world through work, volunteering, social contacts, and fitness programs” (Butler, 1997, p. 12).

What provides a sense of motivation during later stages of life? If persons are going to participate in the social swim of work, volunteerism, and fitness programs or explore their own inner resources, they must have the energy and motivation to do so.

Particular older persons have developed an outlook, a “strength despite adversity, an elusive attitude that helps persons through difficult situations” that helps them age

successfully, to better cope, and to enjoy themselves despite the changes and demands that accompany the aging experience (Herth, Popovich, & Farran, 1995, p. 5).

Research from nursing indicated that the presence of hope was health enhancing. The energizing power of hope focused on future outcomes that were important to the individual has also been documented (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Fowler, 1997). Other studies have documented that hope is essential for the energy to engage in health promotion activities (Benzein, Saveman & Norberg, 2000; Fowler, 1997). Hope has been cited as essential to effective coping and adaptation (Benzein, et al., 2000; Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Herth, 1989, 1993, 1995; Stephenson, 1991). Persons were “energized by their feelings and attitudes related to hope” (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, p. 385). Hope seemed to energize, empower and strengthen (Vaillot, 1970). However, little research described how hope was created, maintained or regained after a loss.

### Problem Statement

Earlier studies have explored hope in non-elderly or non-healthy populations with the vast majority of these studies investigating hope in adults experiencing a specific health related diagnosis or condition such as Parkinson’s disease, cancer, or a terminal illness (Dufault & Marchinno, 1985; Fowler, 1997; Owens, 1989). The presence of hope may be apparent. However, identifying the basis of that hope or determining how that hope can be maintained or regained after a challenge to mental or physical health is an area with little reported investigation. While studies exist that have investigated hope

in young and ill populations, there are limited studies investigating hope in independent, healthy, community dwelling persons over 65 years of age.

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the construct of hope as experienced in the lives of older adults living in the community.

### Research Questions

1. What were the sources of hope defined by individual older adults?
2. How did older adults talk about hope in relation to *visual information*?
3. How did older adults talk about hope?

For the purposes of this study, *visual information* was defined as pictures of subjects or symbols identified by the participant that added a hopeful dimension to life. These may be pictures they have taken with a camera or located from other sources.

### Definitions

The following terms and their definitions are provided to facilitate understanding of this study:

Community Dwelling – Individuals were defined as community dwelling if they lived in the community in a home or apartment as opposed to a residential care facility, assisted living center, or long term care facility.

Elderly/Older Adults – This study included persons 65 years of age or older. This is based on the common usage of this age as an “older adult” definition in both research and lay language.

Gerotranscendence – Gerotranscendence implies the construction of a reality in which the “individual experiences a new feeling of cosmic communion with the spirit of the universe, a redefinition of time, space, life, and death, and a redefinition of the self” (Tornstam, 2000, p 11).

Healthy – Healthy refers to individuals who define themselves as functionally independent in terms of community participation and their activities of daily living

Home Centered (as opposed to homebound) – Home centered individuals were defined as persons who rarely left their home because of health issues but are not necessarily receiving formal home health care. “Homebound” has a specific definition for Medicare eligibility and is not considered in this study.

Hope – Hope is defined as “a process of anticipation that involved interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating that was directed toward a future fulfillment that was personally meaningful” (Stephenson, 1991; Gaskins & Forte, 1995, p. 17).

Long Term Care Facility – A long term care facility was defined as assisted living, residential care facility, or nursing home. Definitions vary from state to state. The intent was to identify participants who lived in their own home or apartment.

Phenomonology – Events are considered from their context and ever-changing aspects. Phenomenology maintains that the person experiences the universe at a specific

moment in time that is unique, personal and context specific. Transcendence of suffering, anxiety, and alienation is emphasized (Murray & Zentner, 1993).

### Limitations and Delimitations

The sample was limited to those individuals who were accessible through their church communities. This convenience sample was composed of volunteers who chose to participate after learning about the study in their church community. Participants were recruited from two states and three congregations to provide possible variation in the response. Some of the participants know each other within their own state. The congregations had limited racial, economic, or ethnic diversity within their memberships; therefore the pool of volunteers was limited in that regard. The sample may have had a high percentage of persons who felt positive and hopeful about their life as well as confident about their ability to take pictures with a disposable camera. In addition they were willing to share personal information in an interview format. The only criteria for participation were age and residence. Individuals were over 65 years old or older and lived in the community.

### Scope

The scope was limited to the qualitative descriptions and pictures regarding the individual experiences of 14 participants. The study was also limited to their experiences between the summer of 2001 and early 2002. Review of the literature was limited to articles published by 2001. The intent of the study was to provide material that would

prove useful to nurses, adult educators, gerontologists individuals working with older adults. The findings were related to the experiences of the older adults involved.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

*“Hope” is the Thing with Feathers that perches in the soul,  
And sings the tune without the words and never stops at all.*

(Emily Dickenson as cited in Dufault & Martocchio, 1985. p. 379).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the individual experience of hope in the lives of older adults. Hope has long been associated with well being. It has roots in philosophy and theology as well as the applied fields of nursing, psychology, and social work. In order to provide a framework for the investigation of hope in older community dwelling adults, a review of the importance of this construct was made and previous research with this particular population surveyed. Theoretical support for the construct of hope and its value to the older person was derived from social theory focusing on *gerotranscendence* identified by Lars Tornstam in 1989. Developmental theory concentrating on the work of Erik H. Erikson with expansion of that theory by Joan Erikson also supported the exploration of hope in later life.

Rees and Joslin (1998) examined hope within their current nursing experience. They speculated that current emphasis on the science rather than the art of nursing, the numerous trends in cost containment, and the difficulty with measurable outcomes when considering hope have decreased attention to this subject. “The importance of hope and

the methods of evaluating its contribution to nursing now need to be debated and systematically examined in both qualitative and quantitative research” (Rees & Joslyn, 1998, p. 35).

### Definition of Hope

Selected literature from the fields of psychology, gerontology, and nursing that provide insight into the individual experience of hope in the latter one third of life were reviewed. Menniger (1959) wrote of hope as, “. . . a process; it is an adventure, a going forward, a confident search” (p. 42). Hope has been characterized as the “ability to make expectations fluid and not be overcome by the absoluteness of the present; as a quality of being able to live contextually” (Herth, Popovich, & Farran, 1995, p. 8). Literature from theology, philosophy, psychology and nursing was comprehensively reviewed for contextual usage of the word “hope” (Stephenson, 1991). In this study, hope was viewed as “part of human development, a process, a theory and a source of meaning in life” (p. 1456). Hope was defined as “a process of anticipation that involved the interaction of thinking, acting, feeling, and relating, and was directed toward a future fulfillment that was personally meaningful” (Gaskins & Forte, 1995, p. 18; Stephenson, 1991, p. 1459).

Although, definitions of hope have been brought together in a number of reviews, the Stephenson definition was the preferred definition of researchers Gaskins and Forte (1995) and Rees and Joslin (1998) as it emphasized both a positive future and the desire to be realistic. The Stephenson definition was selected for this study as well noting again the realistic aspect of this definition for the current study with its purpose of examining the individual experience of hope in the lives of older adults.



## Theoretical Support

### Existential Theory

Existential literature provides broad support for the construct of hope with experiential, spiritual, relational and rational attributes. The rational characteristics focus on freedom of choice, responsibility, and consequences of action. Existentialism identifies transcendent themes of hope and meaning, and “suggests that persons find meaning through both provisional and ultimate or spiritual means” (Herth, Popovich, & Farran, 1995, p. 21).

The method is phenomenological which means the context and ever-changing aspects of events are considered. Phenomenology maintains that the person experiences the universe at a specific moment in time that is unique, personal and context specific. Transcendence of suffering, anxiety, and alienation is emphasized (Murray & Zentner, 1993). Phenomenology regards that the unique perspective of each individual is formed by

... one's location in it, one's personal history, and one's voluntary adoption of any of an array of possible points of view. These possible points of view include looking at things scientifically, historically, esthetically, and spiritually. They include human capabilities of perceiving things imaginatively, empathetically, and intuitively. All these ways of looking at things are possible and each gives its own perspective on reality and what is true. (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 1990, p. 194)

### Developmental Theory—Erikson

Erik H. Erikson proposed that hope had early developmental origins. Erikson believed that hope was a trait. In Erikson's developmental model, the individual develops through seven stages. If successfully negotiated, the individual arrives at an eighth stage of ego integrity. When successfully negotiated, ego integrity implies a fundamental acceptance of one's life as it was lived, regardless of how good or bad the experience was.

Joan Erikson (1997) reflected on life stage research investigated jointly with Erik Erikson. When searching for the most accurate words to designate the life cycle virtues she related that wisdom and integrity were identified as the final strengths to come to full maturation in old age.

We had initially considered "hope" because it was mandatory for survival and was needed for all other strengths. But since hope becomes vital from infancy on, it clearly does not demand time for its fruition even though it may endure throughout life. (Erikson, J., 1997, p. 5)

Weaving together the contextual aspect of hope, Erikson pointed out that an individual life cycle cannot be adequately understood apart from the social context in which it comes to fruition. Individual and society are intricately woven and interrelated in continual exchange (Erikson, 1961,1964,1997; Stephenson, 1991).

### Gerotranscendence

Additional support for the construct of hope and its value to the older person derived from a theory called *gerotranscendence* was first identified by Swedish Social

Gerontologist, Lars Tornstam (1989). Tornstam suggested that human aging, the very process of living into old age, encompassed a general potential toward *gerotranscendence*. He described this as a shift in metaperspective from a materialistic and rational vision to a more cosmic and transcendent one, normally followed by an increase in life satisfaction. Tornstam developed the theoretical concept of *gerotranscendence* as three dimensions of age-related change.

The cosmic level: changes in the definition of time and space, increasing sense of connection to earlier generations, new comprehension of life and death including disappearance of the fear of death, acceptance of the mystery dimension in life, rejoicing in a range of events and experiences

The self: discovery and confrontation of hidden aspects of the self, both good and bad, decrease in self-centeredness, development of “body transcendence” (taking care of body, but not being obsessed with it), self-transcendence (Moving from egoism to altruism), rediscovery of the child within, and ego integrity.

Social and individual relationships: Changed meaning and importance of relationships, new understanding of the difference between self and role, emancipated innocence, modern asceticism, understanding the difficulty in separating right from wrong, withholding from judgments and from giving advice. (Tornstam, 2000, p. 13)

The theory of gerotranscendence suggested that the definition of reality develops and changes as one matures and experiences life. It provided possible insight into the difference between a positive inward self-examination and the more negativity viewed disengagement theory of a few decades ago.

Schroots (1996) discussed Cummings and Henry’s disengagement theory as a basis for comparison of that theory to *gerotranscendence*. Disengagement theory proposed that the elderly adult moved toward a natural withdrawal from social roles and activities, with increasing preoccupation with self and a decreasing involvement with others

(Schroots, 1996). However, the disengagement theory provided a one-sided view given the significant number of older people who do not lose interest in life nor withdraw.

Robert J. Havighurst was a main proponent of the opposing *activity theory* which proposed that elderly persons must substitute new roles as they age in order to maintain a positive sense of self. The central organizing concept of age-related developmental tasks has been named activity theory (Schroots, 1996).

While some indicators of *gerotranscendence* might be misinterpreted as signs of depression, isolation or negative disengagement in other aging theories, both qualitative and quantitative studies by Tornstam (1994, 1997) have shown the following positive characteristics of people with a high degree of *gerotranscendence*. These individuals expressed a

higher degree of self-controlled social activity than individuals with a low degree of *gerotranscendence*, a higher degree of life satisfaction, and show more satisfaction with their social activities . . . but were less dependent on social activities for well being. (Tornstam, 2000, p. 12)

Additionally, they have more active and complex coping patterns. Tornstam's work indicated that the definition of reality develops and changes due to experiences in life and maturation. The actions of the older individual may be a positive development toward maturation and wisdom rather than a possibly more negative interpretation possibly implied by a younger caregiver, health care professional or relative. Tornstam (2000) also suggested that professionals might consider that some older "individuals might find great comfort in having the possible way to *gerotranscendence* explained and described as a perfectly normal way to develop in old age" (p. 13).

Tornstam, Joan Erikson and Gerotranscendence

Discussions of transcendence are rarely a part of casual conversation but frequently look to philosophy and theology for guidance. However, references to transcendence are found in both the theory and practice literature of those who work with older persons. Transcendence expresses the hopes and expectation of all true believers and perhaps non-believers as well. The very old may find physical withdrawal to be a safe place of privacy and solitude. A withdrawal of choice documented in spiritual transitions around the world may not imply a lack of vital involvement but rather an involvement despite disengagement – as Erik Erikson wrote, a “deeply involved, disinvolvement” (Erikson, 1997). This paradoxical state does seem to exhibit a transcendent quality.

Basic trust is the confirmation of hope, our consistent buttress against all the trials and so-called tribulations of life in this world. From the beginning we are blessed with basic trust. Without it life is impossible, and with it we have endured. As an enduring strength it has accompanied and bolstered us with hope. Whatever the specific sources of our basic trust may be or have been, and no matter how severely hope has been challenged, it has never abandoned us completely. Life without it is simply unthinkable. If you still are filled with the intensity of being and hope for what may be further grace and enlightenment, then you have reason for living. I am persuaded that if elders can come to terms with the dystonic elements in their life experience in the ninth stage, they may successfully make headway on the path leading to *gerotranscendence*. (Erikson, J., 1997, p. 113-114)

This type of “withdrawal” in which one deliberately retreats from the usual engagements of daily activity, is consciously chosen withdrawal. Again, such a stance does not necessarily imply a lack of vital involvement; there may be continued involvement despite disengagement. (Erikson, J., 1997, p. 125)

Erik Erikson's integrity refers primarily to integration in a life that has passed from within the same paradigm (Schroots, 1996). According to Tornstam, an important difference between Erikson's eighth stage and gerotranscendence is that "gerotranscendence implies more of looking forward and outward, with a new view of the self and the world" (Tornstam, 2000, p. 11).

Summarizing the material on psychosocial development in very late life through the writings of both Joan Erikson and Lars Tornstam, the picture of a very active life develops. Although this activity may not be apparent to others the older adult may be active and involved in their own developmental journey.

#### Nursing Literature

Both Erikson and Tornstam provided theoretical perspectives for the continued investigation of hope from both a research and practice base. Hope in its mature form becomes a sense of certainty about the coherent nature of life and the acceptance of life as worthwhile (Herth, Popovich, & Farran, 1995). It involves a sense of consolidation and accommodation over time. With this in mind recent literature was reviewed as well as selected examples of classic literature on this subject.

The studies of hope published in the nursing literature since the 1980s have focused on understanding hope from the perspective of specific clinical populations. Examples of these populations have included terminally ill adults, adults with cancer, older adults within community and institutional settings (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985; Farran et al., 1990; Herth, 1990). These studies suggested that particular populations

exhibited a global, non-time-oriented sense of hope, a hope that focused on a sense of “being available” and as opposed to “doing” (Herth et al., 1995).

The following quantitative studies examined hope in a community dwelling population. Farran and McCann (1989) suggested that hope in older adults was maintained through multiple pathways. Therefore, interventions needed to be holistic in nature. In this study, a questionnaire format design was administered to 126 adults over 60 years of age living in federally subsidized senior housing centers. The purpose of this quantitative study was to explore dimensions of hope in a community-based older population related to known variables. Physical health was found to be a predictor of mental health and “a predictor of hope through mental health” (Farran & McCann, 1989, p. 275). Physical health was predicted by interpersonal control, activities of daily living, and stressful life events. Interventions should be “directed toward these variables in order to enhance physical health, mental health and, subsequently, hope” (Farran & McCann, 1989, p. 275).

Hope in community dwelling older persons was quantitatively explored (Farran, Salloway & Clark, 1990) in relation to stressful life events, social support, religiosity, personal control, hope and health. Standardized instruments, The Hopefulness Scale and the Stoner Hope Scale, were administered to older adults ranging in age from 60 to 89 years of age. The issues examined were as follows: hope in spite of adversity, future orientation of hope, hope versus happiness, interpersonal sources of hope, hope and goal attainment, and control. This study identified issues potentially different for older adults as opposed to younger adults and proved helpful in identifying those differences.

Goal attainment represented a sense of “being” available and engaging in relationships, as opposed to “doing” for oneself and others” (Farrah et al., 1990, p. 53). A positive way of viewing the issue of control was the finding that uncontrollable events often associated with aging were reframed with words such as “things are in control.” Participants indicated that at an attitude at an earlier stage of life might have been phrased as “I am in control” (Farrah et al., 1990, p. 53).

### Qualitative Studies

Although there are fewer qualitative than quantitative studies, qualitative studies have contributed depth and breadth to the understanding of hope in these clinical populations. The following three differences were noted between the quantitative and qualitative studies (Herth et al., 1995). While the quantitative studies focused primarily on psychiatric populations, the qualitative studies spanned all age groups and focused on individuals with lasting disabilities or life-threatening illnesses. Another difference was that the quantitative studies had been conducted from a variety of disciplines while the qualitative studies had been conducted by nurses. Third, quantitative studies have examined hope primarily with the use of standardized instruments. In contrast qualitative studies have attempted to define and explain hope and its meaning for patients with different health and illness experiences (Herth et al., 1995). The following qualitative studies provided a background for the current examination of the experience of hope in individual older adults.

Dufault and Martocchio (1985) presented a theoretical model for understanding the complex nature of hope based upon findings of a two-year observational study



involving elderly persons with cancer. Hope was found to be multidimensional, process oriented, and dynamic with implications for action (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985).

Spheres of both generalized and particularized hope were identified. Generalized hope was defined as the presence of a sense of the future. "Generalized hope protects against despair when a person is deprived of particular hopes, and preserves or restores the meaningfulness of life" (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, p. 380). Particularized hope was concerned with a particularly valued outcome or state of being characterized by the expectations that:

What exists at present can be improved. What a person does not have at this time can be attained or received. The desired circumstances surrounding an event will occur. What is valued in the present can be part of the hoping person's future. (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, p. 381)

The six dimensions of hope identified by Dufault and Martocchio (1985) included the following: affective, cognitive, behavioral, affiliative, temporal, and contextual. This study found that persons maintained their hope until they perceived that they no longer were able to ground their hopes in reality. At that time hopes may be abandoned, revised, or modified. Some abandoned specific hopes but maintained them as wishes. According to the definition of wish in this study, a wish differs from a hope in that it is not perceived as within the realm of possibility in the present or future. Additional hopes may also be identified which assist in the construction of a revised definition of hope that was more realistic for the current situation (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985).

The behavioral dimension focused upon the action orientation of the hoping person in relation to hope. Actions in the physical realm were specific acts taken by the individual to achieve hope. Actions in the social realm were acts that involved others

including cooperative involvement with others that would not be possible to achieve alone. Examples of actions in the religious realm were identified as praying, meditating, fasting, adhering to customs, reading spiritual literature, watching or listening to religious programs, requesting prayers of individuals or groups and contributing to religious institutions or activities. Not only do individuals take action to effect the hoped-for outcome, they are energized by their feelings and attitudes related to hope. Both the energy and the ability to take specific actions were found to be a direct consequence of hope. “It is as though hope serves as an anesthetic or an insulation in the midst of hardship. In a sense, hope predisposed individuals to take their own forms of occupational or interpersonal therapy” (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, p. 386).

The affiliative dimension included social interaction, attachment and intimacy, and self-transcendence. The temporal and contextual dimensions involved experience with a sense of time—past, present, and future--in relation to hope; participants hoped for some degree of personal freedom, self-control, and perspective related to events in their life.

The temporal, affiliative, and contextual dimensions described in by Dufault and Martocchio (1985) presented many of the same qualities of hope that Tornstam validated in his qualitative and quantitative studies of the later life experiences of Swedish people in 1994, 1997. Both Dufault and Martocchio (1985) and Tornstam (2000) spoke of the active orientation to this late stage of life and the relationship with hope. The participants in the 1985 study had cancer or a terminal illness as opposed to the healthy subjects in the 2000 study. Neither study was restricted to older adults but covered a broad age range of participants. According to Tornstam, the development toward gerotranscendence and the

signs of gerotranscendence cannot be explained away as symptoms of disease, depression, or consumption of drugs. However, his research revealed that life crises can accelerate the development toward gerotranscendence (Tornstam, 2000).

Herth (1993) investigated the meaning of hope in the older adult in community and nursing facility settings with the use of semi-structured interviews. This was the first qualitative research to compare community dwelling and nursing facility residents in the same study. The purpose of the study was to identify strategies that older adults, aged 65-80, used to maintain and foster hope, and to determine the influence of place of residence, age, gender, race, marital status, income, educational level, functional ability, energy level, and perceived level of health on hope (Herth, 1993). These adults viewed hope as dynamic and “multifaceted enabling a sense of aliveness and inner strength. Hope energizes one to envision a better tomorrow for self and others” and provided support in situations where no direct action was possible (Herth, 1993, p. 144).

Participants related a transcendence that enabled an expectation of a better tomorrow. This study broadened other research to include a world focus. Herth (1993) identified eight hope-fostering strategies in the older adult: interconnection with self, others and the world, purposeful activities, uplifting memories, cognitive strategies, hope objects, the refocusing of time, lightheartedness, and spiritual beliefs/priorities. Several sources of hope were suggested by each respondent which suggested that hope came from multiple sources. The most frequently identified sources of hope were family, friends, health-care professionals, and God (or “higher being”). A refocusing of hope was apparent in the oldest cohort who had experienced a decline in functional status. New hopes directed toward others were created within the opportunities and limitations of their

reality (Herth, 1993). Those individuals who resided in the long-term care facility and those who reported severe fatigue had lower level of hope than those who resided in their own home or who possessed high to moderate energy levels. The necessity of possessing energy in order to hope was previously identified by Herth (1990) and in several additional studies (Dufault & Marchinno, 1985, 1990; Fowler, 1997; Owen, 1989). This additional study supported the finding that hope was a “dynamic, and multidimensional.” Future research to further delineate and extend the understanding of hope in other populations was suggested (Herth et al., 1995).

Gaskins and Forte (1995) expanded the work of Herth, further examining the meaning of hope in older adults by identifying the sources of hope to their subjects. A qualitative design and phenomenology was used with interviews allowing each participant to describe their own experience with hope. An added element was the use of pictures of hopeful scenes or symbols chosen by the participants themselves to guide the interviews. This study was the only qualitative study identified that used guides for interviewing that went beyond interviews. Pictures provided a guide for interviews without the controlled effects of questionnaires or specific verbal probes (Gaskins & Forte, 1995). The picture produced rich and accurate information according to the authors (Gaskins & Forte, 1995).

The theme clusters identified by Gaskin & Forte (1995) were spirituality, relationships with others, having one’s health, having positive emotions, anticipating the future, equality/justice, availability of resources, reminiscing/special memories/hope objects, being in a special place, providing service for others. This was a rare study that investigated hope in a population that was both elderly (65-85 years) healthy, and

community dwelling. The findings supported the Herth (1993) study but also identified the following three additional themes: Equality/justice, the availability of resources and being in a special place. This study also suggested further exploring hope in healthy older populations using a variety of research designs.

Fowler (1997) investigated the relationship between hope and a health-promoting lifestyle in adults with Parkinson's disease and noted the limited amount of studies examining a health-promoting lifestyle in older adults. This study was a descriptive study based on theory that described the relationship between hope and action. Hope was correlated with health-promoting actions particularly spiritual growth and interpersonal support. "Spirituality and social support may also be antecedents to hope depending on how these concepts are conceptualized and defined. The relationships between hope and spiritual growth and interpersonal relations may be cyclic in nature" (Fowler, 1997, p. 114). Identification of additional factors that may determine investment in hope and health-promoting behaviors were recommended.

Two final studies of hope in healthy community dwelling individuals came from Sweden. Benzein, Saveman, and Norberg (1998) were interested in determining how hope was experienced in healthy persons with different outlooks on life. The purpose of the study was to describe the meaning of hope to individuals that were part of a group of healthy Christians belonging to the Swedish Pentecostal Movement. This group was chosen because of its clear and distinct religious image and the accessibility of this population due to their regular church attendance. Verbatim interviews were analyzed for meaning. The following two important statements emerged: the Bible was considered the ultimate truth and hope was a subjective experience that the interviewees found

difficult to describe to non-believing Christians. The findings indicated that experience of hope constituted a basic trust and was quite stable and not influenced by external factors (Benzein, Saveman, & Norberg, 1998). Hope unconnected to Christian belief was found to be of no significant importance to the interviewees in this study.

In the companion study, Benzein, Saveman, and Norberg (2000) interviewed 24 healthy Swedish adults who considered themselves as non-religious. The individuals were age 18-80 (M=47). The sample consisted of persons who did not believe in a personal God nor regularly attend church. In spite of some self reported chronic health issues, all participants considered themselves to be healthy (Benzein et al., 2000). The lived experience of hope was interpreted as an internal process that was linked to a person's being and an external process that was linked to a person's doing. This appeared to be a reciprocal relationship with the internal process being a prerequisite for the external, and the external process nurturing the internal. For the participants in this study, hope was involved with making positive choices to gain independence, freedom, and inner peace. Descriptions of hope revealed that the external process was reconstructed throughout various stages of life. Although the quantity of hope did not change, the quality of the hope experienced was found to mature throughout later stages of life (Benzein, 2000). The findings of this study indicate that it seemed necessary to identify hope related to being in order to release the energy that was required for hope related to doing. According to the authors, further research is needed in people from various cultures with various outlooks on life.

## Summary of Literature

Erik and Joan Erikson and Lars Tornstam provide the theoretical base for the exploration of hope in late life. Erikson's psychosocial stages of development present progressive developmental strengths that extend over a lifetime of conflict resolutions finally arriving at an eighth stage termed ego integrity. Joan Erikson expanded this theory to include a ninth stage of development in very late life described in much the same language as the theory of gerotranscendence defined by Lars Tornstam. Gerotranscendence provides a theoretical base for integrating and further developing both traditional and newer theories on issues in later life.

The earlier studies of hope in the nursing literature focused primarily on specific populations including terminally ill adults, individuals of all ages with cancer, or other specific diagnosis. Until the 1990s the studies on hope in healthy older adults had been quantitative in nature primarily using standardized instruments as a research method. The more recent emphasis on qualitative studies investigating hope provided a background of hope as actually experienced by specific populations. However, there were limited studies investigating the experience of hope in the lives of healthy older adults living in the community.

Herth (1993); Gaskins and Forte (1995) and the more recent Benzein, et al., studies (1998, 2000) were the only qualitative studies located that investigated hope in an older, healthy, community dwelling population. The use of photography in the Gaskins and Forte study (1995) was the only study that incorporated a research method that went beyond language for the purpose of investigating the individual experience of hope. The

use of additional methods to supplement and guide the words of the participants needed further investigation.

The following chapter outlines the procedures used in collecting and analyzing the data for this study.



## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to determine sources of hope in the older adult, and to describe the meaning of hope from explanations given by the subjects. An investigative design using qualitative methods was selected as the best design for exploration of the authentic individual experiences of hope encountered by the participants. This study design was selected after reviewing the research described in Chapter II as well as a number of qualitative studies examining hope reviewed and summarized by Herth, Popovich, and Farran (1995).

A qualitative phenomenological design that incorporated the use of both photographs and interviews was used to identify sources of hope and determine meaning of hope to the participants. Photo-assisted interviewing that guided conversations without the inhibitory effects of questionnaires were used in the Gaskins and Forte study (1995). Decreased word retrieval skills and decreased physical energy present challenges to some older adults. The use of images to facilitate or guide the interview provided assistance for these challenges while also allowing for the opportunity for non-verbal resources of hope to be explored.

Criteria for participation in the study included only that the individual be living in the community, healthy, and 65 years of age or older. The purposeful sample was recruited from church congregations by presenting a description of the study to groups or individuals within their church settings. Permission to solicit participation (Appendix B) within those settings was approved by the ministers of the congregations involved. Although recruitment occurred from opportunities at church, neither church membership nor active participation within a particular church was a criteria for participation in the study. This congregational setting provided a convenient and available opportunity for recruitment of participants to form a purposeful sample.

### Study Design

In both the earlier Gaskins and Forte study that used photo assisted interviewing techniques and this study, each participant was given a camera and instructed to photograph anything that caused them to experience a sense or feeling of hope. They were not given a specific definition of hope but rather encouraged to think creatively of what settings or situations in their lives caused them to feel or be hopeful. The material prepared for the participants describing the study suggested that at least ten hopeful images would be helpful in guiding the interviews although no specific number of pictures was required to participate. Instructions on the operation of the disposable camera were offered to each participant at the time of camera distribution.

The participants kept the cameras between two and four weeks. Telephone checks were made to the participants after two weeks and the cameras were collected if participants indicated they had completed taking pictures. Some participants requested

more time to complete their project. The cameras were distributed over a period of several weeks between August and November of 2001. That length of time was required to meet individually with each participant in multiple locations in two different Midwestern states.

The cameras were collected within four weeks of distribution and the film developed at a local camera store. Two people added additional pictures they had taken at an earlier time. Two copies of each print were developed so that a copy would be available to both the researcher and the participant. Participants were then contacted to arrange an interview to discuss the pictures they selected.

After four weeks, the 14 participants in the sample completed the task of taking pictures and submitted the cameras for picture development. Two participants included written descriptions of each picture when the cameras were retrieved. One woman related that she would be out of the state for several months during the time of the interviews. The other participant stated she preferred to submit responses in writing.

All participants with the exception of the two described above chose their own homes as the location for the interviews. The interviews were scheduled at an agreeable time for both the researcher and participant. The interview session began with a participant review of the developed pictures. The researcher introduced the format of the interview. The interview proceeded using the developed photographs to guide the interview process. Basic questions (Appendix C) and the pictures themselves guided the semi-structured interview.

All interviews were taped using a small tape recorder. The researcher demonstrated use of the recorder and requested permission from each participant to use

this device. All participants were agreeable to this method of recording the interview. The completed interviews were transcribed verbatim. In the study description each participant initially received, the interviews were expected to last 15-20 minutes. In reality, no interviews lasted less than one hour and most interviews lasted about 90 minutes. The longest time spent with a participant was two hours. After the first interview, it was explained that the interview itself was expected to take at least an hour and more time was possible if they chose to share additional information. The purpose of the additional explanation was to clarify time and energy expectations and establish loose boundaries for both the interviewer and interviewee.

Member check provided the opportunity for participants to review and clarify their responses. The transcriptions of the interviews were mailed to those participants who expressed an interest in reading the transcript of their interview. Four participants made corrections primarily in the spelling of names and one participant submitted an expanded personal definition of hope in writing after the member check opportunity. Three other participants were interested only in reading the interview transcription.

Colaizzi's method as cited in Gaskin & Forte (1995) of phenomenological analysis was used. The steps used were:

Reading each interview in its entirety, extracting the significant phrases or sentences, formulating meanings from the significant statements, clustering the meanings into general themes or theme clusters, and defining the essential structure of the concept. (Gaskins & Forte, 1995, p. 18)

Each photograph was compared with the descriptive material provided in the interview regarding that photo. Similar themes were grouped within each participant's material. A central theme of the entire interview was noted if such a theme was apparent.

Research was grounded in the interviews of the participants. The phenomenological approach was based on each participant's authentic individual experience.

#### Summary of Interview Experience

The photos served as a guide for investigating individual hopeful experiences. Some participants pre-prepared their own notes to assist in describing their photos or experiences. They spoke of planning each picture and, in some cases, traveling short distances to capture a particular image. Other participants were less guided by the photos they had taken and interviews were more about life experience in relation to hope. A picture often proved to be only a starting point for a rich lengthy description of a personal experience. The thick descriptions of hopeful themes and length of engagement provided time to clarify the personal significance of the pictures taken to the participant or add additional narrative information. Some participants shared personal stories, family pictures, hobbies or additional material beyond the subject of the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The sample of 12 women and two men submitted 110 pictures of different subjects. Ages ranged from 65-88 years of age. All participants lived in their own homes in the community in one mid-sized city in Oklahoma and one suburb of a mid-sized city in Kansas. All participants were white. English was the primary spoken and written language. All 14 participants were active in church activities. Participants expressed interest in education and the research process; two mentioned that they had helped with research in the past. Nine were college graduates; three with advanced degrees.

Both men and five of the women were currently married. Seven of the women had become widows within the last few years. All participants had been married only one time with the exception of one woman. Widowed in her fifties, she remarried and was currently married to her second husband. All participants had children and grandchildren. One participant had raised a grandson who had just completed a graduate degree this spring.

All but one participant had retired from full time formal employment. That participant worked about 20 irregular hours per week. Several individuals volunteer daily in a variety of community programs. All participants were involved in the life of their

communities in spite of some chronic health problems. The mention of a hip replacement or a former hospitalization did not impact participation in the life of the community. Only one participant mentioned health in relation to this study. She inquired about the possibility of obtaining larger print copies of the explanatory materials as an accommodation for macular degeneration but definitely wanted to participate in the study. She lived independently and confidently and was very forthcoming in regard to this visual challenge. Printed materials were created in a size 20-point font. Although she related that while she did not personally use a computer, she was very familiar and comfortable with the accommodations that could easily be made with sizes of print. When questioned by the researcher about the actual process of taking pictures, she said she had been thinking about that. She planned to select images and take her daughter with her to actually focus and center the shot of the image she wanted to capture. The larger print materials were offered to other participants as well but only this participant chose to use the larger size print.

Names of the participants in Table I are fictitious in order to protect identities. Age, status and location are all actual.

TABLE I  
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name	Age	Status	State
Sue	84	Widowed	KS
James	88	Married	OK
May	79	Widowed	OK
Ruth	77	Married	OK
Betty	77	Widowed	OK
Anna	87	Widowed	OK
Lucy	67	Married	OK
Sharon	65	Married	KS
Eunice	88	Widowed	KS
Helen	78	Widowed	KS
David	72	Married	OK
Marilyn	71	Married	KS
Rose	67	Married	KS
Laura	72	Married	KS

Lives Filled with Hope – A Brief Introduction  
of the Participants

Five of the 14 participants included a specific definition of hope. The definition is included in the introduction of those participants. Participant introductions served as a framework to present the descriptions of hope that emerged during the interviews. Some



participants supplied more detailed explanations of the pictures, the definition of hope or their personal lives. Therefore, the introductory material varies in length and thickness of information. Contextual information was provided in some cases as well.

Sue (Age 84, Widowed, Resident of Kansas)

Sue is an alert 84-year-old who has lived in her current home for 51 years. A former teacher, she gives talks on the U. S. presidents to school and community groups and is particularly knowledgeable about the U. S. constitution. The theme expressed in her photos and description was making a contribution to her community in a very involved and participatory way. Her personal definition of hope was “belief in our country and our people that we can continue on.”

James (Aged 88, Married, Resident of Oklahoma)

James is 88-years old, a retired educator who graduated from Oklahoma A & M College soon after World War II. He began teaching school, completed a Master’s degree during the summers and essentially has been a teacher or school administrator ever since. His daughter is now a middle school principal and he continues to be involved in educational opportunities. James is extremely involved in a church community as a leader of a group for older adults. He needlepoints every day and uses that skill for gifts, service, and as a focus for assisting others. The overall theme of his interview was “working together, we can do anything.” James stated he had not prepared his definition of hope in the same way he had prepared his picture information.

Well, I hardly know what to say here. If you didn't have hope and planned for a future, what would happen to you? You've got to work towards something. And when you start out, you start thinking and hoping that it will come to effect if you work towards it. As far as a definition, I'll just say, plans for the future.

May (Age 79, Widowed, Resident of Oklahoma)

Born in Canada and a 40-year resident of Oklahoma, May, at age 79 spends her days delivering mobile meals and volunteering for a hospital-based hospice agency which frequently involves providing direct care to persons diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease. She is active in her church as well, visiting home centered and nursing facility-based members.

Her home reflects grace and warmth with walls decorated with May's oil paintings. She says she hasn't painted for a while but will get back to it in the future. She has no plans to decrease or discontinue any of her volunteer activities. Gratefulness and hope have similar meanings for May and both words are woven through her interview. "It (hope) is a feeling of thankfulness and helps you overcome all kinds of terrible things. If you have hope you can fight. You can do something."

Ruth (Age 77, Married, Resident of Oklahoma)

Ruth at 80 years of age serves in many capacities at her church. A career in public school teaching evolved into a second career of church and community service. Two years ago, she survived a traumatic injury spending months in the hospital and rehabilitation. Her wisdom and insights about that experience were incorporated into the interview material. She is married to James and is thankful to be able to share time with

her daughter and grandchildren. Ruth spoke of “tomorrow and of looking forward” in relation to hope. She took pride in what this study might contribute in terms of enhanced “understanding of our generation.”

Betty (Age 77, Widowed, Resident of Oklahoma)

Betty is also involved at church on an almost daily basis. Initially educated as a home economist, she returned to college for a Master’s degree in her 30s and taught public school kindergarten for 17 years. She and her husband spent ten years after retirement (at 54 and 62) traveling the world. She had been widowed for two years. Capable and involved in the church and community she is planning a move to a retirement community within the next few months while continuing her high level of community involvement.

Anna (Age 87, Widowed, Resident of Oklahoma)

Anna has appreciation and knowledge of fine literature, art and music. A gracious and articulate woman, she still submits news pieces to a local mid size city newspaper. A widow with grown children in other states, she has experienced both family life and a long time career in journalism at a time in history when few women were accepted and involved in that career field.

Lucy (Age 67, Married, Resident of Oklahoma)

Lucy is a self-defined planner with varied careers that have used her organizational skills to their best advantage. She has lived in 14 states and settled in the

mid-west because her daughters were here. She contributes tirelessly and efficiently to church and community. She and her husband of 40 + years share a home they recently planned and designed together.

Sharon (Age 65, Married, Resident of Kansas)

At age 65, Sharon is the youngest of the participants. She is a life long resident of her community; much of the town center has been built on the land her family settled in the mid 1800s. Her interests revolve around family, home and community. Sharon's definition of hope was thoughtfully given.

Hope is when the glass is half full instead of half empty in your mind no matter what your circumstance is. Hope springs from your spiritual cup being full rather than empty. That is partially your responsibility because you must seek to do that. God's promise to us is that he will keep it full if we do what we are suppose to do and that he will keep his promises, and I do believe that. I believe marriages and families should be built on hope. I think love is important, but I think even when love is tested, hope has to be even bigger than love.

Eunice (Age 88, Widowed, Resident of Kansas)

Eunice is 88, the oldest participant is active trim and articulate. She has taught three generations of her community about the love of gardening. She lives alone after a 60+ year marriage to her life long love. She sees two adult sons regularly but not frequently and visits home centered and nursing facility based elderly on a regular basis. Eunice's definition of hope came from her strong spiritual center.

I first think of Christ, God's son. God's power to give us hopes. If something happens that really distresses me, my first thought is to go there. So my definition of hope is that something is better afterwards, after praying and worshiping.

Helen (Age 78, Widowed, Resident of Kansas)

Helen was a school librarian by profession and has a lifetime interest in education and access to books for everyone. She shares her time between a comfortable Kansas home and a cabin in the mountains of Colorado. She related that she looked up “hope” in the dictionary to help her thinking for this project and thought it interesting that hope can be both a noun and a verb. “I think I’ve used both parts of speech in my thoughts and pictures about hope” Helen related.

Dave (Age 72, Married, Resident of Oklahoma)

Dave retired from a financial career in the oil industry and returned to school to study the law. After a year of school, he started teaching at the community college level. He currently serves on non-profit, community and church boards. Dave related that he was not particularly motivated or inspired by the project; he participated mainly to assist with the research. He found intergenerational creativity to be particularly hopeful as reflected in his pictures of multiple activities involving people of several generations participating in the same activity.

Marilyn (Age 71, Married, Resident of Kansas)

Marilyn is involved in church and community projects. She raised a grandson who has just received a master’s degree in criminal justice. She and her husband have worked at a variety of careers and now spend time writing, woodworking, and providing community service.

Laura Age 72, Married, Resident of Kansas)

Laura described an ideal life filled with financial and personal success. Enthusiastic and fun loving, she and her husband/best friend share frequent contact with adult children and grandchildren who live nearby. Laura values and appreciates the consistent friends, family, and church support she has had for 50 years. Her overall hopeful theme was predictability. When she read her transcribed interview, she chose to write the additional following description of her hopeful feelings:

I do not like change but the continuity I find in my life gives me hope. This says to me that even though the world around me may not be perfect, the things that remain the same give me hope. So many of the events I told you are important because they are continuous in my life. They may not be earth shaking but they give me hope because of the people that are part of this sameness . . . Change is inevitable but because I have gotten older and wiser and less likely to be on my soap box I am willing to accept some changes with the hope that a few of my most believed permanent things will not (change).

Rose (age 67, Married, Resident of Kansas)

Rose is capable and understated, and deeply involved in her church. Her country home reflects her love of nature. She has appreciated living all over the world as a military spouse. She's clear about her theme of hope. It is related to continuity and the sense that nature and human families and church activities will continue on generation after generation.

### General Findings – Themes Repeated Between Interviews

The following patterns were identified by clustering the themes presented in the interviews of the participants describing their personal experiences of hope.

Hopeful themes identified in this study included:

1. Nature
2. Productivity/Making a contribution
3. Personal Spirituality
4. Worship experience
5. Freedom
6. Connections with others
7. New beginnings
8. Technology, abundance, and convenience
9. Hope Objects/Objects of Beauty
10. Knowledge/Life Long Learning,
11. Available Help

(Examples of photos are included in the appendix)

#### Nature

The hope produced by nature came in many forms. Nature was a hopeful image chosen by all but one participant. James described a rose cutting his father originally planted that now grows in his yard. How does it show hope? “It shows that with tender loving care we can do anything.”

Sue photographed her granddaughter intently watching a birdhouse for the return of its occupant. “That’s Kelli (granddaughter) and her bird; they enjoy birds and just nature—it’s going to be there forever.”

Eunice related, “A bachelor button . . . gives me joy because it was my mother’s. It’s classed among the everlasting. When it’s in a bouquet it seems to last and last which is very inspirational.”

Anna, when describing the pleasure of her bird feeder writes,

. . . I love to see a cardinal against the gray weathered wood of the feeder. To me birds are one of the wonders of God’s creation; such a mystery. How do they know when it is time to move north or south and how do they remember the routes? And how do little birds make such long flight with amazing speed?

Rose described her hummingbird feeder with this thought, “I guess it (hope) comes from the continuity of nature. The hummingbirds are here every year, whether or not they come to the feeder. I think the continuity of things, family and nature.”

Dave spoke of the beauty of a large shade tree and designing their new home around the tree to save and protect it. Participants spoke of the peace and sanctuary they felt in their yard surrounded by particular trees, flowers, and birds.

Betty related a story of begonias growing in the same spot all season and not thriving because of the drought. Betty moved them to a new location and their color brightened and they thrived. She related that relocating to a different new place can produce a positive outcome. “I’m looking forward to a new style of life, a new living situation and actually getting into a new environment . . .” Betty will be relocating to a new retirement center when it is completed.



Marilyn related, "Clouds can sometimes be inspiring because you hope for rain. A man growing things is hopeful." In response to the picture of a waterfall Marilyn had photographed during a trip to Wyoming, she said, "Everything is in perfect order in nature . . . That's what is hopeful since everything is in perfect order like the seasons. Everything is in God's hands and it turns out the way it should."

Sharon described the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks sign she photographed as hopeful with these words,

The Department of Wildlife and Parks gave us hope in one of our darkest hours, as 400 plus trees in our woods were threatened with destruction . . . They gave 2.5 miles of reparation along the corridor of the creek. They gave us hope and continued to give us hope by their dedication to conservation of natural resources, flora and fauna.

Her flower garden is hopeful as well,

When I was a little girl I always wanted to pick the flowers and was always told to wait. I decided when I got older, I would have flowers that I didn't have to wait and I could pick the flowers whenever I wanted to. It gives me hope that my daughters have the same love of gardening and flowers that I do. I also hope that is passed onto my grandchildren because that is a great thing to pass on.

Helen pictured a mountain stream with hope for continued water for this earth and continued seasons and the beauty of the earth. She too described a picture of a sunrise, "The first light of a new day. A hope for the realization of your dreams or those you love."

May found hope in the rugged open spaces of a trip to the prairie.

I love to go to rugged things like that. I prefer to do this sort of trip instead of something fancy or very social . . . I like rugged things. I would have been happy to be in the Western civilization when they were doing all this . . . These are all pictures of buffalo. There are quite a few of them . . . Oh, I think nature has a way of overcoming a lot of difficulties that we have

with our own life. I guess the fact that this goes on and on. To me this is very comforting . . .

May described another hopeful theme personally experienced through nature.

One day I was sitting there gazing up at these trees. They meet overhead and all the sudden I realized that these trees have protected us all of these years that we have been here through storms and things like that. They've always been there. They form a nice little roof overhead. And so, I just really seriously thought, for the first time, about these trees so then I had to take pictures of them. I realized how much I loved them. They are like friends.

#### Productivity/Making a Contribution

Eunice took several pictures of a yearly fund raising event at her church; although this could also be affiliative or religious, "making a contribution" was the intended theme. "I took those (pictures) because I thought that if one understands all the work that goes . . . and what it does. We cleared \$3,000 this year." Eunice related that 50% will go to the missions outside the local church (describes specific mission projects) " . . . There is so much good cooperation . . . and we . . . raise money for these hopeful things."

Eunice also photographed a series of photos of an 88-year-old neighbor baking for the sale. The famous pies her neighbor makes never make it to the sale; they are sold before she gets them to the sale according to Eunice.

Sharon told of the contributions of her father an articulate man with limited formal education who eventually became a real estate agent, wrote articles for the local paper and donated land for the local library.

I realized when he did that, that when you put your mind to something you can evolve into something bigger, better or more. I'm proud of the achievements of my children and grandchildren and I think the foundation

was laid with the steadfast courage and determination of my dad and mother.

Sue spoke the significance of Senior Center programming in her town in terms of hope.

A lot of these seniors wouldn't get up in the morning (without these programs), I think I can safely say. We have an "Are you all right?" program just to call first thing in the morning and make sure that they are "ok."

Her involvement in the program planning area was a source of pride.

I'm on the core committee . . . and also on the survey committee; we send out surveys to 1,200 people . . . I want people to volunteer; too many of us are getting to the point that we want things done for us. I want it to say, "Would you be willing to help others" instead of being a volunteer just willing to . . . help ourselves.

Sue also pictured the school and school dynamics in several photos. "We (the Senior Center) worked with the elementary school; the kids come to the Senior Center to present programs and we go to the schools and share our programs with them." She related details of both shared program models and another senior program that has been particularly successful especially at the local high school. The intergenerational focus was evident throughout her interview. She summed up that theme best with this statement, I like to have things done for us (trips, etc.) but I really get excited when we do something for someone else."

James explored the theme of contributing and persevering through photos of needlepoint pictures that he has made; this skill was woven in the texture of meaning of much of his interview. He started needle pointing when,

I became assigned Dean of Boys . . . there were battles every day. I did the seats of the chair cushions for the dining room chairs – they are still there . . . I started again after my sister's illness. I said, "All right, I'll do it

with you.” And my doing it with her, I encouraged her by doing it with her, I started back.

James has made needlepoint gifts for family and friends and further tells of a story of completing a commissioned needlepoint project and refusing to be paid for it.

However, he told the owner that they could donate the money to a shared church project.

He related that hope was the ability to work together, “Working together we can do anything.”

May related stories about her 17 years of Meals on Wheels delivery experience with the wonderful opportunities God had given to us. May also volunteers weekly for a home health hospice organization based at a local hospital. She cares for the terminally ill with love and flexibility as she is assigned when “they need me.”

#### Religious Practice and Spirituality –

##### Two Separate Themes

Spirituality was the theme cluster identified most frequently in the Gaskins and Forte study. Although the participants made references to specific religious practices or beliefs, hope emanated not only from organized religion, but more so from a moral creed for living one’s life. Twelve of 14 participants in the current study addressed the hopefulness of religious practices in a personal church community or a personal spiritual life. However, differences were noted between expressions of hope found in collective religious experience and the hope of a personal spiritual life. The two areas are presented in separate themes in this study.

### Worship Experience

Eunice described the inspiration of her prayer circle in this way,

I'll get a call and they ask you to put so and so on the prayer chain or please remember someone on Tuesday. We'll get notes that say how much it meant for their names to be on the prayer list. I think of it sometimes as a responsibility and yet it's a choice.

Sharon wrote about her church,

I say a silent prayer of thank you to God for bringing me to this place. I have hope that it will continue to be nurturing for myself and to my husband. Our journey here on earth has been enhanced greatly by our spiritual experience at this church.

Betty described the pictured steeple of her church this way.

This is a favorite spot . . . at my church . . . in the north hall. I can look out through the glass door, through the Memorial Garden, and see the steeple. It just reminds me of what is important.

Ruth spoke of her church with a picture of a Bible and a hymnal as the guide for that description. She spoke of the support she received during the recovery from her injury described earlier. "That's the church. And, I think, that is self explanatory that you find hope and security at the church."

### Personal Spirituality

Eunice created an arrangement of a lighted candle behind a Bible to symbolize her personal spiritual hope. A second picture submitted by Eunice on this theme was of the sun coming out from behind cumulus clouds after a storm as representative of her hope.

Marilyn photographed a large cross with a background of bright blue sky and clouds. She described the location of this particular cross as visible from an interstate and

large enough that no motorist could miss it. “Hope for the future. He’s alive [Christ].” was the meaning Marilyn attributed to this powerful image. A pictured rainbow represented the personal belief that, “The world will never be destroyed by floods again” for Marilyn. Hope can also be expressed in shared language. Marilyn copied a poem engraved on a memorial stone because, “There is hope for future life. ‘Never, never be afraid to die, for I’m waiting for you in the sky’.”

Crosses, hymnals representing the hope of beautiful music with a spiritual theme, and places of personal spiritual reflection were also pictured and described.

#### Connection With Others

Most participants chose pictures of other people to symbolize hope. However, the particular people or groups identified as a hopeful presence varied.

Sue related the family history beginning with letters exchanged before the Revolutionary war. She continued to describe the family story relating events in the last century focusing on the home where she was born. The value of family in providing continuing support was hopeful to Sue.

Sharon spoke of the unconditional acceptance of her best friend. “She has been my best friend for over twenty-five years; she is a very calming influence in my life.”

Sue spoke of friendship guided with a picture of framed handwork which said, “Friendship is like love; it lasts forever.”

A friend made it for me . . . we traveled together a lot . . . she has had several heart surgeries. She doesn’t know who the letters are from but I still write to her . . . (they) lived next door for so many years.

Marilyn photographed an arrangement of flowers her daughter had sent for a birthday gift to illustrate the hope of family connections and Anna photographed her granddaughters reminding her of the hope and continuity of family.

Lucy photographed a display of birthday cards. "We are grateful for this—because a lot of people remember our birthdays. We both have birthdays in December so we take our cards and line them up. It makes me feel good."

### Freedom

Eunice attempted three times before she captured the picture she wanted of a flag at the end of a construction crane high in the air. She also photographed a flag in front of her favorite garden supply store. The shared experience of flying the flag was hopeful to her.

While many participants photographed the flag alone, David and his wife chose to display their love of God and Country and their hope for peace with the following symbol. They had a banner made for display in her yard. The banner displayed next to the American flag in their yard read, "Blessed are the Peacemakers."

Sue used her picture of a flag to describe her patriotic feelings in this way.

You know how some groups read their mission statement before they meet. If politicians would just read this (the constitution) before they meet . . . They (the writers of the constitution) did have the ability to compromise.

Lucy pictured a Veteran's Hospital Christmas party. "My hope is that we won't need a Veteran's hospital. That we won't have war or the remnants of war."

### Knowledge/Lifelong Learning

James discusses the value of reading and education as he described the public school administrated by his daughter, the principal. He pictured his grandson and the hope that he will “become a biochemist and be of help to society in some way.” He commented further on his value of a library. “Being a person who likes to read, it entices one to go in (the library) and check to see what they have and keep pushing forward.”

Ruth expressed the following thoughts on the hope of education.

I think if people today, the homeless, had a good education or had participation or tried, they wouldn't be in the place they are today. They missed the boat. They didn't get it. They didn't get a good foundation in education. My hope would be that we could inform people about education.

Ruth spoke on freedom of the press in this way

What would we do if we didn't have freedom of the press? With our knowledge...I'm not saying that the press is always right, but I hope it continues and it's not censored. Letters to the editor, I don't write them but, You know, I read other people's experiences and, I think, it's wonderful that they can express themselves and so I hope that continues whether you agree with them or not.

Helen wrote of books,

I was a school librarian by profession. I naturally love books. My hope is that future generations of children will enjoy books and that there will be mothers, grandmothers, and teachers who will continue to introduce good books to children. I have a librarian friend who says, “children's books should always give them hope.”

Sharon told of sharing books with her best friend as a way to continually share ideas and the importance of the library in her town and her family's contribution to that project. Lucy expressed the hope for continued public education.



### New Beginnings

Marilyn photographed new houses and lots where new houses would be built. Although she does not know the people involved she expressed, “A new house is a new beginning...it is hope for a new family.” Marilyn also photographed a newly planted field, “Growing things is hopeful.” Marilyn reported that when selecting her pictures of hope, she continued to come up with the “idea of a new beginning . . . a new baby and children starting school . . . a new beginning. Everything is in its proper order.”

Eunice took a picture of a grandmother and new grandchild. “The grandmother and I talked about hope and the pictures and agreed that a new baby is hope for the world.”

### Hope Objects/Objects of Beauty

Betty took a picture of a rabbit figurine that reminded her of a special couple with whom

. . . we took many trips...My friends are now deceased, but the rabbit is an indication of my love for these friends, and the importance of friends to me. These friends were a vibrant, fulfilling, loving part of my life since 1956.

Anna expressed the appreciation of beauty in the environment in several of her descriptions (she wrote her descriptions of hope). As a journalist she has these comments about her lifelong love of newspaper work. “The new look in newspapers merges marvelous color photography, sleek layouts and technology in a way that delights the eye.” An art museum provides Anna with continual pleasure and she never tires of visiting the exhibits. Likewise, silver vases remind her of a rewarding career and

experiences lived with other early woman journalists; the vases were willed to Anna because of “our [friend] shared love and admiration for a colleague.” A setting of her best china and crystal brought this comment about the memories of the joy of a festive table. “I don’t use ‘the good dishes and silver’ that much anymore. Much of these things were gifts and this picture makes me feel happy because of these memories.”

### Technology, Abundance, and Convenience

Lucy was hopeful that available electricity, fuel, and an adequate water supply would continue. She also photographed several scenes from a large grocery store. “It gives me hope that those things will always be available to us . . . we don’t have to get out and plow, plant, weed, or harvest.” Lucy also took pictures of the Houston space center. “My hope is that [the space program] is giving us something worth the money that we are spending. I just hope and pray that it’s going to be worth it.” She also described banking and hope because “it was a place to keep finances, money, and that the country had FICA and insurance.”

Ruth photographed produce at her regular grocery store. “Let’s hope that there will be food tomorrow and tomorrow and the next day and isn’t it a shame that there are countries that do not have and here we have all of that. You have choices.”

### Available Help

Ruth spent seven weeks in the hospital and rehabilitation followed by home health care following a traumatic injury four years ago. She spoke of that experience in her interview. “If you (I) didn’t have hope I would have never made it through.”

Eunice described her thought surrounding the availability of doctors and the local assisted living center. “We are so thankful that there is a place that we know we could get good help or care should we need it.”

Sue photographed a Handicapped Accessible sign with this description,

My husband was in a wheelchair for so many years and that’s a mighty nice thing to see. He was on the verge of the time when accessibility was not mandatory . . . we knew places we could go . . . it’s always so hopeful (encouraging) to see that sign.

Ruth and Sue spoke of the help that came from hospitals, rehabilitation professionals, home health and the availability of resources for accessibility during their recovery or a spouse’s illness.

### Additional Findings

There were a few picture-guided descriptions of hope eliciting topics that made a strong statement but stood alone rather than conforming to a theme. The following two examples particularly come to mind. James used a picture of a mosque, which happens to be just two blocks from his house to relate,

We hope that through it (the mosque) being there, and through discussions, we will become a little closer. Instead of saying “we are it and you are nothing.” At the present time, they (Muslim congregation) have had two Thursday night discussions of the Koran. They are doing it right now; they have had two and their next one is next Thursday night.

James blended connection with others and lifelong learners in the process of gaining new awareness about this congregation and its teachings during and a highly sensitive time in history.

A second example of an individual expression of hope came from May. She described hope as gratefulness with the following description.

This next picture is totally different. It is meant to be a picture of these slippers (house slippers) . . . The slippers are the focal point. I delivered Meals on Wheels to the people in the Maplewood Manor for years and years . . . This place is full of people that are in wheelchairs, some of them not even able to use wheelchairs. Everybody in there has some disability. I guess it was 12 years ago that I first meet this particular girl that gave me these slippers. The thing that was so unique about her was that instead of complaining about being there, (she said some of them really don't want to be there) she had just come out of a nursing home and she was so thankful for being there. She said that this (Maplewood Manor) was her first real home.

#### Perseverance as an Overlay

A general overlay of perseverance continued to surface in the interviews without being attached to a particular theme. The best example of perseverance was expressed by Sue with the following example exploring perseverance with a picture of a single yellow flower,

I wanted a picture of a flower that was withstanding the drought. You know, as we get older we hang on as long as we can. I told Anne (daughter) I wanted something that showed you hang on as long as you can. Another single flower picture was chosen for this reason. I wanted something with the real bright color flower to show that everything is ok. You know, even in a hard place, that everything is ok.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following conclusions were directly related to finding in the interview material from the participants themselves:

1. Hope came from many sources
2. Hope was dynamic
3. Hope was a shared responsibility
4. Hope was experienced on multiple levels
5. Hope continued to evolve throughout life
6. Hope involved continuity
7. Hope involved plans for the future

#### Hope Came from Many Sources

Hopeful themes identified in this study included:

1. Nature
2. Productivity/Making a contribution,
3. Personal Spirituality
4. Worship experience
5. Freedom

6. Connections with others
7. New beginnings
8. Technology, abundance, and convenience
9. Hope Objects/Objects of Beauty
10. Knowledge/Life Long Learning
11. Available Help

#### Hope Was Dynamic

The active hoping expressed in this group of individuals was inspiring. There was no sense of others taking over or passively waiting for someone else to act. They were the actors. The older adults in the study were engaged, volunteering, worshiping, celebrating, interacting and experiencing their own spiritual journey—apparently concurrently. Interestingly these participants did not equate hope with their own physical or mental health or energy during the interviews. However, hope had come from health care helpers in the past and was available if help was needed in the future. Part of the dynamic quality of hope also required energy. The internal hope related to being and the externally expressed hope related to doing as described by Fowler (1997) and Benzein, et al., (1998) and Benzein, et al., (2000) appeared to be true for the participants in this study.

### Hope Was a Shared Responsibility

Evolving from the dynamic quality of hope presented by the participants, a theme of shared responsibility emerged. Shared responsibility was implied among the older adults themselves and between others in the community—Sue spoke of the responsibility and opportunity to give as well as receive in the planning and implementation of senior center programs and through intergenerational programs and the opportunity to work with the schools. Ruth spoke of working with health care professionals after a particularly traumatic injury.

The sense of shared responsibility extended to the life of the religious community as well as a shared responsibility with God for the quality of ones own personal spiritual life. This vision of responsibility was expressed by both Sharon and Eunice.

### Hope Was Experienced on Multiple Levels

Hope was used as a noun and a verb. No definition was given and the participants were free to represent hope in the ways that were meaningful to them personally. Dufault and Martocchio's (1985) dimensions were apparent in the multiple experience of hope presented in this study as evidenced by the following examples:

1. Affective—personal significance of the hopeful themes chosen by participants
2. Cognitive—memory, interpretation and generalization
3. Behavioral—involvement in community and family
4. Affiliative—involvement with God and with other people

5. Temporal—current time was the primary focus as opposed to reminiscence
6. Contextual—current life situations surrounding their hope

#### Hope Continued to Evolve Throughout Life

Participants were all involved in community life. They spoke of hopes for themselves but also for children and grandchildren, community, country, and in one case the world. This finding was consistent with the theories of both Erikson (1997) and Tornstam (2000) in the participant descriptions of the evolving foci of their lives. Until fairly recently much more attention was spent on studying earlier stages of development. The experience of growing old and being old is currently receiving much attention. Qualitative information is providing rich data for the study of later stages of life and these participants have the confidence and the skills to describe their experience.

#### Hope Involved Continuity

Continuity in nature, the continuing cycle of new beginnings in planting and harvest each year, continuation of family history, and certainty of faith were predominant themes. Continuation and the order of things were hopeful to every participant although this was expressed through differing words and images. The words predictability and continuity were used interchangeably by some participants in this study.



### Hope Involved Plans for the Future

The participants' personal definitions of hope included the word "future" in that definition. Again both self and a broader definitions of "others" were described in future plan descriptions. Stories emerge of independently solving problems and a belief in the continuation of both natural and human events. They see themselves as part of the solutions and still dynamically engaged in life.

### Implications for Practice

Professionals working in the field of gerontology, geriatric nursing, adult education, or social work may choose to use this information in the design of programs, environments, or experiences for older adults. The information has potential value for older adults considering their own life planning as well. Specific examples are included below.

Many of the hopeful experiences cited by participants are currently part of the design of some assisted living and residential settings for older adults. The key may be the intentionality and purpose with which these concepts are designed. Including nature because it provides sanctuary or a sense of comfort seems to be a goal more significant than the attractive landscaping it provides. Providing areas in the yard and gardens for residents to visit, meditate, or work with the plants in comfortable shady surroundings is worth consideration. Choosing plants from their past for a garden of bachelor buttons, roses, surprise lilies, and old fashioned garden flowers would be an excellent choice for the participants in the study.

The importance of an individual's own faith community cannot be over emphasized. Although general spiritual customs and symbols are meaningful in any setting to those sharing a particular faith tradition, the tie to the people, building, and activities of their own church family warrant special efforts to connect older persons with that community. Encouraging relationships of all kinds and encouraging the discussion of significant relationships is a very valid approach to supporting older adults.

The need to contribute in a real way--to make a difference--did not diminish with age for the participants in the study. Involving adults in their own programming at senior centers, church etc. not only provides the input of the customer but also provides needed information on relevance and practicality in terms of scheduling for energy and physical demands.

Programming across generations appears to be increasing. Children can go into nursing facilities; older adults can volunteer at the schools. One intergenerational community of fourth grade children and residents of an assisted living center in Florida met monthly for a year to make holiday wreaths. The wreaths were sold at a holiday event. The intergenerational group of both children and residents voted to donate the \$1000 profit to the local chapter of the Alzheimers Association. This provides a very practical example of productive activity and affiliation both identified as hope producing activities by the participants in the study.

Including special objects of meaning for the value of memories of significant events or people can be encouraged at a time when many older adults are downsizing their possessions. Including art or personal mementos can add quality to life at a time when these items can be truly enjoyed and appreciated. Objects that have provided

memories of positive experiences and people add richness and a sense of ownership to a new environment.

Providing an atmosphere of predictability, continuity, or a personal world that is “in order” was a theme repeated throughout the interviews. Celebrating the changing of the day, the week, the month, and the seasons of the year with plans, rituals, and conversation can accomplish much in this regard. Again, the awareness and the intentionality of providing the opportunity for the experiences discussed by the study participants themselves can make a difference in the quality of the life of older adults.

In addition, adult educators may find value in this study when planning educational opportunities for older adult students in both formal and informal educational settings. Intergenerational programs need older adults on the planning side as well as the recipient side. Most importantly, older adults need to be participants in the planning of their own environments, programs, and activities.

### Implications for Research

The Gaskins and Forte study after which this study was modeled identified the following themes: spirituality, relationships with others, having one’s health, having positive emotions, anticipating the future, equality/Justice, availability of resources, reminiscing/special memories/hope objects, being in a special place and providing service for others (Gaskins & Forte, 1995, p. 19). There were similarities in both the themes and the content of the interview material from participants in both studies.

However, this study contained interview material presented by the participants that did not lend itself the format of theme categorization. The story of the slippers, the

educational opportunities available at the Mosque and the stories of perseverance are examples of additional powerful material that stands alone. Describing hope exclusively by theme categorization proved too limiting for adequate explanation of experiences with hope expressed by the participants. Therefore, more qualitative studies in the form of observations or interviews with attention to design in order to capture creative ways of thinking or expressing ideas are recommended.

Older adults in Sweden participated in the more recent qualitative nursing research studies involving healthy older adults (Benzein et al., 1998; Benzein, 2000). Communication between investigators across cultures and between disciplines seems potentially useful as well as additional designs for research discussed above. The interest in multiple cultures and between generations provides opportunities for further investigations of hope at this very active older stage of life.

Manheimer (2000) provided a balanced statement between the newer trend of idealizing old age and the former negativity of growing old as he summarized the current position in respect to later life.

Redeeming the meaning of aging and later life is a mission in which we all have deeply vested interests . . . We are searching for meanings that bring new initiatives, that encourage deeper understanding, that inspire without looking at old age through rose-colored glasses. ( p. 6)

Every reference to hope and aging suggested that only the older person can know their experience with hope, meaning, and aging. It is a gift given to us if they choose to share that wisdom and take us along for the journey.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

APPROVAL FORM



Oklahoma State University  
Institutional Review Board

Protocol Expires: 6/21/02

Date: Friday, June 22, 2001

IRB Application No ED01128

Proposal Title: IMAGES OF HOPE FOR OLDER PERSONS

Principal  
Investigator(s):

Shirley Inglis  
8606 E. 30th  
Tulsa, OK 74129

Robert Nolan  
210 Willard  
Stillwater, OK 74078

Reviewed and  
Processed as: Expedited

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

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Dear PI :

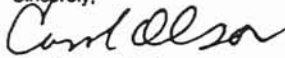
Your IRB application referenced above has been approved for one calendar year. Please make note of the expiration date indicated above. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Sharon Bacher, the Executive Secretary to the IRB, in 203 Whitehurst (phone: 405-744-5700, sbacher@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Carol Olson, Chair  
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION TO SOLICIT AND  
PERMISSION TO CONTACT

A PROJECT I *HOPE* YOU WILL ENJOY by Shirley (Williamson) Inglis

You have probably heard the phrase, "A picture is worth a thousand words." I am interested in what images/pictures add meaning or hope to life. In other words, when you look at a \_\_\_\_\_, it makes you feel good. As a personal example, the recent displays of American flags in the cemeteries during Memorial Day weekend and everywhere on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July caused me to feel good and hopeful.

The project involves identifying pictures/symbols/images that add a positive dimension to life. I am a graduate student at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. My main areas of study are health and adult education. I am also a registered nurse.

If you find pictures in your home or community that produce a hopeful feeling, those images are fine for this project. In addition, I will provide a disposable camera loaded with film and ask that you take a picture of images that give/produce positive feelings (or a sense of hope) for you personally. I'll pick up the camera in about 2 weeks and have the pictures developed. I will return all of the pictures and negatives you have taken to you.

No specific number of pictures is needed but if you could identify around 10 images that would be helpful. The disposable camera will hold up to 24 pictures. If you would like to take 2 or more pictures of the same image that is fine. These may also be pictures in books, on your walls, or an image in your everyday surroundings.

I will contact you for a time to discuss the pictures with you. This brief interview should take no longer than 15 minutes but may take longer if you would like. During that interview, I will use a tape recorder so that I can concentrate on the conversation without having to record information in writing. After the information has been reviewed, the tapes will be destroyed. No personal information will be kept identifying you to this project. I will provide my information as well as the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of two other persons at Oklahoma State University who can answer questions about this project. Please call with questions at any time.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Thank you for your willingness to consider participating in this meaningful project.

Sincerely,

Shirley Inglis

## CONSENT FORM

**I, \_\_\_\_\_, would like to participate in the project conducted by Shirley Inglis as part of her graduate studies at Oklahoma State University.**

**This project is designed to explore the individual experience of hope in the lives of persons 65 years of age or older who live in the community.**

**Each participant will be provided with an automatic disposable camera loaded with film. During the 2 weeks following the receiving of their camera, the participant may photograph or find pictures or symbols of hope that are meaningful to them personally.**

**Shirley Inglis will then develop the photos and send them back to the participants (along with the negatives). She will contact the participants to schedule a follow-up interview to discuss the experience of hope and meaning guided by the pictures/photos they chose.**

**There are no known risks involved. To protect confidentiality no names, addresses, phone numbers or identifying locations will be used or given to anyone.**

**Participants may stop at any point during the two weeks if they choose to do so. All pictures and negatives will be sent to the participants.**

**Page 2—Contacts**

**If you have questions or would like other information, you may contact:**

1. Shirley Inglis (918) 663-9293 (Principal researcher)  
8606 E. 30<sup>th</sup> St.  
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Singlis904@aol.com
  
2. Oklahoma State University  
Sharon Bacher  
203 Whitehurst  
University Research Compliance  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-1020  
(405) 744-5700
  
3. Dr. Robert Nolan (Advisor to principal researcher)  
School of Educational Studies  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, OK 74078  
(405) 744-7758

Thank you for your help with this project.

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(405) 744-7758

Thank you for your help with this project.

APPENDIX C

BASIC QUESTIONS

Follow up Interview Questions:

Initially, participants will be asked to give their personal definition of hope.

Using each picture taken/identified by an individual participant to guide the interview, the following questions will be asked.

1. Please describe each picture.
2. Why was it chosen?
3. In what way does it cause you to experience a sense/feeling of hope?
4. Is there anything else you would like to add about this picture?

Thank you again for your participation.

(This is the process and question format for follow-up interviews used in the study by Gaskins & Forte, 1995.)



APPENDIX D

PHOTOGRAPHS

**NATURE**

**Watching birdhouse for bird's return--  
predictability**

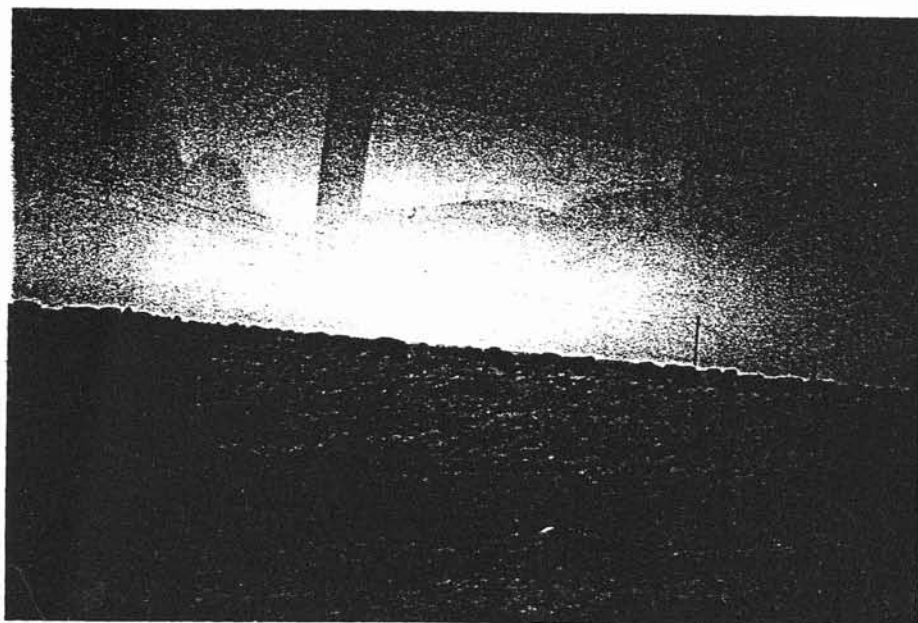
**Surprise lilies--predictability**

**Fall trees—Growth, harvest**

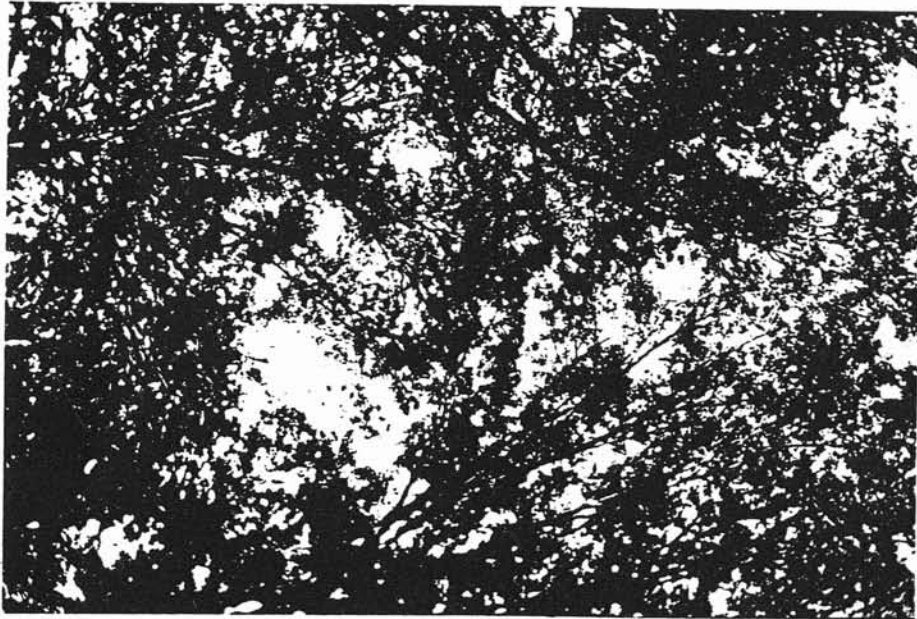
**Rose from parents home--continuity**



**“...I wanted a picture of a flower that was withstanding the drought. You know, as we get older we hang on as long as we can. This is the one with just one flower left on it.”**



**“I think nature has a way of overcoming a lot of difficulties that we have with our own life. I guess the fact that this goes on and on. To me this is very comforting...The buffalo (bison), I was just surprised to see them all.” (December 3, 2001)**



“One day I was sitting there gazing up at these trees. They meet overhead and all of a sudden I realized that these trees have protected us all of these years that we have been here through storms and things like that. They have always been there....” (December 3, 2001).

**PRODUCTIVITY**

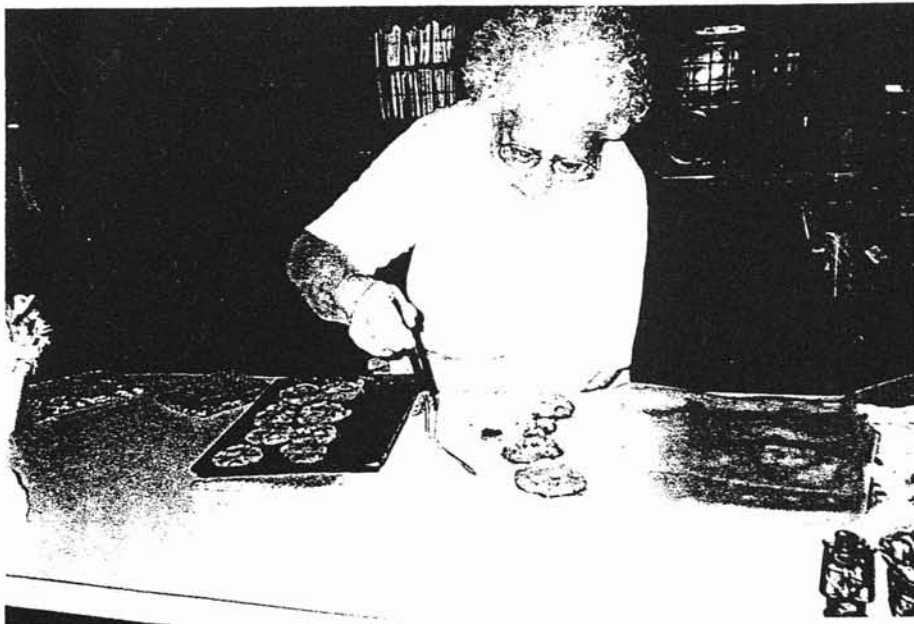
**Baking for church sale**

**Needlepoint for shared project**

**Sharing flowers**

**Lot for Sale—Complete business ventures**

**Senior Center--Planning Intergenerational Programs**



**SPIRITUAL SYMBOLS**

**Sun coming out of clouds—Life Everlasting**

**Rainbow—God's Promise**

**Bible**

**Cross**



**WORSHIP EXPERIENCE**

**Own Congregation—Continuity in Community**

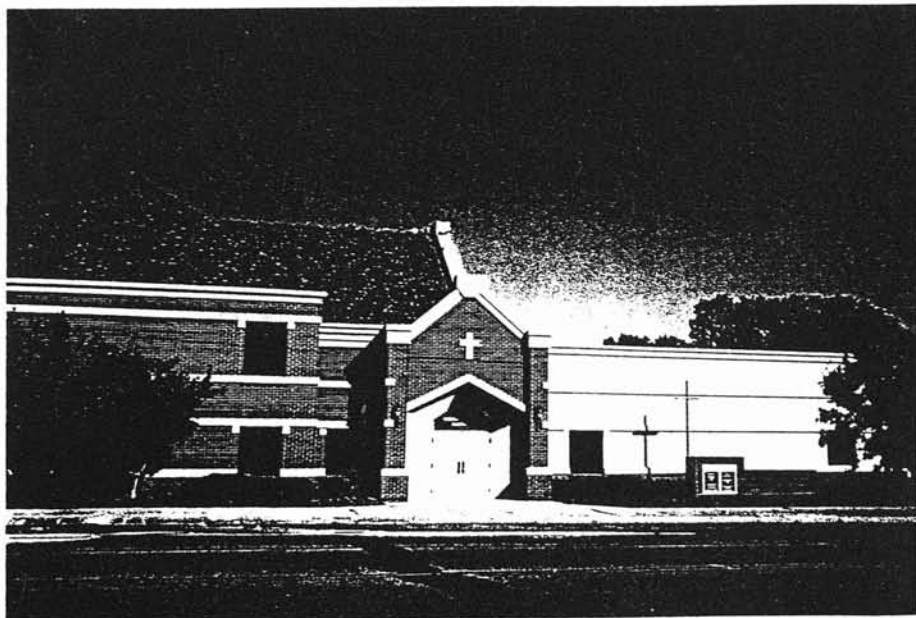
**Minister—Devotion to Christianity**

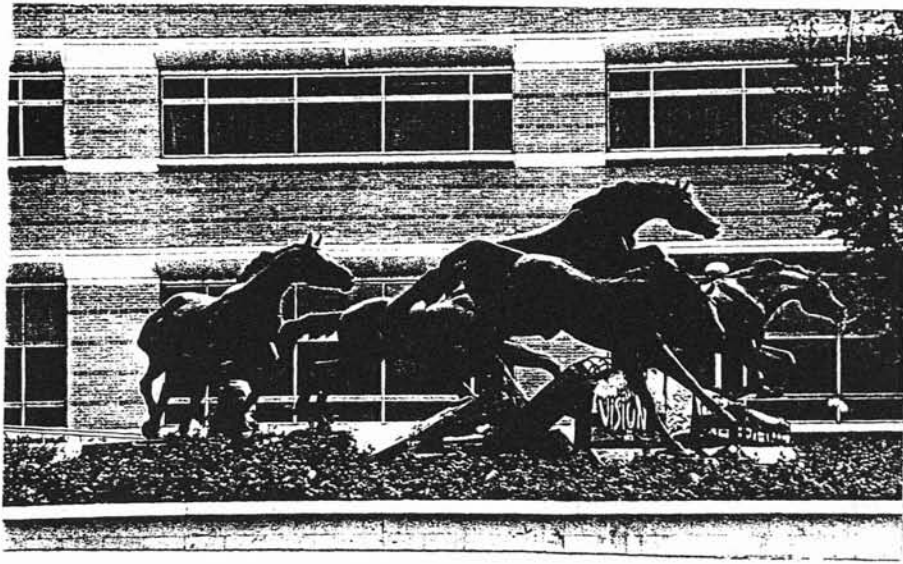
**Church—the Building**

**Children's Sermon**

**Children's Choir**

**Particular Church Family**





**“This picture was taken at the Bush library in Texas. These are wild horses. This happens to mean freedom to me”. (January 2002)**



**Birthday cards—being remembered**

**Best friend—unconditional acceptance**

**Intergenerational cooperation**

**Grandchildren—contribution**



**“We are grateful for this—because a lot a people remember our birthdays. We both have birthdays in December so we take our cards and line them up. It makes me feel good” (January 14, 2002).**

**NEW BEGINNINGS**

**New Baby**

**Farming—New Growth**

**New House**

**Blooming Flowers—Increased Beauty by  
Changing Locations**



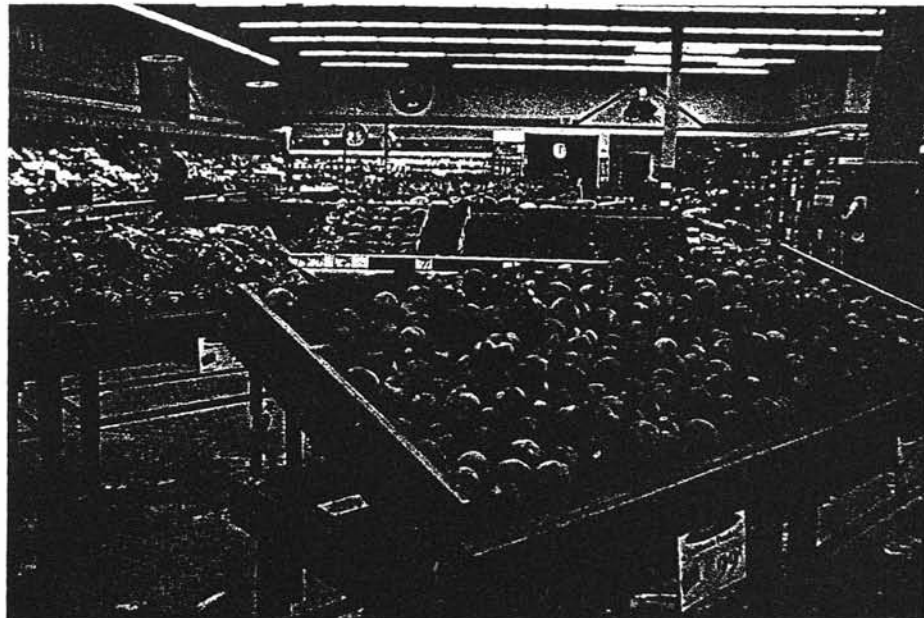
**LIFE IS EASIER WITH CONVENIENCES**

**Water, Electricity, Oil**

**Bountiful food**

**Air Conditioning**

**Bathrooms**



“...This reminded me of the abundance we have....Unlike other countries, we have choices....”

(October 20, 2001)

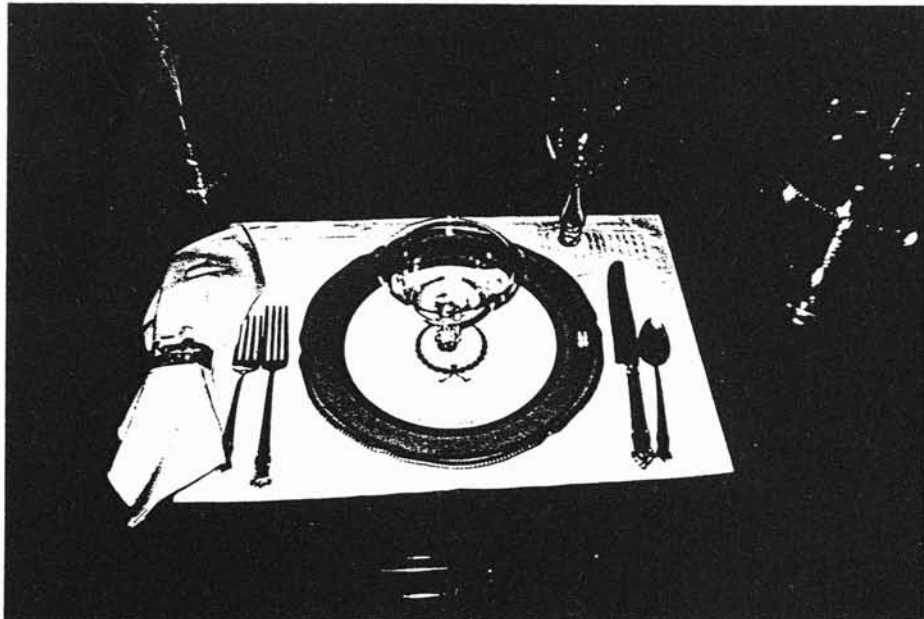
**HOPE OBJECTS**

**Art Museum—Children and Art**

**Beautiful Garden/Home—Planned for  
Comfort/Sanctuary**

**Crystal/China—Good Memories**

**Choir—Creation of Music**



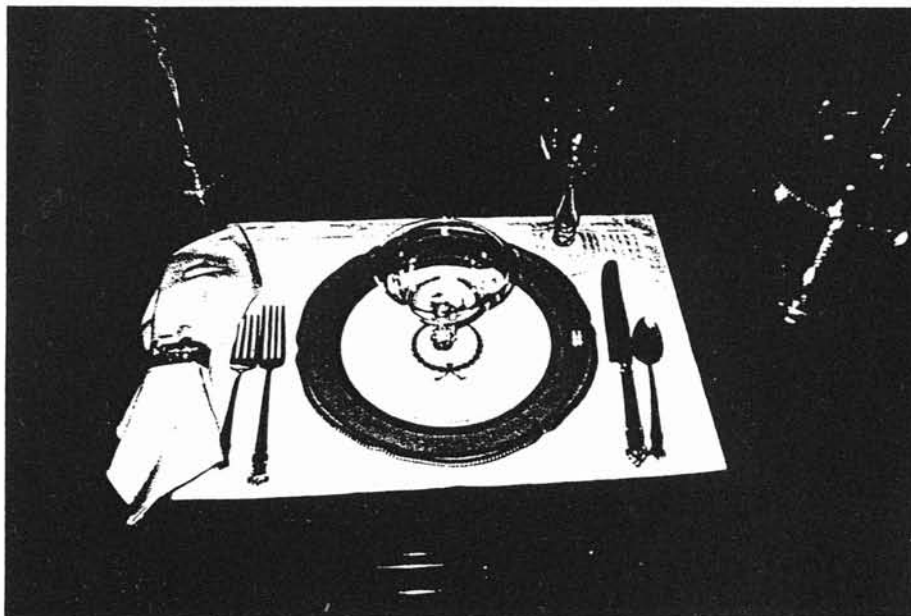
## **HOPE OBJECTS**

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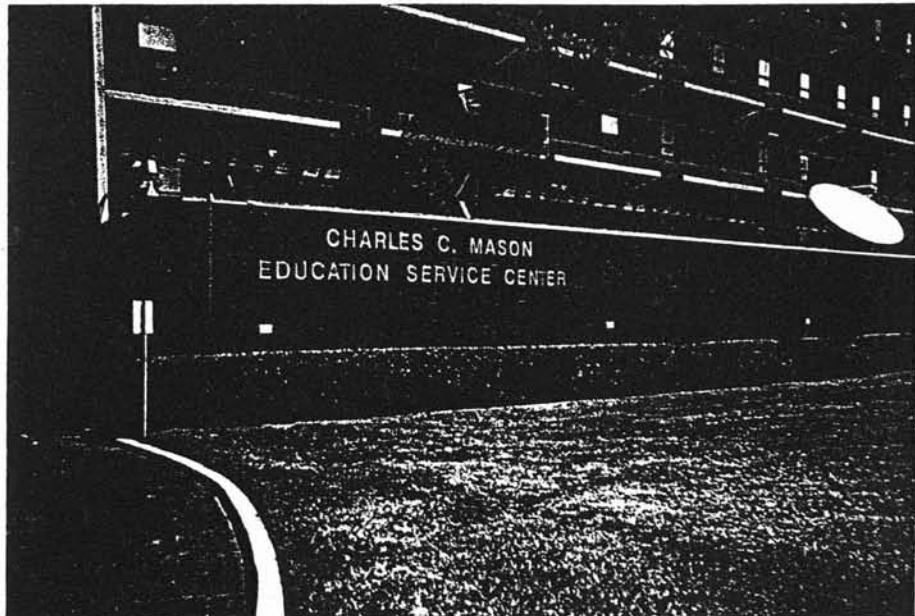


**KNOWLEDGE/LIFE LONG LEARNING**

**Books—Continual Learning**

**Schools**

**Education Center—Education**



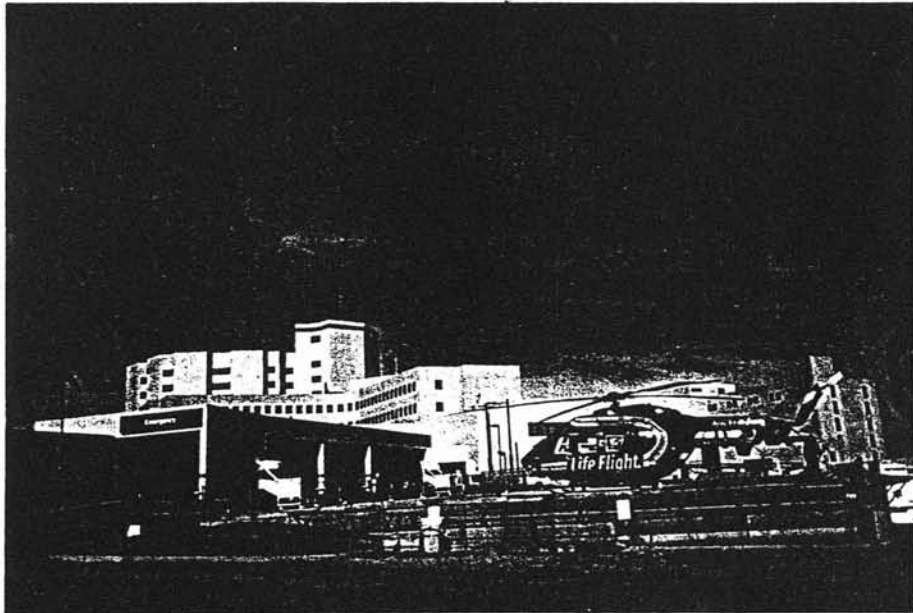
**HELP**

**Hospital/Life Flight Helicopter**

**Doctor**

**Handicapped Accessible sign**

**Assisted Living**





VITA

Shirley D. Inglis

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: HOPE AS EXPERIENCED IN THE LIVES OF OLDER ADULTS

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Education: Graduated from Mulvane High School, Mulvane, Kansas in May 1964; received Bachelor of Science degree in Health Education from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December 1980. Completed the requirements for the Master of Science degree with a major in Occupational and Adult Education with an emphasis in Adult Education and a Certificate in Gerontology in May 2002.

Experience: Registered Nurse since 1967; employed by Visiting Nurse Association of St. Louis, Missouri; Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Wellness Center, Oklahoma State University, Health Training Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Children's Medical Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma; Long Term Care Authority, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Professional Memberships: Southwest Society on Aging, Phi Kappa Phi.