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THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE ELDERLY IN TWO
INDIAN COMMUNITIES.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, PH.D., 1978

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE ELDERLY
IN TWO INDIAN COMMUNITIES

A DISSERTATION
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degree of
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BY
MARJORIE GARDNER SCHWEITZER

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1978

THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE ELDERLY
IN TWO INDIAN COMMUNITIES

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PREFACE

My interest in the lives of elderly Indians grew out of my concern for the lives of several elderly people that I have known. Their experiences of growing old in America reflect some of the alternatives available in our contemporary society. In categorizing these alternatives from the point of view of kinship, four different patterns emerge. One person, whose life spanned the last half of the 19th century and the first 45 years of the 20th century, lived out the last years of her long life in her own home in a small town in Nebraska. She lived an independent life but one which included important kinship ties with two of her four children who remained all of their lives in the same small community.

Another person, a widow, worked to support herself and her daughter for many years. After she retired she lived the rest of her life (to age 85) with a married daughter and her family. Kinship ties with daughters in other states were kept alive by frequent visits. Both of these women kept their kinship ties intact although the solutions were somewhat different.

One couple chose sunny Florida for their retirement years where they lived in their own home until the age of

80. Florida was many miles away from the homes of their daughters, grandchildren and other relatives and visits were few and far between.

The fourth pattern is illustrated by a person who lives today in a nursing home in the same town where she lived for many years with her late husband. She is far from any of her own kin, no longer productive and very much alone. Her own home has been sold and someone manages her business affairs for her. Her isolation from relatives is no more in miles than the Florida couple's was but a good deal more in terms of life in general.

Reflecting on these patterns prompted me to wonder about the solutions other groups of people make to the experience of old age. My long-standing interest in the history and culture of American Indians and my concern for elderly people resulted in a research design aimed at finding out what it was like to be an aged person in a contemporary Indian community. The research was initially begun in the summer of 1974 in a Student Originated Studies project funded by the National Science Foundation involving several researchers and several Indian communities. Subsequently research which focused on two Indian communities located in north central Oklahoma resulted in the data presented here.

I began my study of the roles and attitudes of Indian elderly by calling upon an elderly couple in one of the nearby communities. The woman was a member of the Oto tribe

and the man, the Ioway tribe. They received me courteously and generously and over the four years that I have known them have never failed to make me feel welcome. I have talked to many people in both Indian communities but I am especially indebted to this couple and their family who were always willing to invite me to their homes and to include me in their activities.

Two factors affecting the data are worth mentioning. First, as any anthropologist knows, the information that a person receives about a certain topic is determined in part by the willingness or lack of it on the part of the respondents. Certain avenues may be closed to the researcher because of friction and factionalism within the chosen community. Certainly this was true in these communities. The population used in gathering the field work data was not as inclusive or varied as originally planned. The data presented are based on that supplied by several key respondents, but the avenues to some of these persons were eventually closed because of tribal factionalism which penetrated even closely related families.

Secondly, the research data reveal generalizations which reflect the more traditionally oriented members of each tribal group who have chosen to remain in or return to their communities. There are many tribal members who live either in other Oklahoma towns or in other states. The extent to which these people participate in the activities

and attitudes described in this study is difficult to estimate but obviously cannot be on the same level as for those who remain.

Two important features of these Indian communities stand out. One is the extensive and complicated network of social relationships which exists both within and among these and other Indian communities. The second is the very evident and secure position that elderly people hold within that framework, often appearing as a firm foundation on which younger members of the family depend. Not only do people profess to honor and respect and look up to their elderly relatives and friends--their behavior puts these expressions into action.

Although the communities and tribal affiliations are as named in the study, the names and identities of individuals are disguised out of respect for their privacy. The attitudes and behaviors represented here are authentic.

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THE POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE ELDERLY
IN TWO INDIAN COMMUNITIES

CHAPTER I

THE PROJECT AND THE METHOD

The Need for Research on Minority Aged

A review of anthropological, sociological and gerontological literature reveals two important areas in the study of the elderly which need further research. First, there are few data about the elderly members of minority groups in the United States. Of those reports on minority elderly only a few are concerned with the position of the elderly in American Indian communities. Munsell (1972:127-132) extracted data from a study of the changing economy in a Pima Maricopa community in Arizona to test four hypotheses related to the status of the aged. The assumptions were that the status of the aged will be higher in: 1) extended family arrangements, 2) where residence units are stable, 3) where the aged effectively control land, and 4) where the aged perform useful functions. His data from the Pima

Maricopa community suggest that the first hypothesis is supported, that the second and third hypotheses are refuted, and that the fourth is true for women but not for men.

Levy (1967:221-238) summarized the effects of change on the role and status of contemporary aged Navajo. Economic changes have resulted in the destruction of the productive and economic roles of the elderly, resulting in a concomitant loss of power and prestige, although in isolated areas of the reservation where the matrilineal extended family still exists and pastoral pursuits continue, older traditional Navajos appear to maintain a position of prestige.

Most of the data on old people, however, are derived from research which has been done on middle-class Anglo-Americans. As Moore states, generalizations about elderly people are ". . . based on the study of a limited sample--primarily middle-majority Anglos" (1971:88).

Second, aside from the cross-cultural analysis by Simmons (1945) on 71 preliterate societies which correlates cultural factors (such as subsistence pattern, social organization and political organization) to the roles of the aged and the prestige accorded them, only a few contemporary studies attempt to use data from different societies to arrive at cross-cultural generalizations (see Cowgill and Holmes, 1972). One of the reasons for this failure is the lack of data with which to make these kinds of generaliza-

tions.

Anthropologists have gathered data which illuminate various social institutions. Correlations have been made between social organization and economic adaptation. For example, the band is the basic unit of social organization in strictly hunting and gathering societies. Elderly tribal members of preliterate societies have been relied on as informants for the ethnographic reconstruction of these cultural patterns, but the position of aged people has not been a subject for investigation as such. What we know about the roles and attitudes of the elderly has been gleaned from data in general ethnographic descriptions which were not primarily concerned with the aged. The little that is found in ethnographies about the roles of the aged emphasizes the aged male role but often leaves us to guess what roles and attitudes were prescribed for the women.

Factors Influencing the Roles of Elderly Americans

Cultural and historical factors are as important as biological factors in determining whether old age is a stage in life that is anticipated and desired or one that is regarded with dread and misgiving (Anderson and Clark 1967: 3; Anderson 1972:210). Attitudes toward old age and the roles of old people vary from society to society and are related to the subsistence patterns as well as the social structure and ideology which prevail. That is to say, every

culture has ". . . an 'appropriate' way to age" (Kent 1971: 26).

Clark and Anderson (1967:13-18), in looking at a segment of American aged, have suggested that four factors have been of principal importance in shaping what they call the normlessness of these old Americans. These factors, historical and cultural in nature, have been instrumental in determining the current status of American aged. The four factors are:

1. Mobility of individuals and families, from the early colonial period to modern times, has weakened the kinship ties of the family, resulting in the reduction of the familial roles of the aged.
2. Rapid industrial and technological changes quickly make obsolete the older person's technical knowledge and skills. This "progress" increasingly excludes older people from significant productive roles; as a result they are considered, and consider themselves, to be of little value in today's society. Rapidly changing social norms and values also contribute to the sense of uselessness and alienation associated with the older person.
3. There are increasing numbers of elderly people in the United States resulting in a continually

expanding percentage of the total population who are considered old.

4. A strong emphasis on productivity in the American value system makes it difficult for the elderly to feel needed. Even though persons in their sixties may be physically and mentally capable of continuing productive work, they are relegated to the classificatory status of old.

Clark and Anderson's research shows that the roles of old people in the family and the community, the extent to which old people are respected and valued, and how care is provided for them have all been and continue to be affected by these four factors: mobility, obsolescence of knowledge, longevity, and the high value placed on productivity.

The Aged in Indian Communities

In the summer of 1974 a research team addressed the problem of how Indian communities in Oklahoma defined, treated and cared for their elderly members. In essence, the question considered was: what is it like to be Indian and to be old? Preliminary research was done in several Indian communities (Schweitzer and Williams, 1975), the results of which suggested that aging in an Oklahoma Indian community offers important contrasts to the trends which were illustrated in Clark and Anderson's study (and in other

studies of old Americans). The preliminary research suggested the following thesis: Although the people of Indian communities have experienced rapid and extreme culture change during the past 150 years, a social structure and set of values and ideals nonetheless continue to exist which support and foster a position of prestige, power and respect for elderly people.

The preliminary research also suggested the need for further inquiry into the lives of Indian elderly to better understand and define the roles they play and the attitudes held toward them. Two Indian communities were selected for continued research concerning the contemporary position of the elderly: the Oto-Missouri (usually referred to as Oto) community at Red Rock and the Ioway community at Perkins--both in north central Oklahoma. Approximately 980 Oto live in or near Red Rock, although the tribal roll lists about 1500 members (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1970). The Oklahoma Ioway 1975 roll numbers 273 persons with around 80 persons living in or near Perkins. The Oto and Ioway are predominantly rural groups and are closely associated with each other. In addition to the historical and linguistic ties which they share, many have intermarried and they frequently participate in each other's tribal activities.

The Hypotheses

The information gathered in the preliminary research indicated several assumptions about Indian aged which could be used as a basis for gathering more detailed data. The trends which were indicated in the preliminary research are expressed in six hypotheses and reflect assumptions about existing social structure and ideology in these communities as well as historical and cultural changes which have occurred. More explicitly stated the hypotheses assume the persistence of a viable, strong social structure and a still-functioning ideology encompassing values and world view which support the aged through prestige and power even though many changes have taken place.

Hypothesis 1. The concept of elderly or aged in the Indian community is based on a functional rather than on a formal definition.

Hypothesis 2. While industrialization and technological changes increasingly result in less need for the elderly person's knowledge and skill in the performance of significant roles, elderly Indians are respected for their knowledge about traditional ways.

Hypothesis 3. Although the positive attitudes

towards elderly people subscribed to by younger Indians reflect an ideal pattern which is not always expressed in actual behavior, old age and old people are nonetheless positively valued in the Indian community.

Hypothesis 4. While generational differences in attitudes about the position of the elderly are found, the Indian aged still retain roles of prestige and power within their families and in the community.

Hypothesis 5. Although internal migration and increased mobility have resulted in a weakening of kinship ties in the Indian family, Indian communities have viable, active social structures which support the elderly individual.

Hypothesis 6. In spite of the fact that increased longevity and a rise in the numbers of old Indian people create problems that make care of the aged more difficult, Indians take care of their own elderly rather than turn

to an outside social agency such as
a rest home or nursing home.

Succintly summarized, the hypotheses focus on the following: a definition of old age, respect for the elderly Indian's knowledge, the value placed on the old person, the roles of the elderly, family relationships of the elderly and the care of old people. All of these dimensions are viewed within the context of the Indian family and community and refer specifically to the two communities under study.

American Aged and the Hypotheses

Anderson (1972:209-216) makes some generalizations about the aged in American society based on her research into the four factors affecting the position of the aged in contemporary society (Clark and Anderson, 1967). In her discussion of American old age she considers each of the dimensions expressed in the above six hypotheses proposed for the present study on Indian aged. Although direct comparison to American aged in general is not practical for several reasons, it is instructive to review the comments and conclusions regarding the place of old people in American society because they provide a contrast with the thrust of the hypotheses concerning Indian aged. Direct comparison with Anderson's analysis of American aged is not feasible partly because several variables are not comparable; for example, the Indian aged in this study are basically a

rural population while the population used in Clark and Anderson's study lived in an urban environment (1967:33). The background of the Indian population being studied represents a relatively homogeneous societal and cultural environment whereas the population Clark and Anderson studied exhibits heterogeneity--they are Americans with varying cultural backgrounds, for example, Greek, Swiss or English (1967:38-39, 41, 68). About one-third of the urban informants were born in Europe (1967:71). Part of the Indian population does share with some of the urban population the condition of being classed as poor, although the ramifications of being a poor elderly Indian are different from being a poor urban aged person, as will be shown further on.

Definition of the Elderly

Societies identify who is to be included in the category of "old." Definitions of old age can be characterized as: 1) formal definition based on chronological age, or 2) a functional definition based on various attributes that are achieved by the aged.

Anderson asserts that the definition of the elderly in middle-class America is a formal one:

. . . in the United States we have widespread social acceptance of a formal rather than a functional definition of old age. 'Old' means being over sixty-five. 'Old' applies to people arbitrarily retired from the responsibilities and economic activities of adult life, sometimes two decades before they experience serious functional impairment (1972:212).

The prevailing definitions of old age among Oklahoma Indian communities are found to be functional, having little or nothing to do with a person's chronological age (Schweitzer and Williams, 1975:3-4).

The Elderly Person's Knowledge

The speed with which technological changes and industrialization have increased has resulted in a condition for many middle-class American elderly in which:

. . . they are a lost generation in the sense that they are carriers of a defunct or dying culture. In the thirty or forty years since the world revolved around them as the initiating, active, decisive young adult population, the content of our world has changed significantly. Material culture is vastly different. The content of knowledge has snowballed. Ways of living, the pace and orientation of life--all have changed. And as a consequence, the mainsprings of personal motivation, of social, religious and philosophical stances are greatly different too (Anderson 1972:211).

No one would argue that Indian communities have remained immune to these changes. Certainly American Indian communities have undergone at least as much if not more kinds and greater rapidity of change in the past 150 years than even middle-class American society. The hypothesis asserts that in spite of these tremendous changes, the elderly people in Indian communities are respected for the knowledge they have, particularly about traditional ways. This is not an assertion that the traditional tribal ways have remained unchanged but that old people receive respect for sharing the tribal knowledge they do possess.

Value Placed on the Elderly

Older Americans are often no longer positively valued as old people or even as people. Anderson rather graphically expressed this devaluation:

. . . we have succeeded in making them (the old) invisible The quality . . . communicated (by old people) was one of being ill-defined, out-in-left-field, sitting in an empty theatre when the actual performance is next door (1972:213).

In contrast to the lack of value for many older Americans, it is suggested that the Indian communities provide expressions of positive value toward their old people in both behavioral and verbal commitments.

Roles of the Elderly

With regard to the roles of the elderly, Anderson aptly expressed the situation in which older Americans find themselves as they approach old age:

People entering old age in the United States . . . are statusless. There is no consensus as to how precisely they can continue or develop links with other men. We hold up no goals for them, no attainable, much less rewardable, ends of behavior . . . the 'role-less' role of the aged . . . is dramatized (1972:212).

Preliminary evidence indicated that the Indian communities provide a social structure which supports viable roles for elderly both within the family and the community.

Kinship Ties

Many older Americans find themselves scattered far and wide in the United States, and even though transporta-

tion facilities make visiting within the realm of possibility, many children grow up with only occasional contact with their grandparents. We are separated from the older generations in space as well as in time and perception.

The suggestion is made that the Indian communities--in spite of the effects of mobility and migration--provide a strong center which draws toward it even those who have either permanently or temporarily moved away. Social events of the community as well as family occasions bring families together, further supporting the elderly individual. It is frequently the case that the younger people who have moved away for a few years come back to the community to live to be close to Indian friends and relatives.

Care of the Elderly

The proliferation of rest homes, nursing homes, senior citizen apartments and retirement villages for the aged attests to the fact that:

. . . the old have become social phantoms, and like phantoms, they make us uncomfortable. We relegate them to white-sheeted habitats where they (and we) feel more comfortable among their kind; we send them to golden-age homes, antechambers to eternity If they must live among us, we at best divorce ourselves emotionally from this growingly intrusive group of people who--like the poor-- seem always to be with us /We have tucked/ them away in prairie resthomes out of the path (and sight) of urban communities (Anderson 1972:212-213).

The data indicate that in Indian communities the elderly are cared for in their own homes or in the homes of their close

relatives. Only on very rare occasions are the elderly relegated to a resthome. Indians not only prefer to take care of their own but they do take care of their own.

The Method

The methods used for gathering data were: 1) informal interviews, 2) participant observation, and 3) ethnohistorical research. While a few informants were the major sources for interview data, interviews with about 30 people from both tribes provided information on various aspects of elderly roles and attitudes. An interview schedule (Appendix A) was used as a guide to the kinds of questions needed to obtain information which would test the hypotheses. Interviews were unstructured and extremely informal. No notes were taken during the interviews nor was any taping done except for music at handgames or pow wows.

Participant observation was an important source of information. The events where observation took place were: handgames, pow wows, craft shows, church meetings, prayer meetings, senior citizens meetings, language classes, and funerals. Observation also took place during informal visits in people's homes.

Ethnohistorical data were obtained from written sources, including government documents, in the Edmon Low Library, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, and the Bizzell Library, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

Some insights into factors impinging upon the aged were acquired by talking with Bureau of Indian Affairs officials.

CHAPTER II

THE ELDERLY IN PRE-RESERVATION

OTO AND IOWAY CULTURE

Introduction

This chapter presents the traditional roles and attitudes of the aged in pre-reservation Oto and Ioway culture. The data provide the background against which the cultural continuity and change in the roles and attitudes of contemporary aged may be assessed.

Information regarding the roles of old people and especially the attitudes toward old age is limited. The data contained in this chapter are taken primarily from the work of William Whitman who interviewed Oto people in the 1930's (1937) and from Alanson Skinner's Ethnology of the Ioway Indians (1926) which contains data gathered in the early 1920's. Whitman's informants were in their 70's and represented the immediate descendants of Oto who had participated in pre-reservation culture. Skinner's data also came from recollections of older Indians. Since Whitman and Skinner were gathering data for a general ethnography, the

information relating to the position of old people must be culled largely from the general descriptions of the culture. Some accounts of early attitudes and roles were obtained from contemporary Oto and Ioway who recalled what they knew or had heard about the position of elderly people in the pre-reservation period.

The Historical Background

The Oto, Missouri and Ioway tribes share a long-standing relationship. Legendary history locates these three groups in prehistoric times with the Winnebago in a region north of the Great Lakes (Hodge 1907:612, 911). Early documents indicate that these tribes were never very far apart as they gradually migrated southward and westward. In the late 1600's and in the 1700's the Ioway located eventually in what is now the state of Iowa (Wedel MS:9). The Missouri settled in northern Missouri and the Oto resided in Nebraska near the Platte River just west of the Missouri River (Thwaites 1905:131-133; Hodge 1907:911). Late in the 1700's the Missouri, after having been depleted by depredations and warfare, amalgamated with the Oto and shared their villages along the Platte River (Nasatir 1952, V.1:261).

By 1854 the Oto-Missouri had ceded all of their land with the exception of a small tract on the Big Blue River. This tract became their reservation which they occupied from

1855 to 1880 (Kappler 1904 Vol. II:608-611). Bowing to continual white pressure for possession of their land, the tribe moved to Indian Territory in 1881 to a reservation located just south of the Ponca Reservation in the north central section of the Territory (Chapman 1964:139, 141). Although not in favor of allotment, the Oto-Missouri eventually accepted allotments between 1891 and 1899. It is in the region of the former Oklahoma reservation that almost two-thirds (about 970) of the tribe reside today.

The Ioway were placed on a reservation west of the Missouri River in 1837 where they remained until the late 1870's (Kappler 1904, 2:518-519). Approximately one-half of the Ioway on the Kansas-Nebraska reservation moved to a reservation in Indian Territory where they ultimately agreed to allotments in 1890 (Chapman 1936:474; Chapman 1943:366-371). The Ioway who resisted removal and remained in Kansas and Nebraska were allotted in 1894 (Kappler 1904, 1:228-229; 245). About 80 Ioway live in Oklahoma on or near their old reservation. The Ioway living near Horton, Kansas, list 1467 on the tribal roll.

The Cultural Background

Early documents indicate that the Ioway and Oto were sedentary horticulturists who also depended on the hunting of bison and the gathering of wild plants. The basic agricultural products were beans, corn, squash and pumpkins. With the advent of the horse the tribes engaged in bi-annual

hunts typical of the Plains area.

The permanent Oto villages contained large earth lodges which housed more than one family (Bradbury 1817:56-57; Whitman 1937:2). Skin tipis provided shelter during the hunting season in the summer (Whitman 1937:1). Ioway villages contained bark-covered or mat-covered rectangular Woodland style houses in addition to the earth lodge (Skinner 1926:271-277).

The social structure of both groups was based on patrilineal exogamous clans which were formed of four lineages each (Skinner 1926:193; Whitman 1937:15, 18). The Buffalo clan provided leadership for one-half of the year including the hunt in the spring. The Bear clan provided the leadership for the other half of the year including the fall bison hunt (Skinner 1926:200-201; Whitman 1937:7).

Social status was determined by one's rank in a system of classes which cross-cut the lineage system. The most prestigious and affluent group was that of the chiefs, who held the ultimate authority in the tribe. The second class status was composed of warriors, and their families, who had been invested with secular or supernatural power. These powers were hereditary and thus it was not easy for a person to move from one group to another. The third class was composed of the common people--those who were poorer in material wealth and who had limited rights in ceremonies (Whitman 1937:35-37; Skinner 1936:190; Wedel MS:3).

The clan was a decentralized social organization which was apparent primarily in marriage preferences and in ceremonial duties. The individual had a strong personal identification with his clan and his lineage but it was through close family members that he found immediate and continual expression of his membership. It was in the family where sanctions and obligations became apparent and it was the family which socialized the individual (Whitman 1937:42-43; Wedel MS:3).

Political leadership revolved around the hereditary chiefs which each clan possessed (Whitman 1937:36-37). The Bear clan was the largest and most powerful clan and it was from this clan that the tribal chief came (Whitman 1937:15, 20; Skinner 1926:199). The tribal chief and a council of seven clan heads constituted the basic political organization of the tribes. Headship was inherited by the son or grandson who was qualified to assume the position. Even the inheritance of power was held by the family; vision power was passed on to a man's son, a brother's son or the nearest grandson (Whitman 1937:101).

Rituals permeated the secular and religious life of the tribes. Ceremonies were connected with life cycle events such as birth and death. The solidarity and perpetuation of the tribe as a group were focused on by use of ceremonies such as The Buffalo Doctor's Lodge and the Medicine Lodge. Interpreting the group's relationship with the

supernatural was a function of ritual. Higher ranking individuals particularly the men, were involved with ritual and ceremonialism as their special prerogative (Skinner 1926: 242-243; Whitman 1937:85-127).

The Elderly in Pre-Reservation Oto and Ioway Society

In 1945 Leo Simmons published a comparative study of the aged in 71 preliterate groups in different areas of the world. His analysis correlated the relationship of the different elements of culture to the status of aged people. His research shows that the roles, prestige and power of the elderly are differentially affected by the society's technological and technoeconomic adaptation, by its political structure, social structure, and ideology. Within each of these subsystems of culture there are ways in which the old people of a given society can establish and perpetuate varying amounts of power and prestige.

Simmons' analysis provides a useful model by which the roles and attitudes of pre-reservation Oto and Ioway aged may be presented. The model specifically provides a way to determine the position or status of the aged members of the Ioway and Oto tribes in their pre-reservation society when they were following a way of life based on bison hunting and agriculture: that is, to determine whether the aged obtained and maintained power and prestige and the nature and extent of that power and prestige.

It is difficult to separate for discussion cultural

institutions because of their interconnectedness. For example, the characteristics of the economic system and its ramifications for the aged cannot be analyzed completely separately from the political organization and the attributes of generosity required of a political leader. That is to say, the subsistence pattern or adaptation to the environment is strongly intertwined with the type of political organization and leadership. The resultant society has certain implications for the position of the elderly. The following discussions of the roles, power and prestige of the Oto and Ioway elderly in pre-reservation culture will be presented in Simmons' categories although it is recognized that because of the nature of culture one attribute will necessarily fit under more than one category.

The categories to be used are as follows: assurance of food, property rights, prestige and respect, general activities, political and civil activities, the use of knowledge, magic and religion, functions of the family and reactions to death.

Assurance of Food

Simmons generalized that a dominant theme existing among old people in different societies all around the world is the desire to live a long time. Long life assumes most importantly an adequate supply of food (1945:20). Aged people everywhere face the increasingly difficult problem of

acquiring that food. It is difficult for urbanized aged Americans to get to the store and to prepare their own food even if they have money. It is also difficult for aged members of a hunting society or an agricultural society to face the rigors of the hunt or to continue the hard labor necessary to till the soil. Thus the assurance of food for elderly people becomes an important factor in their ability to achieve a long life. In societies where surplus food was not abundant and where group survival ultimately depended upon the sharing of food, particularly in times of scarcity, sharing also assumed an important role in the survival of the aged. Communal sharing of food has been the strongest in environments that are harsh and where the food supply is less constant (Simmons 1945:32-33). Hunting societies usually occupy these types of locales. For example, the food acquired in the Plains communal bison hunt was equally divided among all the families who participated in the hunt. However, the aged people unable to hunt at all were also included among those who received from the successful hunters (Hoebel and Frost 1976:251).

Assurance of Food Among Oto and Ioway

Oto tribal custom required that for a man to be accepted as a good leader he must be kind and generous to the old people. It was his duty to see that the old people were protected and cherished. He was charged with seeing

that the most basic of needs was met; that is to say, no one, especially the old and the infirm, was permitted to be without food (Whitman 1937:36).

When a young man first killed a deer or some other animal it was customary for him to have the head cooked and to present it to an old man. Whitman's informant recited such an example:

. . . my grandfather had a fine horse. This horse was admired everywhere. A Sac-and-Fox came to buy it. Grandfather would not let it go. He said it was for his grandchildren. The Sac-and-Fox offered three horses for it; then he put up his buckskin leggins, and finally his rifle. Then the old man gave in. 'It will be for your good,' he said to me. 'You are just about the right age. Bring back a deer's head so I can eat it.' So I got the gun. The first thing a man shoots he must have the head cooked for some old man to eat (as quoted by Whitman 1937:6).

Besides the communal sharing from successful hunters and the special honor of receiving part of a young man's first kill, there were other opportunities for reciprocity which specifically benefitted the elderly. Old storytellers were given pecan candy and other sweets when asked to tell the winter-telling tales. At a naming ceremony or an adoption ceremony in which elderly people played special roles a feast usually was prepared to which the participants were invited and honored (Whitman 1937:58, 64; Curtis 1930:155). There were other ceremonial occasions where the aged had specific roles to play and as a result were beneficiaries of the immediate sharing of food. These occasions included

life cycle rites at birth, marriage and death, and religious ceremonies.

Old men performed special roles during the bison hunt as the leader of the hunt and as the crier who made announcements concerning the hunt. After these specific duties were finished, these old men held a sacred feast (Whitman 1937:10). Old people were singled out by wealthy hunters to receive a horse on occasions when a son or daughter was being honored or when celebrating a successful raid by a warrior.

Property Rights

Property rights have afforded the aged with effective means of securing services from the rest of society which transcend the ties of kinship. The enforcement of these rights depends little on the physical prowess or stamina of the property owner and relies more on the sanctions of the society which compel compliance and observance of the customs. Thus the aged people who possess property of one sort or another have had their requests heeded more than those without some sort of property (Simmons 1945:36-37). Although property rights increased in importance in agricultural societies, hunting and gathering peoples did have certain material and non-material kinds of property, the possession of which gave certain advantages to the aged (Simmons, 1945:39). Property need not be land or housing; the simplest and most universal kind of property is services

rendered for the receipt of fees. The fulfillment of obligations can be rewarded with gifts (Simmons, 1945:36). Property can also be power such as the power to doctor, ownership of religious paraphernalia, songs, ritual information, and the telling of legends.

Property Rights Among Oto and Ioway

Numerous opportunities existed in pre-reservation days for old Oto and Ioway people to provide services in exchange for material goods and for a certain amount of power and prestige. The aged, both men and women, were often asked to tell stories in the winter time for which they received gifts of food (Field Notes). Rituals and ceremonies were performed at birth, death, marriage, naming a baby, adopting a child and tattooing--occasions revolving around important periods in individual's lives. These occasions included special services rendered by the aged for which they were compensated in various ways with gifts, food and prestige (Whitman, 1937:51, 58, 65, 68-69, 75; Skinner, 1926:255; Curtis, 1930:154).

Doctoring was the prerogative of the elderly and although the power to doctor was usually inherited by a son or grandson, it was possible for a person to buy power (Whitman 1937:102-103). In some cases a new doctor was admonished not to use his power until he was an old man (Whitman 1937:110). Thus an old man who possessed doctoring

powers was in a position to obtain goods and food as recompense for his services.

Prestige and Respect

Simmons suggested that the prestige and respect of the elderly people in any one society were variable. His research indicated that the positions the aged occupied and the concomitant amounts of prestige and respect were very much dependent upon individuals' personalities, physical exploits and intelligence. —That is to say, old people are not necessarily accorded reverence and respect just because they are old (1945:63).

Simmons divided respect into four categories. One category refers to the general respect accorded an old person because of a particular asset the old person possesses. The second category is identified by special social taboos which are favorable to old age. The glorification of the aged in legends and stories is the third category. The fourth category is characterized by the deification of the aged in religion (1945:50).

General respect. Respect for the aged has most frequently been based on the possession of a particular asset. These assets include extensive knowledge which the individual has acquired over the years. Experience in the daily problems of living, expert skill in a particular technique, power to intercede between the group and the supernatural,

exercise of priestly functions, control of property rights and the performance of camp chores were all factors in the general respect accorded the aged (1945:50-51).

General respect given to Oto and Ioway. Aged people in Oto and Ioway society were accorded general respect because of their knowledge about tribal customs and tribal history. Skill in storytelling, control of power and the manipulation of rituals connected with doctoring and the Sacred Pipes, and skill in tattooing were ways of gaining respect and prestige.

General respect for the elderly permeated the value system of the two tribes. Small children were taught to respect their elders. The closeness of grandparents with grandchildren continually emphasized the value of the elderly. The highest leader in the tribe as well as the members of the council were the eldest people of the clan. Leaders were not considered fit for their jobs of chief or council headman unless they were generous to the aged and saw to it that the old people were well taken care of. The participation of old people at life cycle rites as well as in other ceremonies continually reinforced positive attitudes toward the aged (Whiteman 1937:38, 47, 58, 68).

Social taboos. The relaxation of social taboos for the aged provided ways of presenting old people a measure of respect and prestige that is not afforded to younger people. These privileges often come when sexual or reproductive

powers decline. The release from taboos may also be granted because it is felt old people are immune against dangerous acts or objects (Simmons 1945:63).

Taboos among the Oto and Ioway. Women did not customarily eat with the men, but when a woman was old and respected and a guest in someone's house, she was allowed the privilege of eating with the men and boys (Whitman 1937:71).

Legends and stories. As might be expected, the elderly were the chief storytellers and also the final authorities on past events. The aged were glorified in legends and stories; leading characters were wise, important and old (Simmons 1945:66-67).

Oto and Ioway legends and stories. Legends and stories in which elderly Oto and Ioway people are presented combine prestige with admonition. A story might convey a subtle message to the listener indicating dire consequences may result if one did not respect the aged in deed and thought. The following Ioway story intimates that the untimely death which befell the young woman might also occur to the listener.

The Old Man Who Was Married to a Young Woman

This old man was about 90 or thereabouts and he was so old and feeble that he could not take care of himself very well. He married a woman about half his age. She had to gather food and firewood for him as he could not do it. She took care of him for a long time but she got tired of taking care of him. In those days the people sort of worshipped the buffalo. There was a buffalo skeleton at the

edge of the forest and the woman started to prepare a little bowl of food to take to the buffalo so she could speak to the Great Spirit through the buffalo skeleton. She told the old man she was going out to get firewood but she went instead to the buffalo and gave it the bowl of food and then she knelt down and spoke to the Great Spirit. She said she was tired of taking care of the old man and she wanted the Great Spirit to take him away.

She did this several times. The old man got suspicious and so one day he decided to find out what she was doing. So he said he would go for firewood. He found the path she had made going to the skeleton and he found where she had gone. So he hid himself under the leaves and grass and put his face in the skull. A little while later the woman came with another food offering. She knelt down and said the same things she had said before. The old man then answered as if he were the buffalo, saying, 'Granddaughter, you will be taken before he will.' The woman was so frightened she ran back to the lodge and never went out of it again. She died soon afterward. (Field Notes, 1977).

Sometimes legends glorified old people as the individuals who had learned special skills. For example, there is a story of an old man who, in a trance, flew to a special land where he was shown how to make drums and songs and how to heal the sick (Whitman 1937:96).

Deification of the elderly. Gods depicted as old people exhibited the attributes of old age, wisdom and power but never the liabilities of senility or lack of cleverness and knowledge (Simmons 1945:74).

Oto and Loway deification of the elderly. An Oto legend illustrates the deification of the elderly. In the legend the beaver and all of the people are created by the Beaver's grandfather who is referred to as the Creator

(Whitman 1937:29).

The following story told by an Oto woman illustrates respect, honor, and supplication to the natural elements which are portrayed as grandfathers. Lightning and thunder are personified as human beings and endowed as mortals with divine existence, thus deifying the grandparent role.

The Grandfathers

You know when one of the big storms comes-- a tornado--a big wind--we go out when it is raining and take some tobacco in our hand and hold it up and we talk to the lightning and thunder--that's the grandfathers. And we tell them to journey over to that way. We say to them how we like the nice cool wind on hot days and how they make us feel good. But we tell them to go over to the other direction. And then we let open our hand and the wind takes the tobacco. I remember going outside one time with my grandmother and grandfather. I was afraid to go out but we went. I looked up at my grandmother and she was standing there with the rain coming down on her face and her hair blowing in the wind. And there she stood, holding the tobacco up. And I saw my grandfather doing the same thing (Field Notes, 1976).

In general, the respect which old people receive is a reflection of the economic adaptation, the social structure and the ideology that are characteristic of the society in question. In a society with a patrilineal kinship system the respect for old men is great, more so than for old women. In a society in which political organization consists of leadership concentrated in councils of headmen and where men control or participate in coming-of-age ceremonies for the young, men have also acquired greater prestige than the

women (Simmons 1945:79). The Oto and Ioway societies were patrilineal with political power concentrated in a council and men controlled the recognition of the adolescent young. As a result, the prestige of men was greater than that of women.

General Activities of the Aged

As aged people gradually become less and less able to participate in subsistence activities and other tasks which require a certain amount of physical ability, their roles have tended increasingly toward supervisory roles and jobs which require a reduced amount of physical endurance and ability. Their security then becomes more dependent upon the manipulation of people rather than things. They achieve whatever position they have by pressing others into their service and cooperating with them and assisting them by being active rather than passive. In short, they exchange services for the purpose of retaining a position which they can no longer physically maintain (Simmons 1945: 82).

The activities of the aged in which their own personal achievement became an important factor in gaining the support of others are indispensable services which only the old could provide (Simmons 1945:82-83). The direction of other peoples' activities due to the exercise of certain prerogatives also gave old people power. Special skills

acquired through the accumulation of experience and familiarity were other assets for elderly people.

Storytelling was a very popular and common activity of the aged (Simmons, 1945:88-89). The stories told fulfilled a combination of functions: entertainment, instruction and moral admonition. Stories dealt with mythology and legend and were a means of instructing the tribe in the "way to do things." They were also references to events which had actually happened, a way of knowing the past. Stories provided a justification for things which happened and an explanation for the existence of the physical world. The aged people of the tribe were the people who had heard the old stories most often and who knew the tribe's history (1945:98-100).

General Activities of Oto and Ioway Aged

Hunting and gathering societies provide fewer opportunities for indispensable services, particularly in the economic sphere, than do horticultural societies (Simmons, 1945:102). The Oto's and Ioway's combined life style of hunting, gathering and horticulture, however, afforded greater opportunity for service than might be found in a strictly hunting and gathering group. There were important and essential jobs for all but completely helpless individuals. Jobs having to do with subsistence provided some means of security, as, for example, the job of slicing meat to be

hung to dry, or watching the crops while the hunting party was away on an extended bison hunting trip. But services not connected with the economic sphere provided a more secure position for the elderly (Field Notes 1976).

The old people in Oto and Ioway society contributed to their own security through the direction of the activities of others. A portion of this direction related to the property rights possessed by the aged person. Men particularly benefitted from the control or possession of property of various kinds, which included the power to doctor, the possession of horses and songs, and the special knowledge of procedures involved in many ritual and ceremonial events (Whitman, 1937:4, 42, 58, 68).

The position of Oto and Ioway elders was enhanced by special skills acquired through a lifetime of experience. A woman proficient in tipi-making was called upon to help the younger less experienced person to cut the skins for and put together her first tipi. An old man was in charge of the ritual which accompanied tattooing. Tattooing was done to enhance beauty and also to enhance the prestige of the father of the person being tattooed. Thus the individual who could provide this important service certainly had bargaining power and prestige. Old women were the ones who had the prerogative to tie the umbilical cord at childbirth. Doctoring skills were also associated with the aged

(Whitman, 1937:75, 105).

A common activity of the aged has been storytelling. The Oto and Ioway aged were no exception in telling stories for entertainment as well as for the instruction of the young. Indeed these functions were often combined in such a way that an entertaining story also contained a moral, an admonition, a value to be learned, an explanation of some part of the universe, or a recounting of past events important in the lives of the people.

Certain stories could only be told in winter and were known as winter-telling stories. Sometimes the stories were so long that it would take a week to tell one story. Old women were asked to come and tell stories. Sometimes there were old men who told stories (Field Notes 1974).

Political and Civil Activities

The security of old people has always depended more upon wits than actual physical labor. The activities of old people in daily labors have not been as rewarding as those found in political, civil and judicial realms. Special knowledge, long-accumulated experience and well-established prerogatives compensate for physical handicaps and waning vitality. Old age security can be found in positions of chieftainship, membership in official councils, regulative organizations, clubs, and secret societies. Attainment of these positions, however, is not dependent entirely upon age

but also upon the ability that a person is able to maintain through personal initiative within the framework of the society (Simmons 1945:105).

Political and Civil Activities of the Oto and Ioway

Among the Oto and Ioway the tribal chieftainship went to the eldest lineal descendant of the eldest Bear clan ancestor. The civil chiefs constituted a council formed of the eldest male descendants of the eldest brother in each clan. Since these positions were hereditary the person occupied the position until he died, at which time it was passed on to the oldest living son who was capable of fulfilling the position. The importance of the aged in government suggests a position of strength in traditional Oto and Ioway society and ultimately of power and prestige (Skinner 1926:199; Whitman 1937:15).

Judicial powers were also prerogatives of elderly men. An Oto chief had a clan peace pipe with which he could settle intertribal and extratribal conflicts. His tent was recognized by all as a sanctuary to those fleeing enmity. He had the power to elect two warriors to serve him to maintain order on special occasions. The warrior and the whip he carried were used to execute the command of the chiefs. Thus the chiefs and warriors represented secular control. Social control was explicitly vested in the chief with the peace pipe and in the warrior with his whip. This control

was in reference to situations which threaten the tribe as a group. Whitman suggested that murder and endangering the source of food supply on the bison hunt were those situations which were under the jurisdiction and control of the chiefs. Social control of other matters was vested in the family and was not a concern for society at large (Whitman 1937:35-42).

An important source of power and prestige among the Oto and Ioway was associated with one of the most important and basic of endeavors--the bison hunt. The man chosen to lead the hunt was an old man who was known to be a capable and successful hunter and who knew how to lead that particular endeavor. When the bison were sighted the old leader appointed another old man as the crier to announce it to the rest of the village. After the hunt was over and there were enough bison shot and dried and smoked the old men had a sacred feast. At the end of the last day of the hunt the leader relinquished his position, for his duties for that event were over (Whitman 1937:9-10).

The position of tribal leader or chief contained a reciprocal characteristic due to the fact that while an elderly man might fulfill the position, there were certain requirements relating to old people in general. A good hereditary leader was expected to take care of the aged. The chief was the head of a family, was expected to be kind and generous, to be trustworthy, to be the protector of the

poor and to cherish the old people, as well as others who needed special care (Whitman 1937:36, 38).

Other means of increasing the authority of the elderly came with the assumption that old men were especially well-equipped to teach young males who were seeking a vision. Even though secret initiatory rites were not involved in these instances, some domination of the elderly over the young can be assumed (Whitman 1937:81).

The Use of Knowledge, Magic and Religion

Aged persons have frequently served as mediators between people and the supernatural--the benevolent and evil spirits. People who experience personal crises and who worry about the outcome often turn to the old people for advice and comfort. The aged are considered to be wise because of their lifelong experiences and knowledge about the ways of the world. The ability to remember past events, to think clearly and to judge wisely are requisites enough for a person to be useful to the group (Simmons 1945:131).

The knowledge possessed by elderly people includes tribal history--the history handed down from their forebears as well as the historical events observed and experienced in their own lifetimes. Because of the reliance on oral history in preliterate societies an old person with excellent recall and practical powers of narration was both useful and influentially prestigious. The same may be said for knowing

how to conduct the proper ceremonies and rituals important on special occasions. The accumulated wisdom may even be regarded more important in the definition of the elderly and elders than age itself (Simmons 1945:140-141).

Special doctors were useful for treating disease, propitiating the gods, and working miracles of many kinds. The old did not need physical powers when they had the power to produce information that was needed or to conduct ceremonies or to offer prayers. Power was also found in formalized ceremonial roles, such as the guardians of sacred paraphernalia (Simmons 1945:141-142, 164).

Leaders who performed ceremonies in connection with special events such as life cycle ceremonies were people with special power and prestige. These were most often old people (Simmons 1945:164).

Knowledge and Religion Among the Oto and Ioway

The roles of elderly men and women seemed to punctuate the life cycle of the Oto individual. From the baby's first arrival in the world to the individual's final rite of passage, and on numerous occasions during the journey in between, old people filled important roles in assisting persons to traverse that path. Associated with these essential positions in the society was an attitude of respect toward the old people; each occasion was a positive reinforcement. From these continuing contacts with and

teachings from the old, one learned positive associations with being old.

At birth, an old experienced woman was asked to cut the umbilical cord of the newborn baby (Whitman 1937:65). The newborn child was then named within four days of birth with ritual and ceremony. An old man of the tribe officiated at the naming ceremony held in a lodge which was erected especially for the occasion. The old man gave the family four names for the baby from which they could select one name. The names chosen were associated with the child's clan and were either a family name, a plant name or an animal name. The child was sometimes given the name of a grandparent of the same sex. After the naming ceremony other people were invited to the feast and gifts were given. The ceremony included the singing of sacred songs and the relating of the story of the name. The old man who officiated was highly esteemed and received many gifts. At the close of the ceremony he offered a prayer and forecast the child's future (Curtis 1930:154-155).

Advice during adolescence was given a girl by her grandmother or her mother. At the first menses the grandmother gave a young woman more specific advice on how to act--for example, not to have sex with a man during menstruation. The young woman was told to get married, have a home and raise children and grandchildren. At the time of the first menses the girl fasted, drank only water and ate a

little ground corn. An older woman cooked the first meal and ate with the girl at the end of the period (Whitman 1937:48, 72, 83).

A young boy at about the age of 12 was advised to go off and fast alone. If he was good and minded the teachings of his father he would go. But if he did not heed the advice that was given, an old warrior would be expected to go with him to encourage him to fast and to teach him how to ask for spiritual help (Whitman 1937:81).

The father was the main teacher of the young men but the grandfather would often participate in the boys' training. Part of the responsibility of the grandfather was to call out his nephews and grandsons early in the morning to take a cold bath for four days in a row for the purpose of making the young men hardy and brave like the warrior grandfather (Whitman 1937:71).

If a family lost a son, they might choose to adopt another boy. At the adoption ceremony the adopting family invited the family of the child to be adopted to a feast which might include the entire village. At the ceremony old men of the tribe were there to do the talking. They spoke to the boy being adopted and to his family (Whitman 1937:58).

When a couple decided to marry, the young man's father took the prospective bride to his house and there the young man's relatives dressed her in the finest clothes and

ornaments they possessed. They painted her and painted their best horse. The father then requested the help of four old men who had done many deeds and were wise in the ways of the tribe. One of the old men led the woman on the painted horse and the other old men led the other horses, as many as thirty, to the woman's house where her father distributed all of the horses (Whitman 1937:50-51).

At the death of an individual the old men of the tribe were again asked to invoke the spirits. The oldest surviving male member of the clan painted the face of the individual who had died so that the Great Spirit would know who he was. Each clan had a particular style of painting. In this way the relatives of the deceased would recognize the soul when it arrived in the other world. These relatives would then care for him. After painting the face of the dead the old man would make a speech to the corpse admonishing him to keep on until he reached the home of the dead (Skinner 1926:255).

It was customary for both old women and old men to become doctors. The role old people played in a person's joining the Doctor's Lodge as well as how the doctoring power could be used is illustrated in the following example cited by Whitman.

The Buffalo Doctor's Lodge was associated with curing primarily but also with the cultivation of corn. One of Whitman's respondents described his joining of the

Buffalo Doctors' Lodge as a boy. On the day selected for the ceremony the participants in the ceremony walked the four miles to the Lodge meeting, four old women were selected to carry the water they were to drink on the way. An old woman offered the boy water when they stopped and blessed him by saying, "Live to this (old) age. Good will happen." After arriving at the Lodge, the ritual was held. The boy then slept through the night. When he awoke he got up and found the old people still singing for blessings from the Buffalo (Whitman 1937:108-110). The boy thanked the people who said to him, "We give you this power (to cure), but don't fool with it. Don't play with it until you get old. Then you can doctor, if you want to" (Whitman 1930:110).

Other rituals provided mechanisms for maintaining one's position as an old person. The Dance of the Peace Pipes was just such a mechanism by which a poor man might honor a rich man and in return receive gifts. Whitman's respondent explained the function of the Dance in the following way:

There are four hills of life. When I grow up I climb the first hill. It is not so high. The second hill is a little higher. The third hill still higher. Once I was young. I was a well-to-do man and had plenty. When I reach the fourth hill I am forty or fifty. When I am going down that hill I am getting old. I do not have what I once had, so I give the pipes to a rich man, and he gives me horses and blankets. (As quoted in Whitman 1937:122-123).

There were special roles throughout the ceremony itself which were performed by old people, further enhancing their aged power. On the first day of the ceremony the pipes are blessed by an old man. On the fourth day two old men selected by the donor officiate in the part of the ceremony which involves a young child. One old man takes the child to the center of the Lodge and the other old man helps the child take four steps symbolizing the walk of life--life itself, marriage, prosperity, and good fortune. The old people take the pipes and turn the child four times in the directions of the four winds: east, north, west and south. They then touch him with the pipes from his head to his feet, indicating this is the life he must go through (Whitman 1937:124-145).

Sacred religious paraphernalia have been referred to as "grandfather" in Oto and Ioway culture, further indicating the role of grandfather as a prestigious one. Skinner reports that the Red Bean War Bundle of the Ioway was referred to as "Grandfather" when the bundle was addressed by tribal members. Offerings were made to it by throwing tobacco on the ground near the pole where the bundle hung (1926:247).

In a ceremony for the war bundle the Ioway referred to Wakanda (the Great Spirit) as "Grandfather." According to Skinner's respondent the speaker in the ceremony would say,

We are giving tobacco. We want our grandfather, Wakanda, to give us strength and health, and drive away disease, and to lengthen our days four years at least. (As quoted in Skinner 1926: 214).

Teaching or giving advice on how to live was a prerogative of the old people. The teaching of tribal values was meant to be effective in instilling proper attitudes and conduct and to provide guidelines for the young in order to live the good life as viewed by the Oto and Ioway. Tribal members were urged to try to acquire the following attributes. A chief should conduct himself in a way that would bring honor and respect. A warrior should know how to hunt well and kill game. A general admonition to everyone was to be ambitious and not lazy (Whitman 1937:81).

In some instances the teachings were precepts handed down by chiefs and thus listened to only by those whose rank in the society allowed them the privilege. The advice given by old people usually included mention of how to treat old people. For example, the advice given in one instance mentioned by Whitman included the following admonitions: to respect everyone, not to lie, to help the poor and the tribe, to help old people, and to build one's own fire (Whitman 1937:80-81).

In the words of one of Whitman's informants, "Travel the good road. Respect old people. They will give you good thoughts. Then you will live a long time." (as quoted in Whitman 1937:81).

Functions of the Family

The family has been regarded as the safest, most intimate and longlasting haven for the aged in most societies throughout history. The aged have relied on the family for the greatest security. Several alternatives are available which enhance the position of the old. The marriage of an older spouse, a widow or a widower, to a younger mate forms a relationship in which the older person will be looked after as he/she may eventually require. The practices of polygamy and the sororate introduce younger spouses who can help the older woman with her chores as well as help care for the old man. In general, old men have more opportunities to marry younger mates, although marriage with younger men by older women is found in some societies, particularly in hunting and gathering groups. The production of many children and grandchildren results in the availability of closely related individuals whose responsibilities include caring for those who need help, especially the elders (Simmons 1945:210-212).

The Oto and Ioway Family

The family was the most important unit in the lives of the Oto and Ioway--more important than clan membership and more important than the individual. The family was responsible for aid to the family. Prestige and power were controlled by the family and descended from father to son.

Family prestige and prerogatives permeated all activities. If the child did not heed the teachings learned from the family as he or she grew up, the family itself was at fault--more particularly the teacher of the child who usually was the father or the grandfather (Whitman 1937:42-43).

Whitman's data on the Oto suggest that the individual can be seen against this importance of the family as a very individualistic person with a highly egoistic development (Whitman 1937:41). The child was honored by a giveaway on many occasions: at birth, by giving to the maker of the first cradle, by giving to the name giver, on the occasion when he or she first walked, at the ear-piercing ceremony, when he shot his first game, when she wore out her first pair of moccasins, when she talked to her first suitor, and when she was tattooed. This emphasis on the child and on his or her place in the family and clan gave the individual a sense of place in a large group while not losing emphasis on the person as an individual (Whitman 1937:64-65).

Based on the field work that Whitman did in collecting information about the pre-reservation Oto, it seems apparent that the most cherished relationship in the family was that of the grandparent with the grandchild (1937:47, 70). Whitman suggests that the attitudes of the grandparents and grandchildren toward each other were ones of greater freedom and greater warmth than the ones between

children and parents. The grandfather and grandmother told stories to the grandchildren as well as relating the tribal history. They played together and were very affectionate toward each other. There was no tension in this close and direct relationship between the grandfather and the grandchild. The father on the other hand was the disciplinarian and teacher and the son must respect the father. The father conditioned the son to a way of life (Whitman 1937:47).

A newly-wed couple lived near the woman's parents for several months after the marriage or until the birth of the first child. Then the woman made her own tipi and the young family set up their own residence, most commonly near the husband's parents. In either situation the village was bound by ties which included all the old people of the village and created a situation where they were in close association with immediate relatives as well as more distant ones (Whitman 1937:53).

The relationship between the son-in-law and daughter-in-law to the parents-in-law was an important one where reciprocal gifts of food and services were obligatory throughout their lifetimes. A man did not lend his son-in-law a horse; he was obligated to give it to him (Whitman 1937:53). The term for father-in-law is the same as that for grandfather and the term for mother-in-law is the same as that for grandmother. The use of these terms for parents-in-law implies that a particularly warm and respect-

ful relationship existed between the two sets of in-laws and that the avoidance-respect relationship was not hostile but on the contrary a warm one. The set of expectations was added insurance that the older generation would be taken care of adequately (Whitman 1937:47).

If a couple separated, the children of that couple were raised by one set of grandparents (Skinner 1926:252).

Remarriage for old people was frequently possible as a young girl's marriage was sometimes arranged to an old warrior. Men seeking a second wife sometimes availed themselves of respected old women (Whitman 1937:57).

Reactions to Death

Simmons found that the killing of the aged was most likely to occur where the climate is severe, the residence is more or less impermanent, and the food supply irregular. Thus it is not infrequent among hunters and gatherers to find the necessity of leaving behind the old who could no longer keep up with the group (1945:223-225).

The desire for a long life is almost universal among societies around the world. Remedies to prolong life as well as prayers for a long life were important (Simmons 1945:218).

Oto and Ioway Reaction to Death

Contemporary Oto and Ioway recognize that in the pre-reservation society when hunting, gathering and horti-

culture formed the base of their lifestyle that certain responses to death and its approach were accepted. In the words of one old man:

In Oto and Ioway custom in the old days when a couple got real old--about 90 or so--they used to build themselves a little wigwam down by the creek so they would not be a bother to their children. Their children would bring them only a little food and water. Finally, they would die. The old people were not in the way; it was not much for their children to do that. The old people only did that if they thought they were being a burden to their children (Field Notes 1976).

Because these tribes were sedentary many months of the year, the need to abandon old ones while out on the prairie was not as compelling as it was for groups without permanent residences. Permanent villages made it possible to leave old people at home during the long annual bison hunts where their needs were more likely to be met.

Among the Oto and the Ioway the desire to live a long time was mentioned in many ways as a positive good. For example, during the naming ceremony for a baby girl, the name was bestowed with the blessing and the expectation that she would grow to be a woman and see many grandchildren. The teachings of a father to a young man expressed the same idea: "You are going to live a long time; your hair is going to be white; and you are going to have children and grandchildren." (Whitman 1937:82). To grow old and have grandchildren was frequently mentioned as a cultural ideal.

One of the sentiments expressed in different cere-

monies was the wish for long life. For example, the ceremony of the Peace Pipes was considered to bestow long life on the participants (Whitman 1937:125).

The old people had special beliefs about the dead. They were not afraid of them according to Whitman. They talked to them and told them not to worry, just to go on and not look back. They admonished the dead to cross the river saying: "You've got your way and we have our own. We will join you some day." (Whitman 1937:100).

Summary and Conclusions

The foregoing information shows the lives of Oto and Ioway old people in pre-reservation culture intricately and explicitly interwoven with the family and the community as a whole. There were mechanisms which provided food and material items as well as care to those no longer able to actively procure such necessities of life on their own. In conjunction with the meeting of their needs the social structure provided important, even indispensable, roles for old people to perform, enabling them to secure and maintain positions of power and prestige in spite of the fact that physical prowess was on the wane.

Certain property rights, particularly more intangible rights such as the power to doctor, contributed to the overall power of the elderly as did the possession of special skills and knowledge which younger members of the

tribe did not possess.

Positive attitudes toward old people in general, toward particular people who were old--such as one's grandfather--as well as toward the idea of growing old permeated the daily lives and lessons and legends of the young. The physical closeness during much of the people's daily living prevented isolation from occurring--being old was not something foreign to those growing up.

From the evidence available, it would be an oversimplification of the data to say that old people in early Oto and Ioway society occupied the most prestigious position possible. Status in the society was hereditary and rank was rather rigid and important. Thus differential attainment of status as an old person was possible, partly because of one's rank and in part because of one's own individual personality and accomplishments. But there seems to be support for the conclusion that the elderly were persons with a positive self esteem who occupied important roles and who were greatly cherished people.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLES AND ATTITUDES OF THE ELDERLY IN CONTEMPORARY OTO AND IOWAY SOCIETY

Participant observation and informal unstructured interviews provide the bases for the data presented in this chapter. The data from these observations and interviews will be arranged in such a way as to illustrate the positions held by Oto and Ioway elderly in contemporary society. The overall position of the elderly will be seen to be a function of the roles still available to them, the respect and prestige now accorded them, and the personal accomplishments each individual brings to the position.

A Definition of the Elderly

Before outlining the roles and attitudes associated with the elderly, it is important to establish who the Oto and Ioway people consider to be in the category of old. The criteria used to define people as old or elderly vary from one respondent to another. There is, however, in the various definitions a commonality: that is, the definitions

are functional ones rather than formal ones. People are defined according to the functions they perform, the roles they play, and the community and family positions they hold rather than by an arbitrary and formal definition such as that of chronological age.

In 1970 the U.S. Bureau of the Census reported that thirteen percent of the population in the Oklahoma Oto and Ioway communities were 62 years of age or older. This percentage would mean that approximately 195 Oto and 35 Ioway were at that time 62 years or older. When questioned about who was old, however, informants included only a small number in contrast to the large percentage involved in the above arbitrary chronological classification. For example, one woman (herself over 60 years of age) who lives in one community but who has an elderly brother living in the other community was asked to tell how many old people there are among her people. She responded, "There are not many old people left--maybe two or three." Other interviewees responded in similar fashion, mentioning only the oldest member of the tribe.

One of the criteria apparent in the Oto and Ioway functional definition recognizes a person as old if he or she possesses knowledge about tribal ways and customs. This element of the definition carries with it an attitude of honor and respect and offers occasions for interaction between old people and other tribal members. Knowledgeable

individuals are sought out for advice and are looked up to as repositories of information that is not common to all tribal members. Specific information about customs and ceremonies is shared.

Another positive way to fulfill the category requirements of old age is to reach a certain stage, in this case to become the eldest living member of a family line. This part of the definition hearkens back to pre-reservation days when political rule and clan leadership rested in the hands of the eldest male member of a family line. Thus when an 80-year-old man was asked to name the elders of the tribe, he responded in this way:

You are an elder when you are the head of the family--when you are the eldest living member.

He named three men and five women whom he regarded as elders of the Ioway tribe.

While the above-mentioned dimensions may be considered the positive aspects, there are other dimensions of the functional definition which might be considered to have negative connotations. These aspects state that a person is old when he or she can no longer take care of himself or herself. If he or she finds himself or herself in a debilitated condition, has failing health, and is dependent upon others to a considerable extent, he or she is considered to be old even if the chronological age is, for example, around 50 years.

Although various criteria define who is considered old, there is differential respect given to those who have attained this stage. It does not follow that respect and honor are necessarily accorded all of those who become old. As expressed by one old person about another:

X . . . is an old man who takes advantage of his being old--he does nothing for the tribe. When he was in office as the tribal chairman he did not work to the advantage of the tribe. He does not retain the respect of many of the younger tribal members.

Thus we find that as in other times and other cultures the fact of being old does not carry with it automatic power or prestige.

As indicated in the discussion of old people in pre-reservation society in Chapter II, it is difficult to divide roles and attitudes into separate categories without having them overlap. Thus it will be necessary at times to allude to the same event or phenomenon in more than one section of the following discussion. For example, the information discussed under the category The Use of Knowledge could just as easily have been included instead in the section detailing the different roles of the elderly and merely alluded to in the Knowledge category.

The Use of Knowledge

As we have seen in the analysis provided by Simmons and summarized in Chapter II the aged have been able to maintain a position of power and prestige through the use of

knowledge and information. The use of knowledge provides even elderly who are failing physically a position of strength in the family and the community. The possession of knowledge thus provides a more secure place in the society than the small physical tasks which an old person might be able to perform. There are many ways that the elderly in contemporary communities of the Oto and Ioway tribes make use of the knowledge that they have.

A woman in her 70's speaks of her husband:

People come to him and ask him things--how to do things in the old way. (In tribal government) there is a lot of paper work and we give it to the educated ones But for lots of other things people come to the old people to find out how to do things.

The ways in which the elderly provide services to the family and to the community can be illustrated by an examination of the events where the elderly's knowledge is important.

Naming Ceremony

The elderly people today are the ones who possess knowledge about people's kinship with other members of the tribe, including their clan membership. This is information that younger people either do not know or know only partially. Thus one of the roles that an elder tribal member can fulfill is that of selecting tribal names for a family to use in naming a baby with an Indian name. Three or four clan names are chosen from the proper clan and presented to

the parents from which they may choose a name. The names that are presented are ones that have not been used too frequently in recent times.

The role of naming babies offers an old person several advantages. Naming is still considered an important job and is one which an aged person can fill better than anyone else as it requires knowledge and experience rather than physical prowess or stamina. As a result of the importance attached to naming, respect and prestige accrue to the individual performing this role manifested in the giving of gifts and money and a feast to honor him on the occasion.

Giving the Blessings and Prayers

It is the role of the elders of the two tribes to give the blessing on special occasions. These occasions include the following: a special birthday dinner for small children, the opening and closing of a one-day dance, the four-day summer encampment pow wow, the opening and closing of a hallogame, an informal luncheon in the tribal hall, an evening prayer meeting, at different times during a funeral and blessing the food before it is eaten at a funeral feast. Frequently these prayers are given in the native Oto or Ioway language; sometimes a prayer in English will be given afterward by the same old person for the benefit of those people who do not understand or speak the native language.

These occasions are attended by members of the tribe

as well as members of the immediate family of the elder. The community aspect of the role places the older person actively within the wider network of the community. These prayers may be given by old people who are rather feeble physically. Many of them use canes and some of them need help from another person to get to the microphone where their prayers or blessings are to be given. Some are confined to wheelchairs. This kind of disability does not seem to detract from the positive qualities these individuals have. They receive much respect, often verbally expressed by the younger ones who are asking for the prayer. The old on these occasions are very obviously recipients of respect and honor and holders of prestige.

Funerals

Advice on the proper way to conduct a funeral according to Oto or Ioway custom comes from the elderly people. Elders are called upon to share their knowledge as younger tribal members claim to be somewhat ignorant of traditional ways--of the proper way to do things as the elders would have them do. To state that there are special Oto and Ioway funeral customs is not to imply that the pre-reservation customs are practiced. There are several practices, however, which differ from those practiced by the surrounding non-Indian community which are being passed down from the old people.

When Chapman published his book in 1964 he suggested that certain Oto customs were at that time only a "fading form," and that adherence to the "white man's road" would soon bring the end of the customs (304-306). The customs which were fading, according to Chapman, were the funeral feast and giveaway, burial on the fourth day after death, singing a song four times at the grave site, interring some of the deceased's possessions such as a blanket, walking around the grave and dropping in a handful of dirt, killing a horse and burying it near the grave, burning a light at the grave, observing one year of mourning, a feast for the mourners after a year's time given by special friends, and a memorial feast then given by the deceased's family after the mourner's feast.

Very few changes can be seen today, however, in the customs currently being followed and the descriptions Chapman gave. The extent to which the traditional ways are still important is indicated below. The old people provide both the key to how things are done as well as perform important duties and rituals during the four-day period. The following description of a funeral is a composite picture of customs with some specific examples interspersed; the roles performed by elderly people as well as the attitudes held toward them will be emphasized.

Upon the death of a person, the body is taken to the funeral home where the funeral director prepares it just as

quickly as possible. It is customary for someone, or for several people, to stay at the funeral home all night, remaining constantly near the body until the funeral director has completed preparations. The body is then taken in the casket either to his or her home or to the tribal community hall. It is here that the body is on view until the fourth day--the day of burial--and here where the prayer services and funeral feast and service will be held.

In one instance, a 74-year-old woman (hereafter referred to as Y . . .) died suddenly one evening. She was taken to the funeral home where family members remained the entire night in the lobby "to be with her."

As soon as possible after the death of a person, it is necessary to contact the deceased's "special friend." The obligations of a special friend include "putting her or him away." This means that the friend makes arrangements for women to cook the meals for the deceased's family and friends, including the funeral feast which takes place at noon on the fourth day. The friend also sits near the head of the casket during the time the body is on view. The half-open casket is covered with a square of netting or a large net scarf which the special friend lays back when friends and relatives come by the basket to view the body and pay their respects.

In the case of Y, the deceased's special friend had

preceded her in death. Y's daughters drove to another part of the state to find the special friend's daughter to carry out the obligation. Even though the 84-year-old husband had been up all night and was tired and grieving, the daughters wanted him to go along to do the talking for them.

Evening-long prayer services are held each evening until the day of the funeral whether or not the deceased's body is ready to be brought to the hall or home. An individual or a group is in charge of the service each evening but the pattern of events is rather informal. Songs are interspersed with mini-sermons and testimonials given by the deceased's friends and relatives. Church hymns are sung in English and in the native language. At the end of the evening, around 10 or 11 o'clock, a light supper of sandwiches, cookies, tea and coffee is served.

It is customary at the end of the evening prayer service to "smoke off" the relatives of the deceased.¹ At X . . .'s funeral the "smoking off" ceremony was conducted by an old man with long braids--a highly respected elder of the tribe. In this instance the old man was helping a middle-aged man who had the responsibility of "putting away" the deceased for his father, the special friend, who was too

¹"Smoking off" with the cedar involves a process whereby the smoke from burning cedar dust is fanned on the person either by the one holding the cedar or by the person himself. One interpretation is that smoking off makes the mourner feel better and is a gift from legendary times.

feeble to carry out his obligation. The old elder told the younger man what to do and how to do it.

The prayer service held on the first evening after Y . . .'s death was conducted by an elder of the tribe. Several relatives and friends got up and spoke what was on their minds, especially in regard to their feelings about the deceased. During one such testimony, Y . . .'s nephew referred to his uncle, her widower, as an elder of the tribe, saying he looked up to him and always went to him for advice. The nephew said his uncle did not wait to be called upon but offered advice whenever he heard the nephew had a problem.

The body is dressed in tribal clothes, including jewelry; perhaps a beaded feather fan is placed in one hand. Laid over the closed part of the casket are one or more Pendleton blankets. A lamp is placed at the head of the casket and is kept lit at all times during the four-day vigil.

Each night several people choose to sit up all night long with the body. The dead person is never at any time left completely alone. Food is prepared by the cooks for family and close friends on each day of the vigil. On the fourth day a big funeral feast is prepared to which all friends and relatives are expected to come. Elders of the tribe conduct the service preceding the feast. It is customary for an older man of the tribe to bless the food, to

give the prayer during the service before the feast or maybe to make general remarks. Following the funeral feast a spokesman for the family speaks to the guests, making remarks for the deceased's family and acting as the master of ceremonies for the giveaway.

At Y . . .'s funeral feast the prayer offered before the feast and the blessing of the food were introduced by a man who expressed the sentiment that they tried to do things in the ways of the elders and that they did the best they could. When the family's spokesman began his remarks after the feast the first thing he did was to call the elders by name as he looked around the hall and verbally and visually acknowledged their presence.

At the grave site special songs are sung in the Oto or Ioway language before the casket is lowered into the grave. Then each person walks around the edge of the grave, takes a handful of dirt from a shovelful and tosses it on the board covering the coffin. Then the gravediggers begin the job of filling the grave with dirt. The family and many guests remain until the dirt is all replaced.

Observations and interviews indicate that the knowledge required to carry out these traditions is indeed the particular possession of the old people of the tribes. While the broad outlines of procedure may be familiar to many people, it is to the elders that one is required to go for the details.

Handgames

A handgame is a guessing game played between two groups of people such as two different tribal groups. For example, the Ioway tribe may invite the Oto tribe to their tribal hall for an evening of handgame and dancing. The game is often preceded by a dinner provided by the host group.

People of all ages attend these functions and everyone, even the young children, participate in hiding the bones although it is usually adults who are chosen to be the guessers. A drum with singers around it is in the center of the room. At one end of the room is a table with the microphone used for making announcements. The counters used to score the game are kept here also.

The old people are called on to fill certain roles: they are scorekeepers, givers of the opening blessing and the closing prayer, and the ones who advise younger tribal members on how to conduct the handgame. In one handgame between the Oto and Ioway a 79-year-old man who is one of the oldest living members of the Ioway tribe and who is looked up to as an elder gave advice to a man in his 30's on how to act as master of ceremonies for the handgame. The elder was also asked to give the blessing at the beginning of the evening. At the end of the evening an old man of the Oto tribe gave the closing prayer. Both of these prayers were given in their native languages even though many of the

audience could not understand the language.

At one handgame an 82-year-old woman was the scorekeeper. She was assisted by an elderly man. At this handgame the prayer at the end of the evening was given by an old and much respected man.

Religion

Religion revolves for many Indians around two centers--one that has a denominational base such as the Baptist Church, and one that is centered in the Native American Church. The Native American Church is a long-standing institution, one which combines Christian elements with tribal religion. The proper conduct of the ceremony is one which is learned in the meetings by observing others conducting the ceremony. Although I have not attended a ceremony myself, many times I have been told that the elders of the tribe are the ones who know the proper way to do things and that they take the opportunity to tell the younger participants when they are doing something wrong. The younger participants look up to the elder and respect the information he is capable of relaying rather than pushing him aside with the connotation that he and his ideas are out of date and no longer needed.

An 84-year-old man related the following about a special peyote meeting that was held for mourners soon after his wife's death:

In the morning the young leaders wanted to line everybody up together and 'smoke them off' all at once. But I told them that they had to have the ceremony just right. That they had to take that special herb and clean away the place where the fire was because the Bible says that cleanness is next to God. The Indian believes this also. Then take each one of the mourners and stand them up one at a time in a certain place and certain way and smoke them off with the cedar. The young leaders thanked me for the advice because they admitted they didn't know exactly the proper way to do things. They said they needed me around to tell them the proper way to do things.

On numerous other occasions this elder is asked to lead peyote meetings in towns near his home. The ceremony is an all-night ceremony which ends at dawn.

The wife of an old peyote leader describes it this way:

The ceremony is held early in the morning. Songs are sung and are passed down to the children and grandchildren--even the little ones learn the songs. The songs are never written down. X . . . says to them to watch everything he does and listen to every word so they know what comes next. Someone outside the tent recorded the songs. That's the peyote ceremony.

It is considered improper for a participant to go to sleep until the following evening because the participants are expected to sacrifice one night of sleep. Certainly it is a positive sense of self that allows a man of more than 80 year to spend the entire night at a peyote meeting although he does admit to resting some the day after the ceremony.

Story Telling

An activity which is frequently associated with Indian elderly is that of story telling. A woman of 74 said:

We used to get one of the old ladies to come and tell stories. We would all bring her presents and then she would tell them. They were only told in the winter time. And sometimes they would take a week to tell one story. There were four or five good old storytellers. Sometimes there were men who told stories.

Nowadays it is too long to tell one of these stories. Another woman expressed similar views:

Grandma used to tell me stories. You tell them through the winter. We would give the old lady pecan goodies. Say: 'Grandma, tell me a story.' They give her something to snack on. She'll tell you an Indian story about two little boys that grewed up. There is a story behind that. Maybe where one got lost. Another one about sharp elbows. Others about animals, beavers, buffaloes-- what that animal does.

They had rules for everything. It was more respectable in a good way. There's a lot of respect in it.

The 74-year-old woman admitted that although she has told her own children stories when they were young (40-50 years ago) she had not told her grandson very many stories. The stories take too long and there is the implication that with many more activities (such as sports) and ready transportation available, the opportunities for storytelling are fewer.

The old stories are there for those who would have the time to listen. But unfortunately for younger tribal

members, some of the stories will die with the old people.

Teachings

Some of the younger members of the tribe have learned the customs and the history of their tribe from their grandparents and the other older members of the tribe.

A middle-aged man (49 years old) told how he learned the teachings of the tribe when he was a boy:

When I was a little boy my best friend was X. . . . He was an old man friend. I dressed in moccasins and breechclout and leggings at that time. I was about seven years old and my friend made me a bow and three arrows to go with it. The bow was made from willow. I spent a lot of time with this old man.

I learned about the tribal culture from my grandparents and the older people in the tribe and from the old people.

Today some of the children and grandchildren are learning some of the tribal ways. An 80-year-old man said:

My daughter and grandson are learning the songs. They have them all on tape.

Others did not learn about Indian ways; when the opportunity was available they did not take it. Today many of these people are attempting to acquire that knowledge. A man fifty years old is the son of a medicine doctor who has been dead for several years. In the past three years this son has become more interested in his Indian heritage. He must go to old relatives and old people of the tribe to learn about his heritage because of his failure in his younger days to learn what his own father could teach him.

Recently he stated:

I didn't realize until just recently just how nice it is for a person to have relatives.

The implication is strong that an identity with the Indian community and the teachings of the elders are becoming more important to middle-aged and younger Indians today. There is evidence that individuals return to these communities in part to regain their Indian identity. One important way to achieve this is to associate with and learn from the older generations.

A Special Song

Another example of the use of knowledge is the presentation of a song to a younger family member. An example of such an occasion was a special gourd dance held one afternoon in the tribal hall at which an elderly uncle presented a song to a middle-aged nephew. The song was written especially for the occasion and included the nephew's name; it would be sung whenever the new owner requested it.

This particular song was also given to another singer, a younger man, who would sing the song whenever it was requested. This was done by the old uncle because he felt he could not sing too well anymore.

Language Learning

In the spring of 1976 a language program was funded for the purpose of teaching the Ioway language to tribal

members. The teacher for the language classes was an old man of the Ioway tribe. Several other old tribal members were also involved in helping with the classes. In spite of the fact that people in their 70's and 80's today date from an era when they were punished for speaking their native language in school, these are the ones today who still know the language. Many middle-aged people and many more younger ones do not know the languages. It is difficult to assess how fast the language is being lost, but this is certainly one area in which the old people have no peers as far as competence goes.

Doctoring

A very few old people today are medicine men or doctors. They do some 'doctoring' on themselves or relatives and friends who ask for help. Indications are, however, that this skill is dying out, in part because of past pressure on Indians to give up such practices and in part because acculturation of younger individuals has resulted in the failure of the doctor to be able to pass on his power before he died. A young man 34 years old related that he had been chosen by his grandfather twenty years ago to learn the doctoring power. Circumstances and a non-receptive attitude on the part of the young man at the time he was chosen combined to prevent the inheritance of this skill.

Advice

Advice is sought and given in a variety of situations. One elder told his son-in-law that he was responsible for giving his daughter his song. There are young people who come to the elders and want to know how things were done when he was young. In public gatherings the older people are always referred to as elders of the tribe who give advice. Certainly the relatively recent resurgence of ethnic identity has caused some of the younger people to turn rather belatedly to the elders for information about tribal lore and traditions. It is difficult to assess how much this has enhanced the contemporary position of the elderly when compared to the period prior to the current trend. Advice from elders constitutes a part of most of the roles the aged play whether it is as a participant in a handgame or a leader of a peyote meeting.

Family Relationships

The most important social structure which operates within the Indian community is that of the family. The interaction which occurs between members of the larger family is mirrored in the kinship classification system which reflects close relations between various members. For example, the terms used for the second ascending male generation--the position of grandfather--include not only mother's father and father's father but also the brothers of

the grandfathers. All are called grandfather. Reciprocal terms exist between grandparent and grandchild where the same term is used by each to refer to the other. Parallel cousins are called sister and brother; father's brother is referred to by the same term as father; mother's sister is referred to by the same term as mother. Nephews and nieces are referred to as sons and daughters.

Thus, even though many of the grandchildren and some of the grown children of elderly people do not know the tribal language, the kinship system is still in operation. Individuals repeatedly refer to their 'great uncles' as grandfather. One man of thirty-four said:

X . . . tells me about the way things used to be.
He's my grandfather.

The individual referred to by the speaker is the brother of the speaker's mother's father.

A son-in-law is still considered to be a part of the family after divorce as long as there are children alive.

My daughter is divorced from an Indian husband but he still calls me mother-in-law. It's better for the grandchildren.

Although the son-in-law is remarried he helps and interacts with his original parents-in-law.

While the role of story teller to the younger family and tribal members is no longer as important as it was formerly, the grandparents of today do tell their grandchildren stories.

In the summer they could sit out with the kids while they played and be with them that way but in the winter when they had to be inside they told them stories.

The stories teach the children the right way to do things and if the children do not learn these ways, things will not go right, according to the elders. There are, however, fewer and fewer occasions today when winter-telling stories are told and the grandchildren today hear even fewer than their parents did.

The role of grandparent continues to be an important one, however. As one old woman put it:

Old people are useful in many ways. For one thing they could look after the kids. People never did let anyone else take care of their kids. Grandparents are very useful to patch clothes, sew on buttons, be there to look after the children when the mother and father had to go somewhere.

The grandchildren come by every day. Sometimes they bring presents. Sometimes they bring a piece of meat from mother's freezer. It's better to have grandchildren than your own kids. They take time to come to see you. If they were somewhere they would stop and come by and see you. They would love you. My daughters are busy--they don't come too often.

The grandparent-grandchild relationship is a strong one. There are special occasions when this is evident. Sponsoring the young dancer and having a giveaway for that person is one of the most common examples of the close relationship between the two generations. On occasion the grandparent will sponsor an entire dance and dinner for a grandchild; for example, a grandson who was home on leave from the Army was honored at a dance held by his grandmother.

It must be understood however that occasions like this are the result of much cooperation and sharing among family members. There is a great deal of expense involved in providing the food, the gifts and money to be given away to the cooks, to the drummers, and to the special friends and relatives that are to be remembered in the name of the person being honored. The money and gifts and food provided by the immediate family or grandparent are supplemented by the sharing of other members of the extended family--aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, and even friends. This extensive and involved network serves to tie all of the participants into a set of relationships which is stronger and more inclusive than the simple fact of being related to someone in a kinship system.

It is customary for grandparents to raise grandchildren who have been left without a father or mother or both. A young man in his early 20's is one example. The grandfather, to whom the young man is very close, stated that "A . . .'s father died when he was a baby. We raised him." This statement carried with it the impression that this was the accepted and usual thing to do. Indeed, it is also customary for grandparents to raise grandchildren when parents work, a parent is sick, in prison, away on a job relocation, or when it eases the burden of too many children. Grandparents may choose to raise a handicapped child to ease the burden a young family may face.

The term 'elder' is used quite frequently by members of the Oto and Ioway tribes. The connotation associated with the term is one of respect and prestige. As noted above, one becomes an elder when one becomes the oldest living member of the family. Women become elders as well as men. This concept is directly related to the custom which existed in earlier times when families headed by a father and his sons lived close together.

The elder father was the most important. He would leave it to the older son and pass it on down.

Although extended families do not always live together under one roof today, there is a tendency for them to live in houses that are close to each other. One old couple lives in a relatively new residential section of a small town. Their nephew and their two daughters each have a house nearby on the same street in the same block as the old couple. This could be considered a four-house three-generational extended family where three generations are housed in four separate houses which are located closely together. The pattern is reminiscent of the pre-reservation pattern where a man's married children lived in nearby tipis. The old couple's sons take turns living in their house with them. The son who is not staying with them lives on the old farm a few miles out in the country. Thus frequent interaction is possible between the members of three generations--grandparents, their children, grandchildren,

nephew and his family. Visiting takes place often and social events are attended together. In times of need the old couple have aid close by.

Another old couple live ten miles from the main highway on the very western edge of the original reservation. Their house and land are quite isolated from other residents of the same general area and certainly isolated from any towns. Living with them is one of their sons. Other children come by often to visit and to go with them to social functions. Although physically isolated in a rural area, the old couple is an integral part of the community and participates in the social functions of the tribe.

Two elderly women live about four miles in the country and are wholly dependent upon automobile transportation to get their supplies or to see other people. Sometimes when their car is not in working order they are dependent upon other people to provide that transportation.

My nephew wrecked my car. My brother comes down from Pawnee every two or three days to see if we need anything.

The elderly frequently own land--a farm or part of an allotment--which is sometimes used by their children. Grown children may live at home with their aged parents and receive economic support in this way or they may live on the farm and the aged parents may live in a house in town. Another economic advantage can be seen in the gardens which many older people maintain and share with children who may

be too busy working to have their own gardens.

Thus it is a two-way cooperative exchange where grown children and grandchildren provide certain necessities for the grandparents who in turn contribute useful and even indispensable services for the younger family members.

Elderly people themselves view the aged as being very useful in family situations. Among those functions they feel are important are: babysitting--the idea was expressed that Indians never hire babysitters; household chores such as patching clothes, sewing on buttons, or putting on a pot of beans.

The positive aspects of kinship relations do not hide the fact that there is a certain amount of feuding and fighting that goes on within families as well as between different families.

When a death occurred in the immediate family of an old woman, the close surviving relatives divided into two camps. The actions and behavior resulting from this split reached into their relationships with the old woman. When she died a few months later, one faction was not notified of her death. The influence of the elderly person was not strong enough in this case to override the factionalism occurring in the family.

Historical documents relating events of the 1800's indicate that feuding and quarrels have not been uncommon among the members of these two tribes. Indeed the legend

which relates the prehistoric mythological travels of the two tribes involves a split where the group separated into two different ones, with some people joining the leadership of one brother and the others staying with the second brother. The case of the leader named Iatan who quarreled with his brother and then killed him would indicate that feuding and quarrels are not things which come just with the stress and strain of twentieth century living (Hulbert, 1934, Vol. 4:236).

The middle-aged son of one old man in his early 80's who recently lost his wife has been living with the old man most of the time since the wife's death. When the younger man began complaining about the activities of the old man and about his doing his share of the housekeeping, the old man told him:

You are a big person now and you can just get yourself back to the farm any way you can.

The old man did not feel the need to have companionship at the price of his independence. During conversations with these two men the younger one indicated that whatever his father told him to do he would do, thus expressing at least verbally the idea that the old man still was the most powerful person in the family, although the incident shows he is not so much in awe of his father that he would not criticize him.

Community Roles

Political Roles

In the early 1970's the chairman of the tribal council was a man in his 70's. Prior to his chairmanship a man aged 49 held the position. In 1974 a man 49 years of age was elected tribal chairman. For a brief period of a few months in 1977 the chairmanship was held by a man of 55 and subsequently by a man of 52. Although the chairmanship has recently been held by a man considered to be elderly as well as by younger (middle-aged) men, opinions regarding the chairmanship can be illustrated by the following quotations, first about the younger chairman:

X . . . , he's my age (49); he was the tribal chairman. He got things done. He took advantage of all the government offered. The young guys want to do that but the old men seem to be happy just to draw their pensions and let things go on as they are.

And the following response about the old chairman is also typical:

He is just an old man who does not get anything done. He lets all the benefits that the government is willing to give the Indians of Oklahoma go by. He says that he is an old man with lots o knowledge and says that the others are too young to know what to do.

And yet the realization that being a tribal leader takes a great deal of time and effort is expressed in the following way:

Yes, I've always been interested in the tribal council and business. I go to the meetings when I can. No, I don't want to be (on the council). Not now. Maybe when I'm older and drawing my pension I'll be on the council. It would be too hard to keep a job and be on the council.

In 1976 the Bureau of Indian Affairs records indicated that there were no older men in tribal government in the five tribes administered from the Shawnee Agency Office (in which administration is included the Ioway Tribe of Oklahoma). The leaders were in their 30's, 40's, and 50's. An agency official stated that:

Some of the older men who worked so hard in the 1930's, 1940's and 1950's to keep the tribe together and to give the people a focal point resent a little the large amounts of money that have come to these men.

The official was referring to the funding of several projects by the federal government in the 1970's. Large sums of money have been given to the tribes for the administration of different programs by the tribal chairmen and tribal councils. Older men do express, however, the opinion that they do not have the ability and knowledge necessary to manage tribal business today. They realize that:

In tribal government there is a lot of paperwork so we give it to the educated ones.

It might be noted that the election and support of a tribal chairman and the tribal council is subjected to the vagaries of factionalism as well as to the qualifications offered by one person or another. Factionalism enters into the choice of officers and stems from a long-standing schism which goes back several generations. Part of the displeasure expressed toward the old man who was in his 70's when he was tribal chairman stems from just such factional-

ism. Prestige is differentially accorded and certainly is not automatically given to an old person.

Economic Roles

The economic framework into which the lives of old people fit is a reciprocal one in which elderly people share and mutually exchange with other members of the family and community. Since the elderly have for the most part retired from whatever jobs they may have held as young or middle-aged people, the economic factors do not revolve around the income from a job an older person might have. Neither are the elderly people entirely dependent upon the younger members of their family as might be expected in a group which is rural and characterized by a relatively low income. The reciprocity revolving around the lives of the elderly includes housing, gardening, mutual help (such as babysitting on the part of grandparents and housework and yard work done on the part of grown children and grandchildren) and sharing.

One old couple lived in the country on one of their allotments for many years while they were raising their family. About twelve years ago they moved into town because their children thought they needed to be closer to necessary facilities offered by a town such as stores and because the farm did not have some of the modern conveniences that a house in town would have. After living in a small house in

the center of town for about five years, the old couple moved to a new house which was built with mutual help housing funds available from the federal government.¹ The old couple has lived in the house for about five years where they pay a minimal amount of money for gas, water, electricity, and house payments. The couple still retain ownership of part of their allotments in the country and they go there to visit often.

Rather than being dependent upon their children for housing, the old couple share their housing with their children. One son lives at home with the old couple in the new house. Another son lives on one of the allotments in the country. Other examples of similar arrangements exist. In one instance one elderly couple still lives on the allotment inherited from a parent and one or more of their children live with them.

Gardening is another area in which the elderly people can often make an economic contribution. Several elderly people who have land available plant gardens, with tomatoes, potatoes, squash and pumpkins. These are planted with the hope and intention that the produce will last until

¹The mutual help housing is available to Indian people and requires some small equity provided by the family who is to occupy the house. The equity may be in the form of labor or in the form of money. One couple were too old to contribute equity in the form of construction labor. They kept the site cleaned up and provided hot coffee and donuts for the workers. The contractor was more than willing to confirm their equity contribution.

the next planting time. The contribution to the larger family can be especially important when the children work and do not have time to raise vegetables. The vagaries of the weather plus the infirmities of old age make it difficult for the very old person to garden. Grandchildren help out with the preparation of the garden and caring for it, however, and thus gardening assumes the characteristic of mutual exchange which is so characteristic of these people.

One of the most important elements of the economic realm is that of sharing. Sharing involves reciprocal and mutual exchange found among relatives and friends, particularly 'special friends.' A special friend, chosen when young, is obligated to give his or her friend gifts on certain occasions, to help that person in time of trouble, and to "put him or her away"--that is, to make arrangements for and officiate at the funeral--when he or she dies.

Sharing is also an important factor at social events such as a pow wow or at rituals such as a funeral. On these occasions a giveaway is held at which time friends and relatives of the person being honored are given gifts. The sponsor of the giveaway receives food, money and material items like shawls and blankets from members of his family which he adds to his own supply of items to be given away. A wool Pendleton blanket costs from \$35 to \$45; two or more blankets may be given away at one event. Other items such as shawls, yard goods, towels, and food baskets represent a

substantial investment. Money is also usually given to the singers and drummers at a pow wow and to the grave diggers at a funeral. It is only possible to have a large sized giveaway with the help of friends and relatives. The sharing represented here reflects sharing in more than one direction--from the family and friends to the donor and from the donor to other relatives and friends. It is frequently grandparents or elderly people who stage the giveaway. Elderly people also share in the receipts of gifts.

More intricate sharing occurs on the occasion of a special dance during a pow wow. The person so honored may be the head dancer or the head singer. The relatives of that person request a special dance during the pow wow and it is customary for friends and relatives to dance at that time. After the dance is finished it is also customary to contribute money to the person who is being honored. This can be done by giving it directly to the person or by laying the money on a blanket which has been placed on the floor. The elderly person is often the person who honors a dancer, and it is most often the grandmother who fulfills this role. The money received by the honoree is then in turn given to the drummers or to other special individuals whom the honoree wishes to honor.

Aside from or in addition to the monetary and economic benefits of sharing, there also exists the closeness of ties which bind the various elements of the network of

relationships together. A network to which one feel obligated to contribute and with which one feels a sense of belonging reaches into all generations and helps to bind together the older generation with the younger ones.

Other sharing revolves around the needs of individual persons. It is customary for anyone who is in financial need to be taken care of at least in emergency situations. The older generation represents a stability in many such instances. Many of them still hold original allotments which they have inherited directly from their fathers or mothers. The availability of a place to stay can be a great benefit to a person who may have need for such help. Other occasions exist where the allotment may not be used directly by the owners but in which case can provide a place for a son or daughter to make a home.

Some income is available from the lease money received from the leasing of different portions of allotments which individuals own. Obviously the elderly person still alive who holds his father's or mother's allotments and portions of other allotments in which he or she might have inherited a share would still be the beneficiaries in whatever income came from such enterprise. That the amount is likely to be small is realized when one understands that when the allotment is shared in undivided interest with many other heirs the dollars received during one year are few.

Social Roles

The Oto summer encampment provides old people with many opportunities for participation--both active and passive--in pow wow activities. Camping at the campground for the four-day event results in a special occasion where close family interaction exists around the grandparents' tent. Elderly people have a much welcomed chance to visit with relatives and friends they may have seen only infrequently during the previous year. Typical of the campers is an 80-year-old man and his 74-year-old wife who set up their camp at the 1974 annual encampment. With the help of their two grandchildren they had put up their tent and arranged their camping equipment for cooking and sleeping at the campsite. They had driven to the camp 45 miles distant from their home.

There are occasions for old people to perform important roles as well as to be shown the honor and respect of their relatives and friends. Activities in which elderly people participate include dancing, contest judging, singing and drumming, giving the opening prayer, making the opening remarks, and being the master of ceremonies. There are, of course, varying degrees of participation. Many elderly people are content to attend the afternoon or evening dancing, limiting their participation to listening and watching.

In 1977 the Oto-Missouri tribe held its annual pow

wow and encampment on the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th of July. This marked the 100th time the event had taken place, a fact which bespeaks a continuity of tradition reaching back to the time when the group lived on the Big Blue River Reservation in Kansas and Nebraska before removal to Indian Territory in 1882.

The job of master of ceremonies for the pow wow was given to two older men--one around 80 years of age and the other in his late 60's. The duties of the master of ceremonies on a typical evening included the announcement of the events for the daytime and evening programs. The master of ceremonies was responsible for asking someone to give the opening prayer. One of the masters of ceremonies then called the dancers to come to the dance arena to begin the dance; he asked the singers to begin. During the program the master of ceremonies announced each set of dances and told the audience and participants which dance was about to take place--that is, whether it was a war dance or contest dance. In announcing the contest dance he included instructions to the contestants, gave a call to the judges and, finally, announced the results of the contest. Other announcements included a request to move a car which was blocking another one and information about events scheduled for the following day. These examples show the importance and the extent of the job to which the individuals involved are relied upon to see that the pow wow runs smoothly.

Although neither of these men is the oldest person in the tribe, each would definitely be considered old by American formalistic definitions determined by chronological standards. But more importantly, they both meet the criteria supported by the positive aspect of the Indian definition of elderly or old. They are old people who are capable of getting around, who are honored and respected because of involvement and interest in tribal affairs, and who make special contributions based on their knowledge of tribal affairs.

In the afternoon of the second day of the pow wow, gourd dancing was the main event. The active members of the gourd dance group included young men, middle-aged men and elderly men. A special event during the afternoon was the initiation into the Gourd Dance Society of a man 64 years old. He was presented to the Society by his brother-in-law, also an elderly man.

Elderly people joined in the evening war dancing and several older women were seen dancing occasionally, particularly during a special song being presented to honor an individual, older men danced during the evening war dance, but this seemed to be an occasion more often participated in by the older women. The singers around the drum included older men also.

The summer encampment is an important social event for elderly people--early on Friday evening approximately

one-third of the people sitting around the dance arena were old people. Many of these elderly people participated in the pow wow events by watching, listening and visiting with their friends and relatives. Some were called upon to watch small children or to rock little babies to sleep while the mothers and fathers took a more active part by dancing. Some old people were confined to wheelchairs. One old woman spent the entire evening sitting in the back of a car. Her son and daughter-in-law brought her dinner to the car where she ate it. She was hard of hearing and seemed incapable of moving without aid. One inevitably compares this situation with the nursing homes filled with elderly people many of whom can take care of themselves better and are more mobile than this woman.

There are several opportunities during the summer encampment and the pow wows held during the year for elderly people to honor another individual. Grandparents, especially grandmothers, sponsor a giveaway which is held to honor a grandson or granddaughter. The grandmother may request a special song to be sung by the singers at which friends and relatives of the person being honored dance. After the dance the grandmother and other relatives sponsor a giveaway at which time they give gifts of shawls, blankets, and money to friends and relatives of the person being honored. In many cases there is a particular reason for the person to be honored with a dance--being chosen as a head

dancer, being chosen as a head singer, being chosen as a princess. The giveaway is a way to express appreciation by the family of the honored person and to give material thanks to those who have asked her and to those who have helped support her or him in the activities of the pow wow.

At the 1977 pow wow one grandmother acted as the sponsor of a special ceremony in which her young grandson was officially recognized and given the right to dance at pow wows. An elderly man participated in the ceremony by placing a roach on the little boy's head. After placing the roach on the young boy's head, the two walked in a circle around the drum and the singers, symbolizing the 'going-around-together' of the old and the young. After this special ceremony the grandmother had a giveaway in which she and the other members of the family gave gifts of shawls and food to friends and relatives.

Extremely important in this ceremony is the cementing of the bond between grandparent and grandchild--a symbol of the continuity from generation to generation. The symbolism represents not only close family ties but embraces the larger structure represented by tribal membership and tribal heritage. Besides furthering the network of relationships between the grandparental, parental and grandchild generations during the ceremony, the concept and function of sharing continue to operate to strengthen community and inter-community ties.

Not only are there roles for the elderly during these social gatherings; there are also various ways in which old people themselves are honored, both verbally and behaviorally.

The opening remarks at the 1974 pow wow included a special reference to the old people who had died during the previous year and who would no longer be attending the celebrations. These old people were called by name. The names of the elders of the tribe still living were also involved in a general sense when the announcer expressed the hope that whatever the tribe did would be done properly and in the tradition of the old people.

The pow wow activities for 1977 included a special day set aside to honor the parents of a family who had been married longer than any other couple in the tribe--64 years. The celebration was highlighted by afternoon gourd dancing which took place especially in honor of this elderly couple. During the afternoon activities the couple and their children sat in a front row seat on the dance circle just under the announcer's stand. A special dance was held in the couple's honor in which the old woman danced along with the friends and relatives who were honoring them. The children of the couple sponsored a giveaway in honor of them also. As it is customary to have someone speak for you on such an occasion, a special friend of the family was called upon to relay for the family members their pride and

pleasure in honoring their aged parents. The special friend was also the speaker who conducted the giveaway in which gifts were given to friends and relatives.

All campers and visitors who were in attendance at the encampment and pow wow at that moment were then invited to enjoy a dinner to be served at 5:00" after the dancing. Everyone who was present was invited to partake of the traditional supper provided by the relatives. The meal was a traditional Indian meal with large tubs of boiled corn, beef, salad, fried bread, fresh fruit, cake, iced tea and coffee.

Interaction between generations occurs in more subtle ways than the filling of an actual position as a master of ceremonies or a sponsor of a giveaway. Interaction occurs between grandparents, parents, and grandchildren in the pow wow camp. A typical camp at the annual pow wow was composed of a grandmother, three daughters and their husbands and the grandchildren. In preparation for an evening's dancing, grandmother, mother and the young children interacted as each prepared and put on his or her costume. The grandmother was a source of advice to the younger members of the family as well as an active participant in the social control of the young children. Advice and help with costumes as well as admonitions about behavior gave the feeling that the grandmother was the 'head' of the family group.

Above and beyond the special roles played and the

honor and respect voiced at certain times, the annual pow wow and encampment offer the opportunity for young and old alike to partake in these events together. Many people set up camp on the campground and stay three or four days. People of all ages--from very small babies up to and including very old men and women--enjoy the events together. In subtle and not so subtle ways, the feeling of belonging to a group is felt by young and old alike. Babies 'dance' their first dance in the secure arms of a grandmother. Grandparents share with parents in the care and supervision of babies and young children.

The foregoing descriptions of pow wow events imply an emphasis on family interaction and dependence among members across the generations. There exists, at the same time, an image of independence which forms a part of the positive self esteem which old people seem to possess. While old people need and accept help from their relatives and friends, they do demand and are allowed independence of action. The following incident is an illustration of such an occasion and took place at the pow wow. One 83-year-old woman had been sitting with her son and daughter-in-law watching the afternoon dance. When the dancing was finished she got up and walked across the arena alone. As her son went in one direction, she went in another, left to carry her folding chair by herself across the dance ground to the other side of the campground where the dinner was being

served.

The handgame, like the pow wow, is an affair where there is intergenerational interaction, where the older people, parents and grandparents, are the active participants but where the younger people can, if they so desire, participate also. These events provide subtle means of enculturating the young in specifically the handgame, and more subtly, in being Oto and Ioway. Tribal identity and a sense of belonging are fostered. This sense of belonging extends to all ages, the old as well as the young. Whether or not an old person is filling a specific role, his presence and participation in this social activity support a network of relationships with other members of the community.

Attitudes Toward the Elderly

The foregoing examples of the different roles and positions filled by the elderly people carry with them many expressions of respect and esteem. Verbal expressions often accompany public announcements and have been indicated in the descriptions of the events discussed. These are expressions of honor which are accorded elderly people by others.

Old people themselves support a positive view of being old; this is best expressed by the following quotation from an elderly woman:

It's nice to have old people around. I wish I had some old people around, but now I'm the old one.

When I had my 40th birthday I just started to cry because I thought I was getting old. My sisters and mother cooked me a birthday dinner. Well, they told me of the Indian way to look at it. They said that the Lord had blessed me with that day and if He hadn't they would be burying me instead. So I got it in my head to look at age in the Indian way which is that the Lord has blessed a person with so many days that it was an honor to grow old. Indian people are proud to grow old.

There are instances which indicate, however, that the respect felt for old people is not universal nor is it accorded to a person just because he or she is old. One woman indicated that there was a lot more respect directed toward old people in the old days. An example she cited was the behavior resulting from the mother-in-law taboo which restricted the interaction between a person and his mother-in-law. The elderly today feel that when this custom was more strictly observed much more respect was shown older people. Today few people pay attention to the taboos placed on speaking or being in the same room with one's mother-in-law. Respect for the father-in-law was traditionally expressed in the same way; for example, the daughter-in-law would get up and slowly leave the room when her father-in-law entered. The father-in-law knew that the woman did it out of respect.

There are other ways in which it is recognized that today the young people do not show the amount of respect that the older people feel is due the elderly. For example, when young people walk in front of the elders they should

always say 'excuse me.' That they do not do this consistently is expressed in the following statement:

I have seen the faces of the old people when someone walks in front of them. They don't like it.

Respect by old people for other elderly persons is not necessarily accorded if a person does not have a personal like for that individual. One old woman dismissed the worth of another old woman by saying that she exaggerated whatever she talked about.

In addition to the less than perfect expressions of respect for the elderly is the differential status referred to earlier. Even though one may expect prestige because one is old, this is a factor dependent in part on the individual performance of the role.

Care of the Elderly

When questioned about the care of the aged, Oto and Ioway respondents of all ages agreed that the care of the elderly person is the duty and privilege of the immediate family. As one old woman expressed it:

They just loved their old people. They never did put them off in a place where someone else would have to take care of them.

We don't take our old people to an old folks home. We wouldn't do terrible things like that. We take care of them ourselves. That is a terrible thing for other people to do that.

In fact, very few Indians from these two communities have actually been taken to nursing homes. In each case the

assurance is given that it was done only in cases where it was extremely difficult to take care of the individual at home:

Mr. X . . .'s sister is in the local nursing home. He and his wife tried to take care of her at home but the old lady was getting senile and they couldn't take care of her. The brother was sick and the sister-in-law was coming down with pneumonia at the time and they couldn't take care of her.

The feeling shared among tribal members is that an old person would lose his or her sense of worth and would soon die if put into a nursing home:

I went to Y . . .'s mother. She wanted me to hold her and I put my cheek right next to hers. She said she wanted to feel her people right close around her. She said X . . . had thrown her away--that she didn't belong to her any more. I couldn't go back; it made me feel bad.

Instances in which the family care for the aged right up until death are numerous. Examples of the aged who are invalids and are taken care of by their grandsons or granddaughters and sons and daughters are also numerous.

Some individuals choose their places of residence and work in order to be close to their parents for the purpose of helping to care for them. One solution is for the son or daughter to live with his or her parents in the parents' home. In addition to living in the same house with the older couple is the unique solution to the problems of the elderly which is met by what was previously termed a three-generation four-household family. In the instance which illustrates this solution the older couple lives in a

house on the same street and in the same block as do their two daughters and a nephew. The son who resides within the home of the couple is available for immediate help, especially if the old man is ailing. If the old woman is ailing one of her daughters takes care of her either at her own house or at the daughter's house.

Either X . . . or Y . . . lives with us ever since old Dad's legs got bad. Sometimes they just get numb and they get up and turn him over. I can't turn him over. They fix the electric pad. Y . . . lives here now. They take turns. One's always here so if he falls they can help him.

When I get down one of the girls comes and takes care of me or they take me home.

The close proximity of the different members of the family provides much the same effect as far as care is concerned that an extended family living in one house would. Indeed this is very similar to the arrangement that existed in pre-reservation times when the tribes were on long summer hunts and they would live in tipis which accommodated a nuclear family. The father and family and his married sons and their families would travel and live close to one another. This provided mutual aid and support while hunting.

CHAPTER IV

POWER AND PRESTIGE OF THE ELDERLY

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter attempts to show in what ways the original hypotheses guiding this study are supported by the data reported on in Chapters II and III and in what ways they have been refuted. Each hypothesis will be restated; a brief summary of historical and contemporary evidence will be followed by an assessment of whether or not the data support or refute that particular hypothesis.

Hypothesis I

The concept of elderly or aged in the Indian community is based on a functional definition rather than on a formal definition.

Pre-Reservation Definition of Old Age

There is no indication in the literature available about the Oto and the Ioway that old age in pre-reservation society was defined formally by chronological age. Neither

do population estimates in historic documents suggest how many old people were in the society nor what percentage of the population they represented. The evaluation of pre-reservation roles and attitudes of the elderly in Chapter II necessarily accepts at face value each author's use of the terms old, elderly, aged, elder, grandmother and grandfather. From these accounts we can see that the people themselves considered individuals to be elderly or old when they had acquired certain attributes, filled certain roles and possessed certain knowledge. More specifically, old people were those who were grandparents, who knew lore, legend, and fact, who possessed special and unique skills and property, or who occupied a hereditary political position as the eldest member of a family line.

Contemporary Definition of Old Age

The data gathered from interviews and through participant observation in contemporary Oto and Ioway society indicate that there are features of a functional definition which have positive connotations. Old people thus are defined according to the tribal knowledge they possess, the skills they maintain and the community and family positions they hold.

People are also defined as old when they have reached a certain state. The stage referred to is that of being the eldest living member of a family line. These

persons by virtue of reaching this stage are considered to be elders of the tribe, a highly prestigious position.

Another dimension defines people as old when they become feeble, senile, their health fails, or they are otherwise unable to take care of themselves. Although very young people with these problems are excluded from the category, the age does vary and can include people in their 40's and 50's. Thus this element of the definition is also functional.

The economic factors in the lives of many Oto and Ioway tribal members do not include the transitions involved with a mandatory retirement age of 65 as do the economic factors in the lives of many Americans. This is in part due to the rural nature of their community but also in part to the differences in the social and economic structure which does not emphasize steady employment and does include welfare.

The evidence in both pre-reservation and contemporary society does support the contention that the definition of old age is functional.

Hypothesis II

While industrialization and technological changes increasingly result in less need for the elderly person's knowledge and skill in the performance of significant roles, elderly Indians are respected for their knowledge about tra-

ditional ways.

Tradition in Pre-Reservation Society

The Oto and Ioway in pre-reservation society relied solely on oral tradition for transmission of cultural patterns. It is axiomatic to say that the old people played an important part in this transmission. The aged recited tribal histories, told stories and legends which contained morals concerning conduct as well as explanations for natural events, performed rituals, taught specific facts of living to grandchildren and gave advice based on accumulated experience.

The elderly as a group thus were in demand as possessors of knowledge, experience and wisdom and were sought out to share their knowledge and their skills with tribal members, for it was they who were regarded as the most sagacious and experienced people.

Tradition in Contemporary Society

In contemporary Oto and Ioway society there are many occasions where old people are still relied upon for knowledge about tribal ways. In some instances, the demand for tribal information represents a renaissance engendered by young adults who gradually have come to the realization that they are Indian, are proud to be Indian, and that they don't know much about Indian ways. Thus a certain percentage of the sharing and teaching done by the old people is specifi-

cally for this reason. The data suggest that for many people, however, the old people have always been regarded as repositories of important knowledge and they have consistently been called upon through the years to share their knowledge and to perform the tasks that only they can do.

The ways in which the old people's knowledge is used today include: the naming ceremony, giving prayers and blessings, conducting or advising on how to conduct an Indian funeral, participating in and helping to conduct the handgame, conducting and sharing knowledge about the Native American Church ceremonies, telling stories and legends, teaching tribal ways (mores and customs) to young people, composing and handing down songs, holding language classes and teaching younger people the native language, doctoring, and giving general advice.

The data indicate that there is sufficient evidence to support Hypothesis II. Elderly Indians are respected for their knowledge about traditional ways.

Hypothesis III

Although the positive attitudes towards elderly people ascribed to by younger Indians reflect an ideal pattern which is not always expressed in actual behavior, old age and old people are nonetheless positively valued in the Indian community.

The Value of Old People in Pre-Reservation Society

That elderly Oto and Ioway Indians enjoyed a secure and valued position of prestige in pre-reservation society seems evident when looking at the different factors involved. Roles in both the village and the family were important ones. These included the following: political leadership as the chief and the council members, ritual specialists in rites de passage ceremonies, specialists who dealt with supernatural affairs and the role of teacher to son and grandson. These positions concerned supernatural subjects as well as everyday affairs and involved political leadership, religious leadership and family leadership. All were important and central to the functioning of the society. The positions carried with them a strong element of prestige which was associated with the individuals occupying them.

Glorification of old people in legend, use of the grandfather term when referring to the gods, and social taboos which favored old people support the generalization of a position of high prestige.

The Value of Old People in Contemporary Society

The attitudes toward elderly people today in Oto and Ioway society reflect an expression of respect, honor and prestige--a concept which portrays old age and old people as positively valued. These attitudes are implicitly expressed

in the ways in which old people are expected to fulfill important family and community roles and explicitly in verbal expressions of honor made about the old people on public and private occasions.

There are occasions on which it is possible to see that the respect and honor accorded old people verbally is not necessarily a part of behavior patterns. Young people may be thoughtless in their actions and even may express impatience with old people. But the interviews and observations made concerning attitudes overwhelmingly support the hypothesis that old age and old people are positively valued.

It is probably worthwhile here to reiterate the view that although the above statement is true, individuals bring to their old age an individuality which ultimately results in the achievement of differential status. Old people are not necessarily highly valued or valued equally simply because they are old.

Hypothesis IV

While generational differences in attitudes about the position of the elderly are found, the Indian aged still retain roles of prestige and power within their families and in the community.

Roles in Pre-Reservation Society

The elderly in pre-reservation Oto and Ioway culture occupied significant roles in the basic institutions of the society. The roles included the following: political leadership, clan leadership, religious intermediaries, ritual specialists, as well as repositories and teachers of legend, lore, and history.

The roles relied more on manipulation of other people and the possession of specialized knowledge, skills and property than on physical strength and prowess. Not all of these roles were attainable by all elderly members. In some cases, as with chief and council members, exclusion was based on sex. In other instances, exclusion was because an individual did not inherit a power or simply lacked a particular skill.

Roles in Contemporary Society

While contemporary aged Oto and Ioway do not perform as many important roles as they did in pre-reservation society, they do nonetheless retain and maintain some power within the family and community structure which is manifest in several important positions. These positions pertain primarily to two segments of the societal structure: those roles having to do with tribal heritage and those within the family system. The political leadership roles of tribal chairman and tribal councilman are more and more often

delegated to younger members, both by the tribe as a whole and by the old people themselves. The role of curer is most often taken over by specialists at Indian clinics, by public health nurses and by community health representatives. This is not to deny that some old people still have doctoring skills and on occasion use these skills on themselves and on their friends.

The community roles that are filled by the elderly are those of ritual specialists at funeral and naming ceremonies, religious specialist in the Native American Church, teachers of legends, songs and customs, public social roles including scorekeeper at handgames and the master of ceremonies at pow wows. Implicit in all of these roles is the special information old people possess that allocates a certain measure of power in the public domain. The elders of the tribe possess in addition a diffuse role which exists regardless of the specific duties attached to the position.

Family roles probably constitute the most important area of power and prestige for old people. A measure of that power is attained through the economic contribution which old people make through land holdings, lease money and garden vegetables. If prestige accrues in any context just for the sake of being old or of being someone's grandparent, it is in this context that it may, though not necessarily does, occur. Oto and Ioway grandparents have the potential of achieving prestige in part because of the long tradition

of respect and honor for old people that is a part of the enculturation process that most tribal members undergo from the moment they are born. Circumstances which result in the raising of grandchildren by grandparents is further evidence of old people's economic contribution as well as their prestige value.

The evidence supports the hypothesis that old people retain roles of power and prestige in their families and communities.

Hypothesis V

Although internal migration and increased mobility have resulted in a weakening of kinship ties in the Indian family, Indian communities have viable, active social structures which support the elderly individual.

Kinship Ties in Pre-Reservation Society

The structure of a pre-reservation village included relatives of all ages who lived in close proximity with one another. Newly-married couples lived in the large earth lodges with family and close relatives. When on an extended hunt the families occupied separate tipis which, however, were placed near each other. Relationships between grandparents and grandchildren were very close. Grandchildren lived nearby grandparents in the same village and interacted with them frequently. The kinship classification system reflects the extended system of relationships which class-

ifies grandfathers' brothers as grandfathers.

An old Oto and Ioway person did not automatically obtain a position of power and prestige just by growing old. To be powerful and prestigious required the added facility of performing one's role well, whatever it might be and of bringing to the status of old age a lifetime of well-thought-of accomplishments.

This is not to imply that all relationships were always orderly. There were occasions which have been noted in historic documents where closely related individuals sometimes did quarrel and fight. But on the whole the structure of the village and the family fostered close kinship ties and interaction between all generations.

Kinship Ties in Contemporary Society

The data from interviews and observations suggest that the kinship ties in the two communities are strong. Understandably, with migration away from the local community for economic reasons, some branches of the family and community network are relatively inactive. There are, however, some members of the community who return on special occasions (for example, for the four-day summer encampment) to reestablish ties with their families in particular and the community in general. A number of people who live in other towns in Oklahoma return frequently, some every weekend, to be with their families and relatives.

Although mobility to obtain employment has a direct influence on the migration of younger family members, many instances exist where one or more of the family lives near the older people in part for the purpose of taking care of them. As mentioned in Hypothesis IV, the family is probably the safest haven for old people and with the Oto and Ioway pattern of kinship with an emphasis on the extended family, there are more opportunities for the furthering of interaction between kin members. The importance of family roles discussed in Chapter III lends strong support to the hypothesis that the immediate family, the extended family and the community are still active social structures which support the elderly.

Hypothesis VI

In spite of the fact that increased longevity and a rise in the numbers of old Indian people create problems that make care of the aged more difficult, Indians take care of their own elderly rather than turn to an outside social agency such as a rest home or a nursing home.

Care of the Elderly in Pre-Reservation Society

There were no 'outside' social agencies which could be expected to care for elderly people other than the village as a whole and the family in particular. Leadership duties included the responsibility of seeing that old people were well cared for. Admonitions to all persons by way of

advice from old people themselves and by way of legends and stories cautioned every member of the society that his or her duty was to see that old people were cared for. Most importantly this care by the village included providing food--meat from the hunt--especially to those old ones who for one reason or another had no close relatives to care for them. Clothing and horses were also provided by the village when needed. Prestige accrued to individuals who extended generosity to the aged.

After the Oto acquired horses and made the transition to a more mobile society, horses were a source of wealth to their owners. Aged people who did not have many horses or much other property were often the recipients of the gift of a horse on special occasions. Indeed the needy and aged were thought of first, for it was essential to the establishment and maintenance of a good name to be generous, especially to the poor and the aged.

Care of the Elderly in Contemporary Society

It is an often repeated sentiment among contemporary Oto and Ioway people that their elderly people should be and are cared for by their own families. The prospect of putting an old person in a nursing home is abhorrent to all respondents who expressed an opinion on the question. That a few old people from these tribes have gone to nursing homes is, however, an undisputed fact.

The trend towards nursing home care is slight. However, the data indicate that these incidents involve extremely difficult cases--people who for one reason or another need a lot of nursing care or whose close relatives have too many problems of their own to be able to offer the proper care. Other more common solutions to the care of old people involve children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews who live with the elderly in their own homes.

Although there is a slight trend toward the use of outside agencies for elderly care, the data do support Hypothesis VI to a large degree--Indians do take care of their own elderly.

Conclusions

The elderly Indian lives in a world where positions are valued and attitudes are positive. Although cultural and historical factors have changed the dimensions of their roles, the positions of the elderly continue to persist as important viable elements in the community. The strongest structure which supports the aged in these positions is the family kin network. These networks are extensive and complex and extend into the community organization as well. Thus in spite of the effects of mobility and technological change which have impinged upon the lives of the community members, there remains a strong support system.

The hypotheses that suggest that older people in the

Ioway and Oto communities have power and prestige are substantiated by the many examples of behavior and expressions of attitudes which are documented in this study. The importance of the elderly in economic stability, in childrearing and in sharing on all levels are examples of dimensions which cannot be underestimated. To say that this support system of family exists is not to suggest that all tribal members partake equally during their lives. Some leave the community for personal or economic reasons, only to return at a later date. Others live all of their lives as a part of the community. The fact remains, however, that regardless of the changing elements in the personnel of the community, an active social structure or framework remains available and viable for those persons who wish to partake. While it is obvious that many changes have occurred in the actual physical adaptation to the overall environment, in the economic system, the political system and material culture, a strong sense of belonging for both young and old exists.

One may be tempted to ask whether or not the current pattern of positive and valued roles for the elderly will continue to exist after the elders of today are gone. These people represent some of the last links with the generations of ancestors who lived during the pre-reservation and early reservation periods of the mid-1800's. Their lives, however, are substantially different from those early times,

and cultural details continue to change as they always have. Over the years the social structure and value system have proved to be adaptive. It seems likely to assume that the elderly will occupy positions of power and prestige as the kinship organization and the values continue to provide a viable support system in the face of further change.

As suggested in the first chapter, the solutions offered by the Indian community to the problems of old age offer a definite contrast to the alternatives experienced by many old people in the White world. While it is possible to say that the Indian community does offer productive, respected and valuable roles for their elderly members, the importance of this information contains several dimensions. The data offer convincing evidence about the facets of culture which result in a respected and valued old age and thus provide a better understanding of the cultural factors involved in the embittered and devalued status of old people in other segments of society. Further use of the data can be made in cross-cultural comparison as a way of validating or correcting current theoretical approaches toward aging, many of which have been formulated solely on information from the middle class white population." Not only is this study valuable for what it offers, but for what it suggests--the need for further research into contemporary solutions to the problems of aging offered by different ethnic groups.

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APPENDIX A

THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Who is considered elderly?
2. What are the criteria used in defining the category of elderly?
3. What is the part played by the elderly person in the economics of the family? This would include consideration of actual economic contribution and decision-making about economic matters concerning the elderly person as well as those concerning others in the family.
4. What part is played by the elderly in kinship relations? This would include such questions as the role played in the raising of grandchildren and the sponsorship of relatives at pow wows, location of residence, and composition of household.
5. What is the part played in the political sphere? Is it an active role or an advisory role?
6. What part is played by the elderly in social functions such as pow wows and hand games?
7. Is there a special part played by the elderly in religious functions? Is it an active role or an advisory

role?

8. Is he/she physically isolated?
9. Is he/she an integral part of the life of the community regardless of location of residence?
10. How large is the sphere of social relationships?
11. Does social interaction include distant relatives?
Close relatives? Community groups? Which groups?
What is the nature of the interaction? How frequent?
12. Does prestige increase or decrease when an individual reaches the stage when he/she is considered to be elderly? or when he/she considers him/herself elderly?
13. Is there differential prestige and power between the sexes? Does the older woman have more or less prestige and power than the older man?
14. How do the attitudes of the elderly on these questions coincide or differ from the attitudes expressed by other members of the family and the actions and attitudes observed by the researcher?