

Bulletin 278

June 1951

# OLD AGE AND RETIREMENT IN RURAL CONNECTICUT

I. East Haddam: A Summer Resort Community

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## FOREWORD

Among the many important changes taking place in the United States in recent years, perhaps none has more far-reaching implications than the gradual aging of our population. There is now a much greater proportion of old people than formerly; and demographers tell us that we can expect the proportion in the older age groups to increase in the future.

This aging of the population is due to a number of factors, including a reduction in infant mortality, better control of communicable diseases, generally improved medical care, and higher standards and levels of living. All of these circumstances have enabled a greater proportion of children to reach adulthood and even to attain a ripe old age. This is especially emphasized by data regarding changes in life expectancy. In 1900, for example, the average person at birth in the United States could expect to live only about 49 years. The person born in 1950 has a life expectancy of approximately 68 years.

The growing proportion of elderly people in our society is accompanied by a number of developments which require increasing attention. The problem of retirement becomes more important especially in view of our shift from a predominantly agricultural to a highly-industrialized civilization. The family has gradually cast off much of the responsibility of caring for dependent relatives and has tended to shift this burden to public and private agencies. Industry frequently discards the older worker; and the problem of financial independence during the declining years looms large. Diseases of older people become more conspicuous and cry for greater attention. The problems of recreation, of leisure-time activities and of avocations that will absorb the energies of both body and mind during the later years are considerations that need to be planned long before the individual expects to retire.

Despite the importance of these problems we are only beginning to give them the attention they deserve. Even now information concerning the nature of old age and retirement problems in rural areas is almost non-existent. It is for these reasons that the Department of Rural Sociology at the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station is undertaking a series of studies to determine the impact of old age and retirement problems in rural Connecticut. This is the first study of the series and was made by Walter C. McKain, Jr., Associate Professor of Rural Sociology at the University of Connecticut with the assistance of Elmer D. Baldwin, graduate assistant in Rural Sociology. Other studies in this series will follow later.

N. L. WHETTEN, Head  
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## SUMMARY

East Haddam, a summer resort community in Middlesex County, was selected for study, first, because it is broadly representative of a group of towns that have a larger proportion of persons 65 years of age and older than the state as a whole, and second, because there has been a recent influx of older persons into that area. The older residents in the town may be classified into three broad groupings (a) the foreign-born, most of whom came from Poland, Russia or Czechoslovakia, (b) persons who were born in East Haddam or in a similar New England setting, and (c) persons who were born elsewhere in the United States and who have chosen to spend their years of retirement in East Haddam.

Most of the older residents are self-supporting, depending either upon current earnings for their income or upon savings and pensions. Slightly more than one-fifth of the persons 65 and over are dependent upon their relatives and another 10 percent receive old age assistance.

Nearly one-fourth of the elderly persons live on commercial farms and another fifth live on part-time farms. In most instances the agricultural activities of the older persons are limited. A few are farm operators, others can be considered part-time farmers on a small scale, many have nothing more than a small garden and almost one-half (45 percent) have no agricultural activities. Practically all of the retired men who operate part-time farms have had previous agricultural experience although about one-half of them held non-farm jobs just before their retirement.

Family ties proved to be very important in the lives of the older persons. Those who are widows or widowers usually live with a son, daughter, or some other relative. This is particularly true among foreign-born persons. Most of the older people, moreover, have one or more relatives living in East Haddam in addition to those who live with them.

The leisure-time activities of the older residents are varied but many retired persons actually have very little to do in their spare time. Home ownership is highly regarded (65 percent of them own their own homes) and many leisure-time pursuits are related to the maintenance and improvement of the home. The social participation of older persons in East Haddam is limited. Slightly more than one-half of them attend church less than six times a year, and three-fourths of them do not belong to any organization outside the church.

One of the major obstacles to a satisfactory adjustment in old age is poor health. Over one-half of the older persons either indicated that their health was not good, or mentioned one or more physical disabilities or illnesses with which they were afflicted.

A more serious barrier to a well adjusted life in later maturity is an inadequate preparation for retirement. Many of the retired persons in East Haddam had retirement thrust upon them through unemployment, accident, or poor health. They grew up in a period when a person was expected to remain in the labor force indefinitely and they find that their lives are empty when they can no longer hold down a job. Perhaps a better understanding of their experiences and the problems they face will guide the retirement plans and preparations of coming generations.

## Acknowledgments

A number of persons contributed in one way or another to the project and their assistance is gratefully acknowledged. Dr. Nathan L. Whetten, Head of the Department of Rural Sociology, guided the project from its inception and made many helpful suggestions along the way. Robert G. Burnight, Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, critically and patiently reviewed the manuscript.

Philip F. Dean, Agricultural Agent in Middlesex County, provided valuable background information and introduced the authors to the community. Emery C. Blanchard, Assistant Principal at the Nathan Hale—Ray School, prepared a map of the town that was used throughout the survey. Various town officials and local leaders showed a continuing interest in the study and generously contributed their time and energies. The residents of East Haddam were most cooperative at all stages of the project. Because of their genuine interest in the problems of old age and retirement, many volunteered information which otherwise might never have been discovered.

# **Old Age and Retirement in Rural Connecticut**

## **I. East Haddam: A Summer Resort Community**

**Walter C. McKain, Jr.\* and Elmer D. Baldwin†**

### **I—THE SETTING**

Both the number and the proportion of persons who are 65 years of age and over are increasing in Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> Between 1900 and 1950 the total population of the State more than doubled, but during the same half-century the number of old people more than tripled and today there are 170,000 persons 65 years of age or older living in Connecticut. They constitute nearly 9 percent of the total population. Moreover, this is just the beginning, for demographers estimate that there will be a minimum of 275,000 oldsters in Connecticut by 1980.

A large number of the Connecticut residents in the older age group are retired or partially retired. The number of retired persons can be estimated only roughly since some old people are employed on a part-time basis and others, although they have not formally withdrawn from the labor force, cannot find employment. Many of the retired persons are found in the rural areas, living on farms, in rural villages and in scattered settlements along the highways. Some have spent all or most of their lives in Connecticut, others are newcomers from New York City and other eastern cities who have decided to spend their later years in Connecticut. Altogether they constitute an important segment of Connecticut's population; the problems they face and the adjustments they are making will be duplicated by an increasing number of retired persons in the years to come.

Very little is known concerning the older persons who are living in the rural areas of Connecticut. Their characteristics, sources of income, levels of living, agricultural operations, occupational histories, social participation, their health, family living arrangements, hobbies, problems, and the contributions they are making to rural community life have not been systematically determined. Old age and retirement in Connecticut will be studied in a number of different community situations, including rural towns that are agricultural, industrial and suburban.

### **The Town of East Haddam**

The first community that was studied is East Haddam, a summer boarding town in Middlesex County. East Haddam is one of a block of towns in the lower Connecticut River Valley and along the coast that have a relatively large

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<sup>1</sup>Additional information concerning the aging of Connecticut's population and the implications of an aging population will be found in a forthcoming bulletin of the Storrs Agricultural Experiment Station. This bulletin is tentatively entitled *Old Age and Retirement in Rural Connecticut. IV. An Aging Population.*

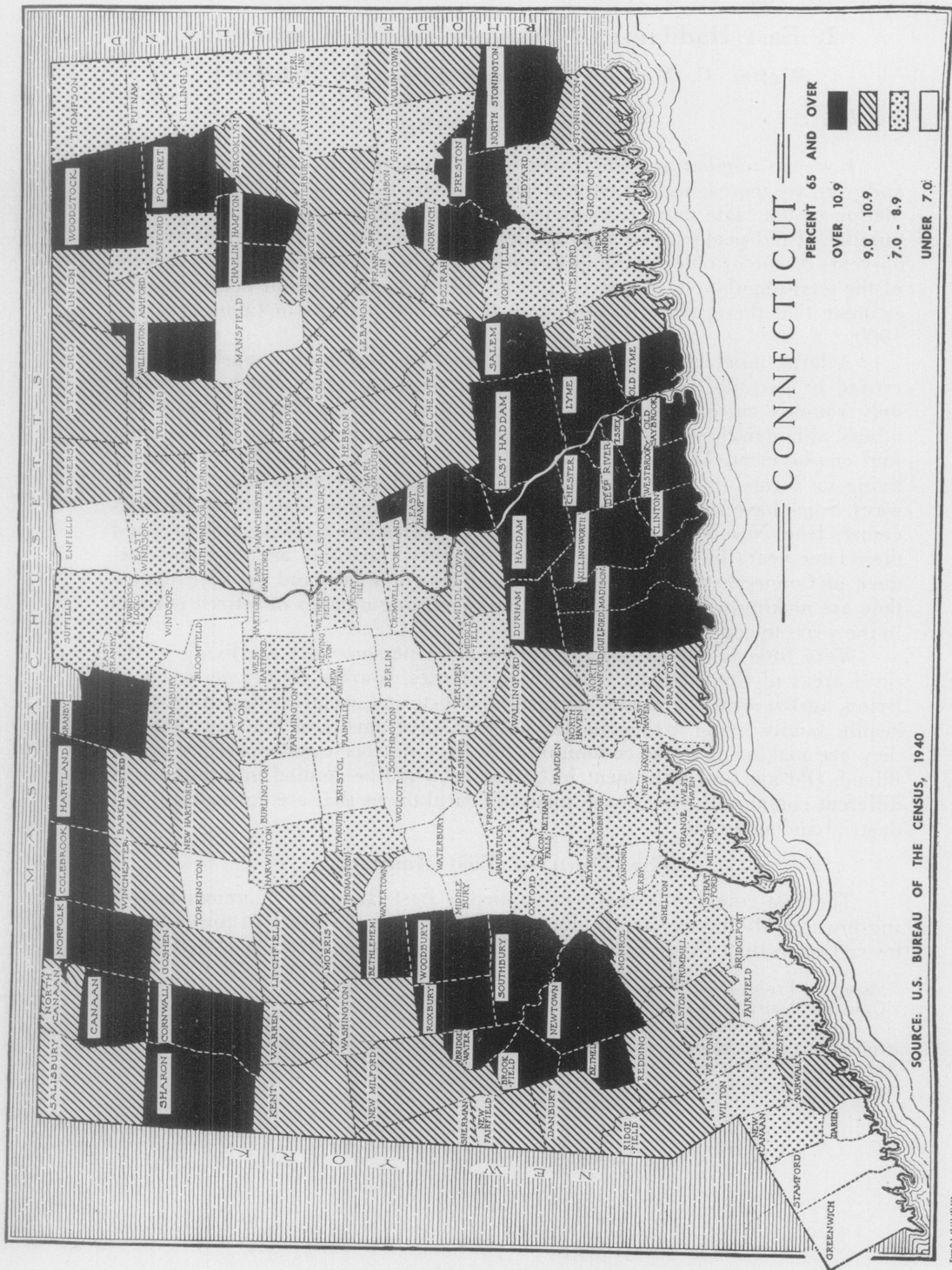


Figure 1. Proportion of population 65 years of age and older, by Connecticut towns, 1940.

proportion of persons 65 years of age and older (Figure 1). Like other towns in this section, East Haddam annually attracts a large number of summer visitors. Some of them have retired in the area and probably many others are planning to spend their years of later maturity there. The older persons who move to Connecticut bring with them problems of adjustment that require special analysis.

East Haddam lies along the east bank of the Connecticut River, about 14 miles below Middletown and 16 miles north of Long Island Sound. It is one of the largest towns in the State in area and one of the most scenic. The first white settlement in what is now East Haddam was established nearly 300 years ago when the area was still part of Haddam. By 1700 East Haddam began operating as a separate town in many respects and its formal incorporation into a separate political unit occurred in 1734.

Unlike most inland agricultural towns in Connecticut, East Haddam has always maintained important ties with the outside world. Before the Revolutionary War, the town was a ship-building center and this industry continued during the first half of the 18th Century. In the same period a brisk trade with the West Indies was maintained and many boats stopped at the East Haddam landings.

The presence of ample water power backed by natural lakes and man-made reservoirs encouraged manufacturing in the area and many East Haddam products found their way to consumers in this country and abroad. Early manufacturers produced a wide variety of commodities ranging from cigars to coffin trimmings. Even today there are nearly one dozen small manufacturing concerns within the town limits.

Another bond with the outside world has been the migration of foreign-born persons to the town. Poles, Russians, Czechs, Austrians, and the members of several other ethnic groups have made East Haddam their home. In 1940, over one-fourth of the adult population was foreign-born and today these people and their children constitute an important segment of the town's population.

Finally, the summer boarder "industry" has brought thousands of visitors to East Haddam each summer and thus has contributed to the cosmopolitan outlook of the community. The first summer guests were friends and relatives of persons who had settled in the area and who wanted to share the joys of rural life. The visitors lived in farmhouses, ate country food, tramped in the nearby hills, admired the rivers and lakes and returned to the city refreshed and eager to come back to East Haddam the following summer.

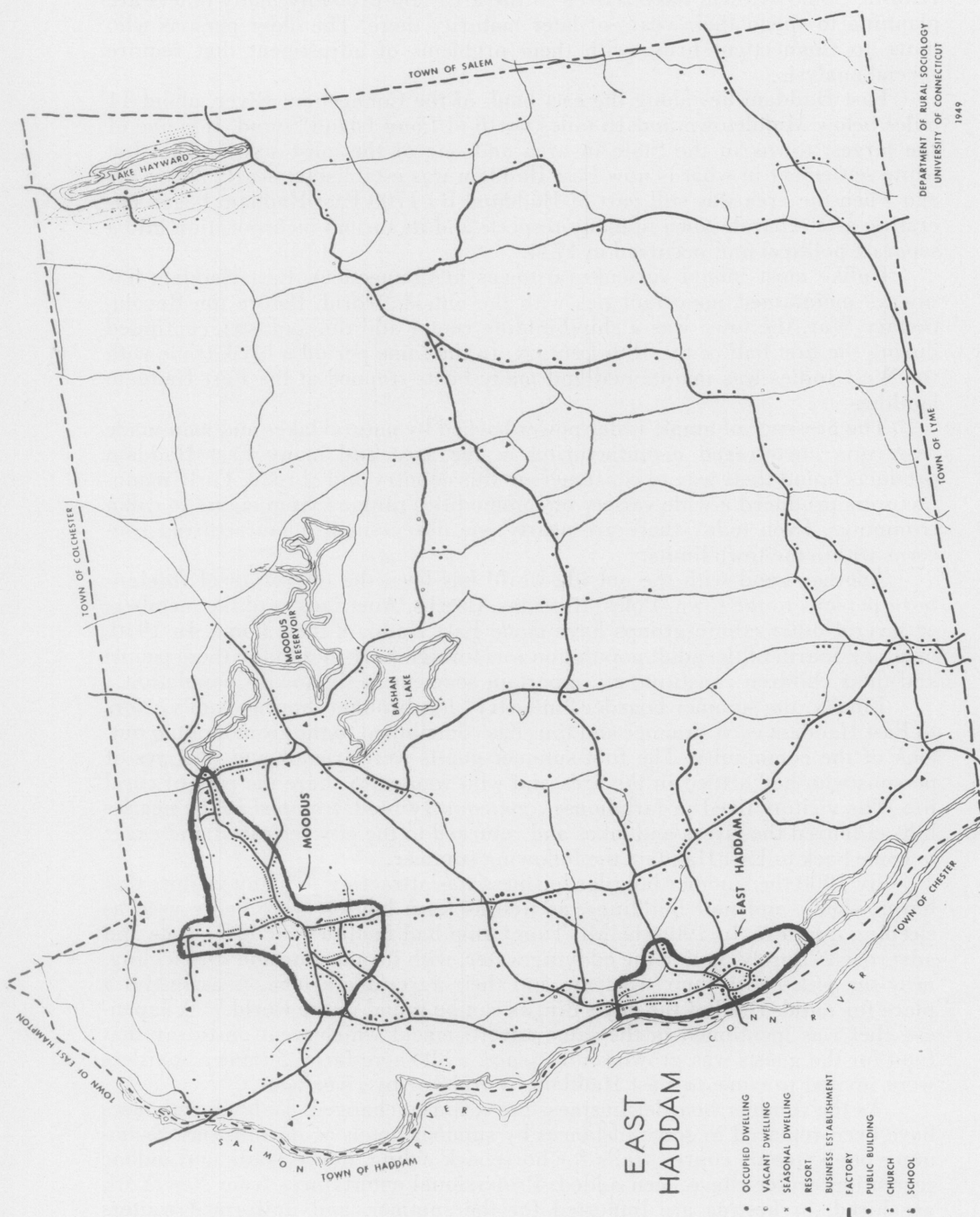
By 1900 the summer boarder business was attracting so many visitors that barns, sheds, and new buildings, as well as farm houses, were being used as sleeping quarters. In 1908 the Mt. Tom Camp had facilities for 175 guests and advertised "Surely, beside the eddying water, with its murmur and its trickling, near the pines with their whispers and their agreeable aroma, is as restful a place for minds tired of the city's din, as can be found in the world."<sup>2</sup> A Japanese chef was mentioned in the same advertisement which went on to say that food for the guests was grown on the place, a 300-acre farm. Summer boarders were invited to come to East Haddam by train or by river boat.

As the summer boarder business grew, it also changed. Today farmhouses have been replaced in some instances by summer hotels or dormitories. Swimming pools, tennis courts, trails for horseback riding, dance floors and indoor recreation centers have been added. Professional entertainers from New York are hired, orchestras are imported for the summer, and uniformed waiters serve carefully-planned meals.

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<sup>2</sup>"Official Program of the Formal Opening" (East Haddam Bridge), 1913. On file at the East Haddam Public Library.





DEPARTMENT OF RURAL SOCIOLOGY  
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1949

Figure 2. East Haddam, Connecticut, 1950.

Most of the summer boarders, now numbering in the thousands, spend one or two weeks in East Haddam and most of them return year after year to the same resort. They are drawn from eastern cities, principally New York. Formerly whole families spent the summer in East Haddam, but in recent years there has been a concentration of young people who do not have families, and middle-aged persons whose children have left home.

The summer boarder business is concentrated in the northwest section of East Haddam, although some summer resorts are found in other sections of the town (see Figure 2). In the north central and northeastern parts, particularly around Lake Hayward and Bashan Lake, there are many summer homes. These are not a part of the summer boarder business. They are occupied for the most part by families who spend most of the summer in East Haddam. The owners of summer homes and cottages are usually residents of Connecticut, pay taxes in East Haddam, and probably are more closely identified with the town than are the summer boarders.

Both the summer boarders and the persons who have summer homes in East Haddam are potential permanent residents of the community. Some of the summer boarders have purchased building lots or homes in the area and plan to live there when they retire. A few have seen business possibilities in the town and already are permanent residents. A number of the summer homes have been "winterized", and couples who formerly spent only the summers in East Haddam are now living there most of the year. Perhaps persons like to spend their retirement years in places associated with pleasures that they have experienced in their youth and middle age.

Like many New England towns, East Haddam has a number of villages and small community centers. Moodus, the largest village, has several stores, offices, churches, eating and drinking places and a post office (Figure 2). The consolidated school is also located there. Moodus derives its name from Mache-moodus, meaning "place of noise," and at one time it was the meeting place of a clan of Indians. Strange noises and earthquakes were reported as early as 1727 and as recently as 1951, although the damage caused by them has been negligible. The beauty of the natural surroundings and the legends that have persisted through the years have added to the attractiveness of Moodus as a summer resort.

The next largest village is East Haddam.<sup>3</sup> Located on the Connecticut River at the eastern terminus of the East Haddam bridge, it contains the town offices, several stores, business establishments, a post office and a hotel. Among the points of interest in the village of East Haddam are memorials to Nathan Hale who once taught in the community, a bell hanging in St. Stephen's Church and bearing the inscription "A.D. 815," and the Cone Burial Grounds originally used in the 17th century and restored in 1904.

Other smaller villages or neighborhoods include Hadlyme, Leesville, Mt. Parnassus, Millington Green, Foxtown, and North Plains. There are also three state parks in the area, Devil's Hop Yard, Brainard Homestead and Gillette Castle.

In 1950, East Haddam had a population of 2,549. Although 1950 statistics on population composition are not yet available, the 1940 census data are probably fairly descriptive of the present situation. East Haddam is partly an agricultural town, partly an industrial town, and partly a summer resort town. One-fifth of the employed persons in 1940 worked in agriculture, poultry and dairying being the principal enterprises, and less than one-third were employed by manufacturing concerns.

<sup>3</sup>Since this village bears the name of the town it will be referred to in this bulletin as the "village of East Haddam" and the town of East Haddam will be called "East Haddam."

The extent of the summer boarder business is not easily measured. In 1949 there were over 30 places in East Haddam that had a summer boarder business. Some of the smaller ones had accommodations for only 15 or 20 guests; some of the larger ones could handle several hundred. The summer boarder industry undoubtedly provides employment for many local people in addition to the proprietors and managers of the resorts. Some of the work is done by college students and others who are imported for the summer season, but local contractors, carpenters, plumbers, cooks, housekeepers, and caretakers also find employment. The summer boarders undoubtedly bring added business to local merchants, doctors and dentists. Farmers in the area sell some of their produce to the summer hotels although most foodstuffs are purchased at wholesale markets.

Adequate measures of income and living conditions in East Haddam are lacking, but it appears to be like many other rural Connecticut towns in this respect. There are a few wealthy families and a number of families who need public or private assistance, but the vast majority of its residents are self-supporting and live in moderate circumstances. The town itself has a high financial standing, partly because it has been the recipient of several endowments.

### Procedures Used in the Study

A map of the town was prepared in 1949 showing the paved and unpaved roads, the principal lakes and rivers and the location of residences and other buildings (Figure 2). The dwellings were separated into four categories, (a) those that were occupied, (b) those that were vacant, (c) seasonal dwellings, and (d) resorts. Summer resorts sometimes serve as the winter homes of their owners. Business establishments, factories, churches, schools and public buildings such as libraries, community halls, public office buildings and firehouses were located on the map.

The proposed survey was discussed with town officials and with some of the local leaders. The field work was started late in 1949 and continued through the first quarter of 1950. Persons who were 65 years of age and over were interviewed according to a prepared schedule (Appendix). Other persons in the community contributed information from time to time on topics related to the research but requiring no formal schedule.

Every house in town was visited unless the field workers had prior information that no older persons were in residence. When a person 65 years of age or older was found he was interviewed privately, if this was possible. In most instances elderly couples were interviewed together, although individual schedules were used.

Adequate schedules were completed for 220 older persons. A very few either refused to grant an interview or were unable to participate in one. The older residents of a rest home located in the town were arbitrarily omitted from the study and a few older persons were missed in the survey.

The usual secondary sources of information were tapped. Information concerning the history of East Haddam was secured from the local libraries, the East Haddam Public Library in Moodus, and the Rathbun Free Memorial Library in the village of East Haddam. Town reports, assessors' records and the membership lists of some organizations were examined. Information from the 1940 census was obtained, including two special tabulations analyzed elsewhere.<sup>4</sup> Some pertinent information was found in privately collected files of newspaper clippings about East Haddam events and people.

<sup>4</sup>N. L. Whetten and H. W. Riecken, Jr., *The Foreign-Born Population of Connecticut, 1940*, Storrs Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 246, Storrs, Sept. 1943, and W. C. McKain, Jr. and N. L. Whetten, *Occupational and Industrial Diversity in Rural Connecticut*, Storrs Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 263, Storrs, Nov. 1949.

## II—THE OLDER RESIDENTS OF EAST HADDAM

A common fallacy is the belief that all elderly people are alike. Actually they are as varied in their appearances, backgrounds, interest and attitudes as are persons belonging to any other age category. In some respects their differences are even more pronounced, for the differentiating characteristics of youth and middle age may become more pronounced in old age. The older a person is the more like himself he becomes.

Like younger persons, the aged can be separated into statistical categories which then can be analyzed and compared. And, as in the case of younger persons, these arbitrary categories are sometimes of limited value and may even be misleading. Individual differences are often obscured by this process, yet in the absence of more detailed case history information rough classifications are a necessity.<sup>5</sup> In the subsequent analysis a large number of the traits of the older residents of East Haddam will be examined. To facilitate this process the analysis will be made in terms of three major attributes. These are: sex (male or female), nativity (native-born or foreign-born), and age (65-74, 75 and over).

### Sex

Although sex roles may be becoming more alike in our society, there remain vast differences in the behavior patterns of older men and women and in the responses that they elicit.<sup>6</sup> Retirement, for example, in the case of an older man usually means a radical change in his everyday activities. For most women, retirement is a gradual process beginning in that period of the family life history when their children begin to leave home. Then, too, older men and women bring into their later maturity experiences that have been conditioned by their sex throughout all their lives. Their adjustments and behavior naturally reflect these differences. The reactions of friends and relatives and society in general to aging men is different from the reaction to aging women. The role of the grandmother in our society differs widely from the role of the grandfather.

Women enjoy greater longevity than men, and this is reflected in the sex ratios of the older population. In 1940, there were more men than women in the total population of the United States, but in the older age categories women outnumbered men. The percentage of men and women in the populations of East Haddam and in the United States are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by sex, East Haddam, 1950,  
Connecticut, 1940, and the United States, 1940*

Place	Male Percent	Female Percent
East Haddam	47.7	52.3
Connecticut	46.1	53.9
United States	48.9	51.1

### Nativity

Another important trait in studying the population of any age group is nativity. Connecticut has a relatively large proportion of foreign-born people, and since the majority of foreigners came to this country before 1920, the pro-

<sup>5</sup>See L. A. Salter, Jr., "Cross-Sectional and Case-Grouping Procedures in Research Analysis," *Journal of Farm Economics*, Vol. XXIV, No. 4, November 1942.

<sup>6</sup>Talcott Parsons, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," *American Sociological Review*, Vol. VII, No. 5, October 1942.

portion of foreign-born in the older population is especially large.<sup>7</sup> In East Haddam nearly 46 percent of the people 65 and over were foreign-born; in Connecticut nearly 40 percent, and for the United States as a whole, just under 25 percent (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
*White persons 65 years of age and older, by nativity, East Haddam, 1950,  
Connecticut, 1940, and the United States, 1940*

Place	Native-born Percent	Foreign-born Percent
East Haddam	54.1	45.9
Connecticut	60.6	39.4
United States	75.4	24.6

A separate analysis of the foreign-born is particularly significant in this study for two reasons. First, the problems that confront an elderly person who presumably was reared in a foreign country differ both in kind and degree from the problems of elderly people who were reared in this country. This is especially true in the area of family support of the aged.<sup>8</sup> Second, during the next two decades the number of foreign-born persons in the upper age categories will probably increase and thereafter the number may decline rather abruptly. Large numbers of foreign-born persons came to Connecticut between 1890 and 1920. Since then stringent immigration laws have drastically reduced their flow to this country. This means that a large part of the foreign-born population in Connecticut is in the older age groupings. The adjustments to later maturity in the next quarter of a century will involve a large number of foreign-born persons; adjustments in later decades will not. A separate analysis of the foreign-born and native-born is therefore necessary for a complete understanding of the problems involved, and for short-run and long-range planning.

The categories "foreign-born" and "native-born" tend to conceal many important differences. An older person born in Manchester, New Hampshire, and another born in Manchester, England, may have more in common than two older persons one of whom was born in New York City and the other in the deep south. An examination of Table 3 reveals that more than one-half of the foreign-born persons 65 and over in East Haddam had their point of origin in

**Table 3**  
*Foreign-born persons 65 years of age and older, by country of birth,  
East Haddam, 1950*

Country of Birth	Number	Percent
Total	101	100
Poland	36	35
Russia	19	19
Czechoslovakia	18	18
Austria	10	10
Germany	7	7
All other*	11	11

\* Includes Hungary, Canada, Switzerland, Lithuania, and Denmark.

<sup>7</sup>Nathan L. Whetten and Henry W. Riecken, Jr., *The Foreign-Born Population of Connecticut, 1940*, Storrs Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 246, Storrs, 1943.

<sup>8</sup>N. L. Whetten and W. C. McKain, Jr., *A Sociological Analysis of Relief and Non-Relief Families in a Rural Connecticut Town*, Storrs Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 219, Storrs, July 1937 and N. L. Whetten and A. W. Green, *Ethnic Group Relations in a Rural Area of Connecticut*, Storrs Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 244, Storrs, January 1943.

Poland or Russia, Czechoslovakia was the birthplace of 18 percent and Germany and Austria together accounted for 17 percent. Nearly 45 percent of the native-born elderly residents of East Haddam were born there and another one-quarter were born in Connecticut. Less than one-fifth were born outside of New England (Table 4).

**Table 4**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by place of birth, sex, nativity,  
and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Birthplace	Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
East Haddam	54	25	31	19	45	—	21	31
Other Connecticut	33	15	13	16	28	—	14	17
Other New England	9	4	3	5	8	—	3	6
Other United States	23	10	3	17	19	—	11	9
Foreign-born	101	46	50	43	—	100	51	37

### Age

East Haddam has a larger proportion of persons over 65 years of age than the State as a whole and, in addition, a higher proportion of its aged residents are 75 and over (Table 5).

**Table 5**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by age, East Haddam, 1950,  
Connecticut, 1940, and the United States, 1940*

Age	East Haddam 1950 Percent	Connecticut 1940 Percent	United States 1940 Percent
All ages	100	100	100
65-69	32	42	43
70-74	32	29	28
75 and over	36	29	29

As a rule, women live longer than men and in most populations there are usually more women than men 75 years of age and older. In East Haddam the reverse is true; there are more men than women in the older age brackets (Table 6). This is particularly true in the age group 75 to 79 in which there

**Table 6**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by age, sex, and nativity,  
East Haddam, 1950*

Age	Total Number	Total Percent	Male Percent	Female Percent	Native- born Percent	Foreign- born Percent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100
65-69	71	32	33	31	27	38
70-74	71	32	28	36	32	33
75-79	41	19	24	14	18	19
80-84	30	14	11	16	17	10
Over 84	7	3	4	3	6	—
Median age		72.8	73.0	72.5	73.7	71.6

were 25 men and only 17 women. One explanation of the high sex ratio among the aged population of East Haddam may be found in the relatively large disparity in ages of husbands and wives who were born in foreign countries. The median age difference of married couples who were born in this country was two years; the median age difference of foreign-born couples was between four and five years. East Haddam has a relatively large number of older persons who are foreign-born and many of the foreign-born older men have wives who are under 65 years of age. If this explanation is correct, the sex ratio for the aged population of East Haddam will probably change during the next two decades and there will be many more women than men in the old age categories.

The living arrangements, sources of income, social participation and areas of adjustment may be different for persons 75 years of age and older and persons between 65 and 74. A community in which the aged population is under 75 will face a different set of problems than a community that has a substantial number of older persons in their late 70's, 80's or 90's.

### Place of Residence

As in many Connecticut towns, the dividing line between the rural villages in East Haddam and the open-country areas is not sharply drawn. The two major villages in the town, Moodus and East Haddam, have the services and concentration of population usually found in villages. They are arbitrarily delineated with the boundaries shown in Figure 2. The rest of the town is treated as an open-country area, although it contains a number of small neighborhood centers.

A little over one-half (53 percent) of the elderly residents of East Haddam live in the open country (Table 7), but less than one-fourth of these are located

**Table 7**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by place of residence, age, sex and nativity, East Haddam, 1950*

Place of Residence	Total Number	Total Percent	Male Percent	Female Percent	Native-born Percent	Foreign-born Percent	65-74 years of age Percent	75 years of age and older Percent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Village	102	46	43	49	45	48	44	50
Moodus	64	29	33	25	18	42	28	31
East Haddam	38	17	10	24	27	6	16	19
Open country	118	54	56	51	55	52	56	50

on commercial farms. The rural nonfarm population, as in most Connecticut towns, is larger than the rural farm population. In addition to the full-time farmers, about one-third of the elderly open-country dwellers live on residential or part-time farms, and the remainder live on places with either no agricultural production or just a garden.

The village population of persons 65 and over is divided between Moodus and the village of East Haddam (Table 7). Although Moodus has a larger number of old people than the village of East Haddam, the proportion of older persons to the total village population is higher in the latter which contains only about one-half as many residents of all ages as Moodus.

Place of residence will be used occasionally in the subsequent analysis as a differentiating characteristic, since the activities of older persons and the community services readily available to older persons are not the same in vil-

lages as in the open-country areas. Traditionally, rural villages have attracted retired persons and persons who are relatively inactive. In recent years, however, many retired persons have moved into the open-country areas.

### Education

Over one-half of the elderly residents of East Haddam have not completed grammar school and only one-fifth have had more than a grammar school education (Table 8). Between one-fourth and one-fifth of the older persons have

**Table 8**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by years of formal education, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Years of formal education	Total Num- ber	Total Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Under 4	48	22	20	24	3	43	23	21
4-7	70	32	42	23	26	39	37	22
8	57	26	27	25	36	14	23	32
Over 8	45	20	11	28	35	4	17	25

had less than four years of formal education and 5 percent reported that they never attended school. In general, older persons throughout Connecticut have had less schooling, on the average, than young or middle-aged persons, but the education of the older residents of East Haddam has been particularly scanty. For example, in 1940 only 4 percent of the persons 65 years of age and older in Connecticut had less than four years of education, while 22 percent of the persons 65 and over in East Haddam in 1950 had less than four years of formal schooling. Older women in the town have had more schooling than the older men. Between one-fourth and one-third of the women over 64 had more than an eighth grade education, while only one out of nine of the older men went beyond eighth grade.

Older persons who were foreign-born frequently had little opportunity to attend school and there were marked differences in the amount of education possessed by foreign-born and native-born old persons. Over two-fifths of the foreign-born had less than four years of schooling, while only 3 percent of the native-born had less than four years. Over a third of the native-born persons 65 years of age and older had more than an eighth grade education but only 4 percent of the foreign-born persons went beyond eighth grade.

There was considerable variation between nationality groupings with respect to education. A number of persons from Czechoslovakia remarked that all children in that country were required to attend school, and severe penalties were imposed upon parents who did not send their children to school. In confirmation of this, 26 percent of the older Czechoslovakians had an eighth grade education compared with less than 2 percent of the Russians and Poles.

Older persons who are under 75 years of age had fewer years of formal schooling on the average than East Haddam residents who were 75 years of age and older. Sixty percent of the persons 65 to 74 years of age had less than an eighth grade education, while only 43 percent of the persons 75 and older had fewer than eight years of schooling. This distribution is contrary to what might be expected and may be explained by the unusually high proportion of foreign-born persons in the younger age group.



## Church Affiliation

Nearly a third of the older residents of East Haddam claim no church affiliation (Table 9). Persons unattached to any church are drawn from all groups within the town although there are significantly more men than women and more native-born old persons than foreign-born.

Older Protestants (31 percent) for the most part are either affiliated with the Congregational church or the Episcopal church. There are several Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians and a few belong to other denominations. A

**Table 9**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by church affiliation, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Church Affiliation	Total Num- ber	Total Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Protestant	69	31	22	40	53	5	25	42
Congregational	36	16	10	22	29	1	13	22
Episcopal	18	8	5	11	14	1	6	11
All other	15	7	7	7	10	3	6	9
Catholic	63	29	39	28	7	54	32	23
Hebrew	19	9	10	7	—	19	9	8
None	69	31	38	25	40	22	34	27

large proportion of the Episcopalians live in the village of East Haddam where the Episcopal church is located. The Protestants are about equally divided between the villages and the open country. Protestant women outnumber the Protestant men almost two to one and, as might be expected, the Protestants are largely native-born. A large proportion of the Protestants are 75 years of age and older.

There are almost equal numbers of Catholics and Protestants among the older residents of East Haddam. About one-half of the Catholics are men and about one-half are women. They are divided rather evenly among the village and open-country populations. Approximately seven out of every eight older persons who are Catholics are foreign-born.

Less than 10 percent of the older persons in East Haddam are affiliated with the Jewish religion. They are almost equally divided between the sexes. Most of the older residents of the Jewish faith are foreign-born and most of them live in the village of Moodus.

## III—RESIDENTIAL HISTORY

The population of the United States has become increasingly mobile, and the movement of older persons from city to country, from farm to village, and from one state to another has probably gained momentum. Retired persons and others in later maturity have frequently broken with the community where they spent most of their lives and made their homes elsewhere. An increase in economic security, a more vigorous health in old age, and perhaps a general restlessness of people everywhere have all been contributing factors to this increase in the mobility of older persons.

The movement of older persons is significant both to the old people themselves and to the communities to which they move. The adjustment of an aged person to a new community must be made at an age when adjustments may be

difficult. A retired person who has dissolved his occupational ties and who then breaks the bonds uniting him with his home community often finds himself at loose ends in his new home. The community itself also is affected by an immigration of old persons. The in-migrants may bring wealth to the town but they also may bring problems. New human resources are added and new needs are created. The community that wishes to understand its older citizenry needs to know from where they came, when they arrived and what prompted them to come.

### **Place of Birth**

One-fourth of the older residents of East Haddam were born there (Table 4). Almost all of the older women who were born in East Haddam and most of the men who were born there have lived there their entire lives. A few said that they had seldom been outside the town boundaries. One man, when he was asked why he hadn't traveled more, made this reply, "Why should I go anywhere? We got everything anybody would need right here in Moodus."

Most of the older persons who were born elsewhere in Connecticut came from towns adjacent to or near East Haddam. A few were born in Connecticut cities. Four percent were born in one of the other New England states, mostly in Massachusetts, and 10 percent were born in other states. The others, 46 percent in all, came to the United States from foreign countries.

A high proportion of the older persons who were born in East Haddam and who still live there are men and, conversely, practically all of the older persons now living there who were born in the United States but outside of New England are women. This pattern resulted from two circumstances. First, a number of the men who were born in East Haddam have lived for a few years in other places, principally New York City. Here they married and later returned to East Haddam with their wives. Carl Frankel<sup>9</sup> is a case in point. He was born in East Haddam in 1881, the son of German immigrants. He moved to New York shortly before the turn of the century in order to earn enough money to buy a farm and also because he wanted to be near other German families. By the time he had saved enough money to purchase a farm in East Haddam, he had found a wife. His bride, a girl who claimed New York as her birthplace, of course returned with him.

Second, a few widows and spinsters have been attracted to East Haddam. Some came there as summer boarders or as summer-home residents in their younger years and decided to return in their later maturity. Others discovered the town by chance or through friends, liked it and made it their home.

Most of the older persons who were born in the United States but outside of New England live in the open-country sections of East Haddam, while most of the older persons born in New England but not in Connecticut live in the villages. This is related to the explanation given for the sex distribution of persons who were not natives of the town. As in the case of Mrs. Frankel, many of the older women born outside of New England accompanied their husbands to East Haddam farms.

A relatively large proportion of the persons 75 years of age and older were born in East Haddam, while a large proportion of the older persons in the 65 to 74 age group are foreign-born.

### **Place of Longest Residence**

Two-thirds of the older male residents and nearly two-thirds of the older women have lived in East Haddam longer than in any other place (Table 10).

<sup>9</sup>To preserve the anonymity of all persons interviewed, real names will not be used and the illustrations will be slightly modified.

**Table 10**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by place of longest residence, sex,  
 nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Place of longest residence	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
East Haddam	142	65	66	63	64	65	62	69
New England	42	19	24	15	23	14	17	23
Middle Atlantic	27	12	9	15	6	20	16	5
Elsewhere	9	4	1	7	7	1	5	3

For them the town is home and they are spending their latter years in the community where presumably their ties are strongest. This group includes a large number of foreign-born old persons who came there early in life, and the majority of them live in villages rather than in the open-country areas. Conversely, the older residents who have lived in other places for longer periods of time are located in the rural areas of East Haddam.

Nearly one-fifth of the old persons have spent most of their lives in other New England towns, usually in Connecticut. They are predominantly native-born and are more frequently found in the open-country areas of East Haddam than in the villages. A large proportion of them are 75 years of age or older. Many of the foreign-born residents have lived for a long time in one of the Middle Atlantic states, usually New York.

#### Date of Arrival

Approximately one-third of the old persons settled in East Haddam in 1926 or later (Table 11). The remainder either were born there and never left (19 percent) or arrived in town before 1926 (48 percent). Those who came

**Table 11**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by date of arrival, sex, nativity,  
 and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Date of Arrival	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of-age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Never left								
East Haddam	43	19	21	17	35	—	17	23
Arrived before 1926	104	48	47	49	31	67	46	50
Arrived 1926 or later	71	32	31	33	34	31	37	24
Unknown	2	1	1	1	—	2	—	3

prior to 1926 include most of the foreign-born older residents. Immigration to this country was abruptly curtailed just after the first World War and the proportion of newcomers of all ages who are foreign-born has probably declined in the last 25 years.

One group of interest are those who arrived during the period 1930-1949.

They are the ones who chose East Haddam as a home in the later years of life, and who probably represent the kinds of older persons who will move there in the years to come. Since the 1930's were depression years and since the 1940's were relatively prosperous years, an analysis has been made of the persons who came to East Haddam during the period 1930-39 and those who came during the period 1940-49. Older persons now living in East Haddam who came there between 1930 and 1939 and those who came between 1940 and 1949 are compared in a number of important characteristics with all persons 65 and over who lived in the community (Table 12).

**Table 12**

*Specified characteristics of persons 65 years of age and older who came to East Haddam 1930-1939 and 1940-1949 compared with all persons 65 years of age and older in East Haddam in 1950*

Characteristics	1930-39 arrivals compared with total	1940-49 arrivals compared with total
Age	Younger	Younger
Sex	More males	More females
Marital status	More single—fewer widowed	More widowed—fewer single and married
Education	More	More
Church affiliation	More Jewish and more with no affiliation—fewer Catholics and Protestants	Fewer Catholics—more Protestant and more with no affiliation
Health	More reported good health	Same
Birthplace	Fewer in East Haddam—More in New England	More in other United States—fewer in East Haddam, fewer in foreign country
Place of longest residence	More from New England and Middle Atlantic	More from New England and Middle Atlantic
Place moved from	More from New England and New York	More from New England, New York and Other United States
Reasons for moving	More for other reasons	More other—fewer for economic reasons
Proportion retired	Same	More retired
Reason for retirement	More for other reasons and economic reasons	More for other reasons—more for economic reasons
Principal past occupation	Fewer agricultural and unskilled workers—more skilled and professional	Fewer agricultural and unskilled workers—more skilled
Source of income	More current earnings and savings	More public and private pensions and savings
Living Arrangements	More with daughters—less with relatives	Less with spouse—more with sons, daughters and relatives
Tenure	Same	More tenants, more with relatives
Agriculture on place	Same	Fewer
Agricultural activities	Same	Much fewer
Amount of leisure time	Same	More

In general, the older persons who came to East Haddam in the period 1930-39 did not come to retire. They came during these depression years to live in a rural area where they hoped eventually to find work and where, in the meantime, their living costs could be reduced. Most of them found work and most of them are still working. Many of the arrivals of this period were Russians, some of whom had previously lived in East Haddam and whose children still lived in the area.

The persons who came to East Haddam in the period 1940-49 differed in many respects. More of them came after they had retired. Only a few of them are currently employed and most of them receive public or private pensions, live with relatives, or have savings and investments. They came from a wide geographic area. Very few of them live on farms or have any agricultural activities.

### Place of Last Residence

Just over one-third of the old persons in East Haddam came there from towns located in New England (Table 13). Most of this group came from

**Table 13**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by place of last residence, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Place of last residence	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75-years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Born in								
East Haddam	43	20	22	17	36	—	18	23
New England	74	34	37	31	44	21	31	39
New York City and environs	61	26	26	30	12	46	30	23
Other United States	21	10	7	12	8	12	10	9
Foreign country	21	10	8	10	—	21	11	6

places in Connecticut, particularly from towns in eastern Connecticut. Some moved from Massachusetts and Rhode Island but northern New England is represented by only a few.

One-fourth of the elderly residents found in the area moved there from New York City and its environs. Most of the members of this group are foreign-born persons who lived for a few years in the New York City area after being admitted to this country. They came 30 or 40 years ago and settled in the rural areas where most of them are still located. A smaller number of foreign-born persons moved to the community more recently to spend their years of later maturity with their children.

One out of every 10 older persons in East Haddam came to the town directly from a foreign country. The vast majority of these are now living in Moodus or in the village of East Haddam. Most of the persons 75 years of age and older were born in the town or moved there from other points in New England, while most of the persons 65 to 74 years of age came from places outside of New England.

### Reasons for Coming to East Haddam

Each older person was asked to give the major reason why he came to East Haddam. Their responses must be examined with caution since most moves are occasioned by a number of factors. The motivating force behind some moves is the pull to the new community; behind others it is the push from an undesirable situation. In many instances the respondents probably were unable to assess the relative importance of the factors that conditioned their coming. Also the question was ambiguous since the answers could be directed to either of

the following questions: "Why did you select East Haddam as a place in which to live?" or "Why did you move at all?" Despite these imperfections the answers to this question probably indicate some of the reasons why these people came to the community.

Over one-fourth of the old persons who were living in the area in 1950 were born there or came to the community with their parents (Table 14). They

**Table 14**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by reason for moving to East Haddam, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Reason for moving	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of-age and older Per- cent
All reasons	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
To find employment	47	21	40	4	7	38	20	23
Farm work	24	11	23	—	1	22	11	10
Nonfarm work	23	10	17	4	6	16	9	13
To be near relatives	81	37	12	59	26	49	42	28
To retire	20	9	14	4	12	6	9	9
For miscellaneous reasons	14	7	6	8	7	6	6	7
Were born in East Haddam or came as children	58	26	28	25	48	1	23	33

did not choose to come to East Haddam but apparently they chose to remain.

Employment opportunities drew one-fifth of the elderly residents. They came to work on farms and on nonfarm jobs in almost equal numbers. Those who sought employment were predominantly foreign-born. As would be expected, most of those who came to work on farms either as farm operators or farm laborers now live in the open-country areas, and those who sought nonfarm work now live in villages.

Only 9 percent of the elderly residents said that they came to the area to retire. The proportion who actually came for that reason is probably somewhat higher. Some of those who came to retire may have assigned other reasons, since there was a reluctance on the part of some to admit that they had retired.

Among the miscellaneous reasons listed were the health of either the older person or someone close to him, the depression, marriage, and the scenery of East Haddam. A number could be no more specific than a retired barber who said: "I guess I just liked the place, that's all."

#### IV—MAKING A LIVING

In an agricultural economy older persons are able to retire gradually and at a time of their own choosing. Usually they are able to continue on the job in a semi-active capacity and with an earning power commensurate with their reduced needs. In an industrial society such as the United States, many wage earners remain in the labor force as long as they can reasonably hope for employment, and then become dependent upon savings, pensions, public assistance or their families. Retirement for them is frequently abrupt and involuntary.<sup>10</sup>

The plight of the older worker depends to a large extent upon general employment conditions. In periods of relatively high employment older workers are usually able to remain on the job, but during normal times and during

<sup>10</sup>Walter C. McKain, Jr., *The Older Worker in Connecticut Industry*, The Governor's Committee on Full Employment, Hartford, Connecticut, 1950 (mimeographed), p. 2.

periods of widespread unemployment they frequently experience difficulty in finding employment. On April 1, 1950, for example, 4 percent of the employed workers in Connecticut were 65 years of age and older, while on the same date 9 percent of the persons registered with the Connecticut Employment Service were 65 and over. Moreover, the older registrants had been unemployed for many more months, on the average than the younger registrants.<sup>11</sup>

The job opportunities available to older persons and the status of their financial security if they have withdrawn from the labor force are concerns not only of the older persons themselves but of the entire community. The migration of persons of retirement age into the rural areas of Connecticut may place a burden upon communities under some conditions, and under a different set of conditions such a migration may be of value to the communities.

### Employment Status—Women

In the following pages the employment status of elderly men and women will be discussed separately. The job of homemaker seldom ends and most of the older women in East Haddam expect to be on the job "until the undertaker comes around." One housewife who had brought up a family of four boys and two girls exclaimed "Did I retire? I should say not. There's still the shopping to do, the meals to get, the dishes to wash and the house to keep clean. I never retired and furthermore, I don't expect to."

Four out of every five older women in East Haddam classified themselves as homemakers and most of the others actually spend some of their time in household chores (Table 15). The few who had retired are women who had

**Table 15**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by present occupation, sex, nativity, and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Present occupation	Total		Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Males only			75 years of age and older Per-cent
	Num-ber	Per-cent			Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age Per-cent	
All occupations	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Homemaker	91	41	—	79	—	—	—	—
Retired	85	39	62	17	67	57	53	76
Farmer	20	9	19	—	12	26	25	10
Laborer*	8	4	8	—	2	13	11	2
Other	16	7	11	4	19	4	11	12

\* Includes skilled and unskilled laborers.

been school teachers, factory workers, or who had held some other job. They no longer work on that job, but they have not escaped housework.

Although women may not retire from homemaking, the extent of their household operations is frequently reduced in later years. When their children grow up and move away, most women are relieved of many of the tasks (and joys) of homemaking. In a sense they are partially retired.

This partial retirement has two important rewards. In the first place it

<sup>11</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 10.

comes at an age when persons are able to adjust relatively easily to new things.<sup>12</sup> A man who retires in his sixties often experiences difficulty when he tries to develop interests outside his job. A middle-aged woman who is gradually relieved of some of her household activities is often able to take part in community affairs, cultivate new friends and in other ways make a successful adjustment.

Secondly, an elderly woman in contrast to an elderly man is more likely to feel of use to someone in the years of later maturity. Senescence to her does not mean that she is "put on the shelf" and that she is no longer of use to anyone. Her household chores may not be appreciated as much as she would like but in her own mind she recognizes the necessity of keeping house and the contribution she makes in doing so.

### Employment Status—Men

Six out of every 10 elderly men in East Haddam are retired (Table 15). This proportion is very similar to the proportion of men 65 years of age and older in the country as a whole who have retired. In East Haddam, two out of every 10 older men are engaged in farm work. Practically all of these men are farm operators; only a few are farm laborers. A somewhat larger proportion of native-born men than foreign-born men are retired, but only one-half as many are engaged in agriculture. Most of the native-born men over 64 years of age in East Haddam who are still in the labor force hold nonfarm jobs. Many are local business men; others are practicing a skilled trade in the community.

Each retired person in East Haddam was asked to indicate the major reason why he retired. Usually a combination of factors lies behind each retirement and the retired person is reluctant to single out the most important one. Mr. Phelps, for example, had been a carpenter most of his life and in 1941 he was making preparations for retirement. When World War II came he decided to keep on the job as a carpenter in a manufacturing concern. The hours were long and his health broke down. His wife urged him to quit work but he stayed on the job until just after the war when he was laid off. He has never worked since. "I don't know why I retired," he said, "but I do know that I should have retired about five years sooner."

A number of the older men in East Haddam were involuntarily retired when they no longer could find employment. Only a few of the men (6 percent) admitted that the loss of a job was the basic reason for their retirement (Table

**Table 16**

*Persons 65 years of age and older who are retired, by reason for retirement, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Reason for retirement	Total Retired		Male	Female	Retired		males	
					Native-born	Foreign-born	65-74 years of age	75 years of age and older
	Num-ber	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent	Per-cent
All reasons	85	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Lost job	6	7	6	11	3	10	6	6
Old age	19	23	20	31	17	23	24	16
Poor health*	33	39	45	21	46	44	38	52
Other	27	31	29	37	34	23	32	26

\* Includes accident.

<sup>12</sup>Walter C. McKain, Jr. and Laurence J. Ackerman, "The Key To Successful Retirement," *The Journal of the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters*, March, 1950, p. 150.



16). Others, including those who did not like to believe that they were no longer of value in the labor market, may have assigned other reasons such as old age or poor health.

Almost one-half of the retired men withdrew from the labor force because of ill health or some physical disability. A few of these were the victims of accidents in their later years and were compelled to retire for this reason. Among the older group, those 75 years of age or older, poor health accounts for over one-half of the retirements. The importance of health in later maturity will be discussed in a later section of this report. Poor health is one of the most serious problems among the aged in East Haddam. It not only has grave economic consequences but, in addition, poor health or physical disability seriously affects other facets of an older person's life.

One-fifth of the retired men said that they had retired because of old age. In some cases the underlying reason for their withdrawal from the labor force was lack of employability to which old age may have been one of several contributing factors. Nearly a third of the retired women considered old age as the reason for their retirement, and nearly a fourth of the retired men who were 65 to 74 years of age gave the same reason.

The number of men in East Haddam who retired because they wanted to is fairly small and they have been included in the group who gave "other" reasons. Some of them quit work to escape the job they held. A retired executive, in explaining his reason for retirement, said "I just had enough of it, that's all." Others withdrew from the labor force "to have fun," "to work in my shop," or "to get a little fresh air." For them retirement was not an escape but a redirection of their activities. A number of men placed the credit or blame for their retirement upon their wives. "She kept after me until I had to quit," was a typical comment of these men. A summary of the characteristics of retired men compared with the attributes of men who have not retired is presented in Table 17.

**Table 17**

*Specified characteristics of retired men, 65 years of age and older, compared with all men 65 years of age and older, East Haddam, 1950*

Characteristics	Retired men 65 and over compared with all men 65 and older
Age	Fewer 65-69 years of age—slightly more in other age groups
Marital status	Fewer married
Education	More with 8 grades of schooling—fewer with less than 4 grades of schooling
Church affiliation	More with no church affiliation (over 50 percent)—fewer Catholics
Health	Fewer reported good health
Birthplace	Fewer foreign-born—more born in New England
Place of longest residence	More in New England
Date moved to East Haddam	More came in 1926 or later
Reason for moving	Fewer came for employment—more came to be near relatives
Principal past occupation	Fewer farmers—more unskilled
Major source of income	Fewer had current earnings—more had pensions, old age assistance
Living arrangements	Fewer with spouse—more with relatives
Tenure	Same
Agriculture on place	Fewer
Agricultural activities	Fewer
Amount of leisure time	Much more (90 percent)

## Former Occupations

A large number of skills and accomplishments may be found among the elderly residents of East Haddam. Artists, barbers, dress designers, bridge builders, coal miners, and many other occupations are represented. A third of the men indicated that farming had been their principal occupation (Table 18). Agriculture was especially prominent among the men who are 65 to 74

**Table 18**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by principal past occupation, sex,  
nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Principal past occupation	Total		Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Males only		75 years of age and older Per- cent
	Num- ber	Per- cent				Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	
All occupations	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Homemaker	88	40	—	77	—	—	—	—
Farmer	37	17	33	2	32	34	41	22
Skilled labor	21	9	20	—	27	13	16	27
Unskilled labor	35	16	27	6	17	36	28	24
White-collar*	24	11	10	11	12	9	9	12
Other	15	7	10	4	12	8	6	15

\* Includes professional persons, businessmen and clerks.

years of age. Over 60 percent of this group are still actively engaged in farming. Among the native-born, farming has been the principal occupation.

Over one-third of the foreign-born men have been unskilled laborers during most of their lives. Some of them worked in local or nearby manufacturing plants and others have done odd jobs incidental to the summer boarder business. During the depression of the 1930's many of these men were unemployed and have not had regular employment since then. A few went back to work during the war years and some of these are still on the job.

More native-born men than foreign-born men have been skilled laborers, white collar workers and craftsmen. Many persons with these occupational backgrounds are 75 years of age or older.

Three-fourths of the elderly women in East Haddam have been homemakers during most of their lives. About one-half of the women who held other jobs had been white-collar workers, many of them school teachers. A few had held jobs in local factories. These were mostly native-born women.

## Sources of Income

Most elderly people in East Haddam are largely self-supporting (Table 19). One-third are either currently employed or share the income of husbands

**Table 19**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by major source of income, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Major source of income	Total Number	Per-cent	Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age Per-cent	75 years of age and older Per-cent
All incomes	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Current earnings	74	34	42	26	25	43	42	18
Savings-investments	53	24	19	29	37	9	16	40
Private pensions*	21	10	13	6	11	8	11	8
Relatives	49	22	14	30	18	28	23	20
Old Age Assistance**	23	10	12	9	9	12	8	14

\* Includes 11 persons who received Old Age and Survivor's Insurance.

\*\* Includes two persons who received town aid.

who have current earnings. Another one-third have savings, investments, or pensions that constitute their major source of income. The remainder depend upon relatives for their livelihood or receive help from the government, usually in the form of old age assistance.

Persons who are dependent upon current earnings are largely found in the 65 to 74 age group and a large proportion of them are foreign-born. Only one-fourth of the native-born old persons listed current earnings as their major source of income. None of the older native-born women are in this category and only one-fifth of the older native-born men.

Men and women who have reached age 75 depend mostly upon savings and investments (40 percent) and a relatively large proportion of them have governmental aid. One-fifth of the foreign-born men in this older age group receive old age assistance.

Foreign-born old persons, especially women, depend to a large extent upon family assistance. One-third of the foreign-born women either live with their children or are supported by their children. A very small proportion of foreign-born old persons have savings, investments, or pensions. They depend upon current employment and their children, for the most part. Approximately one-eighth of the foreign-born receive governmental assistance. The sources of income available to this group are especially important since a large segment of Connecticut's older population is foreign-born.

In Table 20 an attempt is made to compare the major sources of income of

**Table 20**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by sources of income, United States, 1945, and East Haddam, 1950*

Sources of income	United States	East Haddam
All sources	100	100
Current earnings	34	34
Savings-investments	9	24
Pensions	18	10
Relatives	18	22
Government assistance	21	10

Source: The percentages for the United States are from *Fortune*, December, 1946.

persons 65 years of age and older who live in East Haddam with the sources of income for elderly people in the United States as a whole. The United States data were compiled in 1945 and the categories differ in some ways from the categories employed in the East Haddam survey.

The proportion of old persons with savings and investments is higher in East Haddam than in the country as a whole. When private pensions are combined with savings and investments as a source of income the two populations are more similar. A slightly larger proportion of older persons in East Haddam than old persons in the United States depend upon their families. This is probably related to the relatively large number of foreign-born in East Haddam and the practice that foreign-born parents have of turning to their children for assistance in old age.

The dependence of old persons upon governmental assistance is relatively infrequent in East Haddam compared with the United States as a whole. East Haddam has a slightly lower proportion of aged persons receiving old age assistance than does the remainder of Connecticut, and Connecticut has a relatively small incidence of old age assistance compared with the United States as a whole.

## V—HEALTH

One of the major obstacles to a satisfactory adjustment in old age is poor health. Sickness and disability handicap older persons in a number of ways in addition to the physical pain and discomfort attendant upon them. Medical bills constitute a drain on the budget and they are a constant threat to the economic security of older persons. One who is ill or crippled usually is unable to work and may have serious medical expenses as well. An older person who is bed-ridden or confined to the house is also denied some of the everyday experiences that make life interesting and worthwhile. The same is true for the elderly person who cannot see well or who is deaf. Chronic ailments tend to discourage older persons, perhaps even embitter them. The withdrawal of an older man or woman from the social life of the community can often be traced to poor health.

Some older people, of course, enjoy robust health and others have made excellent adjustments to poor health. Security of health in old age may be considered as important as economic security. Certainly the two are related.

Each person over 64 years of age in East Haddam was asked to indicate the status of his own health and to list the major permanent or semi-permanent ailments with which he was afflicted.<sup>13</sup> Almost one-half of the elderly residents said that their health was good (Table 21). Nearly 40 percent of those who said that their general health was good mentioned one or more disabilities so that considerably more than one-half of the older persons in East Haddam have

**Table 21**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by status of health, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Health rating	Total		Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age	75 years of age and older
	Num-ber	Per-cent					Per-cent	Per-cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Good	108	49	45	53	55	42	53	42
Fair	59	27	29	24	27	27	27	26
Poor	53	24	26	23	18	31	20	32

<sup>13</sup>No objective measures of health were used. The conclusions presented herein are based on the informants' expressed opinion of their health and the standards used may vary from one person to another.

health problems. Roughly one-fourth considered their health to be fair and another one-fourth indicated that it was poor.

A higher proportion of older women than older men claimed good health. According to their own statements, foreign-born old persons have poorer health than the native-born even though a larger proportion of the foreign-born are in the younger age group. If age is held constant, the difference between the health of the native-born and foreign-born is even more pronounced.

Nearly a third of the persons 75 years of age and older complain of poor health compared with one-fifth of those who are 65 to 74 years old. One of the most discouraging features of later maturity for some persons is the progressive decline in physical well-being. Fortunately, over two-fifths of the persons over 74 years of age still consider themselves to be in good health.

The deterioration of health is also made apparent by the comparison that the older persons made between the present status of their health and the health they had when they were 55 years of age. Nearly one-half of the respondents said that their health had not changed (Table 22) and slightly over one-half

**Table 22**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by comparison of present health with health at age 55, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Health now compared with health at age 55	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Better	2	1	1	1	2	—	1	—
Same	105	48	40	55	47	48	52	40
Worse	113	51	59	44	51	52	47	60

indicated that their general health was better at age 55. A large proportion of the older men 65 to 74 years of age indicated that their health was no worse, but 60 percent of the persons 75 and older said that it had deteriorated. Among the persons who listed their health as good in 1950, nearly 15 percent believed that it was better when they were 55 years of age. Over 90 per cent of those who were in poor health in 1950 said that their health had been better at age 55.

When the elderly residents of East Haddam were asked to list their specific complaints over 50 different ailments were mentioned. These have been grouped into the following categories:

<i>Kinds of ailments</i>	<i>Percent of persons affected*</i>
Poor eyesight	15
Poor hearing	6
Arthritis, rheumatism, etc.	11
Crippled or lame	12
Cardio-vascular ailments	20
Other	26
None	31

\* Does not add to 100 percent since some persons listed more than one ailment.

Nearly one-third of the older people said that their health was good and that they had no specific complaints. A high proportion (47 percent) of the native-born women who were 65 to 74 years of age had no disabilities. One-

fourth of the elderly residents listed miscellaneous complaints including several cases of hernia, stomach trouble and nervous disorders. Many of these special ailments were mentioned by older persons who were born in a foreign country.

Most of the older persons in East Haddam went to local doctors for medical services, although 15 percent used doctors outside the town and 6 percent had no regular doctor. Hospital service is available in Middletown, which is 14 miles from East Haddam, and 51 percent of the older persons relied on the Middlesex Hospital in Middletown. Most of the others went to hospitals in other Connecticut cities although 34 percent mentioned no regular hospital.

## VI—AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The pros and cons of living on a small farm in one's later years have been discussed in some detail in recent retirement literature. Actually, very little is known concerning the extent of this practice and beyond a few scattered examples not much is known about its desirability. The chief advantages of spending one's years of later maturity on a farm are that (1) it may stretch a limited income by providing a less expensive place in which to live and some food and fuel for home use, and (2) it affords the older person an opportunity to keep usefully occupied. The disadvantages that have been suggested are (1) loss of urban friends, (2) reduced social life, (3) inconvenience of farm life, and (4) the low returns from agriculture, especially for a person who had had little or no farm experience.

Not quite one-fourth of the elderly residents of East Haddam live on commercial farms (Table 23). Most of these are men and a large proportion of

**Table 23**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by extent of agriculture on the place where they live, sex, nativity, and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Extent of agriculture on place	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Farm*	50	23	28	18	13	34	24	19
Part-time farm**	45	20	21	20	15	27	20	22
Garden only	37	17	19	15	20	13	17	17
None	88	40	32	47	52	26	39	42

\* Commercial farm with an estimated net income of over \$1000 a year. The operator works less than 100 days a year off the farm.

\*\* A combination of two or more small agricultural enterprises.

them are foreign-born. Some of the men are still operating farms, and some of the men and all of the older women who reside on commercial farms live with children who are farm operators. Some of the elderly men and women who live on their children's farms are engaged in part-time farming operations of their own. For example, John Pitlak and his wife came to East Haddam to live with their youngest son who is a poultry farmer. Both John and Mrs. Pitlak grew up on farms in Poland and enjoy farm work. They have a large garden every summer and keep a cow. They are part-time farmers on their son's commercial farm.

Two out of every five old persons in East Haddam live on places where there are no agricultural operations. They are usually found in the villages and a high proportion of them are native-born women.

Although less than 10 percent of the aged in East Haddam are commercial farm operators, one-fourth of them operate part-time farms and another one-fifth have gardens (Table 24).

**Table 24**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by agricultural activities, sex,  
nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Agricultural activities	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Farm*	20	9	18	—	5	14	11	5
Part-time farm**	54	25	23	26	15	35	24	25
Garden only	47	21	23	20	22	21	22	21
None	99	45	36	54	58	30	43	49

\* Operates a commercial farm with an estimated net income of over \$1000 a year. The operator works less than 100 days a year off the farm.

\*\* A combination of two or more small agricultural enterprises.

Most of the older persons engaged in agriculture in East Haddam are foreign-born, nearly one-half of whom are either full-time or part-time farm operators. A large proportion of the foreign-born women have a garden and take care of some livestock. One-half of the men who are 75 years of age and older take part in some farm work. A few of them are active farmers; age may curtail their activities but it does not prohibit them.

Almost all of the retired men who are part-time farmers in East Haddam have had farm experience and most of them had been farm operators at one time or another during their working years. Their return to agriculture on a limited basis was not a difficult adjustment. Most of them do not sell farm products but use what they grow in home consumption. A few sell excess vegetables and eggs in local markets. Farming is not a source of cash income for most of them but it does supplement their other incomes. Its chief advantage is perhaps that it gives them a feeling of usefulness. Peter Mozrah is a case in point. He had been a farmer before he got work in New Haven. After he retired, he purchased a small farm in East Haddam and set to work improving it. He now has such a large garden that his wife sends canned goods to their children in New York City. They have a few chickens, a few pigs and a cow. Peter is busy most of the time and he realizes that even a small farm can add to the pension that he receives from a railroad company.

All but two of the retired men who operate part-time farms in East Haddam have had the benefit of previous farm experience. Some of them were born on farms and operated farms of their own before getting jobs outside of agriculture. When they retired to small part-time farms they had only a few adjustments to make. Others lived on part-time farms when they were working in non-agricultural industries and were able to devote more attention to farming when they retired.

Two retired men did not have farm experience when they moved to part-time farms in East Haddam. One had held an executive position in a manufacturing concern and does not need a farm income to supplement his other sources of income. He enjoys farm work and takes a great interest in keeping

up to date on the latest methods. "I'm not retired," he exclaimed, "I am a farmer, a carpenter, a plumber, a roofer, a brick mason and a half-a-dozen other things." He likes to work and is justifiably proud of his achievements.

The other retired man without previous agricultural training had met with many disappointments. He retired with a modest income which he hoped to augment with profits from a part-time farm. He moved to East Haddam just before World War II and started out to put his place in running order. Many of the necessary repairs and additions required skills that he did not possess, and he experienced difficulty and considerable expense in getting the work done for him. Meanwhile, his farm enterprises did not show a profit and he was forced to curtail his operations. Today he is discouraged and wishes that he were financially able to return to the city. His farm is a liability instead of an asset and he is ready to call his optimistic plans a failure.

## VII—LIVING CONDITIONS

An index of the level of living of older persons probably should not include all of the items that are used to measure living conditions in other populations, and the weights attached to specific items probably should be adjusted for the older group.<sup>14</sup> The needs and tastes of persons often change during later maturity. Possessions that rank high in the standard of living of younger adults may decline in importance for older citizens and other things may become necessities or highly regarded objects. Since a level of living index for older persons has not been constructed, the housing and living conditions of older persons in East Haddam will be analyzed in terms of individual items.

Home ownership may be one of the most important items in the level of living of older persons. The possession of a home means far more than shelter. It involves pride of possession and status in the community. Many older persons are willing to make many sacrifices in order to live in a place that they can call their own. Home ownership also allows the older person the privacy he wants on occasion and it provides an outlet for a variety of retirement activities. Many older persons spend hours working around their homes, painting, remodelling, cleaning and beautifying them. A home enables them to entertain friends and to welcome their children and grandchildren. Only a few of the advantages of home ownership are available to the older person who rents his living quarters or lives with his children.

Nearly two-thirds of the older people in East Haddam own their own homes (Table 25). One out of every 10 rents a house, room, or an apartment

**Table 25**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by tenure status, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Tenure status	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Owner	143	65	69	61	69	60	63	68
Renter	22	10	10	10	8	12	11	8
Live with family	55	25	21	29	23	28	25	24

<sup>14</sup>Walter C. McKain, Jr., "The Concept of Plane of Living and the Construction of a Plane of Living Index," *Rural Sociology*, Vol. 4, No. 3, Sept. 1939.



and the remaining one-fourth of the older persons live with their children. A higher proportion of the men than of the women are home owners and more native-born than foreign-born persons own their homes. Approximately one-eighth of the foreign-born are renters.

A rough measure of the material possessions and the home conveniences of older persons is shown in Table 26, which gives the proportion of persons who

**Table 26**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by possession of specified facilities, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Facilities	Total		Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74	75 years
	Num- ber	Per- cent					years of age Per- cent	of age and older Per- cent
Automobile	74	34	40	28	40	27	37	27
Telephone	139	63	58	68	66	59	63	64
Central heat	83	38	30	44	41	35	34	44
Radio*	148	67	61	73	74	59	68	65

\* Includes some persons who may own radios but who do not use them.

either own or have ready access to an automobile, telephone, central heat and a radio.

One-third of the elderly residents of East Haddam have a car. There is considerable variation in proportions of older persons who own cars, depending upon their age, sex and nativity. For example, over one-half of the native-born males who are 65 to 74 years of age have cars, but less than one-fifth of the native-born females who are 75 either own cars or have ready access to them.

Almost two-thirds of the older persons in East Haddam have a telephone in their living quarters. A higher proportion of older women than older men have telephones, and more of the native-born than of the foreign-born are telephone subscribers. Telephone service is related to place of residence. Persons who live in the rural areas of East Haddam now have telephone service, but it came to the village first and probably was originally more expensive in the open-country sections. As a result, a lower proportion of the older persons in the rural areas have telephones compared to the elderly villagers.

A central heating system is one of the conveniences most cherished by older people. In East Haddam not quite two out of every five older persons live in homes equipped with a furnace. Over one-half of the native-born older women live in homes with this facility. Native-born men, particularly those 65 to 74 years of age very seldom live in houses with a central heating plant. This group includes a number of single men who live in shacks or cabins in the open-country areas of East Haddam.

Almost every family in the town has a radio. Each old person was asked if he ever listens to it. Approximately one-third of them said that they did not. Some of those who do not listen do not own radios, others have sets in various stages of disrepair, others are hard of hearing and many do not care to listen. In the group that eschews listening are some of the foreign-born whose unfamiliarity with the language detracts from the pleasure of radio listening.

Thirty-one old persons, or one out of seven, do not have any of the conveniences listed in Table 26. A higher proportion of the foreign-born than of the native-born lack all of these levels of living items, although one-fourth of the native-born men 65 to 74 years of age did not have any of these conveniences.

## VIII—FAMILY TIES

Family relationships assume added importance during later maturity. Although the close family bonds that characterize a familistic society may have been weakened in modern times, many old persons still depend upon their children for financial aid, companionship, and other forms of assistance. This is particularly true among some foreign-born groups in whose value systems family solidarity ranks high.<sup>15</sup>

The bonds between husband and wife may increase with age and their dependence one upon the other may become more pronounced. Yet at this very stage in the family cycle marriages begin to be dissolved by death and the widowed spouse faces loneliness, a change in living arrangements and perhaps economic dependence. Since in most marriages the husband is older than his wife and since women usually outlive men, elderly women are more likely to lose their marriage partners than are elderly men. The problems arising from these situations are a challenge to both the aged and to the communities in which they live.

### Marital Status

Over one-half of the older residents in East Haddam are married (Table 27). Two-thirds of the men 65 and over are married compared with less than

**Table 27**  
*Persons 65 years of age or older, by marital status, and by sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Marital status	Total Num- ber	Total Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Married	126	57	70	46	48	68	61	50
Widowed	68	31	21	49	34	28	30	32
Single*	26	12	9	14	18	4	9	18

\* Includes two persons who are separated from their spouses.

one-half of the older women. There are almost as many widows as married women among the elderly females living in East Haddam. The number of spinsters is slightly higher than the number of bachelors. A much larger proportion of single persons is found in the older age group, 75 and over, than in the 65 to 74 year age group.

More of the foreign-born older persons than native-born are married and a much larger proportion of the native-born are single. A large proportion of persons who were born in East Haddam and have remained there during their years of later maturity are single.

### Living Arrangements

One of the major adjustments in old age is in the area of living arrangements. The mutual assistance and companionship found in home life become doubly important as a person grows older and less able to look out for himself. Unfortunately, during the years of later maturity many old persons lose their

<sup>15</sup>W. I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1927, p. 90 ff.

marriage partners and must either live alone, move in with their children, or live with other relatives or friends.

The most pronounced shift in the living arrangements of older persons is to the homes of children. One-fourth of the older residents in East Haddam live with their children (Table 28). Older women in the United States as a

**Table 28**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by living arrangements, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Living arrangements	Total		Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age	75 years of age and older
	Num-ber	Per-cent					Per-cent	Per-cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Alone	25	11	11	11	17	5	7	19
With spouse	103	47	56	38	40	55	51	40
With son	31	14	11	17	7	22	17	9
With daughter	24	11	10	12	10	12	11	10
With other relatives	20	9	7	11	13	4	8	12
With friends	17	8	5	11	13	2	6	10

whole are more likely to be found living in homes of their children than are the older men; primarily because there are more widows than widowers.<sup>16</sup>

In East Haddam the proportion of widowers living with their children is slightly higher than the proportion of widows who are found in the homes of their children. There is a significant difference in this behavior pattern between native-born and foreign-born old persons. Native-born widows are more likely to live with their children than are native-born widowers, whereas the reverse is true for foreign-born widows and widowers. The reasons for this difference are not fully known but the following explanation is tentatively advanced: In our society the care of an elderly mother is socially expected. Moreover, grandmothers are usually considered more desirable additions to the conjugal family than are grandfathers. In Poland, Russia and some of the other countries represented in the foreign-born population of East Haddam, both the elderly mothers and fathers are accepted in the homes of their children. In East Haddam some foreign-born fathers, although living with their children, remain the head of the family and control the purse strings.

A slightly larger proportion of both the older men and older women live with sons than with daughters. This seems to be related to the traditional practices of the foreign-born group since so many foreign-born old persons live with sons and so few with their daughters.

Nine percent of the old persons make their homes with other relatives and 8 percent live with friends. Older women slightly outnumber older men in these two groups, possibly because there are more widows than widowers in the elderly population of East Haddam.

Twenty-five old persons live alone in the community and, surprisingly, the majority of them are found in the open-country areas. Most of these solitary residents are bachelors or spinsters and a high proportion of them are at least 75 years of age. Some of the men have lived in East Haddam all of their lives. They work in the woods or on farms, often living in a little shack or in an old house off the major highways. Living alone is not a new adjustment for them but undoubtedly living by themselves presents new problems as they grow older.

<sup>16</sup>Otto Pollak, *Social Adjustment in Old Age*, Social Science Research Council, Bul. 59, New York, 1948.

Another group of persons living alone are elderly women. They are found in the villages for the most part. Most of them are spinsters and a few are women who lost their husbands many years ago. They manage to get along in their later years with the sort of assistance from neighbors and friends that is typical of village life.

The family tradition of caring for the old is much stronger among the foreign-born older persons than among the native-born. Only one out of 10 foreign-born persons lives outside the immediate family (spouse and/or children) compared with four out of 10 in the native-born group. A larger proportion of the foreign-born are married (Table 27) and the number with living children is much higher than for the native-born. Only 17 percent of the foreign-born old persons do not have any children while 40 percent of the native-born are childless. When childless families are excluded from consideration the proportion of widowed persons who live with their children is higher among the foreign-born (78 percent) than among the native-born (45 percent).

### Relatives in East Haddam

The importance of family ties in old age is illustrated by the number of elderly people in East Haddam who have relatives living in the same town. Ninety percent of the old persons have relatives living in East Haddam (Table 29).

**Table 29**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by relatives living in same town, by sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Relatives	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
*Total	220	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Spouse	117	53	64	44	42	66	56	47
Children	114	52	51	52	34	73	54	47
Other	67	30	29	32	41	18	29	33
None	22	10	8	12	15	4	8	13

\* Based on the responses of 220 old persons some of whom had more than one kind of relative living in East Haddam. Percentages do not add to 100 for this reason.

One-third of the native-born old persons and over two-thirds of the foreign-born have children living in the community. Most of these elderly couples do not live with their children but live near them. If the time should come when these old persons are no longer able to take care of themselves, their children will be in a position to look after them. Meanwhile, their children, although not under the same roof, are near enough to give them companionship and some help. Joseph Reisen, a retired restaurant operator, describes it thus: "I have two boys and three girls and they all live here in East Haddam. Emily (his wife) and I visit them every week but we don't stay long enough to get in their way. If we ever got sick, we can go and live with one of them or one of them can come here and live."

Nearly one-third of the elderly residents have relatives other than members of their immediate family living in East Haddam. Two out of every five native-born old persons have brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, or some other relative living in the same town with them. In a number of instances two elderly sisters or a brother and sister live in the same house.

## IX—LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES

The use that an older person is able to make of his leisure time is an important factor in his adjustment to the years of later maturity. An older person with nothing to do is seldom contented, while most elderly persons who are active in a number of leisure time activities lead happy and well-adjusted lives. Sociologists, geriatricians, and psychologists have all advised people to retire "to" something and not "from" a job.

Many factors influence the range of activities an older person can have. His health, the hobbies in which he became interested earlier in life, the facilities offered by the community, the presence or absence of social organizations that cater to older persons, the length of time he has been in the community, his education and his marital status are some of the factors that condition the direction and scope of his leisure time pursuits.

When Henry Turner retired and came to live in East Haddam he looked forward to "taking it easy for a while." After six months of doing nothing in particular he became restless and discontented. He complained of that earlier period "There was nothing to do around here. A man gets tired of himself after 'while'." Mr. Turner had no hobbies; his eyesight wasn't good enough for reading and he disliked most radio programs. His wife tried to get him interested in the social life of East Haddam but he made friends with difficulty and he had little to contribute in a social gathering. "They talked about the same old things over and over again," he said. Finally, in desperation, Mr. Turner took a part-time job and escaped the boredom that was engulfing his life. "I didn't have to go back to work," he explained, "but it was better than doing nothing." The absence of interesting leisure time activities had spoiled his retirement.

George Harshfield had a much different experience. This is his story: "Three years ago I had a pretty good job managing a farm up north of here. That winter I came down here to rest up a bit. First thing you know I was out hunting every day. I had a wonderful time. In the spring they wanted me to go back to work but I didn't see it. I'd rather live on a little less and be doing something I want to do, like hunting or fishing or playing cards with old man Jacobs." His use of leisure time brought him satisfaction in retirement.

Each elderly person was asked to indicate the number of hours of leisure time that he had at his disposal each day. Some of the respondents seemed to be reluctant at first to say that they had any leisure time at all. Perhaps they believed that leisure time was a disgrace. "For Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do." Many of the women said that housework claimed all of their waking hours. Some of the men who have a garden or a few chickens stated that this work kept them busy all day. After thinking it over, most of the older persons admitted to some leisure time but the amount is probably underestimated.

One-third of the older persons have leisure time amounting to less than four hours a day, and 7 percent claim that they have practically no free time (Table 30). Six out of every 10 elderly men and women have more than four hours of leisure time every day, and most of these have almost the entire day at their disposal.

A larger proportion of the males than of the women have relatively little leisure time since more of the men have full-time jobs. The foreign-born men and women have less free time than the native-born old persons, and persons over 74 years of age have more leisure time than the younger age group. Nearly 80 percent of the native-born women over 74 have at least four hours of leisure time each day.

**Table 30**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by amount of their leisure time, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Amount of leisure time each day	Total Number	Total Per-cent	Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age Per-cent	75 years of age and older Per-cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
None	15	7	12	2	2	12	8	5
Less than 3 hours	54	25	23	26	19	32	28	18
3-4 hours	18	8	5	11	12	4	11	4
More than 4 hours	133	60	60	61	67	52	53	73

Although no formal attempts have been made in East Haddam to provide for the recreational needs of its older residents, the older persons participate in many different activities. Some of these are listed in Table 31.

**Table 31**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by leisure time activities, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Leisure time activity	Total Number	Total Per-cent	Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age Per-cent	75 years of age and older Per-cent
Reading	134	61	59	63	72	48	62	59
Radio	118	54	51	56	57	50	56	49
Home improvement*	85	39	36	41	36	42	43	31
Grounds improvement**	71	32	34	30	26	40	32	32
Sewing	60	27	—	52	28	27	27	27
Attend meetings	56	25	29	23	41	7	22	31
Visit friends	47	21	20	23	25	17	23	19
Write letters	29	13	4	22	21	4	11	17
Sit and think	20	9	13	5	13	4	6	14
Hobby	17	8	10	5	12	3	8	6
Movies	13	6	6	6	6	6	8	3
Playing cards	13	6	7	5	8	3	8	3
Outdoor sports	11	5	10	—	9	—	7	1
Auto rides	9	4	—	8	6	2	5	3
Attend concerts and lectures	4	2	—	3	3	—	3	—
Writing***	3	1	—	3	3	—	1	1
Other	26	12	11	12	14	9	11	13
None	3	1	1	2	1	2	2	—

\* Includes working on the house, either inside or outside.

\*\* Includes beautifying the yard.

\*\*\* Includes writing poetry, essays, or articles.

Three out of every five older persons enjoy reading in their leisure time. This activity is engaged in by all groups and it is especially popular among the native-born, nearly three-fourths of whom listed reading as one of their idle

time pursuits. Some of the foreign-born who listed reading enjoy foreign-language newspapers and magazines.

All but one-fourth of the older persons either subscribe to a newspaper or have ready access to one or more (Table 32). Most of them have one or two

**Table 32**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by number of different newspapers available, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Number of newspapers	Total		Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age Per-cent	75 years of age and older Per-cent
	Num-ber	Per-cent						
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
None	60	27	29	26	22	34	28	26
One	80	36	37	36	31	41	42	26
Two	61	28	29	26	34	21	22	38
More than two	19	9	5	12	13	4	8	10

newspapers, but nearly 10 percent of the elderly residents of East Haddam have three or more papers. The papers most usually read are the *Middletown Press* and the *Deep River New Era*. Several foreign-language papers published in New York City are to be found in East Haddam homes. Persons who are 75 and older have more newspapers, on the average, than persons 65 to 74 years of age. A larger proportion of older women than older men have newspapers, and the foreign-born persons have fewer papers than the native-born elderly persons.

The accessibility of magazines is shown in Table 33. Although over one-

**Table 33**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by number of different magazines available, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Number of Magazines	Total		Male Per-cent	Female Per-cent	Native-born Per-cent	Foreign-born Per-cent	65-74 years of age Per-cent	75 years of age and older Per-cent
	Num-ber	Per-cent						
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
None	114	52	54	50	32	75	51	52
One	25	11	15	8	17	5	13	9
Two	39	18	14	21	21	14	18	17
More than two	42	19	17	21	30	6	18	22

half of the elderly people do not have any magazines readily available, nearly one-fifth of the older persons in East Haddam have more than two magazines. As in the case of newspapers, the older women, the native-born and the persons upwards of 75 years old have the largest number of magazines, on the average.

Radio listening is another popular pastime among the aged in East Haddam and it was mentioned by approximately one-half of every group. The development of radio broadcasting has been especially beneficial to older people who cannot easily leave their homes and to those who cannot see well enough to read. "I don't know what I'd do without a radio," one woman 69 years of age said. "I keep it on all the time." She is keeping house by herself and isn't well enough to get outside except on special occasions.

Although only a little more than one-half of the older persons indicated that radio listening was one of their major leisure time activities, two-thirds of

them spend some time listening to the radio (Table 34). About one-half of the elderly men and women in East Haddam spend four hours or less in this activity, and 13 percent of the older men and one-fourth of the older women listen to their radios over four hours every day. Many of them keep their radios in op-

**Table 34**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by amount of time spent listening to the radio, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Hours spent listening to radio each day	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
None	72	33	39	27	26	40	32	35
Under 1	50	23	26	20	20	26	22	23
1-4	55	25	22	28	29	21	27	22
Over 4	43	19	13	25	25	13	19	20

eration most of the day and evening. Native-born persons spend more time at their radios than the foreign-born and women are more avid listeners than men. Persons over 74 and those between the ages of 65 and 74 spend about the same amount of time on this activity.

Every kind of radio program is appreciated by several older persons in East Haddam. The most popular broadcasts are those given by news announcers and commentators who are regularly tuned in by over two-fifths of the older persons (Table 35). A large proportion of the native-born and those persons

**Table 35**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by radio program preference, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Radio program preference	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
News-commentators	94	43	39	46	50	35	40	47
Drama	28	13	10	16	22	6	12	14
Serials	25	11	7	16	15	7	11	12
Popular music	24	11	8	14	18	3	11	10
Classical music	23	10	6	15	18	1	10	12
Humor	23	10	10	11	13	8	10	12
Other	46	21	15	27	22	20	20	22
All programs	32	15	12	17	13	17	17	10
None	72	33	39	26	26	41	32	35

over 74 years of age listen to news and news analyses. Other programs do not claim as many listeners but each kind of program has an audience among the older persons of East Haddam. Women listen to more of these programs than do men, and they are especially interested in classical music and the daytime serials. Native-born old persons listen to a greater variety of programs than do the foreign-born aged.

Both older men and older women derive satisfaction from working in or around their homes. These activities not only give them personal pleasures but they are socially accepted. The man who hates to admit that he is retired can find satisfaction in painting or remodelling his house or in landscaping his grounds and at the same time be convinced that the "work" he is doing is use-



ful. Moreover, most old people have had experience in these activities and do not have to "learn" how to do them.

Home improvement and landscaping are the only leisure time activities that are participated in by a larger proportion of foreign-born than native-born older persons. Home ownership and the possession of land probably rank high in the value system of the foreign-born.

Over one-half of the women mentioned sewing as a leisure time activity. Some of them consider it as a hobby and produce many articles that are both beautiful and useful. A few are able to sell their handiwork. Others consider sewing as part of a homemaker's job. "Of course I sew," one woman explained, "but it's not easy work."

The social participation of older persons in East Haddam is largely confined to attending church and the meetings of church-sponsored organizations. One-third of the older people go to church at least every other Sunday and most of these attend every Sunday (Table 36). Another 20 percent attend church at some time during the year. Many of these occasional worshippers attend once a month.

**Table 36**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by church attendance, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Number of times a year attended church	Total		Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74	75 years
	Num- ber	Per- cent					years of age Per- cent	of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
25 or more	79	36	37	35	26	48	39	30
6-24	21	10	4	15	10	9	10	9
1-5	23	10	9	11	13	8	9	11
None	97	44	50	39	51	35	42	49

A larger proportion of foreign-born than native-born persons attend church. Just over one-half of the older persons born in this country do not go to church while only 35 percent of the foreign-born aged are non-church goers, and nearly one-half of them attend regularly.

The advent of later maturity reduced the church attendance of nearly 30 percent of the older residents in East Haddam. One-fourth of the older men and one-third of the older women said that they did not go to church as frequently now as they did when they were 55 years of age. Their participation in social clubs and other community activities was much more sharply curtailed in old age. Over two-thirds of both the older men and women have less social participation now than they had when they were 55 years old.

Nearly three-fourths of the older persons are not members of organizations. (Table 37). A number of reasons may be offered to account for the

**Table 37**  
*Persons 65 years of age and older, by membership in organizations, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950\**

Member of organization	Total		Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74	75 years
	Num- ber	Per- cent					years of age Per- cent	of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
2 or more	31	14	16	12	24	3	14	14
1	26	12	12	11	18	4	8	18
None	163	74	72	77	58	93	78	68

\* Religious organizations were not included in this tabulation.

large number of elderly persons who do not belong to any social organizations. Many are not in good health and are not physically able to attend the meetings. The income of some older persons is not sufficient to enable them to participate. There are a number of ethnic groups in East Haddam that do not have special clubs and, as a result, most of the foreign-born (over 90 percent) do not belong to any social organization outside of the church. Since East Haddam, for the most part, is sparsely settled, many residents are removed from the everyday contacts that lie behind organized social participation.

The men, the native-born and persons 65 to 74 years of age have relatively high rates of social participation. Over one-third of the native-born men who are 65 to 74 years old belong to two or more organizations exclusive of religious organizations.

Two-thirds of the older men and women participate less in social affairs today than they did when they were 55 years of age. Among the persons over 74 years old the proportion is even higher (three-fourths). In a few instances the amount of social participation has increased during later maturity. This is most noticeable among the native-born women who are 65 to 74 years of age. One-eighth of them were able to increase their social participation during their later years. Mrs. Friedman gave this explanation: "After my youngest son left home, I had more time on my hands. I went out more and joined a couple of neighborhood clubs. I'm not what you'd call a social butterfly but at least I get out a lot more than I did 15 years ago."

Although there is one motion picture theater in East Haddam and there are several in nearby towns, only 6 percent of the older people list movies among their leisure time activities. Only 3 percent of the persons 65 and over mention motion pictures as a leisure time activity. Some of those who enjoy the movies attend the theater at least once a week, but most of the older people go to the movies only occasionally, if at all.

Some older people are interested in activities that bring them into contact with other people; others prefer activities that are more solitary. For example, activities like reading, painting, or woodworking can be done by one person and do not necessarily involve others. Leisure time pursuits like dancing, playing cards, visiting friends, attending lectures and concerts, or going to parties, involve more than one person. Two out of every five older persons in East Haddam engage in these social activities (Table 38). Over one-half of

**Table 38**

*Persons 65 years of age and older, by use of leisure time, sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Use of leisure time	Total		Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74	75 years
	Num- ber	Per- cent					years of age Per- cent	of age and older Per- cent
Social activities	89	41	40	41	56	23	37	46
Outdoor activities	85	39	42	36	37	41	40	36

the native-born participated in social pursuits during their leisure time, compared with less than one-fourth of the foreign-born.

Some of the leisure time is spent in outdoor pursuits in contrast to activities that typically are confined to the house. Nearly two-fifths of the older residents work in their gardens and yards, like to fish or hunt, or have hobbies that keep them outside.

The men are more likely to have outdoor pursuits than the older women, and more foreign-born persons than native-born took part in outdoor activities. Over one-third of the persons 75 years of age and older listed one or more leisure time pursuits that took them outdoors.

Most of the older persons living in East Haddam mentioned more than one leisure time pursuit (Table 39). One-fifth of them indicated that they had

**Table 39**  
*Persons 65 years of age and over, by number of leisure time activities,  
sex, nativity and age, East Haddam, 1950*

Number of activities	Total Num- ber	Per- cent	Male Per- cent	Female Per- cent	Native- born Per- cent	Foreign- born Per- cent	65-74 years of age Per- cent	75 years of age and older Per- cent
Total	220	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1*	32	15	17	12	8	22	14	15
2	46	21	24	18	13	31	19	25
3	55	25	27	24	23	27	24	27
4	40	18	18	18	24	11	20	15
5 and over	47	21	14	28	32	9	23	18

\* Includes 3 persons who mentioned no leisure time activities.

at least five different kinds of activities that kept them occupied during their spare time. The older women, the native-born and the persons 65 to 74 years of age listed a greater variety of idle time pursuits than did the men, the foreign-born or the persons beyond 74 years of age.

Although some of the older residents take part in a variety of leisure time pursuits, many older persons have relatively little to do in their spare time. Perhaps the major reason for their inactivity is an inadequate preparation for retirement. Most retired persons left the labor force involuntarily or reluctantly, and the loss of a job opened a gap in their lives that has never been filled. Very few had looked forward to the day when their services would no longer be wanted. When retirement was thrust upon them they were not prepared to make the necessary adjustments.

## APPENDIX

Schedule No.....

House No.....

### RETIREMENT IN RURAL CONNECTICUT—EAST HADDAM

Department of Rural Sociology—Storrs Agricultural Experiment  
Station, University of Connecticut

Name..... Age.....

Education..... Marital status..... No. of children.....

Occupation .....

.....

If retired: Date..... Circumstances.....

Birthplace..... Longest residence.....

Date moved to East Haddam..... From.....

Reasons for moving to East Haddam.....

Living arrangements..... Kind of residence.....

Relatives in East Haddam..... Telephone..... Central Heat..... Tenure.....

Size of holding..... Land use.....

Agricultural activities.....

Automobile..... Newspapers..... Magazines.....

Leisure time..... Activities in leisure time:

Garden or yard .....	Attend clubs .....	Visit friends .....
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Hobby .....	Sports—active .....	Write articles .....
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Radio .....	Sports—passive .....	Work on or in house .....
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Read .....	Cards .....	Shop .....
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Letters .....	Rides .....	Attend lectures, concerts .....
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Movies .....	Sew .....	Sit and think .....
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Radio listening ..... Programs.....

Movie attendance .....Programs.....

Church ..... Attendance.....

Organizations .....

.....

.....

Community activities .....

Sources of income .....

Health rating..... Physical problems.....

.....

Life insurance carried.....

Comparison with age 55:

    Health .....

    Social participation .....

    Income .....

    Church .....