CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES
IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Geography

by

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January, 1975
The thesis of Georgia Lorain Richards is approved:

California State University, Northridge

December, 1974
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper could never have been undertaken and completed without the help and concern of several people. First of all, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the helpful suggestions and constructive criticism from Drs. James P. Allen, Ralph Vicero and Warren Bland. My thanks also to Miss Ann Welling for typing the manuscript in such a short time in order that I might meet the deadline set by the University. Mr. Ernest Sandstedt spent his holiday weekend drawing the maps contained in this thesis and for his work I am very grateful.

Last, but far from least, my most grateful thanks and appreciation go to my husband and daughter whose patience and understanding have been unlimited and whose help and encouragement have been monumental throughout my years in school and during the writing of this manuscript.
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ABSTRACT

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES
IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

by

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Master of Arts in Geography

January, 1975

Retirement communities come in several forms from which four types were chosen for this study: 1. planned communities, 2. condominiums, 3. mobile home parks, and 4. retirement hotels. This study was undertaken to determine whether or not types of retirement communities differ significantly in certain characteristics of their populations.

Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What factors are involved in the choice of a particular type of retirement community and can the residents of various types of communities be described?

2. Do people migrate to Southern California for the purpose of retirement and, if so, do they prefer any particular type of community over another?
3. How mobile is the retiree in terms of both residence and travel? Do people in one type of community move more often or travel more than others?

4. To what extent are retirees satisfied with the type of community they have chosen?

Seven individual communities chosen from among the above types were visited. Questionnaires were distributed and collected from 173 respondents. Answers to some questions were confusing and no conclusions could be drawn from them; therefore, these questions were abandoned. In other instances, data from two or more questions were combined in order to lend a clearer understanding to the findings.

After complete tabulations of the questionnaires were made, it was found that type of retirement community figured strongly in all questions. Answers were interesting, informative, and sometimes surprising. Among the findings were the following:

1. Several factors, including age, marital status, and pre-retirement occupation were significant in the choice of a retirement community.

2. Relatively few retirees move into Southern California from out of state and those who do tend to
choose retirement hotels in which to live.

3. Retirees do travel in their leisure time, but travel habits differ among the different types of retirement communities.

4. A large majority of retirees are satisfied with their living conditions, but this, too, varies from one type of community to another.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Retirement-Age Group

The fastest growing age group in America is that group of people 65 years of age and older. Records show that an average of 3,000 people per day are dying in the United States, but, at the same time, 4,000 people reach the age of 65, thus adding 1,000 persons per day to the "older" group.  

The United States Census for 1900 listed 3.1 million persons 65 years of age and older out of a total population of 76 million, or one person out of twenty-five. By 1970 the Census listed over 20 million persons in the over-65 age group out of a total population of over 200 million or approximately one out of every ten persons. The 1970 Census also indicated that older persons as a group have increased 21 percent while all the remaining population has grown by only 12.5 percent.  

2 Smith, p. 18.
population of the United States has grown during the period of 1900 to 1970 by 167 percent but the 65 and older group had grown by 550 percent. Projections indicate that by the year 2000 one out of every five persons in the United States will be 65 years of age or older. This figure, of course, is based on past birth record averages and could fluctuate in accordance with future declines or increases in birth rates in the country.

In 1937 when Social Security was instituted in this country, 65 was considered the normal retirement age. In recent years, however, retirement age has been lowered by many industrial and professional concerns making it possible for employees to retire at age 55 or even earlier. Usually, a person retiring at age 55 accepts a lower rate of retirement income than if he had worked to age 65. However, owing to higher incomes during working years and correspondingly higher contributions to retirement funds, the retiree often finds that by the time he reaches the age of 55 his retirement income is adequate for his needs. Therefore, he will accept the discounted retirement income.

in order to enjoy extra years of leisure. Although many companies have compulsory retirement ages for their employees, between one-fourth and one-half of these workers retire before they are compelled to do so.  

With the lowering of retirement age and the lengthening of life expectancy, there are actually two generations of retired persons living in the United States. Those between 55 and 65 are probably the most active group and those 65 and over less active due perhaps to health problems, lower incomes and other factors. Most persons in the 65 and older group draw Social Security. Many of those in the younger group are reaping the rewards of retirement benefits provided by their employers which, on the average, are higher than Social Security payments. Also many in the younger group are entitled to incomes from both Social Security and company retirement funds. Thus, these people are often better off financially, than the older group.

Before World War I it was not uncommon for three generations to live in one household. The employed member of the household provided not only for himself, his wife

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and children, but also for his aging parents who could not afford to live alone. After the war, families began to break up. When a young man reached working age he moved out of the parental home and established a home of his own. The Great Depression saw a decline in this movement, but with the advent of World War II and the ensuing years of prosperity, the practice became widespread and today there are relatively few households in which there are found more than one family group. The older generation, as well as the younger people, want and generally find a home of their own. Women complete their childbearing period at an earlier age than in former times and after the children are gone, the average couple has fourteen years of life together before the death of one spouse. These are the years a couple looks forward to in planning for retirement.

Types of Retirement Communities

The retirement community is not a new idea. The Romans planned and built villages for their retired

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military officers 2000 years ago. Just how the revival of this idea came about is not known. In 1937 a community which gave low-cost housing to twenty older men and women, the first of its kind in this country, was established in Millville, New Jersey. Then, shortly after World War II, Lawrence K. Frank, Director of the Caroline Zachary Institute of Human Development, suggested the establishment of retirement communities. His suggestion drew national attention and persons from all over the United States indicated an eagerness to participate in such a program. Planners, developers, real estate agents, sociologists and others took up the challenge and began formulating ideas about such communities. Today, retirement communities are found in several forms:

1. The planned community. Here, the houses are separate buildings or sometimes duplexes which can be purchased on the same basis as homes in other places. The owner receives a deed to his property with all the rights any other homeowner enjoys with the exception that an heir

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8 Moore, p. 172.
to the property cannot live there unless he meets the minimum age requirement of the community.

2. Apartment houses or condominiums. In these cases one building houses several units or apartments. The tenants purchase their apartments and receive deeds to their property with the same rights as homeowners. In such a community, the property owner lives in closer physical proximity to his neighbors than in the planned community.

3. Mobile home parks. In these communities the resident purchases his mobile home and owns it outright, but he must rent the space on which it is placed.

4. Retirement hotels. These offer the minimum in living quarters—usually one room only. The residents pay a weekly or monthly fee for their rooms and other services. No ownership of real property is involved.

There are also other types such as perpetual care communities in which the resident turns all his possessions, including real and personal property and savings over to the community in exchange for all his needs for the rest of his life. Lastly, there are nursing and convalescent homes which care for those who are in need of constant medical or nursing supervision. This study is
concerned with only the first four named types of retirement communities.
CHAPTER II

PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not retirement communities have any significance as to type.

The main points of interest are contained in the following questions:

1. What factors are involved in the choice of a particular type of retirement community and can the residents of various types of communities be described?

2. Do people migrate to Southern California for the purpose of retirement, and if so, do they prefer any particular type of community over another?

3. How mobile is the retiree in terms of both residence and travel? Do people in one type of community move more often or travel more than others?

4. To what extent are retirees satisfied with the type of community they have chosen?
Methodology

The Questionnaire

A questionnaire was constructed to answer the questions with which this study is concerned (see Appendix). A few of the questions were either too nebulous or misunderstood by the respondents; and after careful consideration, it was decided not to use these in the study. For example, the question concerning national origins or descent and that regarding living in other retirement communities were apparently misunderstood and the data were so far from conclusive that they were dropped.

The question asking whether or not the retiree bought new furniture was designed to determine if retirement can be considered as a "new way of life." The returns on this question were so small that no conclusive answers could be derived. Also, those people living in mobile homes normally purchase furniture which is included in the mobile home when it is built. Because of these difficulties, the question was eliminated.

It also became necessary for clearer understanding to combine the answers to two or more of the questions. For instance, the questions regarding the average length
of residence in present retirement centers and the satisfaction level were combined in order to determine if satisfaction declines after a number of years residence in one place.

Limitation of Study Area

This study has been confined to Los Angeles and Ventura Counties because it was felt that a sufficient number of the various types of communities from which to choose a sample were located in these two counties (Plate I).

Selection of Communities

After the four types of retirement communities to be considered in this study had been decided upon, the first step in the selection of specific communities was to consult the Guide to Retirement Living. The Guide was first scanned to locate all communities within Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Those sponsored by religious organizations were eliminated since it was felt that questions, especially about religious preference, would be biased in these communities. The finished list contained twenty-eight communities. From the descriptions included in the

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Guide, a list was compiled of each of the four types of communities from which eight were to be selected for study--two of each type.

Telephone contact was made with managers or owners of each community and an explanation and purpose of this study given. In cases where I was met with disinterest or hostility, the contact was withdrawn and I moved to the next community on the list. In this way the list was narrowed to those contained in this study.

The planned communities presented a special problem. Leisure Village in Camarillo had been visited in the course of an earlier study and I had been assured of their interest and cooperation should a larger, more in-depth study develop. I had also planned to visit Mayflower Gardens in Lancaster as the second planned community, but after three months of effort, numerous phone calls and a personal visit with no clear answer as to whether or not I was to be allowed to come in for a survey, it was decided to drop this effort and concentrate on only one planned community.

Mobile home parks willing to participate were also hard to find. I exhausted the list from the Guide and still had only one community of this type. I then turned to the Burbank-Glendale-La Crescenta telephone directory
which I have in my home and located a mobile home park listed for adults only. This proved to be a successful contact and it was used in the study, although the response was very low.

The condominiums and hotels were more easily found. In fact, three hotels were visited but the response from one was lower than the other so the New Robinson Hotel was chosen in preference to the Silver Strand.

Method of Collecting Data

When initial contact was made and interest in this study was indicated, I asked that I be allowed to attend some social function of the community at which a maximum number of people might gather. This eliminated the necessity of a door-to-door process and put less pressure on participants. This is important when dealing with older people.

In some instances special meetings were called for the sole purpose of answering the questionnaire. In these instances I remained on the scene to explain any questions or help with answers. Sometimes, the respondent was unable for some reason or other, to do his own writing. In these cases I did the writing while the participant supplied the answers.
At other places I was asked to explain the purpose of the study to those people at the gathering and then leave the questionnaires so that they could be filled out in the privacy of the participant's rooms. This necessitated another visit to the community to collect the completed questionnaires.

Compilation of Information

The questionnaires were kept segregated as to the place from which they came. When all had been collected, tabulations were made on each question. Where data were insufficient to give a clear picture, the question was abandoned. After all figures and percentages had been worked out on one sheet, a scan was made to find any items significant to particular types of communities. These points are discussed in detail in this study.
CHAPTER III

TYPES OF RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Planned Communities

Barker's definition of a California retirement community is "a planned, low-density development of permanent buildings equipped to provide a wide range of services and leisure activities and designed to house 'active' adults over the age of fifty."\(^{10}\)

The planned community is developed with the idea that it will provide all the needs of its residents without their having to seek conveniences or leisure activities outside the community. These services are designed for those retirees who are physically and mentally capable of leading active lives after leaving the structured routine of their jobs.

There is usually some form of self-government within the planned community. This is usually done by boards and committees elected from among the residents. These people establish and enforce rules and regulations

\(^{10}\)Barker, p. ix.
in order to preserve certain standards within the community.

Leisure Village

Leisure Village (Plate II) fits Barker's definition quite well. When completed, there will be 2,100 to 2,200 units on 375 acres of land or less than six units per acre. No more than 4,000 people will inhabit the community at any time.

Leisure Village is surrounded by a block wall with a security guard at the gate. A visitor must state his business and have his appointments verified before he is allowed to enter. A security guard also patrols the grounds throughout the night. The streets are wide, paved, well-lighted and attractively landscaped.

The housing units are built as duplexes with sound-proof walls between the two sections. There are five different floor plans ranging from one bedroom and one bath to two bedrooms, two baths and a den. All units also feature their own carport and private patio. Prices for these homes range from $25,000 to $41,000 and prices include some of the larger appliances such as stoves, refrigerators, washers and dryers.
LOCATION OF LEISURE VILLAGE IN CAMARILLO

PLATE II
Homes may be purchased by total cash payment or by a certain percentage down and the balance in monthly installments. In any case, upon completion of payment, the owner receives a deed to his property. He may rent or lease his home or will it to his heirs. However, he is restricted in that no one will be allowed to live in the unit unless he meets the age requirements of the community. One of the spouses must be at least 52 years of age and no children under 19 years old will be accepted.

Leisure Village leaves little to be desired in the way of recreational activities and facilities for its residents. There is a nine-hole golf course and an Olympic-size swimming pool with a paid lifeguard on duty. A good-sized library has been established through the donation of books by people in the Village.

A full-time activities director is employed to organize events of interest to the residents. Regular classes in ceramics, photography, lapidary, woodworking and art are among the activities available. Entertainment by musical stars of the 1940's and 1950's is also provided from time to time. Other leisure facilities include shuffleboard, bocce ball court, card and sewing rooms, and individual garden plots. The 400-seat auditorium is used
for community activities but may also be utilized for private functions such as weddings and family reunions.

A board of directors acts as the governing body for the community. All public grounds and buildings are maintained by the Leisure Technology Company, the developers of Leisure Village.

The money for these services comes from the residents. A monthly charge over and above the purchase price of their homes is levied on each household. These fees range from $56 to $76 per month, depending on the size and type of house.

Leisure Village, at this time, does not have any shopping facilities. All shopping must be done in the city of Camarillo. Most people drive their own cars, but there is a bus service operated by the Village for those wishing to use it. There are tentative plans for the establishment of small shopping centers on the grounds at some future time. Medical and dental care must also be obtained in nearby Camarillo.

**Condominiums**

In a report by John Owens, President of the Residential Research Committee of Southern California, it is stated that nearly three out of every four housing
units being developed in Southern California this year (1974) will be condominiums. This is a dramatic shift from just four years ago when 92 percent of all housing units built in Southern California were single-unit homes.

The cost of separate single-family units has skyrocketed in recent years to a point where many people, especially those on fixed incomes, find it difficult to purchase them. Maintenance costs have also risen and a family owning its one-family unit must be responsible for its upkeep. This is a handicap both financially and physically for many older persons.

A scarcity of available land for building has also played a part in the movement from single-unit, low-density housing to high-density developments. Many places in Southern California no longer have land on which to build. It is expensive to clear and cut down hill or mountain property, and where this is the only land available, it is much cheaper for the builder and buyer alike to go into high-density development. Where older sections of town are torn out to make way for new housing units, it is quite common to replace single-family dwellings with

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units three or four stories high which house four to five times the number of people who had formerly lived in the single-family units once occupying the same ground space.

The dream of a cottage surrounded by large expanses of lawn and trees in which to spend one's declining years is fast disappearing. Population increase, especially among older people, forces families to live closer together and many must share a common wall with their neighbors. While the high-density condominium concept calls to mind a high-rise "rabbit warren" arrangement, this is not necessarily so, although more and more units are being built in this way. However, there is nothing that says a condominium complex cannot be built on a one-level, one-story basis. In this case, two or more units are built with one or more commonly shared walls. In researching this report I visited one community, Klingbeil Towne, in which the units were stacked atop one another three stories high and another, Carefree Living, in which all units were built on the one-story level but sharing common walls.

Klingbeil Towne

The builders of Klingbeil Towne (Plate III) have used a little different philosophy than the builders of planned communities. They have built their condominium
LOCATION OF
KLINGBEIL TOWNE
IN CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS

THOUSAND OAKS

PLATE III
complex "in town" at Thousand Oaks, California. They believe they need not build a community complete in itself as this would merely be duplicating services already available in town. Rather, they supply housing and minimal recreational facilities and allow their tenants to utilize available facilities in Thousand Oaks for recreation, shopping, etc.

Klingbeil Towne is a new complex of 480 condominium units which will cover approximately twenty-eight acres. The units are three-story buildings serviced by elevators to the upper floors. There are four floor plans ranging from studio apartments to two-bedroom, two-bath arrangements. Prices start at $18,000 and go as high as $30,000. Each unit has its own carport but these are all located on the ground level. These units may be purchased by total cash payments or with a down payment and monthly installments thereafter. Also, the units may be leased or rented by the owners providing the tenants meet the age requirements in the development.

A security guard is on duty at all times and the visitor must have business in the community in order to gain entrance.

The complex has a swimming pool although it is much smaller than the one at Leisure Village and no life guard
is on duty. There are two lanes of shuffleboard. There are also rooms for billiards and crafts but the facilities are quite limited.

Tenants may cook their meals in their own apartments since kitchens are provided in all units. However, there is also a dining room where a full-time, salaried cook prepares daily dinners at a nominal cost.

At the present time, a company-paid administrator governs the activities and solves the problems at Klingbeil Towne. When more people have moved in, a homeowners association or board of directors will be formed from among the residents and the Towne will become more or less self-governing so far as its own affairs are concerned. The administrator will then move to handling only those affairs necessary to the physical maintenance of the settlement.

Since Klingbeil Towne is built on the hillsides, a tram service is operated by the company for the convenience of residents wishing to go from one part of the complex to another. The company also provides a mini-bus service into Thousand Oaks where all services are located.

There are no medical or dental facilities on the grounds but an arrangement has been made with the hospital
in Thousand Oaks where twelve doctors are on call twenty-four hours a day.

Carefree Living

This is the most beautiful community I visited (Plate IV). It is situated at the edge of the City of Port Hueneme and constitutes a little settlement all in itself. It is surrounded by a wall but there is no security guard at the entrance. The units are all built on one level with as many as six units all connected by common walls. It is a relatively old community having been started in 1964. Initially, the prices ranged from $12,000 for one-bedroom, one-bath apartments to $18,000 for three-bedroom or two-bedroom and den with one and a half or two baths. Today, these same units are selling from $22,000 to $40,000.

The minimum age for admittance to Carefree Living is thirty-nine, which is unusually low for adult communities. Children must be at least sixteen years of age but no children have ever lived there. In addition to the age requirements, a prospective purchaser must furnish two acceptable references before being allowed to move in. Owners may rent or lease their places providing the tenants meet the above requirements.
Recreational facilities include shuffleboard, billiards, sauna, pool, golf course and a library. This library, like all surveyed for this report, holds books donated by the residents. These are borrowed on the honor system since there is no librarian in attendance. There is no life guard on duty at the pool. There is no full-time recreational director, but residents serve a term of one year as coordinator of activities.

The community is divided into areas with a "governor" elected by and from the people in that area. Problems within a particular area are handled by the governor. Any problem not solved within the area is carried to the Administrator who is paid by the Company. Of interest is the fact that the Administrator or office workers are not allowed to live within the community but must live on the outside. This keeps these people from being biased in decisions which must be made concerning the complex.

There are no shopping facilities within the Carefree Living compound and residents go into Port Hueneme for most of their needs. There is a large shopping center only about a five-minute walk from the entrance which contains a large supermarket, a beauty shop, jewelry store, two restaurants, a yardage shop, five and
ten cent store, a nursery, a watchmaker, bakery and a laundromat. A travel agency in the shopping center is also available to residents wishing to make travel arrangements. People sometimes travel to Ventura or Los Angeles to shop for special items.

Medical and dental care must be sought outside Carefree Living. There are no special arrangements for medical services such as those at Klingbeil Towne.

**Mobile Home Parks**

Living in movable housing units is not new. Trailer courts were first started in the early 1930's.12 These units were, and still are, grouped together in parks due to the legal restrictions against their use as dwellings on residential lots.

These could very well have been a product of the depression years when families were forced to move about in search of work. The family could be moved from place to place with a minimum of expense and yet have most of the "comforts of home." Many of these early trailers were homemade and quite small, which made them relatively

easy to haul from place to place. Travel trailers are still quite popular and are usually relatively small—somewhere under twenty-four feet in length and eight or ten feet in width.

Modern mobile homes are an outgrowth of the travel trailers and differ only in size, cost and maneuverability. They are a product of the Post World War II period when the demand for housing skyrocketed. Returning servicemen who had had a taste of independence from family ties began searching for homes of their own in the price bracket they could afford. Figures are not available for those early years, but in 1970 the cost of a mobile home ranged between $3,000 and $12,000 while the cost of a medium-priced house was $27,000. These prices have both increased over the past four years, but mobile homes are still lower in price than houses. Then, too, the purchase price of a mobile home includes the price of the furnishings which are not included in the purchase price of a house.

It has been estimated that in California the number of mobile homes increased by 65 percent from 1950 to 1960.

---

compared to an increase of 50 percent of all occupied
housing units.\textsuperscript{14} The 1970 census indicated that one out
of every four housing units started in the United States
was a mobile home. The government recognized their im-
portance and included them in a report on national housing
needs. Of the twenty-six million units it hopes will be
built by 1978, four million are expected to be mobile
homes.\textsuperscript{15}

Rental costs for spaces in mobile home parks vary
according to the size space, the age and size of the park,
and the conveniences offered at the park. Utilities are
usually extra. There are no property taxes on mobile
homes. Instead, a licensing fee is collected annually
by the State Department of Motor Vehicles in accordance
with the size and age of the coach. These fees decrease
each year with a minimum assessment of $17.00.

Maintenance for a mobile home is relatively easy.
The enameled metal sidings are easily hosed down and
waxed like an automobile. Repairs are almost never needed.

\textsuperscript{14} Rosabelle Price Walkley, et al., Retirement Housing
in California, (School of Public Health, University of Cal-

\textsuperscript{15} Johnson, p. 162.
Interiors are relatively small and compact, making the housewife's chores much easier than in the average house. The yards around the units are very small and many are covered with colored gravel in lieu of grass. Most of the greenery in a mobile home park consists of the grass and trees in the common areas maintained by the operators of the park.

There is one disadvantage to a mobile home and that is the fact that the units do not increase in value as normal real estate does but instead decrease in value as they grow older. Resale or trade-in value is quite low.

The word "mobile" is really quite misleading since most units are never moved once they are installed in a park space. Most of the owners remove the wheels of the unit and set it on blocks or some permanent foundation and then install a metal skirt from the floor of the unit to the ground thus making it appear to be anchored securely to its space. Then, many build on added carports or patios making it still more immovable. However, for some persons it is comforting to feel that at any time they develop a dislike for a neighbor or have some other reason for moving on, they may do so.
Granada Villa Mobile Home Park

This park is located in the town of Solemint on one of the main traffic arteries (Plate V). It was built sixteen years ago, and according to the manager, some of the residents have lived there since its opening.

The spaces rent for $68.00 to $77.50 per month. The coaches are, for the most part, not new but are well-kept and attractive. Tenants are allowed to build carports or patios onto their coaches but must obtain a permit and undergo inspection by the City officials after the work is completed.

There is no governing body in this park. All problems are handled by the manager who is paid by the park owner for this service.

Recreational facilities are at a minimum. The clubhouse is used for community gatherings such as potluck dinners or bingo games and it also houses two billiard tables. There is no pool.

Sherman Grove Adult Mobile Home Park

This park is located in Sunland on a quiet, winding street not far from the downtown section of the city. It is only one block from a good-sized municipal park where picnicking is popular. The park is surrounded by a
LOCATION OF GRANADA VILLA IN CITY OF SOLEMINT

PLATE V
residential area, but is itself enclosed within a block wall. It was built in 1963 on the site of a former lake which was drained to make residential building sites (Plate VI).

This, too, is an older mobile home park but it is well-kept and the coaches, although many of them are several years old, are all in good repair, neat and clean. Space rentals run from $62.50 to $85.00 per month, depending upon the size of the space and its location in the park.

Residents may build carports or patios to suit their own tastes so long as their neighbors do not object. No city inspection or permits are required. There is a requirement which says a coach must have steps leading from all doors to facilitate escaping in case of fire or other disaster. Tenants are not allowed to rent or lease their coaches to other persons. All owners must live in their own units.

The community has an Olympic size swimming pool, one shuffleboard court, a billiard room, a laundry and recreation hall. Other types of recreational activities must be sought outside the park. Medical and dental care are also available in nearby towns.
LOCATION OF SHERMAN GROVE
MOBILE HOME PARK
IN CITY OF SUNLAND

VERDUGO MOUNTAINS

PLATE VI
The community is not self-governing; all problems are taken to the manager to be solved.

**Retirement Hotels**

In a study of the literature concerning retirement and retirement communities very little information was found on retirement hotels. Just when the idea originated is not known. However, one reference indicated that the concept was pioneered by Mr. Charles S. Lavin, a Philadelphia real estate appraiser.  

The retirement hotel is operated like any other hotel with the exception that the guests are permanent residents rather than transients and pay a monthly rental fee rather than a charge based on the number of days in residence. They take their meals in the central dining room and are given other services common to a hotel such as linens, telephone access, and so on. Whereas a hotel usually provides a few recreational facilities such as a pool or perhaps a private beach, the retirement hotel usually has a larger number of recreational facilities.

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16 Ernest W. Burgess, ed. *Retirement Villages* (Division of Gerontology, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1961), p. 132. No indication of the historical origin of this concept was presented.
available to its tenants. There is also usually a planned daily activity program for residents in a retirement hotel.

The New Robinson Retirement Hotel

This facility was originally operated as an ordinary hotel housing transient guests. Sixteen years ago it became a retirement hotel accepting, on a permanent basis, only those persons who are retired (Plate VII).

There is no minimum age for admittance to the hotel. The only requirements are that the tenant must be retired and must be ambulatory and able to care for his own physical needs.

Monthly rental rates range from $186.50 for rooms for men with a central bathroom to $318.50 for a suite with an ocean view. These fees include all bedding and linens, weekly cleaning service for all rooms, and 24-hour switchboard coverage. All rooms are furnished but the tenant may bring in his own furniture if he wishes. Many have their own television sets, stereos and other personal items, but most make use of the furniture provided by the hotel. Also included in rental charges are three meals a day served in the central dining room.
LOCATION OF NEW ROBINSON HOTEL
IN CITY OF LONG BEACH

SAN PEDRO BAY
PLATE VII
The hotel also has a central television lounge, two lobbies, card rooms, and a library consisting mostly of donated books and magazines. Daily activity programs including crafts of different sorts, are planned for the guests. Movies, bingo games and dances are especially well-attended.

The New Robinson Hotel is located in the heart of downtown Long Beach with easy access to shopping centers, theaters, libraries, churches and all types of transportation. Next door is the new Municipal Recreation and Crafts Center which, in addition to its activities on the premises, also offers a bus tour program, both in Long Beach and to other points of interest throughout the state. Medical and dental care are available in Long Beach.

Golden Oaks Hotel

Established in 1964, the Golden Oaks Hotel is located in the heart of Van Nuys, California (Plate VIII). There is no minimum age for admittance, but the person must be retired. He must also submit a health report which states that he is able to care for his own physical needs.

Golden Oaks is a little different from the usual hotel in that each room boasts of a tiny kitchen and a small private patio. Tenants rarely cook in their
LOCATION OF GOLDEN OAKS HOTEL
IN CITY OF VAN NUYS

GOLDEN OAKS

VICTORY BLVD.

BURLINGTON

NUYS

MAGNOLIA BLVD.

VENTURA FWY.

PLATE VIII
kitchens since they are served three meals daily in the central dining room. An extra cup of breakfast coffee or a cup of tea for a guest is about the limit to which cooking is done.

Monthly rental fees range from $415 to $650 depending upon the location of the rooms in the hotel grounds. Meals, of course, are included in this fee as well as a daily maid service and all recreational facilities. Round-the-clock switchboard service is offered, and a nurse is on duty at all times. The rooms are all furnished with the exception of a few personal items such as stereos and televisions.

Recreational facilities are at a minimum here. There is no pool, no shuffleboard or billiards. Recreation consists mainly of planned activities such as dances and sing-alongs in the main lounge. Dancing is quite popular as it is in most retirement communities. A small unattended library is also available.

The management of Golden Oaks operates a ten passenger bus for its residents. This is used for shopping trips to nearby centers and also for short sightseeing trips around the San Fernando Valley and other places of interest within close proximity to the hotel.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Age Factor

Age seemed to be quite significant as a factor when considered in the light of types of communities (Table 1). The planned community had the youngest group with an overall average age of 64.4 years. The retirement hotels held the oldest group with an overall average age of 78.9 years.

This age difference in regard to preference of the type community is readily explained. The planned community is very highly oriented to the "active" life. Its recreational facilities are numerous and most are geared to outdoor activity. Its golf course, shuffleboard and bocce ball courts, swimming pool, and even its garden plots, call for relatively strenuous activity when compared to the retirement hotels which offer none of these facilities. Indeed, the hotels offer activities geared to a much slower pace in life such as movies, bingo, and planned bus trips. About the most strenuous activities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Mean Age of Men</th>
<th>Mean Age of Women</th>
<th>Mean Age Men and Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>64.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>66.6</td>
<td>68.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>69.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.9</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>77.2</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>75.8</td>
<td>79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>81.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>76.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>78.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in the hotels are the dances which are held less frequently than in the planned community.

The average age levels in the condominiums and mobile home parks fall in between the above two extremes. This is also understood in light of the fact that the recreational facilities in these places are more limited than in the planned community but not so much as in the hotels.

Age and the level of recreational activities offered in the different types of communities seem to have a bearing on choice of community in which retirees live.

**Ratio of Men to Women**

The preponderance of women in all types of communities was not surprising in light of the known longer life span of women (Table 2).

The overall ratio of women to men is a little more than two to one. In some cases, the ratio is more than three to one but these figures can probably be explained by the type of functions at which the questionnaire was administered. In the case of Leisure Village where three-quarters of the residents are women, the questionnaire was handed out at a "Meet Your Neighbor Tea." At Carefree Living, I attended a meeting called for the purpose of...
## TABLE 2

PERCENTAGE OF MEN AND WOMEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>% Men</th>
<th>% Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>74</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>33.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>66.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>68.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
displaying drapery and upholstery materials. Women could normally be expected to attend this type of function in larger numbers than men, who would probably rather be out on the golf course.

At Granada Villa and Golden Oaks special meetings were called for the express purpose of completing my questionnaire, but it may be that men would rather sit down to a football or hockey game on television than to attend this sort of meeting.

The closest balance of men versus women was found at Sherman Grove Mobile Home Park, but the return here was so small as to be inconclusive on this particular point.

**Religious Preference**

At first, I was rather surprised to find such an overwhelming majority of Protestants in all types of retirement communities (Table 3). However, during further research I found that the State of California has almost four million Catholics or 19.7 percent of its total population. In Los Angeles County Catholics compose 19.1 percent of the total population and in Ventura County this percentage rises to 20.7 percent.17

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### TABLE 3

**RELIGIOUS PREFERENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Protestant</th>
<th>Catholic</th>
<th>Jew</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.9</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon closer examination of my figures, I found that the average percentage for Catholics in retirement communities closely parallels those percentages cited above. The average Catholic population in the two counties included in this study is 19.9 percent while the average from the retirement communities is 21.9 percent. It would seem that all types of retirement communities are housing an appropriate percentage of Catholic residents in proportion to their populations.

Jews are only nominally represented in the overall picture being overshadowed by Protestants by approximately twenty-four to one and by the Catholics seven to one. This may be explained by the fact that Jews are known to congregate in neighborhoods. There is a district in Los Angeles where it is said that a number of retirement hotels house a huge majority of Jews over other religious groups. This then would explain the few Jewish persons in this survey. I simply did not visit those communities in which Jews are known to congregate.

Since no names were written on the questionnaire, it is difficult to determine the number of persons with Spanish surnames who might reasonably be expected to be Catholic. However, in looking over the assemblages of
persons at places I visited, I would say very few, if any of them were of Mexican descent. Also, even though the question on national origin or descent was abandoned in the survey, it should be noted that no one listed Mexico or Spain as a place of origin. A few listed Italy, but not many.

**Marital Status**

This question, too, brought an interesting response in that by far the greatest number of widows, divorcees, and single persons are found in the retirement hotels. My survey found no married persons in this type of community. All other types of communities had a majority of married persons (Table 4).

One explanation of these figures might be the security factor. Retirement hotels offer very close association with neighbors and most of these establishments lock their doors at an early hour in the evening. Health also enters the picture here. Many of the hotel residents had been referred to hotels by doctors because they are unable to carry on the normal functions of housekeeping which would be involved in other types of communities. In addition to the health factor, age would also tend to limit the number of active pursuits for most people.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Divorced</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Widows or widowers have been used to sharing their lives with a mate. It is difficult to adjust to eating meals alone or keeping up a house when there is no one with whom to share it. In a hotel, the widowed person is relieved of all housekeeping chores and can still enjoy mealtime, evening television shows or other activities at which the company of others is desirable.

The other three types of communities offer housekeeping and other pursuits commonly shared by couples. The planned community has the lowest percentage of widowed persons other than Sherman Grove Mobile Home Park whose sample was so small that this question was probably not significant. The planned community offered the greatest number of leisure activities which could be enjoyed by couples.

The relatively high percentage of widowed persons found in condominiums and mobile home parks is probably due to the desire for living quarters in near proximity to neighbors both for security and for companionship.

**Occupation Before Retirement**

Some significance can be attached to this question when applied to community types. After listing pre-retirement occupations in each type community and relating
these occupations to income level, it becomes easy to see the trends in choice of community (Table 5).

The white collar and professional people find their way into the planned community and the condominiums. Cost of housing units in these places is, on the average, higher than those in other type communities. Those people whose occupations before retirement fell in to the blue collar labor categories probably would be less able to afford the planned community or the condominiums.

**Age at Retirement**

No significant figures were gathered from this question. It did seem that people in the planned community and the condominiums had the greatest number of persons taking early retirements. These are persons retiring at a younger age than the compulsory retirement age dictated by their employers. Many were probably in higher income brackets and could afford an earlier retirement than those in the mobile homes and hotels. This can be verified by the prices of the condominiums and planned community homes compared to mobile homes and hotel rooms.

The actual retirement age was not significantly lower in communities where early retirements were indicated. This probably is explained by the fact that many
TABLE 5
PRE-RETIREMENT OCCUPATIONS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Occupations of Men</th>
<th>Occupations of Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flanned Community</td>
<td>Aircraft Engineer</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nuclear Medicine Tech.</td>
<td>Real Estate Broker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attorney</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tooling Engineer</td>
<td>Court Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printer (Own Business)</td>
<td>Fabrics Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Mining Engineer</td>
<td>Jewelry Store Owner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Laundry Owner</td>
<td>Executive Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aircraft Engineer</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mechanical Engineer</td>
<td>Department Store Buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tooling Engineer</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Machinist</td>
<td>Factory Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Grocery Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appliance Repairman</td>
<td>Apartment Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>Therapist</td>
<td>Office Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postman</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tool and Die Maker</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Watchman</td>
<td>Ladies Wear Saleslady</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In the interest of space, only a partial listing of occupations is shown here. These were chosen as being representative of the pre-retirement income levels for each type community. A large percentage of housewives was evident in all communities and since it can be assumed that these women had no significant incomes, they are not listed.
people either did not know or failed to report the compulsory retirement age at their places of employment. Therefore, no conclusive data could be obtained for either question involving retirement age.

**Residence Before Retirement**

This question brought very surprising results. Before the study began, I felt that a major percentage of people probably migrated to Southern California for the sole purpose of finding a place in which to spend their retirement years. This was not confirmed by the study (Table 6).

An overall average of only 26 percent of the people in the retirement communities studied came from out of state. It could not be determined whether or not they came to Southern California for the express purpose of retirement. Those coming from other places in California averaged 73.7 percent of all the people.

According to Hepner, a study has been made by Harold Hall on retirement places for executives. His study shows that one-quarter of executives move to distant places for retirement, but the other three-quarters remain very close to the homes they occupied before their
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>From Out of State</th>
<th>From Other California Cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
retirement.  

18 This ties in very closely with my own findings in this study.

Of those people coming in from other states, the largest percentage was found in the hotels. This is probably due to age and health factors. The low degree of responsibility connected with hotel living coupled with the mild climate in Southern California is inviting to older people who might have health problems.

The largest percentage of people coming from other California communities is found in the mobile home parks. This may reflect the generally lower pre-retirement incomes and hence lesser mobility of typical residents of such communities.

Type of Living Accommodations Before Retirement

A large percentage of persons lived in and owned their one-family homes before retiring (Table 7). The next highest percentage had rented apartments and only a small percentage had lived in any other type of living accommodations. The importance of property ownership has

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Owned One-Family Home</th>
<th>Rented Apartment</th>
<th>Trailer</th>
<th>Other*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>89</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.3</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.7</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>64.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>73.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>21.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*These included duplexes, condominiums, one hotel and one resident at the Young Men's Christian Association.
always been a feature of life in the United States. This should serve to point up this fact quite forcibly.

It is interesting that an average of 25 percent of the people presently residing in hotels had rented apartments before retirement. This would seem to indicate that persons used to rentals are content to choose rental accommodations after retirement also.

The largest average percentage of persons who had previously owned homes had moved into mobile home parks after retirement. This is probably to escape the high cost of taxes and upkeep and yet to retain ownership of property.

Reasons for Leaving Former Home to Live in a Retirement Community

The answers given to this question were quite varied and yet when looked at in the overall consensus, there were two or three reasons given by most respondents.

1. There were too many responsibilities connected with the pre-retirement home. These involved the size, expense of taxes and upkeep and decline of neighborhoods. Most people wanted a smaller place where the yard work would be done for them or cut down to a considerable degree. Those people living in mobile homes were concerned
with expenses of owning and maintaining their own homes. No tax is paid on a mobile home and they can be purchased, including furniture, for a fraction of the cost of a house.

2. Security also was a frequent answer in all types of communities. Guards on duty around the clock in the planned community and condominiums and the near proximity of neighbors in mobile home parks provide the ultimate in security for retirees. Hotels have, in addition to these security factors, the early-hour locking of doors.

3. Recreational facilities and planned activities were also high on the list. Most people who are retired and living on fixed incomes could not afford the cost of participation in the number of activities provided by retirement communities.

__Reasons for Choosing Southern California__

Climate, of course, ranked extremely high as a factor in choosing southern California in which to spend retirement years. This reason was often given by people who had lived in California for long periods of time before retiring as well as those who came from other places. Health was also a factor and this might reasonably be tied
in with climate, especially for those coming from out of state. The desire to be near family members, especially children, was also a definite influence in the choice of southern California.

The reasons for choosing a particular community were very similar for people in all types of communities. People in all types of communities gave climate and nearness to relatives as major reasons for choosing a particular community in which they presently live. Those in the planned village and the condominiums stated that these places were chosen also for the number of activities provided for the residents.

**Consideration of Other Retirement Communities**

Less than one-third of all respondents had ever considered other retirement communities before moving into the ones where they presently reside. Of these, only 9 percent had gone out of state to look at other centers. The great majority of residents in all types of communities moved there without considering going elsewhere. About 10 percent had actually lived in another retirement community before moving into the one where they live at present. The reasons given for moving from one community to another were not sufficient to base any conclusions
upon them.

It had been the feeling of the writer, before the study began, that perhaps a number of people would move out of an older community into newer ones as they were built. This does not seem to have been the case. Once people are established in a retirement community, they apparently, for the most part, stay there. This may be partly due to the expense of moving from place to place. However, it is more likely due to satisfaction with the community, as will be seen more clearly in the discussion which follows.

**Satisfaction Level and Average Length of Residence in Community**

At the beginning of this study, the writer felt sure that many people in retirement communities were probably quite happy upon first entering such places, but that after a residence of a few years the satisfaction level would probably decline sharply. The glamour and excitement of any place usually palls after a period of time.

The satisfaction level in all types of communities is extremely high, even after a period of several years, although some small decline on an average was shown with the passage of time (Table 8).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Average Length of Residence</th>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reasonably Satisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strong Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>.5 Years</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>.3 Years</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>4.8 Years</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>5.1 Years</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>8.8 Years</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>4.7 Years</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>1.8 Years</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>66.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The highest average level of satisfaction is found in the planned community but it must be remembered that this is a new community. This, in itself, would seem to presuppose a high level of satisfaction with new quarters.

Some extremely interesting results are seen in the other three types of communities, especially when viewed from the individual community standpoint. The largest average length of residence of any type community was in the mobile home parks where 63.5 percent were very satisfied. When viewed from an individual community aspect, those people who have lived in Sherman Grove Mobile Home Park for an average of 8.8 years are more satisfied than those who have an average residence of 5.1 years in Granada Villa. This is also true in the hotels and especially in the condominiums where a full 10 percent span develops between new occupants and those who have longer residence.

However, when viewed by community types, the average satisfaction level drops slightly with longer residency. When considering the relatively small sample in the study, this may not be significant.

Perhaps the most interesting figure in this table is the 2 percent unsatisfied. This figure actually represents only one person out of the 173 respondents in
the study. It is also interesting to note that this person lives in the community exhibiting the highest degree of satisfaction, as a whole, of all the communities visited. The reason for this is not clear since no personal interview was held with this person.

This table presents a picture which was quite unexpected. Two-thirds of all people in retirement communities are very satisfied and another one-fourth are at least reasonably satisfied. This expression of satisfaction comes from people whose actual length of residence in a community spans a time period from one day to fifteen years.

Ownership of Recreational Vehicles

Here again, the writer was surprised at the answers received to this question. I had assumed that most retirees would own a recreational vehicle of some sort. However, this was not the case at all. Only 15 percent of the entire number of respondents owned such vehicles and the hotels had no one who owned one. The lack of storage space and the age level of the hotel residents would probably account for the complete lack of recreational vehicles there.

There does not seem to be any ready answer for the few vehicles represented among the other types of
communities. The fact that the retiree has time for leisurely travel does not seem to be important. It may be that people, generally, are in a hurry to get to wherever they are going and use other means of transportation than recreational vehicles to accomplish this. This can be seen more clearly in the discussion of trips and modes of travel which follows.

**Trips and Travelers**

The questions on travel were designed to determine if retirees are travelers. Indeed, a relatively high percentage of the people do travel, but the number of trips taken over a five-year period average only 3.4 trips. This is less than one trip a year (Table 9). It may be that the man or woman who works all year and gets a two-week vacation actually travels more than retirees who have the whole year in which to travel, but this is only speculation since there is no data to prove it.

The average percentage of people traveling was very close for all types of communities. Those in the planned community showed the lowest percentage of travelers, but this may be simply because the larger number of respondents were women. Or, perhaps it could be due to the fact that Leisure Village is a new community and people are
### TABLE 9
TRIPS AND TRAVELERS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Number of Trips</th>
<th>Number of Travelers</th>
<th>Number of Trips of Traveling</th>
<th>Percent of People Traveling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carefree Living</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average 4.0</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average 4.1</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average 2.2</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Overall Average</strong> 3.4</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All data presented in this table covers a time period of five years.
content with the activities provided at home. Since this probably is not too significant, no conclusive answer was needed.

Modes of Travel

This question was originally designed in relation with the one on the ownership of recreational vehicles. It was expected that retirees would do a lot of traveling in their recreational vehicles, but this notion proved to be untrue since relatively few people own such vehicles. However, it did point out that retirees, in general, like to travel either in their own automobiles or by airlines (Table 10).

A quick glance will suffice to show that the automobile and the airlines are in a close race as to popularity of modes of travel in all types of communities except the hotels where travel by automobile drops sharply. Most of the hotel residents have passed the age when they can operate an automobile competently.

Recreational vehicles are used most often by the group of people in the mobile home parks. Income levels of these people may require that trips be taken as economically as possible. A recreational vehicle usually provides sleeping quarters and cooking arrangements at
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Type</th>
<th>Community Name</th>
<th>Rec.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Auto</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Vehicle</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Airline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Train</td>
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<td>Bus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Community</td>
<td>Leisure Village</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condominiums</td>
<td>Klingbeil Towne</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Home Parks</td>
<td>Granada Villa</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sherman Grove</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hotels</td>
<td>New Robinson</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>Golden Oaks</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In all cases these people traveled by ship on cruises.
little more expense than operating a large automobile alone.

Trains and buses were utilized in about the same proportion by the hotel group. However, the New Robinson far outstripped the Golden Oaks in bus travel and this is probably due to the differences in income level and living expenses in the two communities. The rates at the Golden Oaks would indicate that perhaps these people have more money to spend on living and consequently have more to spend on travel. Therefore, instead of taking the bus, they can afford to take a train or one of the airlines.

Sea voyages were not as popular as might be supposed. There is no ready explanation for this but it may be linked to time and expense factors. Ocean voyages are relatively expensive and travel is slow. Perhaps most people prefer to travel faster and less expensively than can be done by ship.

**Activities Outside Retirement Communities**

Relatively few people were found to be seeking outside activities to augment those provided by the community in which they live. Only 64 out of 173 people (39 percent) sought any kind of outside activity. Of these, twenty people attended church outside their
communities. Others did volunteer work in hospitals and other charitable institutions or attended meetings of fraternal and political organizations. Approximately two-thirds of all people were content to seek their entertainment within their retirement communities.

This is interesting in light of the fact that two-thirds of the people being very satisfied with their living conditions. This would seem to indicate that those who are very satisfied with their choice of retirement communities are also very satisfied with the leisure activities provided by those places.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Numerous studies have been done on retirement places and the people who live in them. These have covered the listing of places in which to retire, how to prepare for retirement, health problems of the elderly, housing for the elderly, planning and construction of retirement communities, and even what pitfalls the retiree or prospective retiree should be aware of. There have also been studies on age, satisfaction levels, marital status of retirees and other factors pertinent to retirement and retirees. However, this study is, insofar as I know, the first to be concerned with types of retirement communities rather than individual communities or retirees as individuals.

It was while doing research for the smaller-scale study that I became aware of the fact that there are different accommodations, services and activities offered by differing types of retirement communities. It occurred to me that perhaps there were reasons behind the choice
of a particular type community over another type.

It also occurred to me that since Southern California is considered as a place where living is relatively easy insofar as climate, scenery, and other attractions are concerned, perhaps a great number of people came here at retirement time to take advantage of this easy living. The population of California has been growing at a fairly rapid pace since World War II and I wondered if this growth could be attributed in any great part to those people coming here to retire.

Traveling has always been a great pleasure for me and I have looked forward to retirement as the time in which I could have all the time I would need to travel as much as I would like. This led me to wonder if retirees actually utilize their retirement years for traveling.

Then, after visiting a few retirement communities, I began to wonder if people in these places were actually happy with the choices they had made. Were the people in one type community more satisfied than those in another type? Does satisfaction drop after a period of time?

This study was done in the hope of finding answers to these and other questions. The results of the survey were, in some instances, quite surprising. On the other
hand, my assumptions as to the answers to some questions were proven right in some cases.

Answers to Questions

What factors are involved in the choice of a particular type of retirement community and can the residents of various types of communities be described?

Several factors seem to be involved in the answer to this question: age, sex, marital status, occupation prior to retirement, and perhaps religious preference although this is not conclusive.

The youngest age group prefers the planned community probably due to the number and kind of activities offered. The oldest age group is found in the hotels where almost no work or responsibility falls on the resident.

Marital status provided one of the most startling statistics in the study. The percentage of widowed persons in hotels was more than three times as high as that found in mobile home parks, more than twice that of the condominiums and four times that of the planned community. There were no married persons at all in the hotels visited for this study.
Religious preference in retirement communities leans heavily toward Protestantism in all types of communities. However, the percentage of Catholics is in keeping with their percentages of total populations found in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Jews were only nominally represented in any of the communities, being overshadowed by Protestants by approximately twenty-four to one and by the Catholics seven to one. This may be explained by the fact that Jews are known to congregate in neighborhoods, and I did not visit a Jewish neighborhood. Nothing conclusive could be arrived at concerning Jews.

Previous occupations suggest approximate income levels of the retirees. This would have a marked effect on the type of accommodations they might be able to afford after retirement. The planned community and condominiums seem to house people who have held higher paying jobs before retirement than those people in the mobile homes and hotels.

Do people migrate to Southern California for the purpose of retirement? If so, do they prefer any particular type of community over another?

It was found that people do not come here in the great numbers which I expected. Only 26 percent of the
people in all communities came here from out of state to retire. Almost 74 percent came from other California localities. The largest percentage of people from out of state were found in the hotels where about three-fifths of the residents came from out of state.

How mobile is the retiree in terms of both residence and travel?

The data on mobility between retirement communities were too small to be conclusive and this phase of the question was dropped. However, data gathered on the travel aspect were interesting. The highest percentage of travelers by community type was found in the hotels where 79 percent of those residents traveled. However, the average number of trips by these people was the lowest of any type community. The highest number of trips were made by occupants of mobile home parks. Over the past five years, travelers averaged only 3.4 trips or less than one trip per year.

Clearly, most retirees travel much less than the leisure time available to them would permit.

Automobiles and airlines were very close in the race for popularity as modes of travel. Most people want to travel in the privacy of their own automobile and on
longer trips they like to travel by plane in order to reach their destinations as quickly as possible.

Hotel residents travel very little by automobile and their use of airlines is above that of any of the other types of community. Trains and buses are also used by hotel residents more than by residents in other types of communities.

To what extent are retirees satisfied with the type of community they have chosen?

Approximately two-thirds of the residents in all types of communities are very satisfied with their choice of retirement locale. The highest level of satisfaction is found in the planned community. The only one unsatisfied retiree lived in a condominium complex where the satisfaction level was very high.

Satisfaction level, on the average, may drop slightly with length of residence, but since the residence times were so different in the various communities, this is not conclusive. In the overall picture, satisfaction level is extremely high regardless of length of residence, type of community, or any other factor.
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Age__________  2. National Origin or Descent__________________

3. Sex: M_____ F_____  

4. Religious Preference:  
   Catholic____________  
   Protestant_________  
   Jewish_____________  
   Other (Specify)__________________  

5. Marital Status: Married__________ Single__________  
   Divorced__________ Widow__________  

6. Major Occupation before retirement__________________  

7. Did your company or business have a compulsory retirement age? Yes____ No____ If so, what age____

8. At what age did you retire?______________  

9. Where did you live before retirement?  
   City and State__________________  

10. Did you live in  
    One family home______________  
    Apartment____________________  
    Trailer or Mobile Home_________  
    Other (Specify)__________________  

11. Did you own_______ or rent?__________
12. Give reasons for leaving home to move to a retirement community:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

13. Please give reasons for choosing southern California:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

14. Did you consider other localities before choosing this particular community? Yes____ No____
   If "yes" please give name of other locality____

__________________________________________________________________________

15. How long have you lived in this particular community?

__________________________________________________________________________

16. Give reasons for choosing this particular community:

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

17. Have you lived in other retirement communities?
   Yes____ No____ If "yes: please state where you lived before moving here____________________

__________________________________________________________________________

18. Give reasons for leaving former retirement community:

__________________________________________________________________________
19. Did you buy new furniture when you moved into a retirement community? Yes___ No___
   If "yes" please state reasons:_____________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

20. Satisfaction with present living conditions:
   Very satisfied_____ Unsatisfied_____ 
   Reasonably satisfied_____ No strong feelings_____ 
   If answer is "unsatisfied" please give reasons for dissatisfaction__________________________
   ____________________________
   ____________________________

21. Do you own a recreational vehicle? Yes___ No___
   Pickup camper__________
   Motor Home______________
   Trailer______________
   Other (Specify)_________________

22. Approximately how many trips have you taken outside Southern California during the past five years?___
   Please name destination for each trip:__________
   ____________________________
23. By what means did you travel?

Automobile______  Train______
Recreational Vehicle______  Bus______
Airline______  Other (Specify)______

25. What is the average length of time spent on each trip? ________________________________________________ __

26. In what activities do you participate __outside this community? (Clubs, volunteer organizations, etc.  

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________

27. Give reasons for seeking outside activities_______

______________________________________________
______________________________________________
______________________________________________
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