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Towards an understanding of the horizontal landscape:

A phenomenological study of sense of place in Chautauqua Park, Des Moines, Iowa

by

Kyle Joseph Beidler

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of

MASTER OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
MASTER OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Co-Majors: Landscape Architecture; Community and Regional Planning

Program of Study Committee:
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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2002

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This is to certify that the master’s thesis of

Kyle Joseph Beidler

has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would be impossible to complete any research without thanking all those who have supported and helped me throughout the process. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all the participants of this study who welcomed me into their homes and shared with me their stories and experiences in Chautauqua Park.

I would like to thank the Departments of Landscape Architecture and Community and Regional Planning for providing me with the opportunity to study at Iowa State University. I would especially like to thank my committee members who stood by me, when no one else would. I would like to thank my parents, Bud and Carol who have always been there through it all. I would like to thank all of my family and extended family for appreciating whom I am and what I needed to do. But, most importantly, I would like to thank Tricia for putting my own interest before hers, even when it meant she had to give up so much of what she loves.
PREFACE

For my undergraduate capstone project, I focused on the rapidly changing landscape façade of Upper Macungie Township in eastern Pennsylvania. Within my lifetime, I had witnessed the physical, social, and environmental deterioration of this regional mosaic. Overwhelmed and irritated by the affects of decentralized development practices, I came to this edge city as an "objective expert" in search of answers and solutions. In the end, I came away with an understanding that vital community elements, specifically, sacred places, places of invested meaning, and places of encounter (Sandercock 1998) had been forgotten in the development of this placeless geographic location. More importantly, I developed a strong conviction that such attributes of place, founded in the cultural, historical, and environmental layers of a region, could provide a foundation for a better tomorrow.

My first year at Iowa State University reinforced my convictions about the importance of these attributes in the continual development of spatial locations and human experiences. I also developed a different understanding of the world. Reality no longer seemed a quantifiable abstraction able to be described and interpreted by oversimplified generalizations. This humanistic perspective and attitude not only challenged my interpretation of reality, but also shattered my acceptance of the expert-centered role of professionals in community development. For me, the role of both investigators and community development professionals needed to be redefined within the flexible context of participation and democracy.

I now perceive the landscape as a richer, more complex, three-dimensional space, perceived and interpreted from multiple perspectives. It is within the horizontal realm of lived experience, as described by Tuan (1979), that I have come to realize that quantifiable attributes of community cannot begin to define the complex reality of place. Rather, I now believe "the transformation of mere space into place" is constructed within a subjective matrix of live experience (Hay 1988). Furthermore, as a complex whole, this transformation is influenced by both the social and physical landscape attributes and the experiences and interpretations of its residents.
Guided by this perspective, it is my belief that designers and planners need a supplemental approach to more thoroughly understand the complexity of people/place relationships within the multiple dimensions of the landscape. As such, the object of this research was to develop and test a method of investigation that will yield an understanding and description of place as understood through the experiences of the residents who inhabit a defined spatial location.
CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT

1.1 Context of the Problem

Based on the foundations of the Enlightenment, positivistic 'rational thought' has dominated contemporary understandings of communities in the fields of both landscape architecture and planning (Corner 1990, 1991, and Sandercock 1998). The result has been a quantitative focus that force community analyses to use only objective scientific methods (Callahan 2000). As a result, these traditional forms of 'objective' community analyses rarely account for the 'subjective' understandings of place simply because they are not considered within the scope of investigation. However, many scholars now believe that subjective interpretations of place are no less vital in any fundamental understanding of communities that accompany design or planning efforts (Corner 1991, Helphand 1991, Sandercock 1998).

Organized largely around two arguments, the use of the rational paradigm alone has been disputed as an unsound theoretical basis for the planning of communities. The first argument reasons that knowledge is not value free and therefore the rational assumption of an objective expert in a value free environment is an unrealistic assumption (Flyvbjerg 1998). The second argument proposes that, even if we accept the rational assumption of objective evaluation, a comprehensive technical analysis that is not embraced by the community it is constructed for remains ineffective and theoretically pointless (Sandercock 1998).

These arguments are easily extended to the realm of landscape architecture, which continues to largely operate within the rational paradigm as designers assume the role of the objective expert. Corner (1991) has correlated "systems theory," which represents a positivistic evaluation technique within the discipline, with two similar flaws associated with the rational assumption. First, it is assumed that factual data alone will automatically lead to a logical synthesis, thus denying any other forms of knowledge. Second, this approach fails to recognize or address the value-impregnated quality of its own observations (Corner 1991). These arguments highlight the theoretical uncertainty of the rational paradigm as the sole basis of analytical investigation within a multi-dimensional reality of today's communities.
The works and intellectual surveys of David Seamon (1979, 1984, 1987) have proposed a phenomenological approach as one alternative to positivistic investigations within the fields of design and planning. Seamon defines phenomenology as "the exploration and description of phenomena, where a phenomenon refers to things or experiences as human beings experience them" (Seamon 2000 p.158). In short, phenomenology focuses on the interpretations of individual experiences within a subjective reality. Thus, a phenomenological approach holds the potential of addressing the shortcomings of the rational paradigm. Furthermore, if, designers and planners employ this qualitative methodology to more comprehensively understand the complexity of lived experience for residents, it stands to reason that they will be better situated to address the multi-dimensional reality of today's communities.

1.1.1 Problem Statement

A phenomenological approach is worthless as a supplement to traditional community analysis unless the phenomenon being investigated is directly related to issues of community dynamics. For example, a phenomenological investigation of light, which is a valid investigation in itself, does not necessarily increase our understanding of peoples' lived experience within the selected locale. Therefore, it is not a useful supplement to traditional approaches within the context of community analysis. In contrast, a phenomenological investigation of sense of place from the perspectives of people within the particular locale would begin to expose essential experiences of place within that community. Unfortunately, the majority of previous phenomenological 'sense of place' investigations have done so in general terms in an attempt to define the construct (Buttimer 1980, Lewis 1979, Norberg-Schulz 1980, Relph 1976, Tuan 1980).

Traditional phenomenological research, from within the geographic discipline, suggests 'sense of place' or 'genius loci' is an intangible and synergistic quality only possessed by specific world-renowned locales (Seamon 1989). My own experience, however, suggests that the vast majority of places and communities possess existential experiences related to sense of place. This assumption is supported by research centered on the importance of everyday spaces in our understanding of place, most notably Hester's study
of scared structures of Manteo (Hester 1993). Therefore, this research asks how can sense of place be explored in the terms of lived experience from the perspective of individual residents within everyday neighborhoods and communities. And furthermore, how can such an understanding of place affect the design and planning of communities and neighborhoods.

1.1.2 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is not to simply prove that a phenomenological is preferred to positivistic methods. Nor, is it to develop a generalized theory pertaining to a ‘sense of place.’ Rather, the intent of this place specific research is a threefold exploration of method, analysis, and implications.

First, this research will construct a personalized methodological approach, drawing upon established forms of phenomenological investigation, to better understand sense of place as subjective, lived experiences within a defined neighborhood. This approach is based on the belief that subjective interpretations and experiences are vital in our understanding of community. This interpretative methodology is being developed as one possible supplemental approach to positivistic community analysis with the hope that it will yield a more rich understanding of the neighborhood.

Second, this phenomenological study will describe the essence of sense of place as a form of conscious, lived experience interpreted by individual residents of Chautauqua Park in Des Moines, Iowa, which has been selected as the locale for this study. At this stage in the analysis, sense of place will be generally defined in a ‘rooted’ context as an individually based, but group informed, localized, personal means of relating to the world that transforms mere space into personal place (Hay 1988).

In a general sense, utilizing rooted as a descriptor with ‘sense of place’ helps provide an orientation that emphasizes place more than sensing; hence the term becomes more geographic than aesthetic. (Hay 1998a p. 263)

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From a phenomenological perspective, sense of place is understood as a perceivable experience and not a social construct, academic theory, or conceptual notion. Therefore, as a perceivable experience, no different than any other experiences, sense of place will not be distinguished within the remainder of this text with quotations, hyphens, or italic font.
Finally, the intent of this research is to explore the implications of an existential phenomenological approach within the fields of landscape architecture and planning. The developed understanding of the phenomenological approach is believed to not only alter how we understand specific neighborhoods but also, suggest supplemental procedures within contemporary processes of design and planning.

1.1.3 Central Question

The central question to be investigated in this study is: What is the essence of sense of place as experienced by selected residents within Chautauqua Park? This question was developed specifically within a phenomenological context.

The essence of a phenomenon is unified objective and structural descriptions of an experience, which present themselves as threads of coherence among the multiple descriptive accounts. These descriptions are interpreted as essential only if the object of study would not exist in the same capacity without the stated elements. Therefore, the central question can be further elaborated with two related sub-questions. First, how is sense of place experienced by an individual living in Chautauqua Park (the objective description of the phenomenon)? And, second what is the meaning ascribed to these experiences (the structural understanding of the object)?

From a phenomenological perspective, objective reality and subjective consciousness are conceived as inseparable. “What I see is interwoven with how I see it, with whom I see it, and with whom I am” (Moustakas 1994 p.59). Thus, the distinction between objective reality and subjective interpretation is neither clear nor precise. Rather, both elements are contained within an intersubjective matrix of lived experience. In short, sense of place is conceptualized as a phenomenon contained within the interdependent context of the human 'lifeworld' in which, the individual is continually immersed within their physical setting.²

² "From the vantage point of existential phenomenology, the lifeworld is the taken-for-granted context and tenor of everyday life" (Seamon 1991 p.3).
1.1.4 Assumptions and Limitations

The foundational assumption of this research is the belief that Chautauqua Park does in fact possess an existential sense of place that residents can experience. Based on my own experience within the neighborhood and informal conversations with residents, certain distinguishing environmental and social qualities presented themselves throughout this community. These qualities were reinforced by unique spatial elements, which defined Chautauqua Park from the surrounding neighborhoods.

It could be argued that unique attributes alone do not comprise a sense of place. However, within a phenomenological perspective, sense of place is understood as a perceivable experience that exists within daily life. Therefore, having been experienced by the residents interviewed within the neighborhood, a sense of place can be classified as a phenomenon or an object worthy of study.

A second broader foundational assumption of the phenomenological approach itself, relates to the way people are conceptualized in relationship to the world. Individuals and the world are perceived within a holistic relationship, which cannot be separated (Seamon 2000). Thus, it is argued that every phenomenon is comprised of both physical characteristics, which are experienced (Noema) and psychological characteristics, which are perceived (Noesis). Even though each set of characteristics can be conceptualized as distinct, Husserl’s intentionality of consciousness unifies the two states of being into a single subjective reality. This inherent, subjective relationship, like that of peoples’ relationship with the world, cannot be separated (Moustakas 1994). Therefore, as a second foundational assumption, sense of place can only be understood within the intersubjective matrix of human experience.

Man is understood as the source of acts of intention, and it is only through the study of man’s intentions that we can comprehend the world, for it is these acts that give meaning to man’s behavior. The world is thus understood as being essentially subjective, and no “empirical knowledge, however purged and ‘objectified’ can get away from this subjective matrix of all experience.” (Relph 1970 p. 194)

Only individual subjective realities exist within a phenomenological perspective. Thus, the essence of any phenomenon is the common descriptions across the intersubjective reality of the multiple experiences of individuals. This is not to say that a phenomenological
investigation of sense of place as experienced in Chautauqua Park will yield a collective, 'generalizable' theory for the construct. Rather, this process assumes that there are discernable features of consciousness that harbor similar understandings of the phenomenon, which are essential in experiencing a sense of place within Chautauqua Park.

Finally, this research did not intend to complete an all-encompassing analysis of Chautauqua Park utilizing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Assuming that a phenomenological approach is an appropriate supplemental investigative technique, this study focused on the continual development of the approach in the description of residential experiences. Specially, the implications of the phenomenological study of sense of place as experienced by residents of Chautauqua Park are discussed in terms of design and planning for communities.

1.1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is the development of a replicable process of community evaluation from the perspectives of individual residents, which utilizes sense of place as an indicator of subjective lived experience. As a result, this research yields essential qualities and experiences that are conceived as vital in the transformation of mere space into place. In future studies, it is hoped that these same essential elements can be compared across multiple phenomenological evaluations of everyday communities thus, revealing the existential variations and similarities of neighborhood typologies.

1.2 Theoretical Context

Traditional analyses of place, concerned with predictive and a-historical truths, objectify both the geographic and human context, which it evaluates (Million 1992). As a result, the developed understanding of place is often little more than a single perspective, focused on abstracted conceptions of 'site,' as interpreted by an outside, rational 'expert.' Both, the qualitative nature of place and the multiple interpretations of its residents are discounted as subjective.

Humanistic geography up to 1976 was a reaction to this quantitative excess within the context of place evaluation. Tuan (1971, 1974) and Relph (1976), both pioneers within the
field, critiqued rational science as an inappropriate paradigm for the study of people/place relationships. Additional authors (Fried 1963 and Jacobs 1961) outside of geography were drawing similar conclusions that reinforced the importance of ‘lived experience’ in our understanding of reality.

In “Thought and Landscape” Tuan (1979) constructed a conceptual framework which highlighted the three dimensional reality of the landscape. This framework critiqued traditional top-down perspectives by reinforcing the need of place evaluations to address both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the landscape. Tuan labeled the horizontal landscape as the realm of lived experience thus, reinforcing the importance of existential perspectives.

This Humanistic framework began to set the stage for a second critique of the traditional, positivistic evaluation of place. Leonie Sandercock (1998) formalized postmodern critiques of plurality within the horizontal landscape by highlighting the existence of multiple interpretations of place. It became clear that it was no longer enough to recognize the intangible and existential qualities of place. But rather, it was more important in the development our understandings of place to recognize individual voices and the complex reality of multiple interpretations.

These foundational critiques of conventional place evaluations set the stage for the theoretical context of this research. This study can be conceptualized as operating within the plurality of the horizontal landscape in an attempt to better understand individual interpretations of residential lifeworlds. Pragmatically speaking, this research attempts to document individual experiences that have transformed mere space into place. Within the context of this research and based on Hay’s (1988) definition, this transformation is defined as a form of conscious, lived experience interpreted as a residential sense of place.

Finally, from a phenomenological perspective, the intentional nature of human action is inherently related to the construction of place (Million 1992). Therefore, as a phenomenological evaluation of place, this study theoretically investigates both the geographic context and human context of space transformation as an interdependent people/place relationship.
1.2.1 Conceptualizing Methodology

In “Personalizing Evaluation,” Kushner (2000) argues that traditional methodologies are little more than prescriptive discourses that reinforce institutional perspectives. Defined as a construct of the human mind, Kushner argues that contemporary methods should enable the researcher to discover their own voice within the research. Kushner suggests that only a personalized methodological approach, which balances the researcher's beliefs with that of individual participants throughout the evaluation and presentation of the data, justifies the use of the researcher's own subjective interpretations (Kushner 2000).

At stake here are the limits to the justification of the use of the subjective experience. Both my position and that of the connoisseur [expert centered model] clearly exploit the subjective to a high degree (hence, ‘personalizing’ refers to the person of the evaluator as much as that of the respondent) and hence appear similar when viewed from a certain angle. However, they differ in that one seeks to position the evaluator methodologically, whereas the other seeks to position the evaluator in a hierarchy of judgment. (Kushner 2000 p.118)

Within design and planning, conventional methods of place evaluation perpetuate an expert centered model and a rational perspective that denies both internal and external subjective interpretations. In an attempt to supplement these institutionalized norms by applying Kushner’s theoretical framework, this research has developed a personalized methodological approach, which balances participatory ethics of individual interpretation with that of phenomenological reduction3. To achieve this conceptual balance, this research engages in a process of critical self-reflection throughout the process of data collection and analysis. As a result, the role of the evaluator conceptually evolves throughout the multiple stages of investigation and thus needs to be detailed in the theoretical context of this research.

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3 Kushner argues that reductive essences are legitimately useful within the context of plurality on the basis of analytical thought (Kushner 2000).
1.2.2 The Role of the Researcher and Stages of the Evaluation Process

As it was alluded to earlier, to justify the use of subjective interpretations, a personalized methodological approach essentially requires the evaluator\(^4\) to strike a conceptual and pragmatic balance between personal bias and individualism.\(^5\) In an attempt to achieve this internal and external balance among perspectives, this research critically examines the role of the evaluator throughout the process of data collection and analysis within the theoretical context of the study.

1.2.2.1 The Role of the Researcher throughout the Process of Data Collection

Traditional models of evaluation and positivistic research clearly define an 'expert-centered' role for the researcher throughout the process of data collection. Similarly, first-person phenomenology places the researcher's interpretations of the subjective world at the center of the evaluation.\(^6\) As a result of these privileged positions, the researcher dominates the process of data collection due to an established hierarchical power structure among traditional methodologies. This is apparently true within the context of either of these approaches, whether the data collection is within the realm of objective or subjective interpretations.

In direct contrast to traditional approaches and first person phenomenology, the role of the researcher in the context of this study is conceptualized within a participatory framework. Guided by a broad assumption that all knowledge is constructed, even though the researcher need not construct all data, this research attempts to share the responsibility of data construction between the researcher and the participants.

The theoretical argument is simple. This research attempted to understand the internal experience of individual residents within a defined community. However, it is not an attempt to understand the researcher's own experience of the same neighborhood. Acknowledging that the interview is a guided conversation, both the participant and research

\(^4\) Note: the terms evaluator and researcher are used interchangeably throughout this piece. Not as a point of confusion but rather, to reinforce inter-dependency of participation, evaluation and qualitative research.

\(^5\) Within this context, individualism refers to the primacy of individual interpretation as opposed to any anti-democratic sentiment.

\(^6\) "In first-person phenomenological inquiry, the researcher uses her own firsthand experience of the phenomenon as a basis for examining its specific characteristics and qualities" (Seamon 2000 p.165).
must share in the responsibility of data construction. However, the interview itself defines a hierarchical relationship reinforced by defined roles. Therefore, the complexity of sharing responsibility rests solely on the flexibility of the researcher to allow the participant to deconstruct the implied power structure within the context of the interview. The intent of limiting the influence of power is to allow the participant to help direct the conversation itself.

The traditional authoritative nature of an interview itself defines the researcher as an external expert. However, if we reverse these roles throughout the conversation by denying our own knowledge of the subject matter and reinforcing the expert status of the participant, we can allow the individual to deconstruct any preconceived power structure. After all, the individual participant is the expert of his or her own internal experience, which is the focus of this investigation. As a result, the researcher and the participant have not only shared the responsibility of data collection but we have created a level of legitimacy in the construction of the data by defining the role of the researcher and clarifying the value of the participant’s perspectives both, theoretically and pragmatically.

... I needed, as evaluator, to have a critical distance so as to be able to adequately represent the many sides of what is clearly a complex and controversial event. (Kushner 2000 p.114)

1.2.22 The Role of the Researcher throughout the Process of Data Analysis

Again, the assumption of the role of the researcher throughout the process of data analysis is simple. At this stage in the evaluation process, the evaluator cannot deny or escape their authoritative position as the lead researcher. Therefore, as a phenomenological study respecting a participatory framework, the charge of the researcher is to uncover the nature of the variation among the plurality of interpretations\footnote{Existential phenomenological models of data analysis provide specific methods of data interpretation, which, can be utilized to identify underlying commonalities and patterns. However, individual techniques of analysis will be covered in the methodological sections of this report.}, while maintaining a reflective perspective of their own role. However, to achieve such a theoretical and pragmatic balance, it is necessary to again clarify a valid process of analysis.
Within the phenomenological context of this research, the analysis is not an attempt to prioritize individual voices but rather, to portray the threads of coherence among the individual experiences of the multiple participants.\(^8\) The authority of the researcher is taken from the intimacy with the subject rather than abstract theory regarding the subject matter. In addition, inductive interpretations of essential qualities (which, to some degree are reductive in nature) have been argued (and assumed throughout this theoretical context) as appropriate for analytical investigations of a complex reality (Kushner 2000). Therefore, this section is not an attempt to justify the use of inductive or reductive methodologies. Rather, this section focuses on balancing internal and external analytical validity through a process of critical self-reflection.

Traditional evaluations of place focus on objective solutions for constructed problems of a selected audience. Validity is directly related to the degree of objectivity, which is inherently laden with internal bias. In contrast, evaluation techniques, which center on concepts of thick description,\(^9\) establish validity through the presentation of data for the audience’s review. By presenting enough information, the audience is able to develop their own interpretation of the author’s analysis. Therefore, a transparent portrayal of the investigator’s external interpretations, integrated with accounts of the participant’s internal experience, creates a “critical space” for the audience to maneuver and evaluate the researcher’s own analysis (Kushner 2000).

These concepts are central to the role of the researcher throughout the process of analysis because the research is conceptualized as presenting findings, rather than, proving theory. Thus, the role of researcher within the context of this study is conceptualized as that of an investigator as opposed to that of an ‘authoritative expert.’ Furthermore, within the analytical process itself, investigative findings are set against a background of internal experiences. As a result, the ultimate process of analysis is open to both internal and external interpretations thus, balancing responsibility among all who read the findings.

\(^8\) The ideal of discovering underlying commonalities or the essence of a phenomenon can be traced throughout all phenomenological investigations of reality. (Seamon 2000)

\(^9\) ‘Thick description’ is a process of interpretative verification developed by Clifford Geertz where as, the audience is presented with enough of the original transcriptions to verify the author’s interpretations of the descriptive accounts (Geertz 1973).
My intent is to enhance the reader’s confidence in the evaluator as portrayer of events and people; but to correspondingly reduce confidence in her as judge of the significance of those portrayals. Under such an arrangement we can claim a role for the evaluator as a conduit for the views and judgments of others, seeking to drive a wedge between description and judgment. (Kushner 200 p.117)

1.2.3 Summary of the Researcher’s Role

The role of the evaluator is to encourage the participant to critically reflect upon the subtleties of their own lifeworld. It is not to force the participant to produce ‘answers’ in the presence of a hierarchical relationship. Nor is it the opportunity for the evaluator to analyze their own existential interpretations. Rather, the participant’s reflection of their own experience within the neighborhood provides residents the opportunity to evaluate their own existential context with relationship to their understanding of place. As such, the interview presents an opportunity for the researcher to peer inside a lifeworld traditionally concealed from and external interpretation. In contrast, a transparent portrayal of the data analysis provides outside perspectives the opportunity to peer inside the internal evaluation of the investigator thus, completing a full circle of shared responsibility.

1.3 Neighborhood Context

Chautauqua Park is a 60-acre residential neighborhood located in Des Moines’s Enterprise Community (Figure 1.1). North of I-235 and downtown Des Moines, this inner-city neighborhood is defined by distinct spatial boundaries (Figure 1.2). Douglas Woods and Hickman Road respectively comprise the neighborhood’s east and north boundaries while, 16th Street comprises the neighborhood’s western boundary. Finally, a pair of historic entry pillars located at the terminal point of 13th Street clearly defines Chautauqua Park as separate from the neighboring communities to the south.

1.3.1 The Enterprise Community

On December 21, 1994, President Clinton designated 105 distressed communities across the Nation as Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (HUD 2001). With the help of local residents and planning staff, census tracts 12, 49, and 50 within Des Moines were among those 105 communities to receive the designation as an Enterprise Community.
(Map 1.3). These specific tracts were selected based on indicators of a decreasing population and high rates of poverty, infant mortality, unemployment, and chemical abuse (The City of Des Moines 1994).

Figure 1.1 The Enterprise Community; Des Moines, Iowa
Figure 1.2 Chautauqua Park; Des Moines, Iowa
Figure 1.3 Census Tracts of the Enterprise Community
Source: U.S. Census Bureau
Conceptualized as a revitalization initiative, the Enterprise Community program is administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The program provides funding and technical assistance for a broad range of community development efforts including business development, human services, job training and education. Ideally, this Federal assistance helps communities “design local solutions that empower residents to participate in the revitalization of their neighborhoods” (HUD 2001a).

In Des Moines, the Enterprise Community designation translated to over three million dollars in available Federal Block Grants. Presently, this money is still being allocated across multiple projects within the community (HUD 2001b). Each proposed development project is selected and overseen by a board of local residents, planning staff, and community leaders. Therefore, to an extent, select individuals have directly participated in the revitalization of their neighborhoods. However, uniform involvement throughout the entire demographic population has been less likely.

Chautauqua Park is one of five neighborhoods included in Des Moines’s Enterprise Community. Throughout the 1970’s, Chautauqua Park experienced similar problems as the surrounding area. However, today, the “Park,” as its residents often refer to it, is largely removed from the issues that continue to encompass the surrounding neighborhoods. These issues were defined by four focus groups assembled during the Enterprise Community application process. Some examples of the twenty-three identified concerns include the large number of vacant lots, the low market value of homes, issues of public safety, and the lack of cultural and recreational activities (Iowa State University Community Development Planning Studio 2000). However, these concerns have a limited presence within the immediate boundaries of the Chautauqua Park. Therefore, it can be concluded that, to a major extent, Chautauqua Park has been identified as a part of the Enterprise Community only because its designation as part of census tract 12.

1.3.2 Demographic Data

Located within census tract 12, Chautauqua Park is comprised of seven census blocks within the 2000 block group. At the time of this thesis, 2000 demographic data from the US
Census Bureau was available for both the tract and block level. However, 2000 income data had not yet been published nor was expected to be published until after the completion of this research. As a result, this section focuses more on demographic than income data.

Chautauqua Park neighborhood is comprised of 118 total housing units with, 95% occupied as of the 2000 census (Table 1.1). This ratio is 7% higher than the average occupancy ratio for the entire Enterprise Community (Table 1.2). The majority of households in both the Enterprise Community and Chautauqua Park are classified as family households (Table 1.3 and Table 1.4). However, with only 7% of Chautauqua Park residents living alone, there are far less non-family households than the 35% average for the Enterprise Community as a whole.

According to the 2000 census data, Chautauqua Park is home for 247 total residents with a slight majority of inhabitants (51.8%) being classified as white (Table 1.5). Caucasian residents comprise 16.7% more of the Chautauqua Park population than the average for the Enterprise Community. The majority race for the Enterprise Community as a whole is typically classified as black or African American (Table 1.6). However, the distribution of black residents within Chautauqua Park is also 5.2% greater than the Enterprise Community average. Therefore, within Chautauqua Park as compared to the Enterprise Community as a whole, there presently exists a usually high concentration of a white population with few residents being classified as neither white nor black.

Finally, the age distribution of residents within Enterprise Community resembles a traditional population pyramid with only a slight deviation in the 20 to 24-age bracket (Figure 1.4). Unlike this normal distribution, Chautauqua Park’s population pyramid clearly defines three major age cohorts (Figure 1.5). The first age cohort from 0 to 18 is comprised of the children from the second age cohort. The second age cohort (22 to 64) is comprised of both the second and third generation residents living in the neighborhood. The second generation is largely a retired population where as, the third generation is composed of young families and single professionals that have moved into Chautauqua Park over the last 25 years. The final age cohort comprised 66 to 85 and older individuals are first generation residents, aging in place.
Table 1.1 Housing Occupancy of Chautauqua Park

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Household Units</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Housing Units</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household size</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Statistics

Table 1.2 Housing Occupancy of the Enterprise Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract 12</th>
<th>Tract 49</th>
<th>Tract 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Housing Units</td>
<td>1,136</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>1,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied Housing Units</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1,254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant Housing Units</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Household size</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Statistics

Table 1.3 Chautauqua Park Households by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Households</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Family Households</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Statistics

Table 1.4 Enterprise Community Households by Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract 12</th>
<th>Tract 49</th>
<th>Tract 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>3,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Households</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>1,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Family Households</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>1,089</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Statistics
Table 1.5 Population of Chautauqua Park by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Statistics

Table 1.6 Population of the Enterprise Community by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract 12</th>
<th>Tract 49</th>
<th>Tract 50</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>3,149</td>
<td>2,128</td>
<td>4,043</td>
<td>9,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>964</td>
<td>1,103</td>
<td>1,204</td>
<td>3,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>1,553</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>1,605</td>
<td>3,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>1,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 Statistics

Table 1.7 Enterprise Community Income Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tract 12</th>
<th>Tract 49</th>
<th>Tract 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income (dollars)</td>
<td>29,554</td>
<td>17,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income (dollars)</td>
<td>34,688</td>
<td>20,093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Non-family Household Income (dollars)</td>
<td>27,679</td>
<td>14,395</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per capita Income (dollars)</td>
<td>12,567</td>
<td>10,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Families</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Poverty Level</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Source: US Census Bureau, 1990 Statistics
Figure 1.4 Population Pyramid of the Enterprise Community

Figure 1.5 Population Pyramid of Chautauqua Park
The income data from the 1990 US census was limited to the census tract level. As a result, this somewhat dated and generalized data is presented here only to display general trends as opposed to, contemporary realities.

In general, census tract 12, which includes the Chautauqua Park neighborhood, has greater median incomes than the median incomes of the remaining two census tracts in the Enterprise Community (Table 1.7). The per capita income of census tract 12 is also higher than tracts 49 and 50. Accordingly, census tract 12 also has fewer families below the poverty level as compared to the remaining tracts. This relationship begins to indicate that census tract 12, which includes Chautauqua Park, has contained greater collective wealth than the immediate surrounding communities over the last decade.

1.3.3 Neighborhood Character

Originally marketed as a “distinctive home community” during the 1920’s, Chautauqua Park was developed as an early automobile suburb of Des Moines (Clarke 1922). With 82 percent of housing built between World War I and World War II, the neighborhood character is defined in part, by its high degree of architectural continuity (Long 1989). Common design elements include material, scale, and massing. However, the predominance of “Beaverdale Brick” homes, a Tudor Revival architectural style, contributes largely to the cohesive appearance of the neighborhood (Long 1989).

Chautauqua Park’s distinctive character is also defined in part, by the site’s unique topography. Designed by local Landscape Architect L. Earl Fogleston, the curvilinear street layout was adapted to the rolling topography of the site. Propped above the surrounding neighborhoods, the setting was marketed as “safe from the encroachment of business houses and undesirable improvements” (Clarke 1922). The overall effect of the harmonious integration of street layout and topography results in a distinct feeling of arrival. The landscape rises sharply at each entrance, while the lanes wind through the district (Long 1989).

Winding driveways were laid out in Chautauqua Park to follow the natural contours of the rolling land; and the entire plan of development was drawn with due regard to the unusual natural advantages. (Clarke 1922 p. 3)
The site was also consciously designed to take advantage of the existing vegetation. As a heavily wooded knoll, every effort was taken throughout its history to preserve the dense Oak canopy. The lofty overhead canopy defines a human scale and a native landscape that is uncommon throughout many Iowa communities. As a result, the entrance into this dense canopy, again reinforces a feeling of arrival in a define space.

Here shaded driveways wind in and out among the hills and dells. Stately old trees cast welcoming shadows. The air is fragrant, invigorating. Cool breezes blow. Birds sing. It is a perfect setting for a home. (Clarke 1922 p. 3)

The lack of sidewalks and a variety of lot shapes and sizes further contributes to the character of the neighborhood. As a design concept, a minimum use of pavement was implemented throughout the neighborhood for “additional space to be devoted to planting and street embellishment” (Clarke 1922). Along the pavement, 25-foot wide lots were plotted to allow original buyers to “fix the size of their homestead” (Clarke 1922). However, two lots were required as a minimum to construct a home. The overall result is a sense of variety among individual parcels however; each is tied together by the consistent qualities of the space.

The result is a residential subdivision of serpentine drives in which the artistic and the practical have been blended and where every effort has been made to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape. (Clarke 1922 p. 3)

A final defining characteristic of the neighborhood is its context within the City of Des Moines. Located south of a bend in the Des Moines River and just minutes north of the downtown district, early development of the site rested on foundational real estate principles of ‘location.’ Advertised as an “eight minute commute to the business district,” and within close proximity of the recreational opportunities of the river, Chautauqua Park is centrally located within the city. More importantly, combined with the site’s defining characteristics, the neighborhood remains a natural oasis within a sea of development. Therefore, as a result of conscious design taking into account the native environmental qualities of the site,
Chautauqua Park to this day, displays a unique uniform neighborhood character throughout the site.

In conclusion, I would like to say that I know of no such piece of beautiful ground form in this or any other city lending itself so beautifully for subdivision purposes, lying so close to the heart of the city. Besides being most advantageously placed to our business center, it has means of most ready access to our boulevard system, our amusement centers, and to our greatest beauty asset, the Des Moines River. (Foglesong, Landscape Architect in Clarke 1922 p.9)

1.3.4 Neighborhood History

Originally a Chautauqua assembly grounds before the turn of the twentieth century, the site now known as Chautauqua Park had a history as a community gathering spot post-European settlement. Prominent speakers of the day, such as Senator Robert La Follette and black leader Booker T. Washington, would lecture from a central pavilion located on present day Nash Drive (Long 1989). However, around the turn of the century, the former Des Moines University purchased the site for a new college campus.

Financial problems later forced the university to sell the land for a residential subdivision. As a result, in 1923 L. Earl Foglesong developed a site plan for Chautauqua Park as a “unique subdivision of winding driveways and other beautifying elements” (Clarke 1922). At the time, Foglesong was the State Landscape Architect and responsible for such projects as the State Capital Grounds (Long 1989).

In the design, Foglesong stressed a central principle of “convenience of access” in response to the developing primacy of the automobile as the central means of transportation (Clarke 1922). The result was a winding street layout that took full advantage of the natural rolling topography (Figure 1.6). The existing ‘boulevard system’ easily accessed individual home sites and the neighborhood itself. To this day, many of the homes within Chautauqua Park include an attached garage as a central feature of the architecture.

A second design concept reflected imaginative principles of marketing. Parcels were laid out only 25 feet wide while, development restrictions required buyers to purchase at least two parcels to construct a home. However, the flexibility of the lots allowed buyers to select the size of their final holding.
Although the initial the auction for the sites lasted from July 17th to the 21st, all parcels were not sold until 1926 (Long 1989). Most buyers bought two or three lots. However, some developers invested more heavily. By 1925, seven total houses had already been constructed with 22 additional housing units dating before 1930 (Long 1989). The depression of the 1930’s slowed development throughout the nation and Chautauqua Park as well. Development did not rebound until 1938 at which time, Federal programs helped to encourage the construction of 51 additional homes. In total, 90 of the present 118 homes had been constructed throughout Chautauqua Park in between the World Wars.

The majority of Chautauqua residents throughout the 1920’s and 1930’s were middle level white-collar workers and businessmen who would travel along 13th Street to the downtown district. Seven Chautauqua Park residents were listed in a 1929 “Who’s Who in Des Moines” (Long 1989). This is an especially significant number being that only 27
houses had been constructed at that point. However, Chautauqua Park did have a dark history of restrictive covenants that prohibited ‘Blacks and Jews’ from living in the neighborhood. It was not until Archie Alexander, a nationally recognized black engineer, challenged the covenant in 1944 that such discrimination was found to be illegal.

1.3.41 History of Suburban Development in Des Moines

Between the World Wars, Des Moines experienced a housing shortage that developers rushed to meet. However, unlike previous development efforts, new housing developments were no longer linked to the central business district by streetcars and interurban routes (Long 1989). Rather, immediate proximity to the central businesses district became far less desirable due to the emergence of the automobile and the contemporary pollution of the city. As a result, housing developments in Des Moines proliferated across the northern and western limits of the city, especially at terminal points of thoroughfares (Long 1989). Almost overnight, new suburban development spawned the ‘American Dream’ of owning a single-family house.

Chautauqua Park represents a single attempt by developers and designers alike to fulfill the American Dream within Des Moines. In reality, there exist several distinctly designed automobile suburbs within the city limits (Figure 1.7). However, Chautauqua Park is the only automobile suburb within Des Moines designated as a National Historic District. Due to the intact design elements and characteristic features, the neighborhood was recognized in two categories, community planning and development, and Landscape Architecture and Architecture.

1.3.42 Contemporary History

The construction of MacVicar Freeway (1958-1968), Interstate 235, severed many neighborhoods from the central business district of Des Moines. The ensuing physical isolation within these neighborhoods perpetuated a downward economic and social spiral (The City of Des Moines 1994). These problems, compounded by a lack of affordable

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10 With the help of Barbara Long, the Chautauqua Park Neighborhood Association submitted nomination papers for Chautauqua Park in 1989. National recognition was received in March of 1990 (City of Des Moines Planning Department 1990).
housing and an increasing demand for rental housing, as mentioned earlier, enabled the City of Des Moines to nominate three census tracts for federal designation as an Enterprise Community.

Figure 1.7 Survey of Historic Suburban Development between 1927 and 1957 in Des Moines, Iowa. Source: (Long 1989)

The surrounding economic and population decline of the area directly affected Chautauqua Park. In the late 1960's and early 1970's many of the homes within Chautauqua Park were renter occupied with even more experiencing break-ins and property damaged. However, long before the collaborative efforts of the city, Chautauqua Park, assembled a neighborhood organization (founded in 1984) in an attempt to "take back the neighborhood." Throughout the 1980's, public and private reinvestment back into the neighborhood reinvigorated the physical and social environment. This reinvestment brought with it
unparalleled diversity and community health. As a result, both housing conditions and neighborhood infrastructure were improved within a context of strong social cohesion.

Today, Chautauqua Park is a distinguished neighborhood represented by a diverse middle class located within Des Moines’s intercity. The community’s rich history, the location’s exceptional physical features, and the embedded environmental attributes of the neighborhood unquestionably demonstrate unique qualities of place within the Enterprise Community of Des Moines.

1.3.43 History of Neighborhood Associations within Chautauqua Park

The history of Chautauqua Park is not limited to the ongoing development of its physical characteristics. Strong social capital has also played a vital role in the development of the community.

In the late 1920’s, residents assembled the first association then known, as the Chautauqua Park Improvement League. Members worked for the creation of a park along the proposed riverfront boulevard. They also collected funds for the construction of the historic entry post located on the 13th Street entrance. The group remained active until 1944, at which time, they attempted to bar Archie Alexander from purchasing a house in the district (Long 1989).

As mentioned earlier, the modern neighborhood association was founded in 1984. Throughout the 1980’s and early 1990’s the association worked both with neighbors and city planning staff in attempts to beautify the neighborhood. As a result, the association was able to “clean-up” the debris littered within Douglas Park, have the streets re-paved, and have a single dilapidated structure removed. Assuming, that homeowners take greater pride in their property, the association also worked to remove renters, especially those engaging in less than desirable activities, from the neighborhood.

Today, due to neighborhood beautification projects guided by the neighborhood association, the physical quality of the neighborhood has largely been improved. In addition, association attempts to “take back the neighborhood,” by increasing communication levels

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11 Much of the contemporary work of the neighborhood association is un-documented. It is presented here as lived experience within the neighborhood, documented throughout the interviews with residents.
among neighbors, has created a safer environment. Neighbors' of Chautauqua Park no longer experience the routine criminal activities of the 1980's.\textsuperscript{12} And, there exists once again an overwhelming sense of pride among the residents. However, because the neighborhood is quite environmentally and socially pleasing and the neighborhood is currently experiencing a relative lack of problems or issues, interest in the association has dropped-off. As a result, the association today, largely functions as an organization planning neighborhood gatherings and disseminating information. The association is less involved in directly dealing with environmental concerns or neighborhood problems.

\textsuperscript{12} The decreased amount of criminal activity was suggested throughout the interviews. This statement is not based on actual reported criminal statistics.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Background and Literature Selection

Over the spring and fall semesters of 2000 and 2001, three primary indexes were used to guide the literature investigation on sense of place research. These indexes included the Social Science Citation Index, the Avery Index, and the Iowa State University General Database. Both the Social Science and Avery Index represented a distinct disciplinary focus within journal publications, while the ISU database represented a trans-disciplinary reference to published texts held by the University. These results were cross-referenced with a larger overarching general index of journal publications at www.carl.org. Finally, the Dissertation Index was referenced to compile a contemporary list of similar academic research.

The findings were overwhelming. Over the last three decades, sense of place has been a topic of academic interest among numerous disciplines including geography, historic preservation, the social sciences, and the allied art and design professions. The resulting body of knowledge demonstrates the development of a widely accepted but poorly defined social construct with multiple interpretations and varying understandings. Similar broad understandings of sense of place often resonate beyond academic camps. As a result, I felt that it was necessary to focus on the primary sources, largely found within the geography discipline, to accomplish a literature review in an efficient manner. However, my work draws on many references that do cross discipline boundaries to gain a fuller understanding of all interpretations.

2.2 Sense of Place Literature

Humanistic geography, up to 1976, was a reaction to the excess of the quantitative revolution. Tuan (1971, 1974) and Relph (1976) were pioneers in the field critiquing solely positivistic science as an inappropriate paradigm for the study of people/place relationships. Tuan (1971) organized the findings of the existing detailed studies of people/place
relationships into two academic camps. The first camp, ‘environmentalism,’ was described as the world of objects, which studies and attempts to define lawful (generalized) relationships between physical nature and man. The second camp, ‘existentialism,’ was described as the world of purposeful beings in which reality is understood through the subjective interpretations of man. This second perspective helped frame initial geographic interpretations of sense of place within a context of qualitative research.

Analytical thought has transformed our physical and social environment. Evidences of its power are everywhere. We are so impressed that to us ‘knowing’ is practically identical with ‘knowing about,’ and Lord Kelvin has gone so far as to say that we do not really know anything unless we can measure it. …What we cannot say in an acceptable scientific language we tend to deny or forget. (Tuan 1977 p. 200)

Like Tuan, Relph (1976) draws out the distinction between inappropriate scientific investigations of place and a more holistic approach. Later termed ‘environmental humility’ as opposed to humanistic geography, Relph (1981) defines his conceptual approach as "respecting what there is in the world and seeking to protect it and even enhance it with out denying its essential character or right of existence” (pp. 19). Additional authors (Fried 1963 and Jacobs 1961) outside of geography were drawing similar conclusions that reinforced the importance of ‘lived experience’ in our understanding of reality and place. However, as a distinction, many of the geographic authors within this era depicted phenomenology as an appropriate philosophical perspective to describe this “world of intentionality and meaning” (Tuan 1971). As a result, humanistic geographers contended that a phenomenological approach was an appropriate method in the investigation of place and environmental behavior. (e.g. Relph 1970, 1976, Seamon 1987, and Tuan 1971).

If geography is thought to be concerned primarily with the development of “objective” laws and theories, the criticisms of phenomenology, at least, should not be ignored. But if geography is thought to be concerned in some way with understanding man on the human level, then the concepts and methods of phenomenology have much to offer. (Relph 1970 p. 199)

Throughout much of the geography literature, we begin to see sense of place develop as a foundational concept embedded within a humanistic understanding of the world. “An
authentic sense of place is above all that of being inside and belonging to your place both as
an individual and as a member of a community, and to know this without reflecting upon it”
(Relph 1976 p. 65). Tuan’s (1981) definition of sense of place contrasts Relph’s, in that
‘rootedness’ is envisioned as distinct from a community’s sense of place. Rootedness is a
state of being in which one is proud of their own past. This multigenerational state of being
can only be constructed over time in a single native place. Thus, a sense of stability (and
knowledge) is the direct result of the familiarity of long residence. This rooted experience is
conceptually distinct from a sense of place, which Tuan (1981) describes as more of an
awareness, achieved through distancing ones self from the context in order to appreciate the
place.

In some respects this [humanistic] approach has more in common with the arts and
humanities than it does with social sciences. This is because humanistic geographers
want to get at the core and essence of the people/place relationship, its heart and soul,
and its sense of place. (Hay 1988 p.160)

Although the literature of this decade established a foundational understanding of
sense of place, much of the work of the 1970’s had been developed around expert-centered
models of investigation and restricted perspectives. Personal insights based on the
researcher’s individual experience and reflections produced little more than external
explanations of an existential phenomenon from a single perspective. Within this
framework, humanistic geographers began to describe concepts of place and placelessness
(environmental experiences as related to physical design), landscapes of home (place as
related to local distinctiveness), and sense of place (distinctiveness as related to intrinsic
values) (e.g. Relph 1976, Sopher 1979, and Lewis 1979). Even though this period of
writings recognized qualitative aspects of place, these normative arguments were largely
based on limited approaches and a privileged research position.

Most humanistic research has been conducted using a limited [subjective,
anthropocentric] approach. Fieldwork was rare and insights were gained through
personal reflection, examinations of artist’s works, and literature reviews. However,
today some researchers are beginning to compensate for these deficiencies. (Hay
1988 p.160)
Humanistic research of sense of place continued into the 1980’s. However, sense of place authors of this decade began to exploit empirical methods of positivistic science to justify their work outside of a humanistic understanding. The most notable, John Eyles (1985), blended a phenomenological approach and critical interpretation with empirical surveys as “proof” for the existence of a structural process.

An individualistic explanation of sense of place is not being suggested. Sense of place becomes manifested at the level of the individual, and individual senses of place vary and are a product of a unique mixture of location, personal characteristics, circumstances, place-in-the-world and place in the social and economic orders. (Eyles 1985 p.137)

Based on this understanding, Eyles presents “the place-identity-material existence relation” as the consistent mechanism that determines an individual’s sense of place. Within this consistent process, place is weighted less than material-existence and identity-in-place as influential factors. However, in the end, the author proposes that sense of place, itself is simply a mechanism which, helps individuals better deal with the complexity of the world. However, this form of quasi-quantitative analysis, used to explain people’s behavior, does not contribute much to an understanding of the meaning of the experience of living in place (Hay 1988). Rather, it attempts to generalize the complex reality of individual ‘lifeworlds’ by reducing lived experience to a series of quantifiable events.

Not all authors of sense of place research during the 1980’s were attempting to use generalized theory and quasi-quantitative methodologies to justify their work. During the late half of the 1980’s, David Seamon (1985, 1989), Francis Violich (1985) and Gerald Pocius (1991) began to more closely explore phenomenological perspectives as the theoretical and methodological basis for the exploration and examination of ‘genius loci.’ However, the methodologies employed during this time period still largely remained focused on the interpretations of a single identifiable ‘expert’ in a tradition of first-person phenomenology. (e.g. Violich’s 1985 reading of Sutivan, Seamon’s 1990 use of pattern language, Pocius’s 1991 ethnographic interpretation of everyday space in Calvert, and Chaffin’s 1989 interpretations of the Isle of Brevelle)
As a single example of a first-person phenomenological approach, Violich (1985) concluded that by ‘reading’ the landscape, an individual could find a “lively and nourishing starting point for understanding sense of place.” Specifically, the author defined Sutivan’s sense of place as “deriving from its own particular structural pattern of major and minor circulation routes, their relationship to the varying human activity centers and the contrast between the components as well as, the way these set in a frame of landscape and seafront” (Violich 1985 p. 58). Characteristic of first-person phenomenology, this definition was largely centered on the researcher’s own interpretations of place, as opposed the experiences of residents within the community. However, authors of this period did lay the groundwork for phenomenological research of sense of place by employing practical methods within a research context of phenomenology.

In contrast, other phenomenological studies, within this timeframe, employed an existential approach throughout their research of environmental behavior and place (e.g. Million’s 1992 study of displacement, Nogue’i Font’s 1993 investigation of landscape, and Seamon’s 1979 geographic interpretation of the lifeworld). Broadly termed existential-phenomenological research, this approach investigates specific experiences of specific individuals and groups involved in actual situations (Seamon 2000). As a result, this type of phenomenological approach no longer centers largely on the experience of the researcher within the studied situation. Rather, it attempts to balance the researcher’s own interpretations with that of the participant’s.

By acknowledging multiple experiences of the studied phenomenon and balancing those experiences with the researcher’s own experience, the works of Million, Nogue’i Font, and Seamon provided a hermeneutic foundation for this research. As such, these works and specifically their existential-phenomenological approaches will be discussed in greater detail in the final section of this chapter as precedents for my investigation of sense of place.

The beginning of the 1990’s marked the vast acceptance of sense of place as a concept, however its definition varied across disciplines and associated paradigms. Blurred by the multiple interpretations, two primary perspectives seemed to dominate the literature both inside and outside of geography. In the first understanding, held by phenomenologists, postmodernists and environmentalists alike, sense of place is largely aesthetic, referring back
to conceptions of a 'genius loci' - a landscape that can be directly experienced, intimately known, and passionately loved (Lewis 1979). From this perspective, sense of place is conceptualized as a connection with the local environment, (Hough 1990) a quantifiable measurement of sustainability (Stedman 1999), a regional typology (Kelbaugh 1997), and meaning associated with physical features (Green 1999).

At the center of all of these interpretations is a focus on the physical setting. In “Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture,” Norberg-Schulz (1980) argued that sense of place, defined within a context of genius loci, is the capacity of a physical setting to constitute itself in comprehensible way. The author implies that an inherent and reciprocal relationship between the built and un-built landscape guides our understanding of place. Other than the actual physical construction, social activity is never taken into account.

From the second perspective, sense of place is envisioned as more of a holistic, humanistic geographic phenomenon, equally influenced by the activities of people and the physical setting (e.g. Lamb 1993, Jackson 1994, and Hay 1998a, 1998b). As a result, many of these interpretations of sense of place focus largely on the social aspects of place while acknowledging the physical setting within a defined landscape context.

From my earliest days as a journalist, I have been drawn not to the cities or the to the rich and powerful, but to the towns and ranches and factories where everyday Americans are living everyday lives. I feel at ease with these people. They have taught me about courage and stamina and tradition. From them I have learned the meaning of place – where you belong and not necessarily where you are. When I asked Red Garretson, Wyoming’s chief brand inspector, why he wore the working clothes of the range – Stetson, jeans and boots – and kept his .45 revolver tucked out of sight in his Chevy pickup, he explained: ‘In these parts, you knock on a man’s door wearing a uniform and carrying a gun, and, oh, sure he’ll give you respect, but you’ll do your talking on his doorstep. You won’t get invited in to eat his wife’s pie at the kitchen table and you won’t really find out what’s going on like you have to in this job.’ In that brief reply Garretson defined, I think, the essence of place as eloquently as a poet.” (Lamb 1993 p. 7)

Like the journalistic efforts of David Lamb, the qualitative writings of J.B. Jackson interpret ordinary landscapes from the ‘inside’ and focus on lived experience. Within these interpretations, Jackson identified three qualities of a sense of place as essential elements; the lively awareness of the familiar environment, ritual repetition that reinforces the conception
of place, and a sense of fellowship based on a shared experience (Jackson 1994). As a result, Jackson contends that a sense of place is something we ourselves create over the course of time. "So in the long run it is that recurrence of certain days, certain seasons that eventually produces those spaces and structures we now think so essential." (Jackson 1994 p.162)

Similar holistic perspectives, which began to account for both the activities of humans and the physical setting in the development people/place relationships, stemmed from the environmental social sciences. As a whole, this body of research emphasizes the dynamic nature of people's relationships to places including, the often overlooked negative and ambivalent responses (Manzo undated). However, this body of knowledge largely centers on concepts of place attachment (emotional responses to place), as opposed to, sense of place as a distinctive experience in and of itself.

In the midst of the attempts to define sense of place, Robert Hay (1988) tries to 'make up for' the perceived deficiencies of individual centered humanism by blending personal descriptions and statistical analysis. Based on this blended approach, Hay proposes a composite theory of sense of place. "It (sense of place) is an individually based, but group informed, localized, personal means of relating to the world, transforming mere space into personal place. Together with people's feelings for their homeland, the aforementioned factors (intimate knowledge, insideness (the subconsciously familiar), social belonging, rootedness, bondedness, and cultural structures) combine to form sense of place which mirror particular place settings and societies in certain eras of time." (Hay 1988 p. 160-161)

Among Banks Peninsula communities, both Maori and Pakeha, everyday forms of rootedness are important toward developing a rooted sense of place. In a general sense, utilizing rooted as a descriptor with 'sense of place' helps provide an orientation that emphasizes place more than sensing; hence the term becomes more geographic than aesthetic. The Maori remind us of the importance of community and ties to the land that continue over many generations, extending to ethical relationships with nature that has supported them. (Hay 1998b p. 263)

Hay's definition of a rooted sense of place contrasts Tuan's earlier observations of the conceptual division between the two concepts. Sense of place is understood as including both sensing and bonding elements, the later of which is deepened by a rooted experience, more typical of indigenous cultures. Hay (1998b) concludes, based on his interpretation of a
tribal culture's relationship with the land, that a rooted sense of place could provide the foundation for a more sustainable society. However, the author's focus remains centered on individual interaction with the landscape, as opposed to, the diversity and intensity of 'lived-experience' within a landscape.

2.2.1 Core Findings
Throughout its history, sense of place research has been largely an attempt to define the concept, outside of holistic or interpretive paradigms. Generally, these attempts have focused on the aesthetic concepts or spatial understandings of 'genius loci.' This narrow focus rarely considers the impact of social activities on residential experiences of sense of place.

Alternative studies of sense of place have included both the impact of the physical environment and human activities throughout their developed understanding of the construct. However, many of these humanistic studies remained centered on the experiences of the researcher as opposed the multiple experiences of other inhabitants.

In an attempt to understand the interpretations and experiences of place from multiple perspectives, existential phenomenological approaches begin to move away from the tradition of 'researcher-centered' investigation while evaluating both the physical and human dimensions of place. As a result, this body of literature presents a pragmatic foundation aligned with the participatory concepts of the present study from which this investigation of sense of place can stem.

2.3 Existential-phenomenological Studies of Place
This section presents three specific existential phenomenological approaches as precedents for this research. These studies include Million's (1992) investigation of involuntary displacement, Nogue's (1993) investigation of landscape, and Seamon's (1979) geographic interpretation of the lifeworld. All three studies center on investigations of multiple experiences within a defined spatial context. However, before proceeding, it is important to note the phenomenological conceptions of place as foundational assumptions within all three studies.
From a phenomenological perspective, place is understood as composed of three elements. These elements include, the 'physical setting', the 'human activity' within the setting, and the 'meaning' ascribed to the setting and activity (Relph 1976). However, within the phenomenological context of human intentionality\(^2\), 'meaning' is embedded within the dimensions of 'activity' and 'setting' (Million 1992). Furthermore, the separation of activity from the setting is only a means of managing discussion. It is not conceived as an actual empirical division between objects and everyday experience. Therefore, in any phenomenological study of place it is important that place is understood as a "constituted totality" (Million 1992).

Based on this foundational understanding of place, Million (1992) presented a phenomenology of place and involuntary displacement as illustrated through the experience of 18 individuals in Southwestern Alberta. Through a process of experiencing the landscape, interviewing residents, and writing, the author uncovered several themes and structures involved in 'building-place' and 'being-in-place.' Million concluded that 'existential insideness,' or 'being-in-place' emerged through such structures as habit, journey, and time. This concept of insideness, or belonging to a lifeworld also evolved the composite themes of the physical and human setting. Central to the concept of the human setting was the idea of 'building-place,' which involved activities of 'work-in,' 'pleasure-in,' 'name-in,' and 'living-within' a particular geographic setting. As a result, for the participants of this study, these structures emerged as interdependent constituents of human activity associated with a defined spatial location that develop out of an ontological human need\(^3\) (Million 1992).

Consequently, the most that we can conclude is that place, although it may in part emerge by way of empirical distinctions such as legal ownership, daily living-with, or being born and raised within, does not necessarily enjoy a one to one correspondence with any one or a combination of empirical distinctions. Place embodies the qualitative, or experiential, dimension of a physical setting, which, before all else and

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\(^2\) Husserl's *intentionality of consciousness* unifies objective and subjective states of being into a single subjective reality. This inherent, subjective relationship, like that of peoples' relationship with the world, cannot be separated (Moustakas 1994).

\(^3\) An ontological need is defined as something that is essential to being human yet shows itself with no specific end (e.g. being at home and being loved). Therefore, Million's claim is that place emerges out of an essential and continual human need. (Million 1992)
like any lived phenomenon, presents itself to us as a matter of the heart. (Million 1992 p.101)

Nogue’i Font (1993) followed a similar existential phenomenological approach in her investigation of landscape. The author’s specific method involved a ‘joint exploration’ of first-hand and intersubjective experiences of twenty participants within the Garrotxa region of Spain. However, in contrast to Million’s (1992) research, this investigation compared experiences and interpretations of the landscape across two separate groups of residents.

In her findings, the author concluded that there exist two separate but non-exclusive phenomenologies of landscape. In the first finding, the phenomenology of landscape was understood as particular to individual and group experiences. The second broader understanding of the region, centered on a phenomenology of landscape in its own right. In this second understanding, five largely spatial themes were presented as taken-for-granted elements of the participant’s lifeworld. However, all of the existential themes, both particular and common among the groups, were identified as ‘inside’ experiences that give meaning to the landscape for the participants of the study (Nogue’i Font 1993).

As the above interpretation illustrates, the experience of the Garrotxa landscape is in some ways different for farmers and painters. There are, however, certain environmental qualities and experiences of Garrotxa that are shared, and these similarities indicate that a phenomenology of landscape in its own right exists. (Nogue’i Font 1993 p.178)

The final precedent study, Seamon’s (1979) phenomenological investigation of the lifeworld, also employed an existential approach. The author’s research was guided by several intersubjective conversations with participants of three focus groups. Throughout these conversations, three themes or “parts” presented themselves as essential elements of everyday environmental experience. These elements included concepts of movement, rest, and encounter, which, Seamon proposed, could be conceptualized within ‘triads of openness and habituality.’

Outside of the direct intersubjective investigation, Seamon also argued that Jacobs’ (1961) concept of a ‘place ballet’ provides a foundation from which individuals could begin to understand the temporal and spatial dimensions of the proposed ‘triad of habituality.’ In
short, the study of ‘place ballets’ enables internal and external investigations of place to recognize the inherent order of ‘people-in-place’ as human existence grounded in an environment (Seamon 1979). Therefore, it can be drawn from this discussion that an existential phenomenological investigation of environmental experience and place represents an appropriate tool for the evaluation of ‘inside habituality,’ or the taken-for-granted experiences associated with given locations.

...such an understanding (of the person-place bond), provides a tool whereby environmental designers and policy makers might discover a new perspective and approach for tackling projects and plans for specific places and environments. (Seamon 1979 p.10)

2.3.1 Conclusions

These three studies begin to provide a methodological framework from which this existential phenomenological investigation of sense of place can stem. Specifically, Million’s (1992) work supports Hay’s (1998) definition of sense of place as a process of transformation, ingrained within the human activity and the physical setting of a given location. In addition, Nogue’ i Font’s (1993) study of landscape demonstrates that there exists common threads throughout these existential experiences of place which are embedded within the lifeworlds of the participants. Thus, existential dimensions of place can be understood across the multiple descriptive accounts of spatial experiences within a given locale. Finally, Seamon’s (1979) investigation of environmental experiences reinforces that an existential phenomenological approach is an appropriate tool to investigate spatial experiences embedded within individual lifeworlds.

In sum, this research is an attempt to understand sense of place as a distinct environmental experience embedded within an experiential realm of bodily and sensory contacts (Seamon 1987). It is not an attempt to decipher conceptual dimensions of place (the perceptual realm) or the emotional responses humans have to place (the emotional realm). Rather, sense of place is understood as a process in which space evolves into place. And at this point, this process is best understood as involving the accumulation of human sentiment over time (Tuan 1977) and aspects of intimate knowledge, insideness, social belonging, rootedness, bondedness, and cultural structures (Hay 1988).
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research is a multi-disciplinary term that includes a wide array of approaches and paradigms concerned with multiple ways of knowing. For the context of this study, qualitative research is defined as a humanistic commitment to the study of the social world, from the perspective of the interacting individual (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). As such, phenomenology is a single methodological approach that has been placed in this larger rubric of qualitative research (Creswell 1998, Low 1987, and Seamon 2000).

3.1.1 Humanistic Foundations

During the late sixties, a movement towards the rediscovery of humanistic principles in both the social sciences and geography began to question traditional positivistic perspectives. The context of that rediscovery was broadly critical and formulated an epistemology comprised of three characteristics. The first characteristic, anthropocentrism, contends that all actions and facts contain a subjective meaning. The second principle calls for a holistic perspective in which any study must recognize its existing context. And finally, reflectivism, an obligation of the researcher to ethically evaluate themselves and their involvement, was presented as a third characteristic of a humanistic perspective (Samuels 1995).

Within this critical framework, landscape, as geographical concept, was redefined as a construct of the mind that can be viewed both vertically and from the side (Tuan 1979). The vertical perspective was understood as the quantifiable abstraction of the physical domain or natural system. Whereas, within a horizontal perspective, the landscape is perceived as the space in which people act. Focused on the moral aesthetic and the symbolic representation of social interaction, this humanistic perspective began to require alternative methods of landscape investigation (Tuan 1979).

Many of the humanistic geographers within this era depicted phenomenology as an appropriate philosophical perspective to describe the “world of intentionality and meaning” (Tuan 1971). This group of authors contended that a phenomenological approach was an
appropriate method in the investigation of place and environmental behavior if, geographic research was concerned with understanding man on a human level. (e.g. Relph 1970, 1976, Seamon 1987, and Tuan 1971). More importantly, Seamon contended that a phenomenological understanding of the "person-place bond provides a tool whereby environmental designers and policy makers might discover a new perspective and approach for tackling projects and plans for specific places and environments" (Seamon 1979 p.10).

3.1.2 Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology is a term that originated more than three centuries ago. Throughout its history the meaning of the term has been subject to many interpretations. However, the so-called phenomenological movement of the twentieth century grew out of the ideas of a single man, Edmund Husserl, (Spiegelberg 1975). Termed transcendental phenomenology, Husserl’s philosophical writings spawned multiple interpretations and alternative phenomenological perspectives. However, for the context of this research phenomenology is defined simply as a “philosophical perspective, which suspends, in so far as this is possible, the presuppositions and methods of official science in order to describe the world as the world of intentionality and meaning” (Tuan 1971).

Within the context of environmental design and behavior, Seamon (2000) describes phenomenology as a “way of knowing that seeks to describe the underlying, essential qualities of human experience and the world in which that experience happens” (Seamon 2000 p.158). The researcher relies on their own experiences and descriptions of other individual’s experiences with the object of study as the foundational ‘data.’ These existential descriptions are not the goal of the research. Rather, they simply represent a starting point for the investigation. The aim of phenomenology is to discover the underlying commonalities that mark the essential core of the object of investigation (Seamon 2000). As such, the essence of phenomenon can be conceptualized as the common threads that present themselves across the multiple descriptions of human experience.

A phenomenological approach is initially concern with understanding an experience from all possible perspectives. As such, the approach respects multiple interpretations and understandings of the object of study. However, ultimately a phenomenological approach is
centered on presenting the collective elements of the descriptive accounts that are shared across the experiences of the participants. It is important to note that the goal of phenomenology is to decipher the threads of coherence among individual experiences and not the plurality of interpretations.

3.1.3 Phenomenological Assumptions

In “A Way of Seeing People and Place,” Seamon (2000) describes two foundational assumptions as distinguishing characteristics of a phenomenological approach. The first assumption centers on conceptions of man’s relationship with the world. The second assumption depicts how this relationship between person and world is to be studied.

From a phenomenological perspective, every phenomenon is understood as being comprised of both physical characteristics and psychological characteristics. Even though each set of characteristics can be conceptualized as distinct, Husserl’s intentionality of consciousness\(^1\) unifies the two states of being into a single subjective reality. This inherent relationship thus defines reality as a subjective matrix of human experiences (Moustakas 1994).

Based on these conceptions of intentionality, Heidegger argued that individuals could not be conceptualized as separate from their world. Rather, they are intimately caught up in it and continually immersed within it. This interdependent relationship labeled ‘being-in-the-world’ is a central assumption of existential phenomenology. As such, this philosophical perspective contrasts any traditional subject-object dichotomy, which conceptualizes man in a separate and directional relationship with his or her environment. (Seamon 2000)

Labeled ‘radical empiricism,’ the second assumption of a phenomenological approach centers on the researcher’s relationship to the object of study. In direct contrast to traditional hypothesis testing, a phenomenological understanding arises from the researcher’s personal sensibility and awareness of the phenomenon. As a result, this defining characteristic requires that the researcher experiences the object of study as directly as possible (Seamon 2000).

\(^{1}\) Husserl’s Intentionality of consciousness refers to a central assumption that human consciousness is always oriented toward the world of emergent meaning. Thus, experiences can be studied based on their appearance to consciousness as identifiable objects (von Eckartsberg 1998).
2000). Therefore, within the context of this research, open-ended interviews present themselves as a single, appropriate method of phenomenological investigation.

### 3.1.4 Existential-phenomenology

Centered on the philosophical frameworks of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, existential-phenomenology refers to a particular method of phenomenological investigation and philosophical perspective (Seamon 2000). As an approach, existential-phenomenology represents a method for the reflective analysis of individual experience in order to interpret the essence of the phenomenon being studied. The aim of an existential approach is "to determine what the experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it" (Moustakas 1994 p.13). From these individual descriptions, meanings are derived on an individual basis and later analyzed for their unifying features.

Also termed empirical-phenomenology (Moustakas 1994), this form of investigation focuses on the specific experiences of individuals and groups involved in actual situations (Seamon 2000). Like any interpretative analysis, existential-phenomenology wishes to arrive at an understanding of what the phenomenon is, as lived human meaning (structure) and how it is experienced within a everyday context (style) (von Eckartsberg 1998).

A central assumption of an existential-phenomenological approach centers on the idea "that there is a certain equivalence of meaning for the respondents whose experience the researcher’s probes" (Seamon 2000 p.166). As a result, participants are required to have experienced the object of study and are able to clearly express themselves. Procedurally, these requirements translate into a non-random sample whereas; participants are intentionally selected for their experiences and ability to articulate the subject matter (Seamon 2000).

Based on this central assumption, broad sets of procedures have been identified within an existential-phenomenological approach. These include: identifying the phenomenon, gathering descriptive accounts, identifying the underlying commonalities and patterns, and presenting the results (Seamon 2000). Within the third step of analysis, phenomenological psychologists associated with the Duquesne School have developed systematic techniques to describe the essence of a phenomenon. The essence is derived
through a process of phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and descriptive synthesis (Moustakas 1994). Internal bias and the “naturalistic attitude” are “bracketed” such that, the investigation, in as much as possible, is without presuppositions.2 This acknowledgment of internal bias opposes scientific objectivism in that; it does not exclude other ways of knowing or subjective understandings, which are conceived as central to all consciousness.

For the context of this research, Moustakas’ adaptation of the Van Kaam method of analysis was followed throughout the process of analysis. This seemingly linear and prescriptive approach, as presented by Moustakas, formalizes the methods of analytical investigation. However, the cyclical, inductive nature of the qualitative research still dominates the overall process. As an inductive approach, the Van Kaam investigates the entire complexity of the problem in an attempt to interpret the essence of the phenomena. Evaluation is limited to only the acquired data or the immediate insights of the participants as the phenomenon is experienced.

The distinct elements of the analysis are further outlined in the following sections of this chapter. However, it is important to remember that there are no exact step-by-step procedures for conducting existential-phenomenological research. Rather, the Van Kaam method provided an analytical guideline in the development of a personalized methodological approach. “The individual style of the researcher and the specific nature of the phenomenon are much more important for establishing the specific research procedures and tools of description” (Seamon 2000).

3.2 Collection of Descriptive Accounts and Participant Selection

Guided by the central phenomenological requirement that participants have experienced the object of study, ‘data collection’ was framed by the selection criteria. The selected neighborhood itself thus required existential qualities of space, which individual

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2 As a method of investigation, phenomenology has been critiqued for conceptualizing “bracketing” as a technique for setting aside internal assumptions. The notion of investigation without presuppositions is in fact a presupposition itself. Therefore, it is important to note that existential-phenomenological research is a systematic approach towards the investigation of a phenomenon, which attempts to limit internal assumptions of reality, as much as humanly possible.
participants both subconsciously and consciously could experience on a daily basis as a sense of place. At this point in the research, sense of place was defined in the context of the literature review as a individual but group informed process of transformation in which space evolves into place (Hay 1988).

3.2.1 Neighborhood Selection

Platted in 1923 as an automobile suburb, Chautauqua Park was largely constructed during two peak economical periods in twentieth century American history, 1925-1930 and 1938-1941 (Long 1989). Throughout its early history, Chautauqua Park remained a residential symbol of social and economic class. Restrictive covenants prevented “blacks and Jews” from owning property. However, time and outside influences began to wear on the physical and economic structure of the community.

During the 1980’s, public and private reinvestment in the neighborhood brought with it unparalleled diversity and community health. The Chautauqua Park Neighborhood Association (founded in 1984) guided these efforts in an attempt to “take back their neighborhood.” The result today is a neighborhood that is distinguished by an upwardly mobile and diverse middle class located within proximity to downtown Des Moines.

The community’s rich history, exceptional physical setting, and environmental attributes unquestionably convey distinctive elements of space within the Enterprise Community. However, defined as the transition of mere space into place, the existence of social capital that was identified with a defined spatial boundary indicated that to some extend this process of transformation had occurred throughout the neighborhood. Therefore, Chautauqua Park was selected as an appropriate location for the investigation of sense of place as experienced by individual participants.

3.2.2 Participant Selection

Again, guided by the phenomenological assumption that individuals interviewed have experienced the phenomenon, a criterion sampling method was employed in the selection of participants. Unlike random sampling used to elicit generalized information, criterion-sampling searches out participants believed to have experienced the studied phenomenon (Miles and Huberman 1994 in Creswell 1998, pp.119).
A long time resident and member of the Neighborhood Association guided the selection of initial participants. The participant’s ‘inside’ perspective allowed the researcher to perceive potential “pre-packaged agendas” held by some neighborhood members due to the political context of the Enterprise Community. In addition, the background and experiences of this participant painted a broader perspective of the existing social dynamics of the community as a whole. From this understanding, the selection of individuals logically included both long time residents and the third generation of residents presently moving into the neighborhood.

Finally, further participants were selected in a ‘snowball’ fashion whereas, the selection of individual neighbors were guided by those already interviewed. This form of opportunistic sampling allowed the research to take advantage of information that emerged in the field, as well as, provided for a systematic process of data collection.

In the end, twelve individuals from eight households were interviewed over the summer of 2001. As such, eight of the participants were married couples. Half of the participants were women and long time residents. Two of the participants were not Caucasian, which did not reflect the actual demographic composition of the neighborhood. However, all of the participants were unique individuals with diverse life experiences stemming from various economic and cultural backgrounds. Finally, all of the interviews were conducted in the same manner following similar protocols.

It is also important to note that all of the participants, in some fashion, had contributed in the functions and/or the governance of the neighborhood association at some point in time. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude, as is true with all sampling techniques, that the present collection of descriptive accounts was representative of all individuals within the neighborhood. Rather, if we were to generalize, it would be more appropriate to categorize the sample of participants as historically active neighbors.

3.2.3 Collection of Descriptive Accounts

Typical of a phenomenological approach, descriptive accounts of neighborhood experiences were acquired through in-depth interviews with selected participants (Moustakas 1994). Within the context of this study, the interview was interpreted simply as a guided
conversation that was an appropriate and prescribed method in the investigation of subjective experiences (Seidman 1998). As a result, eight open-ended guided conversations were conducted in the homes of the twelve selected participants. The literature suggested that this number of interviews was appropriate for a phenomenological study (Creswell 1998).

3.2.3.1 Interview Protocol Design

The specific interview technique of this research followed a ‘tree-and-branch model.’ Rubin and Rubin (1995) symbolically describe the tree-and-branch model as a form of investigative exploration. The trunk of the tree is visualized as the core topic. Each branch represents a main question that examines with the same degree of depth, separate thematic topics associated with the core topic. Within this framework, sense of place was conceptualized as the core, while existential questions of neighborhood experiences, interpretations, and understandings symbolized individual branches.

Rubin and Rubin (1995) present three levels of questions to achieve the desired level of depth within each main area of investigation. The main questions themselves guide the conversation in an open-ended format, encouraging the participant to express individual opinions and experiences. Within the second level, probes are used for clarification and completing unfinished statements. Finally, follow-up questions, based on the interviewee’s responses, pursue the themes that are discovered to explore their implications (Rubin and Rubin 1995). Specific questions, probes, and follow-ups are outlined in the following section.

An interview protocol was followed throughout the guided conversations to provide a level of consistency among the interview questions, probes, and follow-ups. The aim of the research protocol was to help participants reconstruct individual interpretations, experiences, and understandings of their lived-experience in the defined context of the neighborhood (Seidman 1998). As a result, the shared, descriptive accounts were understood as inherently related to individual perspectives of the residential context. Collectively, the common threads throughout the individual conversations began reveal the essential experiences of sense of place as encountered in Chautauqua Park.
3.2.32 Interviewing Process

The following section presents the actual interview protocol used throughout the eight guided-conversations. Each main question was asked of all twelve participants in an open-ended format. However, the selected residents controlled which descriptive accounts they would share throughout the conversation, as well as, the pace and direction of the interview. As a result, the participants were forced into the role of the expert, revealing experiences, interpretations, and understandings of their local knowledge of the neighborhood. Follow-ups and probes varied with individual responses.

Before proceeding, it is important to reinforce this distinction of roles throughout the process of collecting descriptive accounts. Traditional models of evaluation and positivistic research clearly define an ‘expert-centered’ role for the researcher throughout the process of data collection. As a result of this privileged positions, the researcher dominates the process of data collection due to an established hierarchical power structure among traditional methodologies.

In direct contrast to traditional approaches, the role of the researcher in the context of this study was conceptualized within a participatory framework. Denying my own knowledge of the subject matter and reinforcing the expert status of the participant, the traditional power structure of researcher and participant were reversed. Within the context of the collection of descriptive accounts, I was simply a student invited into the homes of Chautauqua Park residents to learn about their lived experiences.

3.2.33 Interview Protocol

I. Focus on life history – contextual experience
   A. Tell me about living in Chautauqua Park. How long have you lived here?
      1. Can you remember the first time you learned of Chautauqua Park?
   B. What brought you to Des Moines and Chautauqua Park?
      1. What attracted you Chautauqua Park enough to purchase a home here?
      2. Has the neighborhood lived up to your original hopes?
      3. Have there been pleasures or difficulties living here that you did not anticipate when you first purchased your home?
   C. Where are you originally from?
      Do you now refer to Chautauqua Park as your home?
      1. How long did it take for you to begin to feel at home?
II. Focus on the participant’s interpretation of their lived-experience.
   A. **What is it like to live in Chautauqua Park?**
      (Internal conscious ideal as described to an outsider)
      1. What is your daily experience within this neighborhood?
      2. Is your experience now different from your initial experience when you moved into the neighborhood? How?
      3. Would you describe this as a process? If so, what was involved?

III. Focus on actual experiences of the participant.
   A. **Can you describe a specific episode, event or situation that exemplifies your daily experience as a resident?**
      (External description of the experience within the life-world)
      1. What makes this experience stand out?
      2. Why is this event important?
      3. What are the important qualities of the experience that you just described? (Description of the components of the external object)
      4. Why are these qualities important to you?
      5. If you moved into the neighborhood today, how do you believe your experience would be different?
      6. How would you describe to a friend the essence of this neighborhood?

IV. Focus on the participant’s understanding of their lived-experience.
   A. **Reflecting back on all your experiences as a resident of Chautauqua Park, can you describe your understanding of this neighborhood as it has developed over time?**
      (Description of external object as experienced internally)
      1. How do you believe this description developed for you?
      2. What experiences were essential to developing this understanding?
      3. Has this portrait included everything you feel that is vital in to your understanding of Chautauqua? (Internal ideal as compare to external experience)

V. **Closing**
I would like to thank you for taking the time and effort by participating in this interview and my research on sense of place. The intent of this research is to begin to describe the discernable features of individual experiences that are essential in experiencing Chautauqua Park’s sense of place. This would not be possible without your charitable dedication of time. At this point, I would also like to ask you if you are open to reviewing the future analysis of these interviews. The intent of this review is to provide you an opportunity to verify that the descriptions of your thoughts and experiences are accurate. If you have any further questions please feel free to ask me now or in the future. My home phone number is on your copy of the consent form. Once again, thank you for your time.
3.3 Interpretation

The interpretation of the descriptive accounts gathered in the previous phase of ‘data collection,’ is an attempt to portray the threads of coherence among the individual experiences of the multiple participants. The authority of the researcher is taken from the intimacy with the subject and the transparency of the analysis for external review. As a result, this section presents the interpretative methods and inductive processes used in evaluating the essential experiences of sense of place.

3.3.1 Computer Applications and Transcriptions

Each interview was recorded and immediately transcribed utilizing *Dragon's Naturally Speaking* voice recognition software. This software package allowed me to replay each interview and dictate the conversation into a computer for transcription. Some portions of the conversations, which did not pertain to the subject matter, were excluded from the final transcriptions.

As a text file, each transcribed conversation was imported into the qualitative data analysis application, NUD*IST 4. The NUD*IST software package includes tools that mechanize the tasks of ordering and archiving text passages. The central functions of the program allow the researcher to more efficiently code and organize the transcribed conversations in a fashion determined by the selected qualitative approach. However, the analysis of the descriptive accounts remains based on the interpretations of the researcher, consistent with phenomenological method.

3.3.2 Interpretation of the Descriptive Accounts

Guided by Moustakas’s (1994) explanation of the Van-Kaam method of phenomenological data analysis, the process of interpretation began with multiple readings of the transcriptions. Each statement within the transcriptions was considered and coded with respect to its significance in the description of an individual’s experience of Chautauqua.

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3 NUD*IST is a computer aided qualitative analysis application developed by QRS (Qualitative Research and Solutions).
This phase of "horizontalizing," resulted in a list of coded text passages or 'free nodes' that represented every expression relevant to the object of study. Each statement was conceptualized as containing equal value in the eventual understanding of the phenomenon.

The subsequent phase of phenomenological reduction required the elimination of coded passages that were vague and the combination of repetitive descriptive accounts. Every expression was tested against two criteria; does it contain a necessary moment in understanding the phenomena? Can it be abstracted and labeled? The remaining coded passages that met these two criteria, represented "invariant constituents" of the experience, which can be translated to simply unique qualities of the phenomenon that stood out (Moustakas 1994). If a passage did not meet either of these criteria, it remained a 'free node' and was limitedly considered in the further investigation.

Throughout this phase, similar invariant constituents were coded as 'meaning units' under the same heading. Each 'meaning unit' thus described how a group of individuals experienced or understood the phenomenon in a similar manner. These 'meaning units' were comprised of unique text passages, equally weighted in the description of the phenomenon.

The third phase of analysis grouped the meaning units into larger clustered themes, each representative of distinct accounts of the experience. Previously coded meaning units were now organized under larger existential headings. Interpretations and understandings of the neighborhood were removed in favor of actual descriptive accounts of specific experiences simply because the phenomenological investigation was concerned with actual experiences of the object of study as opposed to, conceptions of the experience.

A process of analyzing the clustered descriptive accounts to develop structural meanings for that segment of the neighborhood experience was conducted. This process labeled 'imaginative variation,' explored all possible meanings and perspectives for each clustered theme. Specifically, the foundation of each descriptive account of an experience was analyzed in the search for underlying structures and relationships with coded neighborhood descriptions and interpretations.

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4 'Horizontalizing' refers to the process of delineating the invariant constituents of the phenomenon (Moustakas 1994).

5 A free node is simply a termed used by the software package to delineate the initial coding of the text passages. From these free nodes, themes were developed after further analysis, which sub-sequentially recoded each node.
Finally, the structural meanings and composite experiences of the clustered themes were synthesized as the essence of the experience. The essence of an experience is described as a condition or common quality that without which the object of investigation would not exist. The result is presented as a synthesized, composite description of the phenomena as experienced throughout the group of participants (Moustakas 1994, Creswell 1998).

3.3.21 The Interpretative Process as a Whole

This linear process of “horizontalization,” reduction, clustering, imaginative variation, and synthesis is presented here as a general guideline employed throughout the process of data analysis. However, the actual interpretation of the descriptive accounts was a cyclical progression in which new findings encouraged further review and refinement of earlier stages. Therefore, the nature of phenomenological interpretation is better conceptualized as a continual process of reading and learning, which in the end, revealed the individual qualitative descriptions that were common throughout the multiple interviews. These shared descriptive accounts were synthesized as the essence of phenomenon to provide an understanding of the collective framework of the experience for the group of participants within the defined context.

It is also important to note that the inductive nature of phenomenological interpretation is ‘synergetic.’ That is, as an approach, phenomenology studies the “parts in order to describe the whole” (Seamon 1979). This approach requires that phenomenological findings are ultimately presented as a single collective understanding of an experience as opposed to, a myriad of individual interpretations of a construct. In short, the ‘synergistic’ nature of phenomenological investigation limits the scope of research findings to a single essence of the phenomenon.

As discussed in the theoretical context, this does not imply such conclusions are void in a context of the plurality. But rather, that from a perspective of a single subjective reality, phenomenological interpretations attempt to describe the threads of coherence that can be identified across multiple subjective experiences. Therefore, the value of phenomenological

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6 The term ‘synergetic’ is used in this context to describe the collective, as opposed to the reductive, nature of phenomenological analysis. Essential experiences and structural meanings are combined to describe an understanding of phenomenon.
investigation is to present essential environmental experiences that have previously been largely outside of the perspectives of traditional objective analysis.

3.3.3 Verification

Consistent with qualitative literature, two methods of verification were employed to develop a level of validity (Creswell 1998). The first method involved internal checks that were applied after structural understandings of the clustered themes were developed. This method specifically involved a negative case members check, which was developed to establish a level of internal verification.

The second form of verification centers on conceptions of 'thick description.' Conceptualized as an external audit, as opposed to an 'inside review,' descriptive accounts are presented with the findings in chapter four thus, allowing for audience evaluation as well.

3.3.3.1 Negative Case Member Check

Guided by the assumption that individuals tend to tell you what you want to hear, a negative case member check was employed in favor of traditional qualitative forms of verification. Traditional forms of verification present interview data and findings to participants for review. Throughout this process, the existing power structure and limited return for the participants could conceptually influence the quality and degree of review. This is especially true in the context of the high demands of modern lifestyles.

As a result, this research employed a negative case member check in which, individuals that did not share themes consistent with the majority were contacted a second time to verify or refute the theme as an essential experience. This second round of interviews was guided by an analysis of the clustered themes that did not develop for individual participants throughout the multiple conversations. Participants were contacted over the phone. The implications of this process are discussed in the final chapter.

3.3.3.2 Thick Description

The notion of 'thick description' as elaborated by Clifford Geertz (1973) was implemented in the presentation of the data. The goal of thick description is to provide enough information such that, the audience is able to develop their own interpretation of the
validity of the research. This verification technique provides a basis for the external audit of the actual phenomenological interpretations of the resident’s lived experience. As such, the findings presented in the following chaptered are revealed within the context of the actual descriptive accounts.

Finally, the interpretations of the composite data were also presented to committee members for the evaluation of the inductive assumptions and conceptual foundations of the argument. The goal of this review was to provide a level of inter-subjective agreement in the presentation and evaluation of the data.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Guided by the Van-Kaam approach towards phenomenological reduction as described by Moustakas (1994), this chapter discusses the analysis of the data. Perhaps poorly named, phenomenological reduction is an inductive approach, which investigates the entire complexity of the problem in an attempt to interpret the essential experiences of the object of study. In the case of this research, the object of study is sense of place as experienced by the residents within the Chautauqua Park neighborhood. The analysis of the data is limited to the immediate insights and experiences of the participants interviewed.

4.1 Emerging Themes

Indicative of the "horizontalization" phase of phenomenological reduction, the first phase of the analysis coded individual text passages of the transcribed interviews as 'free nodes.' Each node reflected a corresponding theme within that portion of the text passage. Text passages were defined as a segment of the interview from which a single individual spoke without interruption or pause. Various free nodes were recorded throughout this phase of analysis. Each free node was comprised of multiple text passages of similar references with respect to their significance in the description of the phenomenon.

Throughout the second phase, these free nodes were categorized within a hierarchical index system illustrated in a family-tree pattern. Each node was reanalyzed and situated beneath a 'parent node' that described the overall significance of the selected descriptive accounts. Consequently, each node could now be described as a child of a corresponding parent node. Each parent node represented a single non-repetitive meaning unit as discussed in the second phase of the Van-Kaam methodology (Moustakas 1994). Figure 4.1 displays the overall parent-child relationship of each node.
Figure 4.1 Node Hierarchies
Six parent nodes or meaning units evolved under the headings of 'neighborhood interpretations,' 'experiences,' or a type of 'investment' throughout this phase of investigation. Social and environmental interpretations could be understood as neighborhood descriptions participants attributed to their experiences within Chautauqua Park. In contrast, social and environmental experiences reflected shared neighborhood memories of specific experiences individual participants recalled throughout the conversations. Finally, meaning units that related to a type of investment included individual and group aspects. Both of these parent nodes revealed specific experiences that centered on conceptions of neighborhood involvement.

The next phase of analysis interpreted the phenomenological value of each node as an essential theme in understanding the resident's experience of Chautauqua Park's sense of place. Tables 4.1 through 4.7 indicate the number of text passages coded for each free node throughout the eight interviews. Columns that are highlighted indicate that the majority of residents shared a similar experience or shared a similar neighborhood interpretation. As such, these same columns begin to reveal which nodes are common themes throughout the interviews and, thus, more salient from a phenomenological perspective.

Eleven neighborhood interpretations were common throughout the majority of the residents interviewed (see Table 4.1 and 4.2). These significant descriptions centered on both social and environmental aspects which residents used to express their understanding of the neighborhood. Likewise, six of the eight forms of investment were also consistent themes experienced by a majority of the participants (See Table 4.3, 4.4, and 4.5). Finally, eight of the social and environmental experiences could be highlighted as 'phenomenologically' significant and, thus, understood as common experiences encountered by the majority of the group (See Table 4.6 and 4.7).
Table 4.1 Social Interpretations (Number of Coded Text Passages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Active Choice</th>
<th>Village Like</th>
<th>Oasis</th>
<th>Sense of</th>
<th>Exclusive-Private</th>
<th>Sense of Community</th>
<th>Middle Class-Integrated</th>
<th>Friendly-Quiet</th>
<th>Pride</th>
<th>Comfortable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview5</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Environmental Interpretations (Number of Coded Text Passages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Unique</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Small Town</th>
<th>Oasis</th>
<th>Next to Nature</th>
<th>Secluded-Quiet</th>
<th>Street Relationship</th>
<th>Historic Designation</th>
<th>Architecture-Design</th>
<th>Aesthetically Pleasing</th>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>4</td>
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Table 4.3 Individual Investment (Number of Coded Text Passages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Individual Property</th>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Lack of Individual Investment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview4</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview5</td>
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<td>Interview6</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Highlighted columns denote significant themes held by a majority of participants.
Table 4.4 Group Investment (Number of Coded Text Passages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Gl-Social Network</th>
<th>Gl-Physical Environment</th>
<th>Gl-Neighborhood</th>
<th>Lauding Group Investment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Interview 1</td>
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<td>Interview 2</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Interview 7</td>
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</table>

Table 4.5 Social Experiences (Number of Coded Text Passages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Organized Interaction</th>
<th>Non-Organized</th>
<th>Neighborhood Politics</th>
<th>Yard Work</th>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Interview 8</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 Environmental Experiences (Number of Coded Text Passages)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Secluded</th>
<th>Commuting-Movement</th>
<th>Discovery</th>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Relaxing</th>
<th>Exclusive</th>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Interview 4</td>
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<td>31</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Highlighted columns denote significant themes held by a majority of participants.
The fourth phase of the analysis simply grouped the meaning units into clustered themes. Following the Van-Kaam approach, each clustered theme needed to represent a collection of descriptive accounts recounting residential experiences of Chautauqua Park's sense of place. Consequently, all nodes, which revealed residential interpretations of the neighborhood, were distinguished as foundational attributes of place because they were not representative of an experience but, rather of an evaluative cognition. The remaining nodes were then tested against two criteria. Does it contain a necessary moment in understanding the phenomena and, can it be abstracted and labeled?

Finally, three themes emerged as essential experiences of sense of place as experienced in Chautauqua Park. These included 'social interaction,' 'investment,' and 'safety.' 'Active choice,' an 'integrated' demographic composition and aspects of the physical environment itself also emerged as significant themes necessary in understanding the object of study. However, these were conceptualized as attributed characteristics, as opposed to essential experiences. This second group of themes were abstracted and labeled as foundational attributes unique to Chautauqua Park. Unlike individual conceptual beliefs, active choice, demographic integration, and aspects of the physical environment represented 'foundational elements' upon which all residential experiences existed. These attributes were not cognitive evaluations of the neighborhood. Rather, objective facts not subject to interpretation.

These initial results implied that Chautauqua Park's sense of place is comprised of two separate but equally weighted sets of elements. The first set of elements, which includes social interaction, investment, and safety, present themselves as essential experiences integrated within Chautauqua Park's sense of place. The second set of themes, including residential active choice, an integrated composition, and the physical environment itself, represent foundational attributes of the neighborhood that lived experience and, thus, sense of place rest upon.

In the final phase, research efforts shifted from analysis to interpretation. Accordingly, the emergent themes were used to describe the object of study. This process of synthesis largely grew out of my own reflections on the related nature of the individual experiences and foundational attributes. Thus, this section presents a tentative description of
Chautauqua Park’s sense of place as a continual process of transformation, influenced by both the foundational attributes and essential experiences as encountered within the neighborhood. A detailed discussion of each emerging theme is presented in the following sections.

4.2 Foundational Attributes

Before proceeding, it is first necessary to discuss the set of unique foundational attributes that were discovered to underlay all residential events: active choice, an integrated demographic composition, and the physical environment itself. All of which, were common themes that developed throughout the interviews and were not subjective to individual interpretation. These themes were selected as foundational attributes of the neighborhood because of these unique qualities.

4.2.1 Active Choice

Active choice was a theme that developed early and was evident throughout the interviews. As a node, it included text passages that referenced a participant's ability to reside within any number of neighborhoods throughout the city. The majority of residents interviewed were actively choosing each day to continue to call Chautauqua Park their home. However, individual participants would do so for several different reasons including comfort, a feeling of ownership, lifestyle choices, and investment strategies in an individual property.

It was a nice area, but a lot of it was price range too. I mean, we could have moved into a condominium out west with a bunch of other young couples and their kids. But, you know it is the trees and it is amazing how much cooler this neighborhood is. It seems like when you go out west that there has to be a 10-degree difference. (Brian 8/17/01)

See, what makes this is the trees. The tree right here in the front yard is about 250 years old. And the whole park is that. You cannot go to West Des Moines and get this. You get 10 cents worth of fiberglass siding. It is silly. Oh hell, I would throw stones at those West Des Moines houses. Why would you want to go out there? I don't know. We could live someplace else, but we don't care to. But, there are some pictures of this house when there was just the white house over there. An electric contractor built this house and the other house up the street. (Duane 8/17/01)
However, why residents opted to remain in the neighborhood was not nearly as important as their ability to have this choice. The participants, who were interviewed, lived within Chautauqua Park because they wanted to. Thus, active choice presented itself as a foundational attribute that exists prior to all other experiences including the emerging themes that centered on human activity.

I think we have just about covered it. When you look at the neighborhood you should look at all the physical features the neighborhood has to offer. And the uniqueness of the neighborhood, which this neighborhood is. This is definitely a unique neighborhood. The trees and the surroundings make this a beautiful neighborhood. But what also is unique to this neighborhood are the people that live here. Most of the folks who live in this neighborhood could choose to live wherever they wanted to live. And they choose to be here. That is what I think it's remarkable about our neighborhood. The people and the relationships and coming home. (Richard 4/21/01)

4.2.2 Integrated Demographic Composition

The fact that the neighborhood was composed of an integrated diverse population, emerged as a significant theme for participants of the study. 'Integration' itself was viewed as a positive attribute of Chautauqua Park's social composition. However, the fact that the neighborhood is integrated is not a matter of interpretation. Rather, it is a distinct feature or characteristic that inherently affects all residential experiences and interpretations within the neighborhood.

I remember that we liked the idea that it was an integrated neighborhood. It was real central, located in the city. And, a biggie was the value of the home compared to every other home in Des Moines that was in the same price range. The only reason someone would not choose to live here would be because they did not want to be in an integrated neighborhood. (Sara 6/20/01)

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the participants of this study interpreted neighborhood diversity as a positive social aspect. It was difficult for participants to separate their conceptions of the neighborhood from the fact that the neighborhood was socially integrated. However, as a foundational attribute, this integration did directly influence their experiences throughout Chautauqua Park.
So what we are really talking about is discrimination. Are you implying that does not happen in this neighborhood? That maybe there's a level of respect among the diversity.

Yeah. Yes. It is that comfort. In this neighborhood, because we have that diversity we are used to seeing people of different colors and different races. We are used to knowing how we can judge someone. We don't judge how they look or how they dress. If there are kids in the neighborhood, wearing their pants down low, we know their parents. So we know who they are. That is kids being kids. There just trying to be cool. But folks don't understand that kind of stuff. They have a reaction to it that embarrasses. (Richard 4/21/01)

4.2.3 The Physical Environment

The physical environment also emerged as a significant attribute of the neighborhood. Exemplified by a combination of rolling topography, established vegetation, and historic architecture, these elements comprised a distinct neighborhood location and context unique to Des Moines.

It was the winding streets and the pillars at the entrance that attracted my attention. It was the architecture, definitely the architecture and as I said, the homes were in various stages of disrepair. But I love old homes I could see beyond that; I could see the potential beauty. So that is what attracted me, the problem was finding a place or home here. (Richard 4/21/01)

The arrangements of these neighborhood attributes are not only unique to Chautauqua Park but, are also essential in understanding the resident's daily lived-experience. Applied in a different physical context, the social experiences within this neighborhood could not be conceived as a constant.

One thing that Chautauqua Park offers, because of its natural amphitheater like form, it is small enough that you can know everybody. I'm not saying that I know everybody in every household but, close. It is conducive to community life. You have neighborhood meetings and they are not overcrowded with 500 people or something. (Harold 5/10/01)

‘Active choice’ and the ‘physical environment’ were essential attributes without which Chautauqua Park’s sense of place would be inherently altered. In reviewing the
remaining emergent themes, these foundational attributes must be respected as the localized basis from which all social experiences stem.

4.3 Essential Experiences

In its simplest terms "phenomenology explores parts to understand wholes" (Seamon 1979 p.131). As such, this research is an attempt to understand Chautauqua Park resident's essential experiences in order to better describe sense of place as encountered throughout the neighborhood. As discussed in the previous section, three themes, in addition to the foundation neighborhood attributes, presented themselves as essential experiences throughout the interviews conducted for this research. These experiences included investment, social interaction, and safety. Each experience is discussed in the following section.

4.3.1 Investment

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (2000) defines investment as a “commitment of time or support.” In the sense of this research, investment presented itself as both a literal and figurative theme developed among the majority of research participants. Throughout the interviews, individuals reflected on expenditures of time, money, and involvement within the neighborhood. However, when describing experiences of investment, the participants tended to focus specifically on the monetary nature of the theme in a group or individual context.

4.3.1.2 Group Investment

Investment presented itself as a diverse essential experience of sense of place. This diversity centered on two clustered themes, which included group investment and individual investment. The first clustered theme, group investment solely focused on the efforts of the elected neighbor association. Individuals recalled both, past association experiences involving the "taking back of the neighborhood," and the more contemporary social gatherings directed by the same elected body of individuals. These efforts were described as either involving the physical environment or the neighborhood itself as an entity.
I think that the neighborhood association was a major component of us talking together, not just talking about the weather or football, but property values, getting hold of absentee landlords, and doing some hard nitty-gritty work in the first phase. The whole neighborhood volunteered to paint several homes of old widows and stuff like that. It was a beautiful thing. It is this normal growth pains and things like that, now. We were already close but after my buddies moved in; we were really a tight core. (Harold 5/10/01)

Well you know, year number one I fell in love with the home and we got busy here. The transformation of home came to me when I truly invested myself into it, not just the home but the neighborhood. It was like now that I had invested in this, I am going to spend a lot more of my energy and time to make it better. And so that's when it became home. (Richard 4/21/01)

Long time residents more commonly shared earlier experiences within the association. Throughout the 1970's and the early 80's the neighborhood was experiencing a downward financial and social spiral fueled by the recent expansion of the interstate system and the resulting demographic segregation and transformation. Consequently, the residents from that period formed the first association, which as a group, began to financially re-invest time and money in the physical environment. Throughout the conversations with these long time residents, group investment in the physical environment therefore emerged as a prevalent node within the cluster theme.

That is good, we just found some old neighborhood pictures without the curbs and just to see them is like wow. It was a big accomplishment. Some new people might just take it for granted but we fought long and hard for that. There is something also about the neighborhood association, it gives you clout. But, when you have a complaint and I am from Chautauqua Park making this complaint, it means different when someone else is making this complaint. So there is a clout that comes with this whole sense of place. We have a voice by being part of that. (Sara 6/20/01)

In contrast, the newer residents more often referred to the contemporary social functions of the neighborhood association. These functions included the neighborhood ice cream social and the 'Octoberfest' both of which, were held at the community gazebo north of the ravine. It is important to note not only the social aspects of such investment into the gatherings but also, the physical investments of group into the gazebo itself.
So this was the first one (social event) that happened this year. And, we kind of had a mix of people. It was mostly older people that have been here for a while and kids that came without their parents. Like the parents would say "hey kids, there is ice cream over at the gazebo." So we had a few kids and return customers that would keep coming back. So, most of them were longtime residents. And a few were residents that do not turn out for other meetings but came because they saw it in the newsletter or got a flyer.

*Did you distribute the newsletter to each of the houses?*

Yes. We actually mailed the last two. It was too hot to walk around and distribute the last bunch. (Laughter) But, Flyers were distributed for the ice cream social the weekend before it happened. And three of us did that. (Julie 8/23/01)

The gazebo was constructed within the past decade by the association with community block grants. This structure represents the group's physical investment into the construction of a neighborhood gathering space, a public space that did not exist prior to the association's efforts. Therefore, within the context of this theme, the social function of the gazebo was coupled with the ability of the group to invest itself into the neighborhood. It is logical to assume that if there were no space or opportunity to construct a gazebo, continued investment within the neighborhood would be consequently limited. As a result, group investment into the neighborhood presented itself as a node within this clustered theme evolving both social and physical aspects. However, as a social experience, group investment was a thread of coherence shared throughout the age cohorts.

Finally, both groups of residents also referred to the decaying neighborhood involvement with the contemporary association. This lack of group investment was attributed to the overall reduction of neighborhood need. Due to the aggressive efforts of the early association, there are currently a limited number of neighborhood issues, outside of the local politics. Consequently, the contemporary neighborhood association is experiencing declining enrollment and limited group investment.

4.3.13 Social and Environmental Interpretations Related to Group Investment

An intersection analysis looks across the multiple interviews for text passages, which have overlapping themes. In the case of group investment, an intersection analysis revealed relationships that existed between experiences of investment and participant's interpretations
of the social and physical environment. The findings indicate that two noteworthy
neighborhood interpretations intersected within the text passages coded as group investment
(Tables 4.7 and 4.8). These interpretations included the descriptions of Chautauqua Park as a
safe and exclusive neighborhood. These attributed neighborhood understandings were
therefore conceptually related to the investment efforts of the group from the perspectives of
some participants.

Table 4.7 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Group Investment and Interpretations of the
Social Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Social Environment</th>
<th>Group Investment-Social Network</th>
<th>Group Investment-Physical Environment</th>
<th>Group Investment-Neighborhood</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Choice*</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Exclusive-Private</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of
the participants. (See table 4.1)

** Oasis-Like was a separate theme that developed in the context of both social and physical interpretations of the environment. As an interpretation of the social environment, oasis-like referred social distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park from the surrounding neighborhoods. As an interpretation of the physical environment, oasis-like referred to the physical distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park.
Table 4.8 Intersection of Text passages Coded Group Investment and Interpretations of the Physical Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Physical Environment</th>
<th>Group Investment-Physical Environment</th>
<th>Group Investment-Social Network</th>
<th>Group Investment-Neighborhood</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like*</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.2)

Safety was perceived not only as essential environmental experience (as will be discussed latter), but also as an interpretation of a quality of the social environmental held by a majority of participants. As an environmental quality, safety was related to the efforts of the group investment in five descriptive accounts, as depicted above. This correlation largely centered on the group effort of the association to make Chautauqua Park a safe neighborhood. As a result, the participants today interpret the neighborhood as a safe environment.

Well, I will tell you that two or three years after we moved here we had the first drive by killing in Des Moines in one of these houses. And, we had a drug house that was on Avalon and we dealt with that. All the people around that area would take down license plates... but these are all things that we had dealt with throughout the 15 years. It has not been perfect but I want people to understand that things happened here first and then they start moving to neighborhood and neighborhood. And that's why I think it is important for this neighborhood to be a beacon for the other neighborhoods... so, we don't want them to jump from one neighborhood to another we want them to move clear out of here. We don't want them here at all. So, when you know where we came from you can understand why we are so proud of our neighborhood now. Because, we worked hard to get it like that. (Elisabeth 9/26/01)
In the context of the second relationship, group investment was associated to the exclusiveness of Chautauqua Park within three text passages. This relationship centered on the ability of the existing social network to influence future residential composition and contemporary political offices. However, these relationships can only be interpreted as tentative correlations because they were developed through analytical means as opposed to inter-subjective conversation. They are mentioned here only to illustrate the need of further research into the apparent conceptual relationship between experiences and attributed social and environmental interpretations of place.

Because you know, that years ago, they would not let African Americans buy into this neighborhood. That was an interesting part of history, but that was history. We are not redlining, but it is sort of networking. We can just about determine the person who comes into the neighborhood, which would be the stakeholder not just a homeowner. And a participant. And I think that is important. (Richard 4/21/01)

4.3.14 Individual Investment

The cluster theme investment also revealed various levels of personal engagement throughout the neighborhood. Participants recalled experiences involving individual property, the social environment, and psychological aspects of the neighborhood. Throughout this diversity of experiences, the individual nature of the investment presented itself as a common focus.

Well I think a part of that might be that we invested our whole life into this area. And, we have done some things in the area to help make it what is.

I think we are proud of the neighborhood. Whereas in the beginning we did not care what it looked like, we were just concerned with our home. We had no sense of our neighborhood.

So over time it grew into a pride of the neighborhood rather than just your home?

Yes, rather than just a place to live.

Yes so it has changed radically for us.
I want all of it to look nice, to be as good as it can. (Sara and William 6/20/01)
Both long and short-term residents shared descriptive accounts of their investment into the social network of the neighborhood. Experiences ranged from the simple act of developing neighborhood friends to intensive personal campaigns of increasing neighborhood involvement with the association.

Julie is the PR person right now.

*So you guys are publishing the newsletter yourself?*

Yes.

*How often?*

They are kind of quarterly. We started this year and our first one was in the spring.

It had been dropped a couple years ago and, we wanted something to do.

We wanted to improve the communication in the neighborhood, also.

Yes, there is a lack of involvement in association right now. You always have the same six or seven couples there when; you have 125 houses in the neighborhood. So you figure you try to get people information to get them excited. And it seems to work so far. (Julie and John 8/23/01)

Similar to the participants' experiences of increasing involvement throughout the neighborhood, residents also recalled personal accounts of investment into the neighborhood itself as an entity. Such individual investment included efforts to beautify the neighborhood, provide for neighborhood recreation, and studying the neighborhood history.

The 3rd or 4th year we started working on the outside. And then in 1996 is when I really started getting into it. The association asked me if I would help organize a home and garden tour.

So then, I went to the library and got some books. And I had copies of the national designation in 1990 but I guess I did not pay much attention to it until I went to the library... And so that's how I found out and I just kept reading and reading. The more you read the more you want to know. I did not realize what I was getting into. And so that is why it became such a passion for me. (Elisabeth 9/26/01)

Finally, a majority of participants recalled personal accounts of investment into their own property. With the home as representative of self, personal investment in private
property was perceived as an individual microcosm of a comprehensive neighborhood effort. As a result, individual home improvement efforts yielded a feeling of collective ownership. Individual homes were no longer only perceived as long-term financial investments.

Right because everybody else that moved in at that time have to deal with the same thing. They would have to update the kitchens and bathrooms. But they knew that. They just weren't very usable.

I realize that the rest of the neighbors were trying to do the same thing. They were all in this together. They were trying to find light fixtures that would fit and things like this. (Elisabeth 9/26/01)

4.3.15 Social and Environmental Interpretations Related to Individual Investment

An intersection analysis revealed multiple neighborhood interpretations additionally coded as individual investment. Four of the interrelated interpretations were also common understandings of the physical and social environment as described by a majority of participants. These interpretations included a sense of community, and an appreciation for the existing neighborhood aesthetics, property values, and designed elements (See Table 4.9 and 4.10).

Table 4.9 Intersection of Text passages Coded Individual Investment and Interpretations of the Social Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Social Environment</th>
<th>Individual Investment-Individual Property</th>
<th>Individual Investment-Individual Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Choice*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village-Like*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-like**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive-Private</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class - Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly-Quiet</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Pride</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.1)
**Oasis-Like** was a separate theme that developed in the context of both social and physical interpretations of the environment. As an interpretation of the social environment, oasis-like referred to the distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park from the surrounding neighborhoods. As an interpretation of the physical environment, oasis-like referred to the physical distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park.

Table 4.10 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Individual Investment and Interpretations of the Physical Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Physical Environment</th>
<th>Individual Investment-Social Network</th>
<th>Individual Investment-Individual Property</th>
<th>Individual Investment-Neighborhood</th>
</tr>
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<td>Landscape Quality*</td>
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<td>Unique*</td>
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<td>Value*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Next to Nature</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secluded-Quiet*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Relationship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Designation*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture-Design Elements*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetically Pleasing*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.2)

*Sense of community* as a node represented the belief on the part of a majority of participants that such a social construct existed throughout the neighborhood. Its relationship with individual investment largely centered on personal experiences with the neighborhood association. As a result, this correlation, apparent in some of the descriptive accounts, begins to suggest that for some participants, individual investment in the association helped to develop a sense of community.

Making the leap from this just being our house to this neighborhood being our home was not as hard as I expected. Because, when we looked around at other houses one of the questions we asked our realtor was if there was a neighborhood association. Is there a sense of community? And how do we become a part of that? We wanted to know right off the bat. So, it took us may be a couple of months to be invested in the neighborhood association, to know that we really did want to be a part of that and the commitment. And like John said before we knew that this was not just a house that we were going to live in for four years and then buy another one. We intend to be here and pay it off. We came in not knowing right of way that it was our home. It
may have taken a couple of months to really call this and this area home. There were some steps in the process that we did not have to go through. So, to answer your question, has the process change since we had been here? I think maybe, I am a little less hesitant to become involved in bigger initiatives in the association. We no longer feel like we are the ‘newbies’ or we’re stepping on someone’s toes. Now, we are more inclined to say we live here and this is our community and house and we think things should be done this way. We are a little less hesitant and getting deeply involved in some initiatives. I do not know it that gets to the question or not. (Julie 8/3/01)

The relationship of individual investment with interpretations of the physical environment was more directly related to personal improvement projects. As opposed to investment into the existing social network, these descriptive accounts revealed private efforts to enhance individual property values and the visual quality of the neighborhood. Thus, these accounts begin to suggest a relationship between individual investment and financial and aesthetic interpretations of Chautauqua Park.

I think also a big thing is financially we have refinanced our house to make it like it is. We really have quote un-quote invested to make it like it is. We have looked at town houses and to find something similar in price, there is nothing. Because, you really cannot get this kind of value in another house. This neighborhood is still a very high-value for your money. Even though if you would pick-up these home and place them somewhere else they would be worth a lot more money. But, there still is no comparison like when we looked at the home the first time. (Sara 6/20/01)

Combined, these relationships begin to indicate an existing correlation between individual investment and interpretations of the environmental and social context. However, this relationship is only briefly mentioned here to encourage future research into any correlation. An actual inter-subjective investigation of the relationship between experiences and interpretations was beyond the scope of the present research.

4.3.16 Negative Case Analysis of Investment

Of the eight interviews conducted, investment did not develop as an essential experience for one of the participants. Rather, this participant focused on the distinct lack of group investment currently found throughout the neighborhood association. Although this theme of lacking group investment was not unique to this participant, the absence of any
positive individual investment was. Therefore, as the only 'negative case' a member check was conducted via the telephone to better understand this individual's experience within the neighborhood.

Consistent with previous findings, the participant suggested that he did have the opportunity to investment himself into the neighborhood by participating in association meetings. This account begins to imply that experiences of individual investment in the social network were present, however simply not discussed and perhaps missed by the interviewer. The participant rather drew attention to previous experiences he had in another neighborhood where he believed opportunities were more dynamic. In short, the context of the individual’s lived experience outside of Chautauqua Park effected his interpretations and experiences within the park, as was expected. However, due to the specific focus on the object of study as experienced within the defined context, these interpretations and experiences were not conceptualized as essential in his understanding sense of place as experience in Chautauqua Park.

4.3.2 Social Interaction

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition (2000) defines interaction as the “process of interacting” whereas, the verb interacting is defined as “acting upon each other.” Although vague, this definition begins to allude to the reciprocal nature of social interaction. Social interaction throughout the context of this research presented itself as a two-way means of communication. Through social interaction, residents were able to influence others, remain informed on local issues, or simply visit with neighborhood friends. The initial striking simplicity of this theme should not underscore the diversity of the experience nor its necessity as an essential experience of sense of place as encountered within Chautauqua Park.

4.3.2.1 Organized Interaction

Neighborhood social interaction could largely be understood as a product of either organized or non-organized functions. This first theme, organized social interaction, was the direct result of functions directed by the neighborhood association. From yearly social
gatherings to monthly board meetings the majority of participants perceived these association functions as essential neighborhood experiences.

Well I do go to all the Chautauqua Park meetings. I am security chairperson. I go to all of the police breakfasts and keep up on everything downtown. I can tell them if there is anything going on around the area. That's how I can keep up, if there had been any meth labs found in the area. (Laughter) And then, when we have our meetings, I tell them the latest with the police department. I love police work... now, we have this police liaison and he comes to our association meetings. And, if you have any problems or something you hear of you call him. We never had this before. This is kind of neat. But, I miss going to breakfasts. (Rose 4/17/01)

Within the descriptive accounts of organized social interaction, it is important to note the relationship between the theme itself and the demographic composition of the study's participants. All residents interviewed had to some degree, been involved with the neighborhood association either in the past or the present. Therefore, it is impossible to conclude that organized social functions, as directed by the association, is an essential experience of Chautauqua Park's sense of place for all residents of the park. Rather, only only a minority of the residents, including the majority of the participants interviewed, currently attends association meetings.

It (the neighborhood association) is more of acquaintances then close friends. In the other neighborhood when you are restoring a house from beginning to end and you have neighborhood people helping out it is a different chemistry and dynamic. While here the houses are for the most part not falling apart or being restored, they are for the most part already done. They are maintained or were restored back in the 1970s when there was more of a decline. So I think maybe those people that were here at that time and buying at the same time (during the 1970’s when the houses in Chautauqua Park were being restored) struck a closer friendship because of their mutual experience. It seems like that at the (association) board meetings there is not a big attendance versus my old neighborhood. (Stephen 9/11/01)

The correlation of this theme with group composition does not devalue the importance of social interaction as an essential neighborhood experience. Rather, when compared to non-organized social interaction, social interaction demonstrates an individualistic nature. That is, social interaction takes place in different forms for different people. This argument is further supported by the fact that both attendance and organized
social interaction increases when a neighborhood conflict presented itself, as demonstrated by the multiple accounts found within the neighborhood politics node.

Well, only at board meetings it is only a little less peaceful than it looks. I think that one of my first impressions was how peaceful, quiet and secluded it was. And it is all those things but when you throw the neighborly politics part of it in, there is some conflict that we would have never guessed. (Julie 8/23/01)

The relationship between association functions and organized interaction was obvious. However, less obvious is the relationship of neighborhood politics to the same theme. As a node, neighborhood politics presented itself as a concept centered on conflict. Without detailing the political aspects of the conflict, it is important to draw attention to conflict itself as a means of social interaction.

Sometimes, like with any association we have trouble but, I don't think it would matter to us anymore if; we did not have an association. It would if the neighborhood started going down again but maybe that's a good thing. The first time we had something, a need. Now it's like just another meeting. In the past, we kept on being drawn into the next step. From beautification to problem homes and that is part of the problem now, we don't have a need. The neighborhood association is very diluted now because of the reason. (Sara 6/20/01)

As revealed by this passage, conflict itself brings people to the table and forces social interaction. Despite the negative underpinnings, conflict can still generate positive interaction given that a constructive resolution or compromise is achieved. In the past, conflicts within Chautauqua Park focused residential cooperation and social interaction in an attempt to 'take back the neighborhood.' With these struggles largely resolved, contemporary issues and thus organized social interaction have decreased. New issues surrounding the park's historic significance and its designation have emerged as conflicting neighborhood politics. However, at a heated city council meeting, overwhelming opposition for the proposed local designation curtailed all further action. As a result, these issues have seen little persistence outside of neighborhood gossip and, thus, generate little interaction. In short, this designation conflict no longer brings anyone to the table. Perhaps this specific conflict has outlasted its positive aspect of generating social interaction throughout the
neighborhood. In the end, organized social interaction has suffered with little conflict existing in the neighborhood today.

We don't have big attendance at the association meetings. There are not a lot of burning issues. Everybody has their own soapbox... but there are not a lot of problems going on. It is pretty safe. And most people are taking care of their properties. And most people are living in their properties. (Stephen 9/11/01)

4.3.22 Social and Environmental Interpretations Related to Organized Interaction

As a neighborhood experience, organized interaction was analyzed against the descriptions residents used to conceptualize Chautauqua Park. The resulting intersection analysis indicated that three noteworthy neighborhood interpretations intersected within the same text passages coded as organized interaction (Tables 4.11 and 4.12). The first pair of related social interpretations, a sense of community and safety, reveal descriptions of the social environment that were held by a majority of participants.

Well, after a winter like this, it gets us back together. I did not get to any meetings this winter. But like the Octoberfest we'll get like 20 people moving through it and 10 of us stay there and visit. They are good events but we don't always turn out the crowds.

Why are these qualities in the neighborhood important to you? Individuals in West Des Moines are not concerned with an association.

Because they don't know their next-door neighbor.

Yes, as people move they get tired of reaching out and starting new things. I know people who have refused to leave Des Moines or who have moved back. Once a child is born they want to move back. But, I think community is the ultimate answer for the human family. Community to me is the answer but it is damn hard to get there. (Carol and Harold 5/10/01)
Table 4.11 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Organized Interaction and Interpretations of the Social Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Social Environment</th>
<th>Organized Interaction</th>
<th>Neighborhood Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Choice*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village-Like*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like**</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive-Private</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community*</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class - Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly-Quiet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.1)

** Oasis-Like was a separate theme that developed in the context of both social and physical interpretations of the environment. As an interpretation of the social environment, oasis-like referred social distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park from the surrounding neighborhoods. As an interpretation of the physical environment, oasis-like referred to the physical distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park.

Table 4.12 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Organized Interaction and Interpretations of the Physical Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Physical Environment</th>
<th>Organized Interaction</th>
<th>Neighborhood Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Quality*</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next to Nature</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secluded-Quiet*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Relationship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Historic Designation*</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture-Design Elements*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetically Pleasing*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.2)

The third attribute, *value*, was used to describe the physical environment of the neighborhood. Therefore, one can begin to assume that some individual participants within
this study have related their experience of organized social interaction with that of safety, value, and a sense of community. However, it is important to remember that these interpretations have grown out of secondary analysis and not direct inter-subjective communication. Therefore, these relationships are simply tentative findings, which begin to suggest a larger relationship between neighborhood experience and interpretations of Chautauqua Park.

First of all people are taking more interest because they are seeing now what houses are going for. The first house that's sold after we got them backup to snuff sold for $97,000. People said wow; they're not worth that much... But, I can see all around the neighborhood how the yards are better cleaned and when we have a house tour they are even better. Because people have an incentive. That is why in every neighborhood it is important to have people working in an in association to have a house tour no matter what. Because it gives the neighbors incentive to clean up their place... the house tours were the best thing we ever done because everybody worked hard together. Men work together to get it cleaned up... but if you could have seen when we first moved in and the neighborhood now they're definitely is a big difference. (Elisabeth 9/26/01)

4.3.23 Non-organized Interaction

The second theme, non-organized social interaction presented itself as external, casual conversation with immediate neighbors. Almost in direct contrast with the first theme, non-organized interaction was a result of any number of neighbor experiences. These included neighborhood walks, informal social gatherings, and polite neighborly gestures. However, the spatial extent of such non-organized interaction was directly related with the proximity of the individual participant's household. That is, participants were more likely to be involved with informal conversations and activities with immediate neighbors as opposed to all residents within Chautauqua Park.

These little bits that I'm sharing with you help me flesh out the ideas. Like David the friend I was just telling you about... they had four kids and we would go over for every birthday.... These two women that were in their 30s would come over with our daughter who was 10 and put a tent up and sleep in the driveway for their garage sale. They would party all day and laugh and I would get them pizza in the afternoon. What a great way for little girl to grow up with adult women and see that they have fun. Some things turned out so much better than you ever expect.
They would bring over their son who loved to swim and what a wonderful experience that was for him. We tried to keep it open for another year just for him.

I wanted to flesh out just a few little human things that just occurred. It occurred just because we trust that one another and weren't afraid to come and asked one another for help. Trust is my primary principle. We're just too cynical. (Carol and Harold 5/10/01)

Related to social interaction, descriptive accounts of yard work, reflected both social and environmental aspects. Within the context of non-organized interaction, yard-work was described as a means of social communication and not as an environmental obligation of preconceived norms.

Well, I know some of my neighbors. I know my neighbors to the South the best. He's often out the same time of the day that I am. We talk a lot. You know, when you are doing the yard work and then ten minutes later you are sitting there drinking beer and two hours go by. He is a very funny guy. The neighbors across the street are involved in one million different things. They are always up on things going on. The rest of the people I know fairly casually. You know, they walk by and you say hi. (Nancy 9/4/01)

It is important not to dismiss yard-work as a trivial community attribute. For the participants of this study, yard-work was an essential experience directly related to their interaction with the community as a whole. Even though most interaction was limited to immediate neighbors, yard-work was a primary means of keeping up with what was going on throughout the neighborhood.

There are a lot of people who walk and jog through here. This is the best neighborhood to do that in because it has hills, if you are trying to get your heart going good. And, the Des Moines school district building uses this neighborhood for a walking area. And, it is a beautiful area to walk through because most people are putting in gardens. They used to be gardens here all the time. But now more and more people are doing it. They are putting out night lighting, which adds security and brightens up your yard. In the summertime when you are out in your yard people come and mingle and visit with each other. (Elisabeth 9/26/01)
4.3.24 Social and Environmental Interpretations Related to Non-organized Interaction

An intersection analysis revealed multiple neighborhood interpretations additionally coded as *non-organized interaction*. Three noteworthy interpretations were also common understandings of the social environment as described by a majority of participants. These interpretations included descriptions of the neighborhood as a *safe environment*, an *integrated* population, and containing a *sense of community* (See Table 4.13 and 4.14).

All participants perceived the ethnic and age diversity of the Chautauqua Park as a positive community aspect, as described within the earlier ‘integrated demographics’ section. In the context of non-organized interaction, this diversity was viewed as an opportunity to meet individuals from multiple backgrounds. As such, this relationship between interaction and social diversity presented itself as an important neighborhood aspect for multiple participants.

Oh no. That's not a part of it. I would be very comfortable raising my kids in this neighborhood in some respects. I think that my neighbors here are great. As a whole this is a neighborhood that if your kids are running around and they should not be your neighbors will come and tell you. But, at the same time will not be a pain in the ass. The concerns I would have would be the schools around here and things like that. Things that I don't know the answers to. In some respects this would be a great place to raise kids. People are very neighborly and there is security of knowing where your kids are. And the fact that they might have interaction with older people and understand more backgrounds would be a very positive thing for kids. They would not grow up only seeing themselves like I did. I grew up in a very ‘homogenetic’ world. We're all very similar... I really did not know anyone of an ethnic minority until I was in high school. It was really that ridiculous... (Nancy 9/4/01)

These relationships or intersections of coded passages are presented here only to demonstrate some correlations found within the descriptive accounts. They are not conceived as anything more than additional forms of data presentation from which, the audience can begin to evaluate suggested inter-relationships.
### Table 4.13 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Non-organized Interaction and Interpretations of the Social Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Social Environment</th>
<th>Non-Organized Interaction</th>
<th>Yard Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Choice*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village-Like*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like**</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe*</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive-Private</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Sense of Community*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.1)

** Oasis-Like was a separate theme that developed in the context of both social and physical interpretations of the environment. As an interpretation of the social environment, oasis-like referred to the social distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park from the surrounding neighborhoods. As an interpretation of the physical environment, oasis-like referred to the physical distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park.

### Table 4.14 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Non-organized Interaction and Interpretations of the Physical Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Physical Environment</th>
<th>Non-Organized Interaction</th>
<th>Yard Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Quality*</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Unique</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next to Nature</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secluded-Quiet*</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Relationship</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Designation*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture-Design Elements*</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetically Pleasing*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.2)
4.3.25 Negative Case Analysis of Social Interaction

Although social interaction presented itself as a common theme throughout all interviews, a single resident shared no experiences of organized interaction. This negative case was therefore checked to determine the interpretation of organized social interaction as an essential experience of sense of place.

When asked to comment on ideas of organized social interaction, the participant described her experiences with neighborhood functions organized by the association. The individual did not actively participate in neighborhood association meetings however, she indicated that it was simply a matter of schedule conflict. As a result, functions, such as the ice cream social and ‘Octoberfest,’ did provide opportunities of organized social interaction for the participant. More importantly, these experiences indicated that organized social interaction was a salient experience in understanding sense of place.

4.3.3 Safety

The *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition* (2000) defines safety as the “condition of being free from danger, risk, or injury.” To be safe includes feelings of assurance and security. This last synonym, security, begins to allude to the interrelated nature of safety and a second emergent theme, relaxation. Relaxation is presented throughout this section of the analysis as an interdependent social experience of security. To be secure implies a state of ease, a state of relaxation in the company of others. Consequently, throughout the context of this research safety and relaxation are discussed as related environmental experiences, essential to Chautauqua Park’s sense of place.

4.3.31 Security

Presented as a node of environmental experiences, safety revealed itself as a common experience throughout the majority of interviews. (See table 4.2) However, representing a freedom from anxiety, security, as an environmental experience, was more prevalent among the longer-term residents. This demographic distribution of descriptive accounts of safety appears to be accounted for by the contradicting encounters participants have had within the neighborhood. A long term resident explains:
We struggled with the first ten years or so. We had 10 break-ins in the first ten years. And, we struggled with that. One guy broke the window and took the microwave while we were asleep. But all he had to do was to reach in this window back here. But, we have not had a problem since.

So, you had 10 break-ins?

Yes, in the first ten years and we stayed. One night we came home and the place was trashed. It just threw us. You know, when you open the door and you see your place trashed. They opened every drawer but they did not break anything or stealing anything. They were probably looking for drugs or money. And since we don't do drugs and I don't have cash lying around the house there was nothing to steal. But, it was a traumatic experience. You come home for months and open the door real slow. Then it continued and we thought we might just not make it. But then, it calmed down. And it hasn't happened in 20 some years now. (Harold 5/10/01)

This passage begins to reveal one dramatic neighborhood experience that was not uncommon within Chautauqua Park during the 1970's and 80's. However, due to the efforts of the neighborhood association in developing a stronger social network, the community is no longer as vulnerable to such individualized attacks on property. Thus, as a life-long resident begins to conclude, the contemporary existential security has always been related to the social dynamics of the neighborhood.

I still feel that it is a safe haven. I really do. You know, it's just five blocks. There are only five streets in here. And I think that the majority of people like me know everybody up and down their street. I know some people from the other streets but I think that it's always safe because we know each other. It is a little exclusive place, not to brag, but it is an area where everybody kind of knows everybody else. And, I know exactly what car should be over here and I know how many kids they have in this house. And I think that all of us, and at our meetings we have talked about this, pay attention. If you see a car that you know does not belong, keep your eyes open. And in a little area like this we really watch and try to lookout for each other. So it is a little exclusive area. We know that all around us is some really bad stuff.

So, what experiences do you think were essential to this idea of a safe haven or isolation within the neighborhood? Was it the people; was it the surroundings, what made this happen?

It was the people. The people I was growing up and my mother knew that if I did anything down the street and Mrs. Waters would call her. I think it was the people,
we all knew everyone. Parents knew that if I were over there, someone would look
after me. Growing up, I didn't think about being here with the trees. (Rose 8/18/01)

4.3.32 Social and Environmental Interpretations Related to Safety

An intersection matrix revealed that three neighborhood interpretations where related
to the text passages coded as describing Chautauqua Park as a safe environment. (Table 4.15
and 4.16) These interpretations included a sense of community, a village-like neighborhood,
and a secluded and quiet environment. The relationship between these interpretations and
safety is once again tentative, but it does begin to suggest a correlation between
environmental experiences and interpretations of place.

Table 4.15 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Safe and Relaxing and Interpretations of the
Social Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Social Environment</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>Relaxing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Choice*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village-Like*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like**</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe*</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exclusive-Private</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Community*</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class - Respect</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly-Quiet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfortable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of
the participants. (See table 4.1)

** Oasis-Like was a separate theme that developed in the context of both social and physical
interpretations of the environment. As an interpretation of the social environment, oasis-like
referred social distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park from the surrounding neighborhoods. As
an interpretation of the physical environment, oasis-like referred to the physical
distinctiveness of Chautauqua Park.
Table 4.16 Intersection of Text Passages Coded Safe and Relaxing and Interpretations of the Social Environment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interpretations of the Physical Environment</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>Relaxing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Qualities*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Town</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis-Like*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next to Nature</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secluded-Quiet*</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Relationship</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historic Designation*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture-Design Elements*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetically Pleasing*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Denoted themes that were found to be common interpretations described by a majority of the participants. (See table 4.2)

As an example of this proposed relationship between lived experience and environmental interpretation, the experience of security was correlated with a description of the neighborhood as being secluded and quiet. Participants portrayed the distinct and isolated physical setting of Chautauqua Park as contributing to a feeling of safety. Thus, in this example, the physical setting was conceptualized as influencing the social interpretations and the human experience of place. Such conceptions reinforce the interdependent nature of the elements of place as discussed in chapter two.

Well, we are in Des Moines and this is the quietest neighborhood we have ever been in. We're not far from downtown. We're not far from the interstate. We're not far from any of these entities. It's a 15-minute drive to wherever you want to go. So they will say 'you can't go to Des Moines, they have all these killings there and they have all those criminals.' But, we don't have any here. And we are, Bob and I helping the other neighborhoods cope with the crime and the sex offenders especially, because we do not want them moving back and forth. We wanted to move clear out. We don't care where they go; we just don't want them here. (Elisabeth 9/26/01)
4.3.33 Relaxation

As discussed previously, experiences of security were interrelated with experiences of relaxation. In addition, like security, relaxation was related to both the social and environmental experiences within the neighborhood. This existential sense of ease, which enabled individuals to relax, was attributed to the existing social network among neighbors and the nature of the physical environment.

One thing that I love about what I see in this neighborhood, is that when I come home I can sit on the deck and listen to the birds chirping and watch the squirrels run around, look at the trees, all the beauty that nature has to offer right on my deck. It is relatively quiet, in the summertime with all the trees, you can let the house open and the breezes go. My stress level goes down once I get home. If you could take my blood pressure when I drive through those pillars and hit this house, it is almost down to normal. That is the joy I have. I am so happy when I walk in it is hard to describe. It is hard to describe. I love it. I am sure other people love their neighborhoods but, I love mine, I can say hello to my neighbors, we know our neighbors. In West Des Moines, I didn't know my neighbors. People would come and go. They were mobile, a mobile society. Here, I can trust my neighbors. So my neighbors have a key to my home and security codes to my home. So when I am gone, they can come in. And when they are gone I can watch their home. I go in and feed their dogs and get their mail. That is trust in the neighborhood. That is how I feel about this neighborhood. A sense of calm, pride, relaxation, and I can entertain. That's what we wanted in this neighborhood. (Richard 4/21/01)

It is logical to assume that without any sense of security, relaxation would not be possible. Therefore, it is necessary to note the dependency of the relationship, however, this is not to negate the distinct qualities of each experience. As the following passage reveals, the physical environment was a primary factor when participants described experiences of relaxation.

Well as soon as I turn into this neighborhood, it feels good to me. It is more than this house. It is bigger than that, it is home, and it feels nice. There is something real peaceful about coming into the neighborhood. Even though, I come home from River Road and Hickman, which, is also away from reality, but, it's not until I get right into the tree area that it feels like home. (William 6/20/01)
4.3.34 Social and Environmental Interpretations Related to Relaxation

Finally, as with all emergent themes, an intersection analysis was conducted to reveal neighborhood interpretations that were related to experiences of relaxation. One interpretation, common throughout the interviews, described the neighborhood as secluded and quiet. This theme emerged as a neighborhood description used within the same text passages coded as recounting a relaxing experience. (Table 4.15 and 4.16) Like the previous proposed relationships based on an intersection analysis, these associations are only presented here as tentative understandings. They are not based on inter-subjective investigations of the relationship with the participants of this study. Therefore, they only begin to suggest a correlation within the realms of neighborhood experience and interpretation.

It’s nice to be able to come home on the evenings and weekends and you can relax because we don’t have the sound of traffic off of 6th or anything. There is not a lot of people milling around or making a lot of noise. People do go for walks. There is a lot of traffic that comes through here but it is not the main thorough fair. So, it feels nice and secluded so that you can get away, you can relax for the evening or the weekend. (Julie 8/23/01)

4.3.35 Negative Case Analysis of Safety

Due to the fact that the emergent themes safety and relaxation did not develop during one of the interviews, this participant, as with the other negative case examples, was re-contacted to discuss their experience and the nature of the theme. This process was necessary to confirm or deny the character of the theme as an essential experience in understanding sense of place.

When contacted over the phone, the participant suggested relaxation was a foundational experience he had encountered within the neighborhood. However, the participant was quick to point out that this was possible only because he “knew everyone” of his surrounding neighbors. The participant described events of residents “looking after and taking care of each other” as social experiences that allowed him to relax and have fun. These descriptive accounts reinforced not only the nature of the theme as a common thread
throughout the experiences of the participants but also, the interdependent character of security and relaxation.

4.4 Sense of Place as a Whole
The final phase of the investigation shifts from the evaluation of the essential experiences, to the interpretation of Chautauqua Park’s sense of place as a whole. As a result, this process of synthesis largely grew out of my own reflections on the related nature of the individual themes as revealed throughout the inter-subjective conversations. Thus, this section presents a tentative description of Chautauqua Park’s sense of place as a continual process of transformation, influenced by both the foundational attributes and essential experiences individual residents encountered within the neighborhood.

4.4.1 A Phenomenological Interpretation of Place
From a phenomenological perspective, place is understood as composed of three elements. These elements include, the ‘physical setting’, the ‘human activity’ within the setting, and the ‘meaning’ ascribed to the setting and activity (Relph 1976). However, within the phenomenological context of human intentionality, ‘meaning’ is embedded within the dimensions of ‘activity’ and ‘setting’ (Million 1992). As illustrated in figure 4.2, place is therefore understood as the interdependent relationship of these three elements.

![Figure 4.2 Place as an Interdependent Relationship.](image-url)
Within the context of this research, the foundational attributes, environmental interpretations, and essential experiences can be respectively associated with the elements of place. The physical setting is conceptualized as containing the foundational attributes described by the residents of Chautauqua Park. In addition, human activity within Chautauqua Park centered on the three essential experiences of social interaction, investment, and safety. And finally, the physical and social interpretations of the neighborhood are ascribed in the participant’s meaning of place.

This phenomenological understanding of place can help us begin to conceptualize sense of place as a ‘whole.’ However, it is important to remember that this separation of the elements of place is only a means of managing discussion. It is not conceived as an actual empirical division between objects and everyday experience.

4.4.2 A Phenomenological Interpretation of Sense of Place

Throughout the process of phenomenological reduction, an essence is described as a condition or common quality that without which the object of investigation would not exist. In Chautauqua Park, three experiences, revealed by the participant’s descriptive accounts, comprised the essential human activities of the neighborhood. These experiences included social interaction, investment, and safety. As seen in figure 4.3, these elements can be understood within an interdependent continual loop of lived-experience, which constantly informs a resident’s interpretations of place.

![Figure 4.3 Essential Experiences of Human Activity as Continual Loop between Individual and Group Experiences.](image-url)
This investigation begins to suggest that some interpretations residents use to describe the neighborhood are inherently related with these essential experiences. In fact this diagram envisions that, as a resident’s experiences continue to grow throughout the community, new interpretations of the physical and social environment will continue to develop and be associated with portions of the loop.

These essential experiences did not exist independent from neighborhood attributes. Rather, a foundational group of attributes were found to continually influence both the direction and existence of human activity throughout the neighborhood. As depicted in Figure 4.4, active choice and the physical environment itself comprised the foundation from which all other experiences stemmed. Therefore, conceptualized as an interdependent whole, Chautauqua Park’s sense of place was comprised of two separate but, equally weight sets of elements; essential social experiences and foundational neighborhood attributes.

Figure 4.4 Sense of place as a Process of Transformation
There are two primary implications of this conceptual model. First, that a 'sense of place' is not a static environmental attribute only applied to certain locales. Rather, this research would suggest that a sense of place is a dynamic social process continuingly evolving based on a certain set of contextually specific attributes. And, second if the foundational attributes are altered, a new set elements will yield a new continual loop and thus a different or altered sense of place. One could also begin to assume that this is true for an individual, who relocates to another neighborhood. A new space will yield alternative foundational attributes and thus an alternative sense of place, co-founded on a new continual loop of human activity.

Finally, as an explanation of the apparent relationship between the essential experiences and foundational attributes as described within Chautauqua Park, this model echoes Robert Hay’s definition of sense of place. Defined as an “individually based, but group informed, localized, personal means of relating to the world that transforms mere space into personal place,” sense of place was experienced by participants of this study as a dualistically informed process of transformation, based on a set of local foundations (Hay 1988).

In Chautauqua Park investment, interaction, and safety involved both individual and group aspects of human activity, which inform individual interpretations of space. Furthermore, active choice and the physical environment presented themselves as localized attributes or contextually specific themes that without which, Chautauqua Park’s sense of place would not remain the same. Therefore, even though all previous explanations of the phenomenon were bracketed throughout the investigation, this evaluation of neighborhood sense of place reiterates findings presented by Robert Hay of sense of place research conducted in Australia (Hay 1988, 1998a, 1998b).
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

As was discussed in the previous chapter, sense of place was conceptualized as a process of transformation influenced by both human activity and foundational attributes of place. In Chautauqua Park, three essential experiences including investment, interaction, and safety comprised the elements of human activity common throughout the descriptive accounts. Likewise, the physical environment, the integrated demographic population, and active choice represented collective foundational attributes, unique to the neighborhood of Chautauqua Park. This chapter explores the implications of these findings and the broader implications of phenomenological evaluation in contemporary processes of design and planning.

5.1 Sense of Place as a Process of Transformation

The interpretation of sense of place as a whole represents a distinct shift from the evaluation of participants' accounts to the author's reading of the interrelated nature of the themes that developed throughout the accounts. As a result, this process of synthesis largely grew out of my own reflections and can therefore only be considered a preliminary description of sense of place based on the descriptive accounts of the selected residents living within Chautauqua Park.

As a continual process of transformation, this research suggests that sense of place is influenced by both the foundational attributes and human experiences individual residents encountered within the neighborhood. These experiences were loosely correlated with residential interpretations of the physical and social environment throughout some descriptive accounts.

These three constituents of the process (foundational attributes, essential experiences, and environmental interpretations) can be linked with Relph’s (1976) elements of place, which include the physical setting, human activity, and meaning ascribed within the setting and the activity. However, unlike Relph’s phenomenological interpretation of place, this research suggest that sense of place is a dynamic and directional process set upon foundational attributes that are comprised of both physical and social elements of the
environment (See Figure 4.4). In short, these foundational or 'given' attributes of place influenced residential experiences and interpretations, which collectively as a whole, helped develop an individual sense of place for participants of Chautauqua Park.

In Chautauqua Park, the physical and social foundational attributes included landscape features, designed elements, an integrated demographic population, and the concept of active choice. Common experiences of investment, interaction, and safety stemmed from this foundational set of unique geographic and social attributes. These essential experiences were also found to loosely correlate with residential interpretations of place.

One example of this relationship correlated social interpretations of the existing sense of community with residential experiences of social interaction. However, this relationship as well as other existential/interpretative correlations appeared in only a few descriptive accounts with variable features. As such, this research did not focus specifically on the actual interpretations and experiences that had been related throughout some of the conversations. Rather, this study attempted to draw attention to the broad existential/interpretative relationships found throughout the descriptive accounts. Overall, social and environmental interpretations did present themselves as common themes in their own right, and were apparent throughout the majority of conversations, thus meriting future attention and research.

Before proceeding, it is also important to note that the concept of 'active choice' was a social attribute associated with Chautauqua Park. However, the ability to select and remain at a certain residence is perhaps more of an individual attribute than it is a spatial attribute. Therefore, active choice is better understood as a foundational attribute of the participants interviewed as opposed to a foundational attribute of Chautauqua Park itself.

*Active choice*, as a foundational attribute of the social environment, was subject to the individual diversity of the participants. For some participants, the choice to remain in Chautauqua Park was related to their financial means to do so. For other participants, Chautauqua Park represented a cultural integration that they valued. Still others considered the neighborhood a part of their heritage that they did not want to lose. As a result, *active*
choice as a concept was influenced by the multiple and diverse backgrounds of each participant. However, the theme itself was consistent throughout all of the descriptive accounts and thus, has to be considered an essential theme in the experience of sense of place as encountered in Chautauqua Park.

In the end, each element including the attributes, experiences, and interpretations of the neighborhood were considered equally weighted, influential features in the development of sense of place for the selected participants. These findings suggested that sense of place could be best understood as an existential process of transformation influenced by several features found to be common throughout the descriptive accounts.

The intent of this inductive analysis of sense of place was not to devalue the richness of residential lived experience as encountered throughout Chautauqua Park. It is important to remember that for participants of this study, sense of place as a process of transformation, yielded certain emotional responses. These emotional responses were not common throughout all of the descriptive accounts. However, they were inherently tied to the participant’s understanding of the neighborhood. Therefore, we can begin to tentatively conclude that sense of place, which is continuingly informing a residents understanding of the neighborhood, inherently yields variable emotional responses consistent with concepts of place attachment.

For all participants this meant Chautauqua Park was a neighborhood that was influenced by their perspectives of reality. In short, Chautauqua Park was what individual residents made of it. The collective process of transformation did not dictate common emotional responses. As such, Chautauqua Park is a spatial location that respects diversity and at the same time can be conceptualized as exclusive. Chautauqua Park is also a good neighborhood to raise a family while it is capable of catering to individual privacy. Chautauqua Park is a historic neighborhood and allows for individual site alteration. The plurality of emotional responses is seemingly infinite.

So, to answer your question, has the process changed since we have been here? I think maybe, I am a little less hesitant to become involved in bigger initiatives in the association. We no longer feel like we are the newbies or we're stepping on
someone's toes. Now, we are more inclined to say we live here and this is our community and house and we think things should be done this way. We are a little less hesitant and getting deeply involved in some initiatives. (Julie 8/23/01)

Sense of place, as a process of transformation, is presented here simply to highlight the existence and interrelatedness of neighborhood attributes, experiences, and interpretations that are traditionally dismissed as subjective residential elements. As such, this research is an attempt to emphasize additional factors of residential lived experience contained within the horizontal landscape. It is the belief of this author, that such factors are central in understanding contemporary neighborhoods and the dynamics of place interpretation when planning and designing for any existing community.

The suggested process of transformation is not a model to define a single or generalized concept of sense of place. Rather, the process of transformation depicts the essential experiences and influencing factors of sense of place as encountered by participants in Chautauqua Park. Future research can begin to explore commonalities and differences of essential elements across multiple neighborhoods. However, researchers cannot conclude from this study that investment or any other depicted feature is an essential theme of all residential experiences of sense of place.

Finally, this research focused on the attributes of place and the experiences and interpretations of its residents thus implying that sense of place is not simply an intrinsic value of certain locales. Such aesthetic conceptions have been traditionally described as a location's 'genius loci' and equated with sense of place. In contrast, these findings suggest that sense of place is a dynamic process that to some degree exists at the intersection of any cultural and spatial convergence. Variable attributes, experiences, interpretations, and other discernable features may influence the process across geographic areas. However, place is as much of a human construct as sensing is a human tendency. To suggest that a place has no sense of place is to divide the very nature of the beast from the animal itself.
5.1.1 Implications of the Findings for Chautauqua Park

While respecting the multiple interpretations of individual residents, this phenomenological evaluation of sense of place presents common experiences and collective interpretations as encountered by residents of Chautauqua Park. As a result, this research has provided a shared foundation from which neighborhood conversations can begin to address the plurality of social and environmental interpretation in planning and designing for future community development efforts.

In Chautauqua Park the experiences of investment, social interaction, and safety were central in developing a residential sense of place. This conclusion implies that if it is desirable to maintain the existing sense of place, residents and the neighborhood association need to continue to provide for these experiences. Specifically, opportunities for residential investment would require the inhabitants to continue to identify collective neighborhood needs that would allow for individual and group alteration of the physical and social environment. Such efforts are complicated by the fact that residents are presently experiencing limited neighborhood needs and conflicts. However, future investment efforts could center on more pragmatic daily functions of the neighborhood as opposed to, larger previous efforts to 'take back the neighborhood.'

Similar to the concepts of investment, a level of organized and non-organized social interaction needs to be maintained throughout the park. The very nature of non-organized interaction cannot be addressed or controlled by groups of residents. Rather, individuals will have to continue to decide how and at what level they will interact with their neighborhoods. In contrast, organized social interaction can continue to develop in direct relationship with the efforts of association members. As an outcome of the functions and meetings of the neighborhood association, organized social interaction could develop as the central role of the association in the present time when immediate neighborhood needs are on a decline.

Finally, both individual and group efforts to establish Chautauqua Park as a safe environment where people are able to relax, is a continual need of the entire population. As suggested by a number of participants, safety and relaxation are functions of knowing your neighbor. Thus, the concepts of security and relaxation bring us in full circle in essential
experiences of sense of place as encountered in Chautauqua Park. Experiences of individual and group investment require organized and non-organized social interaction and thus generate the security and relaxation of knowing your neighbors.

In this section, I have intentionally not identified specific neighborhood issues, which I believe residents should work towards in the future. Rather, from the perspective of identifying collective experiences, these findings are presented here as a starting point for a conversation among individual stakeholders in the context of community development. As such, it is the conclusion of this researcher that the role of planners and designers within the framework of existing neighborhoods should center on models of facilitation. Specifically, designers and planners could facilitate a stakeholder conversation based on the essential experiences identified by phenomenological evaluation, as a starting point in the design and planning processes. This concept is further explored in the following section.

5.2 Phenomenological Evaluation in the Context of Design and Planning

The nature of the phenomenological research focuses on the common themes presented throughout the multiple descriptive accounts. A phenomenological perspective respects the unique understandings and perspectives of each individual throughout the interviews. However, ultimately the analysis is concerned with the threads of coherence as opposed to the scope of diversity. Thus, in the context of the findings of this phenomenological evaluation of sense of place, the plurality of experiences and interpretations were not the focus. Rather, the intent of this phenomenological research was to identify the essence of the object of study within the subjective matrix of lived experience.

To argue that such a research approach is appropriate in the fields of planning and design, first requires a closer inspection of the analytical process. The nature of phenomenological interpretation is inductive as opposed to reductive. An inductive approach investigates the entire complexity of the problem in an attempt to interpret the essence of the phenomena. Whereas, a reductive process investigates a limited portion of the subject matter in attempt to generalize larger overall relationships and structures.
Throughout an inductive phenomenological investigation, the multiple perspectives of individual participants are considered in the development of an understanding of the essential characteristics. From a phenomenological perspective such individualistic diversity is conceptualized within the single subjective matrix of lived experience. As such, a phenomenological approach does begin to present itself as a somewhat acceptable methodology in context of postmodern plurality by acknowledging the existence of multiple perspectives. However, from a phenomenological standpoint, this diversity is understood as being contained within a single subjective reality.

As a result, a phenomenological approach is best conceptualized as a bridge between reductive positivism and postmodern plurality. A phenomenological approach investigates the lived experience of multiple perspectives within a context of a single subjective reality. Therefore, in the context of this research, a phenomenological approach was neither 'this nor that' but rather, a means to move past the shortcomings reductive positivism and the complexity of a plural reality.

As such, a phenomenological evaluation of the essence of an experience provides an appropriate starting point for a conversation within the diversity of modern communities. Phenomenological interpretations can reveal a 'common ground' from which planners and designers can move forward with individual stakeholders. The participatory and inductive nature of investigation respects individualistic perspectives while, the search for common threads respects the need to make progress.

Finally, having discussed the general implications of phenomenological data collection and analysis within a context of planning and design, there is a need to address concepts of verification. Throughout this research, a 'negative case' analysis was employed as a form of data verification. This technique was critical to reinforce the interpretations of themes as threads of coherence among the individual descriptive accounts.

Throughout some of the interviews, common themes had not developed within the context of specific conversations. The participants associated with these interviews were re-contacted and asked to comment. Specifically, participants were asked, "(X) was a theme
that we did not have the opportunity to discuss and developed in the context of other conversations. Have you encountered (X) in Chautauqua Park?”

All participants, who were re-contacted, discussed the selected themes in the context of their neighborhood experiences. Such responses, focused on the experiences of the participants, reinforced the appropriateness of the technique within the context of the phenomenological approach. As such, the value of the negative case technique, itself, is the ability of the researcher to verify their analysis of descriptive accounts as essential themes in the understanding of the object of study.

The negative case technique itself was not suggested within any of the reviewed phenomenological literature. Rather, Dr. Grudens-Schuck of the Department of Agricultural Education at Iowa State introduced the concept and suggested that the technique may be appropriate in the context of this study. It is covered here to highlight its suitability in future phenomenological research.

From these conclusions, it is easy to believe that a phenomenological approach may be best situated within existing communities. However, it is the belief of this author that a phenomenological evaluation of essential experiences is an appropriate starting point in the conversation of any community development context. Specifically, a phenomenological evaluation could identify common themes among appropriate stakeholders even in the context of ‘greenfield’ development. Such an understanding of the threads of coherence could better inform designers and planners of existing issues within any identified spatial boundaries. Phenomenological evaluation is being suggested here as an appropriate starting point within the context of existing design and planning processes. The implications of such an approach are covered in the following sections.

5.2.1 Methodological Limitations

An existential-phenomenological approach cannot be considered without first identifying its limitations. Two primary limitations directly affect the implementation and use of a phenomenological approach in the context of design and planning. These factors are consecutively reviewed in the following paragraphs.
The first limitation of an existential-phenomenological approach regards the necessary commitment of time and resources. As with all qualitative approaches, a phenomenological approach requires a long time frame for interviewing participants and analyzing the large quantities of data. The process of data collection also requires willing participants that are able to commit their own time. As a result, the pragmatic implementation of the approach is not feasible for projects that involve a quick 'turn around' time or have limited budgets for analysis.

The second limitation of a phenomenological approach regards the inductive nature of analysis. The intent of a phenomenological approach is to decipher the essence of the object of study. As a result, the approach is not suited to investigate the entire diversity of perspectives regarding the subject matter. However, this limitation of a phenomenological approach can also be considered its strength. As will be discussed in the following sections, a phenomenological approach can identify collective themes or 'common ground’ from which planners and designers can facilitate stakeholder conversations.

5.2.2 Methodological Implications for Planning

As alluded in the previous section, phenomenological evaluation can begin to reveal shared foundations of common elements within a context of plural interpretation. Such an evaluation can be conceptualized as an appropriate starting point in the context of traditional rational planning. The scope of critiques of rational planning is not explored in this section. Rather, this section explores how phenomenological analysis can better inform the most widely practiced style of planning.

Rational planning is simply understood as “goal-directed problem solving activity” typically involving a cyclic process of problem identification, goal setting, alternative development, solution evaluation, and decision-making (Anderson 1995). However, within the narrow focus of a problem solving, analysis is often limited to quantifiable data in a top-down objective framework. The multiple subjective perspectives of residents often receive limited consideration. Thus, the goals of authority and the economic focus of analysis frequently bias the resulting plan.
Conceptualized as an alternative form of community analysis, phenomenological evaluation is presented here as a method of informing and involving local citizens in the decision-making process. As a starting point, phenomenological evaluation can highlight common experiences central to all stakeholders. With these findings in hand, the planner can operate as a facilitator of a conversation between stakeholders in an attempt to generate community based goals and objectives. The central key of phenomenological evaluation is its ability to identify common experiences among a diverse population in an attempt to move past conflicting perspectives. As a facilitator, the planner is better situated to help the community identify common interests and goals. Overall, the hypothetical planning process would be more focused on collective goals and objectives rather than, selective issues and a problem solving mentality. Figure 5.1 illustrates the proposed planning process.

As a proposed alternative, the revised planning process is presented here to suggest one possible application of the phenomenological method in practice. The actual implementation of such a planning process was beyond the scope of this research. However,
as a tentative concept, the proposed revision does begin to address issues of participation, subjective appropriateness, and authority in a post-industrial paradigm of sustainability.

5.2.3 Methodological Implications for Design

Unlike the planning process, the design process is often a linear sequence of steps directed by a defined client that requires a “systematic decision-making process” (LaGro 2001). Steps include programming, site inventory, site analysis, concept development, and design development, which culminate in some form of a product for the defined client. Often, client interests have to be balanced with design perspectives and ethical obligations of the professional. The presence of a defined client, the terminal authority of the designer, and the rational top-down tendency of existing design processes often limits the designer’s ability to consider multiple interpretations or experiences of the development site.

Within this framework, traditional landscape architecture site analysis includes biological, physical, and cultural aspects. Subjective interpretations of the site are limited to only the designer’s insights. As a result, the aesthetic, emotional, and sensual qualities of the site are perceived only through the eyes of the designer. In response, this research suggests that a phenomenological evaluation of the site could generate an inventory of multiple existential interpretations. Specifically, phenomenological evaluation could provide a foundation of shared experiences from which multiple perspectives could be considered.

Unlike the focus of phenomenological evaluation within the context of planning, the goal of a phenomenological approach within the design process would be to highlight common experiences as to understand the site from multiple perspectives. The awareness of shared subjective experiences could better inform holistic designs of the land. Figure 5.2 suggests how this method might be conceived in the interpretative process of design.

Participatory processes are not new to planning or landscape architecture. One example would include variations of ‘visioning’ process employed throughout communities

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1 'Sustainability' has been defined as an emerging paradigm in post-industrial society that has been flattening traditional hierarchical social structures under growing pressures of social justice and environmental movements (Thering and Doble 2000).
today. Concepts of ‘handing over the pen’ and citizen control are constantly altering how we conceptualize planning and design processes. What is new with a phenomenological approach is its ability to reveal common and shared existential interpretations within the horizontal landscape of lived experience. A clear understanding of subjective reality presents itself as a bridge between the great divide of positivism and plurality.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 5.2 Proposed Design Process**

### 5.3 Implications for Future Research and Practice

The implications for future research largely center on the applications of the explored existential phenomenological approach in academics and practice. On the academic side of things, future phenomenological research needs to explore the essence of sense of place across multiple communities. We need to begin to discover if threads of coherence present themselves among the individual essential experiences of residents within distinct neighborhoods. Only through such a process, could we begin to define or dismiss a generalized concept of sense of place.

The explored phenomenological approach conceptualized in practice, begins to suggest more humanistic approaches to design and planning are appropriate for modern development issues. With a critical awareness of the modern complexity of neighbors and
communities, I hope practitioners will continue to scrutinize their processes in the hope of developing greater participation and sustainability in design and planning. I believe the addition of phenomenological evaluation, as a starting point within existing design and planning processes, presents itself as initial steps in that direction. Many other possibilities exist. However, only through the exploration of alternative processes within practice could we begin to draw any conclusions. As such, this research will conclude with a general call for renewing a critical discourse between 'how' and 'why.'
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD

Tell me about living in Chautauqua Park. How long have you been living here?

Richard:
I moved here in 1984. It was interesting how I found this neighborhood. I was driving around the city of Des Moines, I was from West Des Moines and it was an afternoon after church. I was driving down Hickman Road out there and I saw all these trees up on the hill. I thought, it must be a park up there. And I thought 'I like parks.' I took the first turn off Hickman onto Chautauqua Parkway, up the winding drive. I became more and more impressed. It truly felt like I was driving into a whole new environment. It didn't feel like Des Moines, I thought I was in a park to visit. And then I got to the turn and came up to the top-of-the-landing and I saw homes. I said 'this is Des Moines?' So I drove around in here and saw all these old homes, with all these beautiful trees. And I thought this is just not like Des Moines, I thought Des Moines was flat and so on. So that's how I first became interested in this neighborhood. There were no homes for sale at that time; some of them were in various forms of disrepair. So that was my first initial experience.

So what was enough for you to purchase home in this neighborhood? What was it that convinced you that needed to live here?

Richard:
It was the winding streets, it was the pillars at the entrance, that attracted my attention. It was the architecture, definitely the architecture and as I said, homes were in various stages of disrepair. But I love old homes I could see beyond that; I could see the potential beauty. So that attracted me, the problem was finding a place or home here. Because there were no for-sale signs out there. So, I thought that I would just start walking around and introducing myself. I met some people in the neighborhood, and someone said you know Mrs. Waters house is for sale. And she's an old lady and her husband died; they gave me the whole history of Mrs. Waters. It was so sad, because her and her husband moved into this neighborhood and built this home between the two wars and as soon as the home was built, her husband died. They had planned to open the home to parties and have friends over. But, after her husband died, she never did. It is so sad. So I asked her if her home was for sale. And she said no! No, it is not for sale. That was a different house. So then I got a realtor, and he started looking around for homes that were for sale. He found this home; a family had just moved out of it. And he said, take a look at it. So I said OK, and pulled up into the driveway. I had not spotted this house. And it had a one-car garage. It did not look like this. And I thought him, this would be a lot of work. The realtor said just walk in, take a look inside. If you don't like it, it doesn't matter. So I walked in, and saw the stairs and dining room and windows. I thought wholly smoke, this home is beautiful. And I said, 'I love this house.' I will buy this house. And that's how I found this place.

So has the neighborhood lived up to your original hopes?

Richard:
Yes. But it was a lot of work. The neighborhood has lived up to my original hopes. But you have to understand. The homes, and fixing, the repairing and the lawns. Stuff was growing wild. A lot of renters in the neighborhood. And the neighborhood was mostly renters and that was not to my liking. There was some drug activity.

Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual's identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
So when you talk about work, you are talking about both your individual residence and the neighborhood itself?

Richard:
I am talking about feeling safe here. In the neighborhood, besides just in my house. I want to feel safe here as well, that's why I was living in West Des Moines. But I didn't know how to get at all that stuff yet, a safe neighborhood. And being in those days, a local broadcaster and celebrity, I bought into the neighborhood and the word started to spread, that I was here. Neighbors started coming by and introducing themselves. Those kinds of things. We got talking about why I moved to the neighborhood and what my hopes and dreams were for the neighborhood and things like that. And I found out they had a vision as well. About what our neighborhood should be like and look like. So then we formed a neighborhood association. And from that, the first thing was to clean up the vacant yards, Douglas Park, our ravine out there, and to mow our lawns. So, we planned how we were going to get that clean. It was going to take all of us; there were old cars down there. So we got together and formed a plan. You have to have a plan when you are taking on something as huge as that. So the plan was to start with the easy stuff, just cleaning out and fixing up our yards. That would be the easiest thing we could do, that would give the neighborhood a better appearance. The next thing we did was to start painting. And you know how that goes, when one neighbor sees a ladder, the next thing the scaffolding starts coming out. Soon home repair trucks were pulling in and it started to snowball. They started to see other people fixing up their homes and they started to fix up their homes. From that little project, we started to talk to the city of Des Moines and told them what we were going to do. And we told them our plans to clean out the ravine. And they said fine, you get the junk out and we will get the trucks. So we enlisted some of the National Guard and they came to our neighborhood. We didn't know anything about pulling in other organizations, but that's how you get things done. We started thinking about these things as a neighborhood. So the guard came in and those guys are workers. One guy carried out a stove himself. That was another thing; we send the word out to the media. So they came and made a cute little bit out of it, but that was our beginning. We were so proud of ourselves. We as a neighborhood were starting to see some beauty out of our work. And once we attracted attention, by the cleanup project and getting the media involved, neighbors started opening up their homes. And we started seeing people driving through our neighborhood, not getting out of their cars, just driving through. And we thought maybe we should get the police, we didn't know what was going on. The traffic was because people knew of the historical significance of the neighborhood. We did not know that yet. Those were folks that used to live in the neighborhood. They were coming back.

Were they ex-residents?

Richard:
Yes. Residents and friends of residents that use to live here. They were coming into the neighborhood and looking. We worked on that plan the first year and got quite a bit done. Year number two we started on the drug houses and the folks that really hadn't done anything or hadn't picked up on anything we had done. So we had to develop a plan of how we could interact with the renters without alienating them. And so we were successful with about 50 percent. So then the next strategy was, if we could not get those folks to help out, we would find out who was the owner. We started putting pressure on the owners. The only way we knew how to find them was through the city records. So we were going to the planning and zoning department and the city started wondering what was going on here. What where people doing over there in Chautauqua Park? So now we got city people... telling us valuable information on how to get things done. This is what we've been waiting for. Now we would get something we were not really used to. So the city said that they wanted to become partners with us. We want to help you, fix the lights and streets. The neighborhood finance corporation developed a city plan, where we were a designated neighborhood, and now available for NFC dollars. That gave us the leverage we needed to get home renters out and homeowners in. For NFC says we're not going to look at your income but you have to live in this neighborhood. They will give you the money but you have to
live here for five years. But, after 15 years you will get a portion of the money back. So there is an incentive now to come in here, buy the home, fix the home, and then at least live here for 15 years to receive some of your money back. So now folks were starting to fix up their homes and instead of being renters they were homeowners. And the value of the home started to increase and the owners who were living somewhere else saw that they could make money on that home. And they put it up for sale. So that's what happened, and it started the transformation of this neighborhood through the efforts of the NFC and the city making good on their promises. The city improved the curbing and the streets were repaired. Then the city started using us as one of their promotional tools of how neighborhoods could start taking back their neighborhoods. When the city partners with the neighborhood, that can start the transformation. So they have spoken very highly of the things that have gone on in this neighborhood. The neighbors got involved with partners and that started the transformation.

You mentioned the word home. Do you now refer to Chautauqua as your home? Having originally been from West Des Moines?

Richard:
This is home.

And how long did that transformation take?

Richard:

Well you know, year number one I fell in love with the home and we got busy here. The transformation of home came to me when I truly invested myself into it, not just the home but the neighborhood. It was like now that I had invested in this, I am going to spend a lot more of my energy and time to make it better. And so that's when it became home. And now when people talk about the neighborhood, they talk about our home and garden tour. Neighbors opened up their homes to people and they come into our homes. When I brought this idea up a lot of people were like 'whoa.' But there was a lot of historical significance in these homes. I just leapfrogged over our research about Chautauqua Park. Probably year number four we got into the research of the neighborhood and found out about when the homes were built and their architectural significance. Including all the wonderful information and history about the neighborhood. Then we used this information for the designation of the neighborhood with Barber Long and the City of Des Moines. She helped us write the application for the designation. Along with that, I produced the videotape of the neighborhood that was a part of the report and application. And of course they had never had a video with an application, and when the committee saw that, the committee thought the neighborhood surely deserved the national designation. So we had our designation. We were really moving. When we got that designation, the pride we had, we had come full circle and we opened the homes for tour after that. We had about 8 or 10 homes on the tour. And the week before that we were polishing the neighborhood as best we could. Even if their homes weren't on the tour all the people were working in their yards. In itself it was a success. Those that came by were very respectful of our homes. It was so neat.

So what is it like to live in the neighborhood today? Some 15 years later.

Richard:

Well, you have some people who have left the neighborhood. Some of the original stakeholders have moved on. Like the president of our first neighborhood association, she had left for Washington State after her husband had been transferred. We have known people that came in and people that have moved on. As the leadership changed, the commitment and involvement is not as intense. Because, originally our need was
greater. And our focus was better defined. Today we've lost our focus and we don't have a vision of what needs to be. And as a result we don't have the motivation. Folks have picked up and moved on. What I have suggested the neighborhood needs to do is to create a master plan. And it would take you to the next step, I don't want to tell you what that step is, but let's get together and create that together. And have some vision for the neighborhood. And that's what I'm waiting to see, that vision. A vision of where we want to go from here and how we are going to get there. Secondly, our surrounding neighborhoods are starting to change. The diversity is starting to change. There are influxes of folks that are coming in that are poor. They are renters, so they're not taking care of their properties. So what I have said to our neighborhood, is now that we have accomplished this in our neighborhood, we should not sit on our laurels, when all around us is going to decay. We need to partner outside of the neighborhood, and help them take back their neighborhoods. Get things cleaned up. I'm seeing that kind of stuff on 13th Street, a real sore spot. A continuing problem of trash, old cars loud noises and those things are what I am seeing.

What is your daily experience within this neighborhood? After a typical day at work what is your interaction with the neighborhood?

Richard:
For me, since I am so busy at the University, I leave early in the morning and I don't get home till late in the evening. I am gone six to seven days a week. It is dark when I get home, so I don't have a great experience, except for a day like today. I should be at the University and working on something. But when I am not there, I am here. If I didn't have you as an excuse, then I would be over there working. So this gives me a chance see my neighborhood, to experience again. One thing that I love about what I see in this neighborhood, is that when I come home I can sit on the deck and listen to the birds chirping and watch the squirrels run around, look at the trees, all the beauty that nature has to offer, right on my deck. It is relatively quiet, in the summertime with all the trees, you can let the house open and the breezes go. My stress level goes down once I get home. If you could take my blood pressure when I drive through those pillars and hit this house, it is almost down to normal. That is the joy I have. I am so happy when I walk in, it is hard to describe. I love it. I am sure other people love their neighborhoods but, I love mine, I can say hello to my neighbors. In West Des Moines, I didn't know my neighbors. People would come and go. They were mobile, a mobile society. Here, I can trust my neighbors. So my neighbors have a key to my home and security codes to my home. So when I am gone, they can come in. And when they are gone I can watch their home. I go in and feed their dogs and get their mail. That is trust in the neighborhood. That is how I feel about this neighborhood. A sense of calm, pride, relaxation and I can entertain. That's what we wanted in this neighborhood.

The issue of safety, is that new in the relationship to living in West Des Moines?

Richard:
In West Des Moines, I never even thought about it. Because income levels are higher and so family lifestyles are a lot different out there. But you don't have much diversity. There was not much diversity so in itself that was West Des Moines. I did not even think about. When you moved back into the city you have folks of various income levels and different cultures. So you have to rely on street smarts living in the city. You just don't leave yourself open, but you have that in West Des Moines now too.

So you mentioned the diversity, do you see this as a benefit?

Richard:
I do. I think that kind of diversity is good. It is good to grow up into that and around that diversity. You gain an appreciation of other people. You do not look at people differently when you grow up in a diverse neighborhood. When you grow up in an all white environment, then when you do come into a diverse environment there is a sense of uneasiness, a sense of not being safe and secure. If you are living in your community there and people of diversity come into your neighborhood you are looking at them differently. I have had several occasions, when I have been driving around in a new suburb in West Des Moines and I see people looking at me and then all of a sudden I have a police officer come up on me. Simply, because I'm driving through the neighborhood. I have had occasions when the police have stopped me. And have asked so what are you doing? And so knowing who I am, I don't have to respond to that kind of intimidation. So I will tell them and we will get into a discussion and then if he wants to try to arrest me, and I will tell them, you arrest me just because I am out here trying to look at the neighborhood, there is not enough money in the city of West Des Moines to handle the law suit that I will file against you. So don't mess with me, because I haven't broken the law. So that's the kind of stuff that I don't like. And it still happens out there, it still bothers me. Walking in the malls is one of those things. I hate walking in the malls, people walk away from you, they will try to avoid you, they put their hands on their pockets and their purses, a move their purses from this side that I am walking on, to the other side. All these little signals that I get from people, and I say these folks have not lived around a diverse environment. So as a result, they think that I am there to pick their pockets or steal their purse. I could see that if I was dressed like some of the young people that dressed with their pants down below their butts and their shirts out. But if I am dressed like a businessman and I am walking down in a suit and tie, I don't expect you to be looking at me and all of a sudden put your hands on your pocket. Or grab your children. I hate that. It is so embarrassing and it is embarrassing to them. All they are trying to do is to protect their families and in trying to keep their little safe and secure zone, they have alienated and embarrassed me. And they have given no thought to who I am. And I am a person just like they are. And why are you to assume that I am there to take what you have, or to hurt you.

Richard:
Yeah. Yes. It is that comfort. In this neighborhood, because we have that diversity we are used to seeing people of different colors and different races. We are used to knowing how we can judge someone. We don't judge how they look or how they dress. If there are kids in the neighborhood, wearing their pants down low, we know their parents. So we know who they are. That is kids being kids. There just trying to be cool. But folks don't understand that kind of stuff. They have a reaction to it that embarrasses. I have to go downtown, and speak to corporate sponsors that need tickets. Those folks that we have put together packets for and still call up needing more tickets for "very special people." I just need to have four more tickets...

.... There is always something going on.

Richard:
We will grill out on the deck. Have some friends come over. Sit on the deck drink some beer.

So then when you return this evening and your blood pressure settles down, how will you relax?
Neighborhood friends?

Richard:
Yes, neighborhood friends and outsiders. We know so many people; I try not to have a lot of people here. You know, I don't like to have a lot of folks here at one time. Two or three people or couples at a time, so then we can move about and enjoy each others company. So I will usually have two or three people here and grill out and enjoy ourselves. Talk, laugh, and get into arguments. The most folks I have had come through here is during the open house. The lines were down the street. I remember talking to Bill Knapp one time; he's a big guy around town. He is the guy who saved Drake at one time. Because, as Drake became surrounded by the city, Drake was in jeopardy, with all the dilapidated homes. The parents believed that their children were not safe. That was the perception. Bill Knapp comes in and buys up the eastern side of the University and he builds beautiful apartment buildings and a hotel building. That shored up the eastern edge of the campus and folks began to feel secure again. And so one day I was talking to Bill and he said how are things going over their in Chautauqua Park? And I said you have never been over there? And he said, sure I used to hang out over there in that neighborhood. I love the homes over there. I said is that right? You should come to our home and garden tour. And he said well I have. You have? Yeah, he said, in fact I was in your house. I said you're kidding me. He said yeah, I came over and had a tour of your house. You have a lovely house. You have a great home. The man could buy anything he wants and he has been in my little old house. And he said you have a beautiful home and that made me feel real good. It is amazing the number of people I have spoken with that used to dream of living here.

One day when I was working out in my front yard, this car drove by slowly and she turned around and came back the other way. And she pulled up again and stopped and said do you own this house? And I said yes. And she said you have a nice home. And I said thanks who are you? And she said well me and my husband built this house back in 1938. And I said you are kidding me. And she said well he died and I have not been back here since. I notice all the writings and reviews you and the neighborhood association had been getting. And I said well madam, would you like to come in? And she said no I could not do that. And I said well yeah, so go right in. She asked are you going to take me in? No, go right in I will continue working in the yard. Take as much time as you want. I was mowing the grass and raking the yard and it had been an hour. So I'm thinking I better go in and check on her. So I go inside and she is sitting in the living room. She is sitting there, thinking. And she said, how you have taken care of this place. I remember all the times we had in this house. That was to me, the ultimate compliment, someone to come back into your home and compliment you after all those years. To me it is like I am the caretaker of this property. I am going to take care of this as best as I can then when I pass it on to the next person that person will have appreciated all the work I put in. And that person will take it to the next level. So that is something.

Richard:
Well, when I was growing up in Gary Indiana, well originally I was from Mississippi. But, my parents died when I was five or six and my mother's sister came to care for us. She brought us to Gary, Indiana to live with her. So we lived in the inner city and we had a little old house that was rented but it was the best house on the block. It was an oasis in the ghetto. We had a lawn and a yard that was green. And the house was always painted and well kept. And it got into my head that, that was how I was raised. And it was my goal that I always wanted to own a house. Own something that I could be proud of. And not something that you just live in and move out of. And so since I have been a kid, I was always looking for the right home. And I found this place, and it was perfect. This house is me; it reflects my personality. This home represents me. When my brothers and sisters come and visit they say 'yup, this is exactly the way you described it.' Because we used to talk about what I wanted and this is what I got. I don't have to live here. I could live anywhere I wanted. I could live in West Des Moines but I do not choose to live in West Des Moines. Although, they are now building homes that reflect this type of house. And they are brand-new and so it is tempting. I am not there yet, but I have been looking. Because, builders are building homes that can truly look old and have an old feel but are totally modern, the wiring, the foundation, the plumbing. Some of the plumbing here is still the
1938 plumbing and the wiring still 1938 wiring. And the windows are still old windows. Although, I did the storm windows and insulation in the attic. My utility bill went from $238 down to $137. $137 to heat this house, is it not amazing a house this size? You should see the insulation in the attic it is huge. The utility company comes in here checking it all the time. They can’t believe it. They say you should be spending more money. And I’m not.

So reflecting back on all of your experiences as a resident, how has your understanding of the neighborhood changed? Or has it been a constant?

Richard:
I like to say the neighborhood continues to reinvent itself. Transform itself. So that’s how I see it. It is going to change. I hope it will change, with young families moving in. And so when I came here there were a lot of kids, and they all have grown up. Other changes, if I were moving in here today, I would not have to be as busy with a house. I could spend time to enjoy the house. I could slowly think about improvements to the house. As opposed to moving in and having to start to work on it right away because it needed improvements to live in it and to be comfortable. Your comfort level. So that’s a change.

I think still the safety issue is important. To have a safe environment is important. I still think that some realtors, we call it redlining, discriminated against this neighborhood. In other words, they don’t show clients the neighborhood or inner city homes. If you say I’m looking for a traditional home, I would like to live in the city; they don’t like to show it. They rather show a home in West Des Moines or west of here that will sell for a lot more money. They can make a lot more in commissions than they can coming in here. So they will say you don’t want to live here. It is the inner city. You may have drugs and problems with the schools kids. So, they will take you west. Unless a client specifically says show me a traditional neighborhood and the city.

How many of the neighbors do you believe had to say that?

Richard:
I do not know if it is common but I have heard stories from the neighbors that moved in that actually had to say that because the realtor was trying to steer them away. We have improved this neighborhood. A home like this in West Des Moines would sell for well over $200,000. But here this home is valued at probably $98,000. I had folks come here asked me if I would sell my home and I said no. But, I thought that was pretty good to have someone come my house and asked if I would sell. If you drive to the neighborhood I don’t think you will see a home for sale. It is the inner city. You may have drugs and problems with the schools kids. So, they will take you west. Unless a client specifically says show me a traditional neighborhood and the city.

So as we have been talking today, you have drawn a portrait of the neighborhood. Has this portrait included everything you believe it is vital in understanding this neighborhood?

Richard:
I think we have just about covered it. When you look at the neighborhood you should look at all the physical features the neighborhood has to offer and the uniqueness of the neighborhood, which, this neighborhood is. This is definitely a unique neighborhood. The trees and the surroundings make this a beautiful neighborhood.
But what is also unique to this neighborhood is the people that live here. Most of the folks who live in this neighborhood could choose to live wherever they wanted to live. And they choose to be here. That is what I think is remarkable about our neighborhood, the people and the relationships, and coming home.

That is interesting. Because when you said a house comes up for sale the neighbors bring in people they already know. And it is a social bond.

Richard:
That's right. Because you know, that years ago, they would not let African Americans buy into this neighborhood. That was an interesting part of history, but that was history. We are not redlining, but it is sort of networking. We can just about determine the person who comes into the neighborhood, which would be the stakeholder not just a homeowner and a participant. And I think that is important.
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW WITH HAROLD AND CAROL

So tell me about living in Chautauqua. How long have you lived here?

Harold:
We have lived here nearly 29 years.

And that is both you and your wife?

Harold:
Yes, and a daughter who is 30 and long gone.

Can you remember the first time you learned of the neighborhood?

Harold:
Well I grew up down on the corner of 12th and Jefferson. Very close, you know. There was a strange sociological thing going on. Us kids would never come up in here and play. It was exclusive in those days.

Those days being?

Harold:
The '50s.

So you grew up just down the street and pillars were cut off?

Harold:
Yes, I do not ever remember being told not to go up there or anything but, we did not walk through here. We always played down in the ravine but never walked up through here. It's amazing, I don't know why.

When was the first time you walked through the neighborhood?

Harold:
Later on in high school I had friends in the neighborhood. I would drive into the park for parties and stuff. I still never really experienced the neighborhood; until I was 35. My brother called and said there is the neatest house in captivity up in Chautauqua Park. He said why don't you go look at it? I said no Mike, we just moved, we are not even unpacked. He said no, just come on. And I was just a little farm boy, did not expect to have a nice house like this. And we came up and it had a great big swimming pool in the back, which a couple years ago blew out from ground pressure. A big, old in-ground pool, which we enjoyed greatly. I might get to some neighborhood aspects of that. The neighborhood got to use it as a watering hole. At night we would have gatherings of 20 or 30 people, it was a wonderful gathering place for the neighborhood. But, my brother just brought me over here to look at it and when I saw it, it was beautiful. Also, I do not know if you want to get into this much interpretation but my wife and I are a multi-racial couple. We spent most of our lives working in civil rights and stuff like that and so with this whole Des Moines scare, realtors would used to redline this neighborhood. They used to redline terribly. When I came to this neighborhood I said God, I'll take that, run you crazy honkeys. They said you're out of your mind. It was the 70's, 71.

Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual's identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
Where had you just moved from?

Harold:
It was Oak Park just up by Chuck's Restaurant. We had liked it but we liked this much better. I saw this place and I was sold. That is the difference between us psychologically. I saw it and I wanted it. She came in with a pad and paper going how much is this? She's very analytical and I am very emotional and responsive.

So what was the initial draw?

Harold:
I just consider this a beautiful home. I just like it aesthetically. Of course, the pool was no small draw. I swam every day of my life and my daughter became an excellent swimmer and enjoyed it. All the little kids and their parents enjoyed it. I believe in the village concept. One thing that Chautauqua Park offers, because of its natural amphitheater-like form, it is small enough that you can know everybody. I'm not saying that I know everybody in every household but, close. It is conducive to community life. You have the neighborhood meetings and it's not overcrowded with 500 people or something.

So has the neighborhood lived up to your original hopes?

Harold:
More than so. We struggled with the first ten years or so. We had 10 break-ins in the first ten years. And, we struggled with that. One guy broke the window and took the microwave while we were asleep. But all he had to do was to reach in this window back here. But, we have not had a problem since.

So, you had 10 break-ins?

Harold:
Yes, in the first ten years and we stayed. I am a minister and a psychoanalyst. So I was doing a friend's wedding and we came home and the place was trashed. It just threw us. You know, we open the door and you see your place trashed. They opened every drawer but they did not break anything or stealing anything. They were probably looking for drugs or money. And since we don't do drugs and I don't have cash lying around the house there was nothing to steal. But, it was a traumatic experience. You come home for months and open the door real slow. Then it continued and we thought we might just not make it. But then, it calmed down. And it hasn't happened in 20 some years now.

That was the beginning of the '80s?

Harold:
Yeah, but also the perception is warped in Des Moines. They see this as a black neighborhood in the inner city. But, it is at least half white. I believe there are more white couples in here than black. They are predisposed to racist ideas.
Well, we put steel doors on my office but I can’t remember anything else. They stopped and we haven’t had any problems in 20 some years. So that was, our choice, and it is hard to do in Iowa, to live in a diverse neighborhood.

This is an interesting issue and came up often with Richard. The issue of safety was an initial concern but no longer bothers him.

Harold:
That is a good example. Because who in hell is going to take from Richard? They would have wished to have never broken into his house. No, but Richard has been a wonderful neighbor. We have been friends for over 30 years now. I met him even before he moved into this neighborhood, a quite a bit after we moved in. I don’t know how to explain it. There is just a bunch of special people in this neighborhood. Now we got of course some people that I do not agree with, a splinter group outside of the group. I have grown up and been educated in a way that is different from most. Sometimes, it is just hard to find where you fit in. The neighborhood does well; we just have a little splinter group that in my mind, that they are not mentally healthy. It is not my place to judge that but; I am trying to be honest emotionally. They didn't want the halfway house or the juvenile hall at the bottom of the hill. But, they all claim to be good Christians. I have a theory of teenage problems; they are doing exactly what this society has taught them.

So were there any other difficulties or pleasures that you didn't anticipate?

Harold:
We somewhat anticipated that one. But also, my partners and my mother were well disposed to moving here. So one of my partners moved here in 75 and stayed until 85. And then, my mother and brother moved right down the street. So, I really love the neighborhood so much that I was really selling it.

So, where were you originally from? You had mentioned that you lived on 12th but did you grow up in the neighborhood?

Harold:
We had lived on 12th and Jefferson until we had moved to 30th and Forest across from the Drake dorms. I grew up throughout my high school career there and Dowling before that.

When you moved into Chautauqua, how long did it take before it felt like it was home?

Harold:
Chautauqua is home for me now for life. But, the first year was a little rough. The first three years was adjusting to the unknown. Like, are we going to get hit again? So, there were adjustments and, just getting to know people. But, Carol and I are very extroverted; we don't have much trouble meeting people. Also, I consider this the San Francisco of Iowa. We had this great diversity that almost no neighborhood in Des Moines had. And, we had Pakistani doctors, Indian pharmacists, blacks, and Felicia as the first Chicano here. But I liked it. This little neighborhood had its own little dance troop.

So what's in like today? Thirty years later in this neighborhood.

Harold:
Well, we don't have as many kids in this neighborhood. Which, I miss.
We used to have a rule, anybody could swim but kids under 16 had to have a parent with them. And, we didn't negotiate that. It worked to perfection. I wanted families to be responsible for their kids. The pool blew up 15 years ago, so it has been a long time.

So, where were the kids coming from? Were they coming from beyond pillars?

Harold:
No, I will be honest they weren't. They were mostly the people that got to know us within the park. It was not a big enough area to invite North Des Moines in. Nieces and nephews would be there every day after school.

I have noted in Iowa the relative lack of residential pools.

Harold:
Well, it is not a good state to have a pool in. But, all the affluence went with the white flight. So whatever little affluence there was around here went to West Des Moines. They're a lot of pools out in West Des Moines now. But, I can't take care of a pool anymore. So, I'm glad it is gone. But, I think that it was one of the best-used pools for people gathering. To me, gathering is almost the sacred word. Just to have an environment that people can sit around. I really value that.

So, at its height the pool is really functioning as a community pool.

Harold:
Yeah, I am sure some people would say I never got invited but I would never turn anyone down. We chose never to get involved as the responsible parties for children but we had to do that.

So, how is your daily experience different than it was 30 years ago?

Harold:
Well, we are a very politicized neighborhood. We used to have Dan Johnson, our county attorney, Earl Willis the state Senator living in the neighborhood. We had some really wonderful people living in the neighborhood. A lot of lawyers and doctors that, are gone now. Doctors wouldn't live in the neighborhood now because of status. I even have friends who would ask if they should bring their old cars when they came in the neighborhood. Talk about overt racism.

You mentioned the status of the neighborhood. Do you believe the demographics have changed?

Harold:
I think they've changed. You can tell on TV and the media ideas of North Des Moines. Broadcasters will say in West Des Moines we had a parade and then on the North side they drop their voice. The media still refers to the Hispanic influx as aliens; we just don't understand people that are not like us. We create our own problems.

Would you describe the process of your experiences as they have changed?

Harold:
In the '50s the black community had not moved into the north side. Then there was a gradual change in that during the '60s. I would say it was never more than 50 percent black but, the perception of the community, mainly realtors, saw it as a black neighborhood.

So is this the '60s redlining?

Harold:
Yes, and into the '70s.

Carol:
It was not brought to our awareness of the deed. Yes, we got our deed from the bank and said no person from the black community will be allowed into the neighborhood. I didn't realize that it was that blatant here in Des Moines.

Yeah, that was in the '30s with the restrictive covenant...
... Can you describe an event that typifies a regular day in your experiences the neighborhood?

Harold:
They're not weekly things, but we do have a strong neighborhood association. It is a little screwed up these days with that splinter group that I was telling you about. And, it has hurt us. But you met Richard; we have some great people here.

Is this splinter group that you're referring to the individuals pushing for historical designation?

Carol:
Yes, local historic designation. Yes, a lot of us don't want to have to... Harold: But, we have the Christmas party, Octoberfest, and the gazebo. However, I consider that normal behavior for a group. I don't expect everyone to be homogenized.

Citing the neighborhood association as a typified event, why is this so important for you?

Harold:
Well, after a winter like this, it gets us back together. I did not get to any meetings this winter. But like the Octoberfest we'll get like 20 people moving through it and 10 of us stay there and visit. They are good events but we don't always turn out the crowds.

Why are these qualities in the neighborhood important to you? Individuals in West Des Moines are not concerned with an association.

Carol:
Because they don't know their next-door neighbor.
Yes, as people move they get tired of reaching out and starting new things. I know people who have refused to leave Des Moines or who have moved back. Once a child is born they want to move back. But, I think community is the ultimate answer for the human family. Community to me is the answer but it is damn hard to get there.

What about the new neighbors moving into Chautauqua now? Is it the same?

Harold:
That's interesting. Our relatively new neighbors next door have moved in about five years ago now. But when my partner and mother had left I thought my little world was ending. We had it great. But then Bob and Richard and people like that moved in and you could not have better neighbors. It has been incredible, they help us, and they help me. I have a Minister buddy that moved in just a couple doors down, so it just has been a Magic Kingdom. I am real positive they are good people.

So why do you believe that the new neighbors get involved?

Harold:
The young and well educated will move up the chain. But, we don't have a lot of economically mobile residents in the neighborhood. I'm nervous saying that but, I believe a lot don't even want to move. Lots of people want to stay here for life. I got two minutes to my downtown office and come home with no traffic. West Des Moines is another story. It is neighborhood friendly. The topography, numbers, and a few key leaders who started the neighborhood association. The association right now maybe at a low-end but, like any organization including churches they are losing memberships right now. So the big churches are making it but I do not believe that is the answer... Ministers should step up to the plate and discuss economic justice, racial justice, and treatment of women. .... I just think the neighborhood lends itself to all those neighborly things. Like we give our keys to neighbors. We used to have more little parties than we had lately.

How would you describe the essence of the neighborhood to a friend? Or, how did you convince family and friends to move in?

Harold:
With my mother it was a pragmatic decision of care. What is the essence? Well, we get a shock value when people first drive into the neighborhood. The houses are different and unique and the trees. Some of the trees do need maintenance and limbs need to be removed. But that is the first impression; they say God I didn't know that this was here. Then they start asking pragmatic questions like money and stuff like that... Property values have increased but there still is a redlining mentality. We pay enormous taxes though.

Because you are in the city?

Harold:
Yes, and this neighborhood is solid with homeownership. I'm not real happy with the taxes but because it does go towards schools I don't mind as much. The affluent suburbs don't pay is much as we do...
If you moved into the neighborhood today, how do you believe your experience would be different?

Harold:
It would be more stable, like issues with break-ins. But I would know that now before I would move in. Since, I tend to like it so much I would probably talk to some friends and get them to move and also. I have been here almost all my life. ... We are very much community oriented. My wife's whole family still lives here, except one brother who went back to Phoenix where they had lived as children.
(F 13) //Free Nodes/Neighborhood Change
(F 15) //Free Nodes/Re-sale and Control

So, reflecting back on all your experiences can you describe your understanding of the neighborhood as it has developed over time?

Harold:
I think that the neighborhood association was a major component of us talking together, not just talking about the weather or football, but property values, getting a hold of absentee landlords, and doing some hard nitty-gritty work in the first phase. The whole neighborhood volunteered to paint several homes of old widows and stuff like that. It was a beautiful thing. It is this normal growth pains and things like that, now. We were already close but after my buddies moved in; we were really a tight core.

Richard had mentioned that the neighborhood had control of who moved in.

Harold:
We also have had house tours because we wanted Chautauqua to be known. If you call a cab, they probably wouldn't know where Chautauqua is. It has been a silly isolation, intentional maybe by realtors, but I think we have been isolated. I friends come from out of town, and they get lost up in here. They will drive around and around and see all the terrible homes outside of the park and then come up on Chautauqua and say is my God what is this? It is a well known but, the first tour we had just about killed us. 600 people walk through this house in one day. We had no idea. We thought maybe 62-100 people. They all love it. Little neighborly things that happen all the time too, like this place is gorgeous in the fall. One day Sen. Earl Willis who started the environmental stuff in Iowa, was just walking around the neighborhood with a camera. And sat down taking pictures on the curb over there and gave the several pictures of our home. They were great shots. And that kind of stuff happens all the time. This old friend is an artist and one day was sitting there on the curb painting our house. At first I thought he was casing the place.

Carol:
That was his Drake project, painting our house. I was embarrassed when I found out he was a new neighbor.

Harold:
These little bits that I'm sharing with you help me flesh out the ideas. Like David, the friend I was just telling you about... they had four kids and we would go over for every birthday.... These two women that were in their 30s would come over with our daughter who was 10 and put a tent up and sleep in the driveway for their garage sale. They would party all day and laugh and I would get them pizza in the afternoon. What a great way for little girl to grow up with adult women and see that they have fun. Some things turned out so much better than you ever expect.

Carol:
They would bring over their son who loved to swim and what a wonderful experience that was for him. We tried to keep it opened for another year just for him.
Harold:
I wanted to flesh out just a few little human things that just occurred. It occurred just because we trust that one another and weren't afraid to come and ask one another for help. Trust is my primary principle. We're just too cynical.

Do you feel the neighborhood association pulled the community through from the 70's to the 80's?

Harold:
I think so. I do give a lot of credit to that first initiation. The neat thing is that you start to get to know each other and then other things start to happen.

How do you believe these experiences developed for you? Is it beyond dumb luck?

Harold:
I wanted to stress a lot of good things have happened here because of intentionality. We planned for the association, we planned for the yearly Christmas party, and we planned the early Octoberfest. And we had small meetings almost every night during the summer; they were more social than planning. I think we're responsible to think things through and make good decisions. And once Richard moved in the neighborhood he had access to the media. He helped. I think it also helped just us bragging about the neighborhood.

A lot of these experiences that you have been sharing with me have been reflections of the past, is that true because you don't have as many positive experiences today?

Harold:
A lot of that for myself is health. I cannot use my hands anymore... I do not get to go out and help with the cleanup week. So, I just don't get to participate. I did not get to a single neighborhood meeting this winter... I am only 60; I did not want to stop working. But I just can't handle much... my friends formed a group called the village people who drove me to dialysis every day... I don't want to play Disneyland but I'm excited to meet you. I'm always excited to meet someone new and tell them some good things about what can happen. I would say that most of people in the neighborhood would say that it's good living here. Several have told me they wouldn't move anywhere. I also believe that if you just get people together and have a common issue like the school or building a gazebo... the first sacrament is not baptism, for most Christians it is but, I believe the first sacrament is creation and that is why the land is holy... It is nothing small, like you it is the big scope. But, I also believe that you can change an individual's way of thinking...Intentionality needs the hard roots labor of hitting the ground...

To wrap this all up, has this portrait you described for me included everything that you believe is important for me to understand your experience in this neighborhood?

Harold:
I hope so; I have shared a lot of stuff. Obtuse stuff perhaps. We also put out neighborhood T-shirts, which the electrician in the neighborhood developed the slogan. We were having this big meeting and we could not come up with a slogan. He just walked in and said I think you should call it a history with the future. I thought that really expresses it. Because the neighborhood does have a neat history, an Indian campgrounds, then the Jewish community during the 20s and 30s up to the '50s. And then came the diversity in the '60s. White flight. It was very real you can see it every day. And we were the fortunate ones who got the benefit of white flight...
I think politicians just for the sake of the game will move in to certain areas as they have...
APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW WITH SARA AND WILLIAM

So how long have you two been living in Chautauqua Park?

Sara: 24 years now.

William: Yes, it is coming up on 24 years now.

Can you remember the first time you learned of Chautauqua Park?

Sara: It is interesting that you asked that. Because I just told the story, I have a real vivid memory. The first time ever, I was working at a retail store right when we moved here. We were living in an apartment building in Van Meter and they were building some new houses. We thought that we would just live there. At one point, we thought we could just buy on contract. We did not have much money and we were starting out a little late. And I was at work one day and I opened the paper. I said does anyone know where Chautauqua Park is? This one woman whose husband worked for the register said oh, that is where the rich people in Des Moines used to live. And she said it's real beautiful, there are a whole lot of trees. But in the '60s, she knew the whole history; she said the blacks moved in and the whites moved to Beaverdale. The values were real down and that point. Anyway, that was fine with us that this was an integrated neighborhood. So we drove up here. And it said near Chautauqua Park. But, when we came up the street we were like, oh my God! This is a beautiful, wonderful neighborhood. But the house was not really in here. You go two blocks over and you're in a whole different neighborhood. And after I saw this, I was like this is where I want to be.

You mentioned how you entered the neighborhood; do you remember which direction you came from?

Sara: I do. I was trying to remember where that house was. We came off of Hickman and entered on the first Chautauqua, Chautauqua Parkway West. Coming off a Hickman and entering into Chautauqua, you are right up in it, right away.

We just about gave up. They were building these houses in Van Meter. So we looked for all the houses in Des Moines at about the same price. And as soon as you went to these other houses, there was no comparison of what you are getting for your value. So then we were down to this house or the house in Van Meter. So that night we went to see Star Wars, it was the opening night. 1977. We came home, so it was out of our minds and made a list of the advantages and disadvantages. And this neighborhood was more about us. To be in an integrated neighborhood, to be in the city and we worked here and everything it was kind of a logical decision for us.

Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual’s identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
This is backtracking a little bit but, when we lived in Van Meter, my brother was in a Corvette club and they used to have a course set out. They would paint markers on the trees. And I think I remember going along with them one time and I think one of their trails was up into this neighborhood. And I think I remember then noticing it was real nice and it was secluded, off of the beaten track. But, that is only in retrospect, now. I kind of remember that we did that but it was later that we came back here.

(2 2 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Secluded
(2 2 4) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Discovery

So, how you feel about a Corvette race coming through the neighborhood now?

William:
Well, it wasn't really race. More like a cruise...

So, what brought you to Chautauqua Park? What was on the list of advantages?

(2 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Individual Attraction

Sara:
I remember that we liked the idea that it was an integrated neighborhood. It was real central, located in the city. And, a biggie was the value of the home compared to every other home in Des Moines that was in the same price range. The only reason someone would not choose to live here would be because they did not want to be in an integrated neighborhood. Because, there was no comparison in houses. Your money is going to buy so much here.

(1 1 8) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Integrated
(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value
(2 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Individual Attraction

Was that the point in the neighborhood's history that the values were starting to increase?

Sara:
They were real low.

William:
It wasn't too long after that that the values actually started to come back up.

Sara:
Yes, because we started to do things. I would guess it was real low.

So, did you guys feel that you are taking a risk?

William:
No, we did not feel that at the time. It might have been that we were a microcosm of everybody else that moved into the area too that had the same ideas as us. They wanted to fix up the homes and make them better.

(2 4) /Neighborhood Experiences/Shared Experiences
(3 1 2) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Individual Property

Did you know any of the neighbors before you moved in?

William:
No.

Sara:
There was no sense of the history at the time. At that time, it was just that place in the middle of the city, that you can get a really cheap home. And, it's a real nice place, nice looking. There was no sense that it was a
historical neighborhood. It was more that it was a great deal and we did not care that there were mixed marriages and couples here.

William: That was kind of a plus in our minds. Because at that time we felt that it did not matter.

Sara: We were raised in the '60s. We thought that's how the whole world should be and we found a place like we wanted the world to be.

Has the neighborhood lived up to these original hopes?

Sara: Um, I would say that it is mixed racially, is probably my biggest disappointment. In that, there is not a lot of mixing. I do not think that that stands out as a plus. It is just the nature that everybody is so busy. But, that is probably like everywhere. We probably even do more mixing than other communities.

When you talk about mixing, are you talking about within the neighborhood or among neighborhoods?

Sara: No, I do not care about between the neighborhoods.

William: There is some mixing within the neighborhood but it is not like we have developed long-term friends.

Sara: 24 years later, there is not great mixing between races. It was, and still is an integrated neighborhood and there was an acceptance within the neighborhood but it did not necessarily lead to a friendship. But, that is more our fault than anybody else's.

So, is there greater mixing between similar races? Do you have more white friends in the neighborhood?

William: Well no, except for people which are active in the association.

Sara: Yes, there are more white people in the association.

William: We had neighbors across the street that were more than neighbors but they moved. We also knew later after we moved here, that our neighbor to our backyard was a classmate of mine.
So we had one instant neighbor. And I was so used to moving and from the East, it dawned on me that I am living here. And I said, OK who are these people? William was already friendly with them having grown up in small town Iowa. William knew a whole lot of people from being out in the yard and working. There are only 125 families but, it is interesting that it's not like small town Iowa that everybody knows everybody else's business. Why don't we become like a small town?

Do you know your neighbors on either side?

Sara:  
That is interesting, we know these people on that side but we don't do a lot together. But, because that is an apartment building, a duplex, I have no idea who is living there. They could be dead for years, and I would not know it.

William:  
I might see them if I'm working in the back, and we might say hi.

Has it been the same neighbors?

Sara:  
No, there have been a lot of different people. That's why I have shut down. We don't even know if it's empty or not.

William:  
The people that seem to be living there now seem civil and not a lot of problems.

Has there been pleasures or difficulties that you did not anticipate when you moved in?

William:  
Well on the pleasure standpoint, I would say that meeting our neighbors across the street that do not live here anymore, through the years we enjoyed their company. It was a real close relationship. That was something that neither of us knew when we moved here that we would have a relationship like that. Also, just being able to work in this yard and tried to beautify it, even though there was some work involved.

Sara:  
That pleasure of sitting in the backyard and knowing I am in the middle of the center city of Des Moines, Iowa. When sitting here, I do not know that I sitting in the center city. It so peaceful, the yard probably gives us the greatest pleasure. This time a year, it is totally private and closed in. Every so often, I think we should find a town home without the work but I know I will never find a room like this.

William:  
On the problem side, the upkeep and some of the problems we had with the house were a negative. We had structural problems with the basement.
Sara:
In the '90s, 1993, everyone was having trouble. By that time we were a historic neighborhood but our basement and many peoples basements were the big problem because of the hill. And we were a bus route up until ten years ago. It felt like a time that a whole lot of us were having trouble with our homes. And, our housing values had not gone up. We had no equity to get a loan to fix things. The normal thing would have been to sell but, what happened at that time; the neighborhood was designated and money was then available for this neighborhood. If you would stay here portions of your debt was forgiven. And so it accomplished two things, it kept the neighborhood together, we were able to fix our homes, and it made people commit. I feel like that was a real turning point in the neighborhood. The bank would not loan us money so that was a real turning point... before the floods of 93. That money saved the neighborhood. The point is that, if we even wanted to fix it we couldn't, the property values were so flat. If something like that would not have happened this neighborhood could have gone really down.

(3 2 2) /Investment/Group Investment/GI-Physical Environment
(3 5) /Investment/Outside Investment

During the height of the crime in the neighborhood around the '70s was it an issue for you guys?

Sara:
We only had one break in. With others, there was something unusual.

William:
We had a TV stolen.

Sara:
There was a time when we would meet up as a neighborhood and see what was stolen lately. But, it was happening all over the city. It was not like I had to get out of here. You have to be logical about those kinds of things. You have to keep a sense of humor.

(2 1 1) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Organized Interaction

William:
We haven't had any incidences in the last 15 years.

Sara:
It now seems boring. We have no stories to share at the association meetings.

Are you still active in the association?

Sara:
Yes, William is still the treasurer.

There is a push within the community and association to get the neighborhood designated not only on the national Register but also, also on the local level. Where do you guys fall on that issue?

Sara:
We would probably vote for it. We are not strong enough to be real against it or for it. It's just whatever. But, there are some people who are super strong against it. People don't like someone telling them what they can do with their home.

William:
The plus of it is, you help to keep your values up. It may help your neighborhood in the long run. People don't seem to see that side of it. We would possibly vote for it.

(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value
Sara:
I don't think it will ever pass. But, it is just not a biggie for us.
So coming from the East, was there a process of change moving into an Iowa community?

Sara:
I was in a suburb of Buffalo and all the houses looked the same. The suburbs become like small towns but here the trees make a big difference, the streets and the non-flatness. Obviously, it is a big difference. When I came to Iowa, I loved the small towns and I had that whole sense of what Iowa was... I knew I would never want to live in a place like the apartment in Iowa City. I had lived in the projects as a child and I wanted something more like small town Iowa. Houses like you would find in a little town.

So, what about someone coming from a small town in Iowa? Did you have that same sense here?

William:
No, not about Des Moines I don't think. Having been in Cedar Rapids for a few years I didn't think of moving here as a problem or much adjustment. I was not stressed about moving here.

How long did it take to really begin to feel like home?

Sara:
I think it took me longer. I guess my experience was that it took me awhile to realize that I was really going to be here, staying here in Chautauqua. It took us a long time to unpack... we had to get used to staying.

William:
But, I do not think we had any sense that we did not like this; let's not on unpack.

Sara:
Yes, as soon as we were here, we loved it. And, there was a point that we just got together as the association and started to just beautify the neighborhood. It was more just getting together and picking up the trash and planting flowers. Having a neighborhood garden and things like that in the very beginning, you were just getting pulled into this thing. I would have rather been an island here, not knowing who lives surrounding me. But, all of a sudden we were becoming a part of something. Sometimes, like with any association we have trouble but, I don't think it would matter to us anymore if; we did not have an association. It would if the neighborhood started going down again but maybe that's a good thing. The first time we had something, a need. Now it's like just another meeting. In the past, we kept on being drawn into the next step. From beautification to problem homes and that is part of the problem now, we don't have a need. The neighborhood association is very diluted now because of the reason.

So what's it like to live in Chautauqua Park today?
Twenty-four years later?
William:
I think we both like our house and the yard. As for closeness with neighbors or trying to get things done that
interest is not strong. Maybe it is our age or discouragement with things not getting done.

(1 2 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Architecture-Design Elements
(3 3 1) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment

Sara:
We just filled out a survey with something to do with the leadership study. But, it seems like the neighborhood
put limited effort into it... but if you just take the active people it is the same people sitting around the table.
Even when I was filling it out I could say these are my strengths but do I have the time and energy to devote?
No. Then I ended up saying I do not have time for this. There is not enough need. I feel sorry for the new
people in the neighborhood and they had but we had way back. And, I think we discourage them sometimes.
So I think that everyone who has been active for so long should stop and let them go with it. I hope that
happens, we do have a lot of younger people here who are interested. I think there could be a turnaround.

(3 3 2) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lacking Group Investment

What is your daily routine and experience within the neighborhood? Do you have contact with your neighbors
on a daily basis?

William:
No, we have limited contact.

(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

Sara:
I would walk with our ex-neighbors across the street every morning at 5:30. Things were different, we were
just so aware of what was going on in the neighborhood. It was a real active time in our neighborhood, that is
when we got the streets paved and the curbs put in, we were more in touch with the neighborhood at that point.
And, I know I have lost a big part of that. William and I walked a few weekends ago, and I think that's when a
lot of things in neighborhoods happen, and it was wonderful. We ran into four different neighbors and just
stopped and caught up. It was nice, if you could just do that more often. Not at a meeting. People are just
belligerent at those meetings... at the socials we have a wonderful time together. And, we get the same people
together and no one is social. Everyone just comes in and is sitting there. It doesn't make you feel good; it is
the same people there.

(2 1 1) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Organized Interaction
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
(3 2 2) /Investment/Group Investment/GI-Physical Environment

William:
At the socials, sometimes more important things come up. You might hear about someone getting sick and you
can get a card out to them. In a way it is almost better than actual meetings.

(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

Sara:
Yes, more could be accomplished.

(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

William:
There are certain people that use the association to attack certain issues...

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

So, from your perspective the atmosphere of the neighborhood has changed but it is simply you guys changing
with age or is it the neighborhood that is changing?
Sara:
The neighborhood needs charismatic leaders and people need time. We have a hard time finding anyone that wants to run for any office. I think it's because people that want to become leaders want it for their resume and we didn't have any people like that. So, it's like why do we keep on making ourselves do this? No leadership, no need. So things have changed.

William:
Different people have to move into the neighborhood, not that we know them that well. But there is some interest on their part to reach out. But maybe the association is not for them. And maybe, that has had an effect on us. It's a combination of our age and us getting burned out.

Sara:
Yes, I think that the association is burned out. The same people show up to do every single thing.

Can you describe a specific episode or event that exemplifies your daily experience as a resident of the neighborhood? The median in between the social event and isolation.

William:
Well when our friends were here across the street, we would arrive home and catch up. But, they are not here and the current neighbors we are not that close to.

Sara:
I am sorry to say that I have not met the neighbors across the street. I work in retail and when I come home, I have no need.

William:
It used to be that when I got home I would go immediately to the backyard and start working. The neighbors were not a factor, I was more interested in doing stuff just right here. But now, as I am getting a little older I don't have the same energy.

Sara:
But I know on the other hand, I like it when I know the people around us. But, we don't go much beyond saying hi. When the old neighbors left, I became aware that I did not know anyone anymore. I had surgery and I did not know anyone to help me. Besides not knowing anyone, it's nice when you're going away. We realized how much we relied on these neighbors. Because when we are gone for the weekend, they can get our mail but, there is more and it is good. It's nice to say hi and get a graduation card from someone that you watched grow up. We don't have much contact with the new neighbors but there is still something there.

When you retrieve home at the end of the day, what qualities in the neighborhood stand out?

Sara:
Well as soon as I turn into this neighborhood, it feels good to me. It is more than this house. It is bigger than that, it is home, it feels nice. There is something real peaceful about coming into the neighborhood. Even though, I come home from the River road and Hickman, which, is also away from reality but it's not until I get right into the tree area that it feels like home.

(2 2 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Secluded
(2 2 6) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Relaxing
(3 1 3) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Neighborhood

William:
Well, I think that part of that might be that we invested our whole life into this area. And, we have done some things in the area to help make it what is.
(3 1 3) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Neighborhood

Sara:
That is good, we just found some old neighborhood pictures without the curbs and just to see them is like wow. It was a big accomplishment. Some new people might just take it for granted but we fought long and hard for that. There is something also about the neighborhood association, it gives you clout. But, when you have a complaint and I am from Chautauqua Park making this complaint, it means different when someone else is making this complaint. So there is a clout that comes with this whole sense of place. We have a voice by being part of that.

(1 1 6) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Exclusive-Private
(3 2 2) /Investment/Group Investment/GI-Physical Environment
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

So, why are these qualities in important, the peacefulness, the investment, the voice, and the trees because, you guys could have or even now selected to live somewhere else?

William:
Well, like we said before you would have to look high and low to find a view like this anywhere else. Sometimes the town home idea sounds good, and nice new place and no responsibility for upkeep but, yet there is still this tug that is so nice here and I guess we had invested so much here. It is hard to give that up. That is part of it too.

(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(3 1 2) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Individual Property

Sara:
I think also a big thing is financially we have refinanced our house to make it like it is. We really have quote un-quote invested to make it like it is. We have looked at town houses and to find something similar in price, there is nothing. Because, you really cannot get this kind of value in another house. This neighborhood is still a very high-value for your money. Even though if you would pick-up these homes and place them somewhere else they would be worth a lot more money. But, there still is no comparison like when we looked at the home the first time.

(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value
(3 1 2) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Individual Property

When you found this house the first time did you have to go to a Realtor?

Sara:
No, there was open house here. We went to all the old and houses in a similar price range and we never came back. We made this decision the next morning. We were fools but we went with our feeling.

William:
Yes, it was a feeling rather than we have to have this or that; it was just that it had what we wanted.
Sara:
It's a whole different house anyway. It has been good to us.

How do you believe your experience would be different today than when you originally move into the neighborhood?

Sara:
It's a nicer neighborhood.

William:
The price ranges are the same, relative to other houses.

Sara:
You cannot get these houses in other areas; it would still be a value like that.

William:
I think the experience would be similar.

Sara:
I would be happy that there is a neighborhood association. I think that is a big selling point. I have been involved when a realtor would give my name to people moving in and we are real proud of it. We have ice cream socials and an Octoberfest. So there are two sides of it. We have this great association and when you get too involved you see the problems with it. But, without it he would not be the same.

William:
So, that would be different because when we first moved here there was no association. The neighborhood is also probably structurally a little better. The houses are a lot better and it is still racially mixed.

Sara:
It just looks better than it used to. But, we didn't notice all those things when we first moved in. A lot of people look at what other people's homes look like because they see it as a first home and investment to sell. We just needed somewhere to live.

Yes, like I asked before did you feel like you are buying into a risk?

Sara:
No, even when there were intercity problems.

Do you ever commute through the other neighborhoods?

Sara:
No, we use Hickman. It is built into me to be aware... and I don't like to go through the intercity in the summer. I know I'm coming from my past but, that is who I am, it is not that I do not feel safe... I'd rather just avoid it. There are people in this neighborhood that feel we should reach out to the other neighborhoods; some of those people feel that would help with our values. Because, there still is a thing with other people that question where you are looking at a house. But, I guess I don't have any feeling to extend out. I am glad they are accomplishing what they are but I don't feel that I need to help them accomplish it.
So how would you describe the essence of the neighborhood to outside family and friends?

Sara:
A lot of people don't know what this is but, I always say I live in Chautauqua Park it is an historic neighborhood, a hilly little place with trees up in the intercity. I always describe it as in the middle of the intercity but I think it gives it a part of the charm. Possibly because it is this little place where you would not expect to be. People get in here and they don't expect it. This something about it really being a surprise. It is an oasis.

(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(1 2 5) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Oasis
(1 2 7) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Secluded-Quiet
(2 2 4) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Discovery

William:
It is a little sanity in the middle of I don't know.
(1 2 5) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Oasis

Sara:
It is all in perspective. I don't know how you introduced it? Do you say that it is a historic neighborhood?
(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(1 2 2) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Unique

William:
No, I usually say that it is a nice wooded area and a little hilly with very different homes and styles.
(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(1 2 2) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Unique

Sara:
Yes obviously for both of us there is something with the setting. If it was a historic neighborhood without the trees he would probably be very different.
(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(1 2 2) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Unique

So, reflecting back on all your experiences as a resident, can you describe your understanding of the neighborhood as it has changed over time?

Sara:
So I guess I am proud that as we have lived here it has become a historic neighborhood. When we moved in the history did not matter... during our first home tour the woman who had lived here during the '50s was walking through and it was a real neat experience. She was really taken... and I realize that we had destroyed things that people had worked so hard on... so, she brought her whole family over a couple nights later and it was so fun. She brought some history to the house. She was living out where everything was during her time. It gave me some pause... there's a tug in me with the history and I am just more of a contemporary person...Externally, I would wish that everyone would keep things looking as they are but, inside I don't know.

(1 1 11) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Pride
(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value
(1 2 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Historic Designation
(F 11) //Free Nodes/Time

William:
Yes, there is some value of keeping things looking as they were... But, there is something with the pride and keeping with the values.
Sara:
I think we are proud of the neighborhood. Whereas in the beginning we did not care what it looked like, we
were just concerned with our home. We had no sense of our neighborhood.

So over time it grew into a pride of the neighborhood rather than just your home?

William:
Yes, rather than just a place to live.

Sara:
Yes, so it has changed radically for us. I want all of it to look nice, to be as good as it can.

So, has this portrait included everything you believe is vital in helping me to understand the neighborhood?

Sara:
Yes, I think these have been good questions. It has helped us get into what this all means.

Note: Last section removed at the request of the participants.
Can you tell me about living in Chautauqua Park? How long have you lived here?

Rose:
I have lived here all my life. My parents built a house about a block away. And when I grew up, the only shopping area there was, was downtown. You would go straight down 13th Street to downtown. So, all the people that built this area, Chautauqua Park, which, is only five streets, almost all owned businesses in the heart of downtown. There was no shopping center, Merle Hayes, or nothing. You went downtown to shop. All these men who built out here had businesses so they would go straight down 13th to go to work. So if you noticed, right at the end of 13th Street there are two great big pillars. So, when you are downtown and you came home, here were these two great pillars and all of this area up here. Because these businessmen did this, because this is where they worked.

Did you parents build originally in the 1930s?

Rose:
Yes, 1934. And, I grew up here and we could have all the pets that we wanted. Pigeon cages, and cats and dogs outside and anything we wanted.

Which year did you move into this house?

Rose:
When I got married, we moved over here in 1958. This home was already built. And, I raise my three children here. And back then you went to your local school. And, right up the hill is Casey school and the children could go right up there. You walked right up to the school and came right back home. Then I had to go up Forest to 16th Street for Junior High but, now they have taken all that out. There is no school, they made it into Evelyn Davis Park. Then I went to North high school, and all my children went to North high school.

So, what was your experience like growing up as a child in this neighborhood?

Rose:
Well, in a way it was a very exclusive area. I didn't realize it at the time because, all of us would go to church, and at that time it was your only source of entertainment. We went to church and there was nothing else to do like today. This was our entertainment going to church and back. And, all these people were such good Christian people. And down here three blocks from the river there was Wakansa Beach, which was terribly poor. Now, they have a park down there and they have it all fixed up. They took them all out, I don't know what you would call it but they were terribly poor.

Duane:
Dirt floors and all.

Rose:
Yes, and 8 to 10 people sleeping on the floor. And, up here were all your businessmen and the ladies formed a club in here. All Christian, good church people formed this club and they would take baskets of food down to
the river to all these shacks and drop off food to these people. It was during the Depression and they did not have anything. So I have always had such a good feeling because the people I grew up with were such caring people. But now, it is such a beautiful area. They fixed it all up and put the boats in.

Duane:
Prospect Road, I remember that the whole bend in the river was just shacks.

Rose:
And here were all these beautiful nice new homes, a few blocks away.

So, what is your experience been like as this neighborhood has changed?

Rose:
Oh, it did. When my parents died and all the elderly people started to die off, it started going down hill. Everyone was moving west. They wanted to go out the new area; they did not want these older homes. And then like 10 or 12 years later, I don’t know they got sick of the long commutes, they decided this is close to downtown and young people started all of a sudden moving in. We did start advertising and having tours through here. We wanted to show people that this was a beautiful little area, so next to nature. And then the young people started fixing these properties. I was just sick; I have lived here for all these years and to see this going down hill. It is just too beautiful of a spot.

When did this all take place?

Rose:
Well, last 10 years is when it's really started coming up again. But,

Duane:
Well when did the Eckers move? And the Powers? Probably in the 1960’s.

Rose:
Yes probably in the 60’s. A lot of the elderly lived even into the 1970s. So actually, I think probably the late '70s and the early '80s were the worst. And by the '90s we had really worked hard to sell this place. Realtors had decided that they did not want to sell this place. They wanted to sell the homes out west. And we caught a few of them and said you are not doing this place justice. The realtors would not offer to show people this area. So when Richard was president, he really got things going. People out west realized they weren't getting so much more area for half the price. We hated to blame them but it was true. The realtors did not want to sell something here when they could sell something out west for $350,000. And now, we have homes selling for 100,000 here and they don't even last on the market.

So, what motivated you to buy a home in the same neighborhood as you parents? Was it the locations you parents or was it the neighborhood itself?

Rose:
I wanted to be in this neighborhood. I really did. I thought I knew the people and I loved it here. And, my parents were wonderful parents. I was so lucky to have a mother and a dad. They were so great. I wanted my kids to get to know their grandparents. It worked out beautifully. I love the area and I love the nature. I can feed the birds even when I got home from the hospital. I love it here. I still love it here.
Has the neighborhood lived up to your original home?

Rose:
Oh yes. And it's coming back. To see all the young little kids out there but they have to take the bus now to where they go to school. We did not have to do that. But it's still great to see the young people moving back into the area.

Duane:
You can sit here in the morning and there might be some deer in the backyard and waterfowl. It is a wood duck haven. Or pheasant might come walking up. It is all due to the river. Like in the floods of 93 there was water over Hickman and it just drove everything out. It is just a haven for wildlife. Of course which is what I like.

Are you a hunter?

Duane:
Oh yes!

Rose:
And my son is. That is another thing, when my parents died my son asked me can I buy grandmother's house? So now he has two great big Labradors and he has them up there on a great big patio porch. So, it was very wonderful to me that my son is here. I love to grow up here and now my son is here, the third generation. He is loving it and he didn't have to. He went to Iowa State...

Have there been pleasures or difficulties that you did not anticipate when you moved in?

Rose:
No, it was a pleasure to move in here. Like I said, the only thing that hurt me is when it started going down hill. All the elderly that had lived here died off and I thought oh no but, it has built back up.

Duane:
Physically the winters sometimes are hard. The hills, and you are the last to get plowed out. From a physical stand point it has been tough. When Judge Glanton was alive and lived at the end of the street, we were the first to get plowed out.

Rose:
Yes, in the winters it is hard to get out of here. But, for us we are retired now.

So, where are you originally from Duane?

Duane:
Right here in town. I lived over in the 33rd Street area.

When did you first experience the neighborhood?

Duane:
I had always known that the neighborhood was here. I have been around here since 1977. I had known her first husband in the service; we were on the same air base but did not know it. This is our second marriage but I didn't know her at the time.
Rose:
So he has been over here for about 20 years. He liked it because he was in an older area and he thought it was beautiful over here. So we decided we would stay here and live in my home.

Duane:
See that 10 years ago, there were really no blacks so to speak, north of University. Then the freeway came down through and separated everything. And now we have an integrated neighborhood. But, it has always been a highly respected area. Its three minutes from downtown.

Rose:
It's a wonderful area and we have great neighbors. Where did you say you were originally from? ....

So Duane did you own another house and then you moved in here?

Duane:
Yes, I owned a house in Urbandale.

So what convinced you to live here?

Duane:
(Pointing at Rose) laughter.

Rose:
He is an outdoorsmen and he really loved the area.

Duane:
And sometimes we have gotten slapped around a little bit. People ask why do you live there? They don't understand. They view it as; I don't want to say but, the ghetto. But, as we have been sitting here, there hasn't been a car that has gone by. It is very quiet.

Rose:
It is a rose among the thorns. We don't have any trouble here.
We are rose among the thorns. That's what you might say is a draw back. If, you really want something besides the weather. When we are out and about, we just have our routes. We don't go down through here. We use Hickman and 6th avenue.

Duane:
See, what makes this is the trees. The tree right here in the front yard is about 250 years old. And the whole park is that. You cannot go to West Des Moines and get this. You get 10 cents worth of fiberglass siding. It is silly. Oh hell, I would throw stones at those West Des Moines houses. Why would you want to go out there? I don't know. We could live someplace else, but we don't care to. But, there are some pictures of this house when there was just the white house over there. An electric contractor built this house and the other house up the street.

Rose:
Ok, you can ask me another question I am ready now. (Laughter)

Well, just before we move on, I would like to ask Duane how long it took for this to feel like home after you moved into this neighborhood?

Duane:
Oh, immediately.

Rose:
Yeah he really fit in because he is an outdoorsmen.

Duane:
Yeah, I am the neighborhood Santa Claus. Seriously. We take care of about 300 plus kids a year...

Rose:
At Christmas time we put out our newsletter...

Duane:
These areas, like the Riverbend Association, all of these properties have been pretty much maintained. So I feel we don't have the same effect like Riverbend and some of these others because we don't have to do that. What I am saying, is that their associations are more effective because well, I would say that our association is pretty weak. We don't have the need. We take care of our own. They are trying to push in local historic designation, we are in national deal, but I think the national has more precedent than the local. Personally, neither one of us cares for the local but I do think we have the respect here for the homes. And, we get together for social events. We had a tour here but I think, you can wear it out.

Rose:
So in a couple years, we will have another tour but we have really worked hard here.
Someone suggested that the neighbors almost control who comes in here because they are the first to know which house is going up for sale.

Duane:
Yes, it is almost word-of-mouth thing.

Are there any houses up for sale right now?

Rose:
Well there was, but it is gone.

Duane:
Yeah, they only last about a week. However, there is a restoration project up on Chautauqua and has not rented for two years. I think it's a deal that they want $800 to $1000 a month. I think that they should reduce it to $500 and put someone in there. But, that is the longest one I know of. They don't last. It runs spurts. For a while you won't see but the one up the street sold at the first showing. And, they got what they want.

So what is it like now to live in Chautauqua Park? What is your daily experience with the neighborhood? Do you know your neighbors on both sides?

Rose:
Yeah but, it is a lot different from when I was growing up. We could be out playing all night, like to 9:00. You don't see that anymore. It is a different era. These people that come in are entirely different from what we were. But I hate to say that, Grandma talking about the olden days. But, it was a lot different when I lived here all my life. Now so many of them both the parents work. It worries me but all the kids know that they are safe to come here. This is what I am glad of. The little girl across the street sometimes she will call up and say 'I am scared, do you mind if I come over?' And I will say sure come on over. This is a safe haven for them... I see this as so different. The parents are gone and the kids are alone. Duane and I are both retired and we keep watch so nothing happens to these kids. And they really need some of us elderly ones who are home all day to make sure nothing happens.

Duane:
In answer to your question, about knowing your neighbors we do. But, we have friends out west that don't even know their neighbors and that's not good. We know everybody around. It is a very small area. Heck, I have chased cars out of here in the morning... they have no business in here. We all kind of watch out for one another.

Rose:
There are some mothers now that stay home with the kids. It's amazing to me because both parents used to work but there are some mothers now that are starting to stay home and look after the kids. And it makes me feel good. Just let them get into the school; you can work all that you want later. But, take good care of them.

So, how is this experience different from when you were raising kids?

Rose:
When I was raising kids here every other mother was home. The Eckers and the Barr's had children and she was home. And, we ladies would all get together and do things. We were all home mothers over at Casey school and I was PTA president. None of us women worked, we just took care of raising children. I guess that's what you did back then. Like yesterday at our church we had a health fair. We didn't ever have anything like that when I was raising my kids... this is all new to me. We did not have anything like that. You pay for the stuff that you needed. But, back then the mothers would get together for coffee once the children were in school. And, we would look after each other's too. I would call the neighborhood here and would say 'can you see my daughter on her way home from school?' And she would say 'she is sitting on the corner, I will go get her going.' So, it was different. All of us ladies would just get together and visit after the kids left.

How did the kids use the neighborhood then? Where there certain areas they hung out or used? Did they use the school?

Rose:
Well, yeah they did go up to the school sometimes but mostly they just hung out and played up in here. Now we have that the Gazebo but that is stuff that they have done in the last few years. Most of the time they would just play in the yard or ride their bicycles up the hill and that was it. They stayed right around here.

So, as your experiences have changed in this neighborhood and the population is different with working parents, how would you describe this process as affecting the neighborhood?

Rose:
Well, I don't know. I know the children around here all know us by name. And they all speak to us, and talk to us.

Duane:
Well, I think that the name Chautauqua is the key. Chautauqua Park is kind of the key. It stops everybody and they say well I know where that is, it is a nice neighborhood. And I think through all the slower times as I experience that, as the properties were going down, not that they were falling down but, I do not know how to explain it. I think that is just the word Chautauqua, it's just here and that's the selling point.

Rose:
Well, I do think that things are little different and I have tried to adjust. But, things are different from when I was growing up. But it is a new era and I tried to adjust with it. The kids are doing entirely different things than we did and the parents are not there. So I think I'll pay attention more than I used to. Because, I did not worry about my Julie because someone was keeping an eye out, they were home. Where now, I worry a lot more. Like the little girl across the street, I know that there is no one there. The cars are not there so, I tend to worry more about the kids then when my own children were growing up. Because, I knew everybody and I knew that the women were there at home.

Do you think that you know less people because you no longer have children? Were the children the medium that got the parents together?

Rose:
I think that. I know the ones right here on my street but, I do know the rest. I used to know everyone in the whole Park.
Duane:
But the ones we do know basically don't have children. Don't you think? And of course we have gotten
acquainted with them through the association.

Rose:
And of course we are in charge of the voting. We are precinct captains. So, when the voting does come I
probably do know more people in the area. So, we might know more people than average because of the
voting. But actually, I don't know them on the other streets like a used too. When you don't have kids.

Does it take place over at the school?

Rose:
It always was at Cassidy School. Then, they took away the grade school and made it into an administrative
building. So now we vote over in the Grubb YMCA. And so that's where our voting precinct is, but it never
was until the last couple years. It is really quite nice there. They are swimming there and working out at the
old gym. But, it is a good way of meeting people.

Duane:
(Phone rings Duane leaves)

Can you describe a specific situation or event that exemplifies your daily experience as a resident in this
neighborhood? And perhaps, it is different from today than when you grew up in the neighborhood or raising
children in the neighborhood.

Rose:
Well I think when you are have kids and they bring all the other kids, you know everybody because this was a
center house. My three children, all the kids would gather here. I don’t know why but we were, but I guess it
was because I like children. I always wanted to teach school. I went to college to be a teacher but, I had three
children and I stayed home and raise them. So, for years I taught Sunday school in my church. They would
bring all the kids in from everywhere. We would have a ball. You don't see much of that anymore. The kids
very seldom leave their own block. It is a lot different for me. I think that any time the kids are grown it is
different.

Do you still get together with any of the ladies in the neighborhood besides the association events?

Rose:
Well I do go to all the Chautauqua Park meetings. I am security chairperson. I go to all of the police breakfasts
and keep up on everything downtown. I can tell them if there is anything going on around the area. That's how
I can keep up, if there had been any meth labs found in the area. (Laughter) And then when we have our
meetings I tell them the latest with the police department. I love police work... now, we have this police liaison
and he comes to our association meetings. And, if you have any problems or something you hear of you call
him. We never had this before. This is kind of neat. But, I miss going to breakfasts.

So why do you believe that having the children gather at the house is so important to you?
Rose:
Well, well I guess they just all knew that it was a safe and fun place to be. I did not worry about my kids because they brought other kids home and I knew where they were and what they were doing.

Were the kids only from inside the neighborhood?

Rose:
My girls, they were all neighborhood kids. Now Gary, my son, had football players and all this from North high school, and kids he would go camping with and stuff, his where from all around the area.

What qualities are important for this house and neighborhood as a gathering point for kids of any age? Why you believe it took place in this neighborhood?

Rose:
I still feel that it is a safe haven. I really do. You know, it's just five blocks. There are only five streets in here. And I think that the majority of people like me know everybody up and down their street. I know some people from the other streets but I think that it's always safe because we know each other. It is a little exclusive place, not to brag, but it is an area where everybody kind of knows everybody else. And, I know exactly what car should be over here and I know how many kids they have in this house. And I think that all of us, and at our meetings we have talked about this, pay attention. If you see a car that you know does not belong, keep your eyes open. And a little area like this we really watch and try to lookout for each other. So it is a little exclusive area. We know that all around us is some really bad stuff.

So, at this point in time with the area surrounding you becoming a little rougher, do you believe it has forced the neighborhood to become closer?

Rose:
Oh, I do!

So, how is it differed from when you are a kid in this neighborhood or moved into this house? What was forcing you to be neighbors at that point?

Rose:
Well I think that back then, it was really because all the mothers were at home. When I was growing up all the mothers were at home. And, my grandmother lived up here on 13th and Forest, nowadays I would not let my kids go clear down there but I went up there all the time. I walk straight up for blocks and thought nothing of it. I was never afraid of anything. I would get on the bus up here and take the bus clear downtown and have lunch with my dad, all by myself. And now I would not even let my children do that. The times have change so much, even by then... Today, we no longer go down 13th Street. But, I think that they, the police, have really worked alot on this area, getting it good.

We were talking about the association before; there are some ideas about your association now reaching out to the other neighborhoods. Where do you guys fall on that issue?
Rose:
Well, we were doing that. All around us, each neighborhood has their own association. So, I think that we all kind of work together. But, we don't have to do as much as we used to because they all have their own now. So, I think it's really getting a lot better. And I think that the reason for an association is mostly to know your neighbors. We had an ice cream social and we had it right over here in the gazebo they built. And it was so nice last week; we visited with people that we haven't seen for awhile.

How many people showed up?

Rose:
Oh, I do know there might have been as many as 50. That is not everybody but it wasn't too bad of a turn out. How did you know Richard? ...

So, if you moved into the neighborhood today, how do you believe your experience would be different?

Rose:
Well, you don't know everybody like you used to, because they are all working. But, I do think now it would be a lot better than it was five years ago because of the association. When somebody moves in we try to get somebody on the block to go and welcome them. And that's what I did. We had a nice little black lady move in down the block here with her little two boys. So, I went down with cookies and welcomed her and she seemed so nice. And she said are you the ones that are Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus? And I said, yeah. But, this is what we are trying to do. To make people feel welcome when they come in here. We used to do this, my mother used to do this how many years ago but we are trying to get back that. Back to a neighborhood that his friendly. People that care. And I think that is what the association is trying to do. When someone moves in we all try to make them feel welcomed.

Duane:
So, how would you describe the essence of this neighborhood to someone outside of the area? What is at the core of it?

Rose:
Well, I would say that it is so next to nature. The trees, shrubs and the ravine that goes around it and the river is close. Everything you want, you'll love it. If it isn't then move out where you don't have to worry about raking.

Duane:
In the fall, when the leaves come down it is a chore. You better believe it.

Rose:
It is entirely different than anything else because it is a nature area right in the heart of the city. You can get downtown; you can get out Merle Haye. It's takes you five minutes to get anywhere. It is not way out there, where you have to drive a half an hour to get to your job.

Do you still go downtown?
Rose:
No, not much. We go out here to Merle Haye. It seems like all these big companies that have moved into town have taken over the parking. So the only ones that can shop downtown are the ones down their working, because you can't find a parking space. So I go out to out Merle Haye, which is the closest one to me.

Reflecting back on all your experiences as a resident, can you describe your understanding of the neighborhood at it has developed over time?

Rose:
You know, when I was growing up here, I didn't think it was any different from anywhere else. I was happy living at home. And now, when I look back I think yeah, it was a very exclusive area. People that own their own businesses and I think yes girl, you had it wonderful growing up. You know, it was very quite affluent during the Depression and things. And I did not know that at the time. These people were all so nice and the women were all at home. Everybody visited and we all went to church. I did not know that we had anything. Truly, I didn't. And I look back now and I see my friends and I think I had it wonderful.

You had a lot of businesses. You have doctors around, attorneys, printers and typesetters. There was basically, no blue-collar they were all white-collar. Now, you have a mix.

So, is this a negative within all the positive aspects? You know, it is a safe haven and exclusive but, now your almost talking about isolation. Cut off from the rest of the world.

Rose:
Yeah, we were really kind of exclusive. And, I never realized that because I went to school and came right back. Everything was right in my area. I think about it, you know. All my friends were right here. They were all right in here.

Duane:
The have even talked about closing the gate right down here at 13th Street.

Rose:
They would like to close it off, so no one could get in here. You have to come down Hickman and come around. But, no way! They're not ever going to get that done. And, I don't want them to. I don't think that's right.
Duane:
Yeah, but it has been talk of it. They got it done with the bus line. It doesn't come through their any more. They got it out here. So now it goes down 16th Street.

Rose:
It had always came through Chautauqua.

Duane:
There is the association part of it coming into play.

Rose:
They did not want that bus coming through here.

Where they concerned with the wear and tear?

Rose:
Yes, the curves were all mangled. So, they finally got that where it did not come down our street. And that has been just last few years.

Duane:
Back in the 93 floods...

Rose:
So, did you get home this summer? ...

So, what experiences do you think were essential to this idea of a safe haven or isolation within the neighborhood? Was it the people; was it the surroundings, what made this happen?

Rose:
It was the people. The people I was growing up and my mother knew that if I did anything down the street and Mrs. Waters would call her. I think it was the people, we all knew everyone. Parents knew that if I was over there, someone would look after me. Growing up, I didn't think about being here with the trees.

Duane:
Yeah but I think someone did.
Yeah, but growing up it was the people. They were all so friendly and most of them were all in my church. That was the nearest church at the time and most of us all went.

Duane:
Yeah, but I go back to Alexander who built that brick house up here on the corner. And you know he was a black man and a bridge builder who was very wealthy at the time. But, that lot per se is just a hole in the corner and he was well known in the United States and you often wonder that there was something that attracted him here. Like your folks, what drew your folks here?

Rose:
It was going to be near dad's work. He could go straight down 13th to work. The Barr's owned the bicycle shop and they were close to work.

Duane:
Were they here before your folks?

Rose:
Yes, they moved in and they said why don't you move over here and build yourself a house. And they talked the folks into moving over here and that is kind of what everybody did.

Duane:
Well yeah, people ask me and I say yeah it is the surroundings. The nature.

Rose:
The Barr's were at my church and they talked my dad into building over here. So they did.

So, as the people change and move, what is it today that makes it the same sense of being a safe haven?

Rose:
I think because it's needed. That is terrible but, I think that now and of course my son being here makes it nice. But, I almost feel needed when I see all those children and their parents are working. And I think my gosh we never had anything like that. And now I feel real needed, it is a good thing that I'm here. The children know that if anything ever happened come and get Rose. No way I would let anything happened.

So, what is it 50 years later? Is it still the people that make the neighborhood?

Rose:
Yes, the people and the children.

Duane:
Do you think Rose that the newest people that moved in were attracted here maybe because of the price?

Rose:
Yeah I do, I think that a lot of these young people could never have had a home, two-story house for $80,000. These beautiful the brick homes but these are old homes and some of them really needed work. They are
basically good houses but they cannot afford to go out and get a brand-new house with three or four children. They couldn't do it and raise their kids. I think that was part of the influx of young people. The price was right. Now, prices are starting to go out in here.

(123) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value

Duane:
Yeah but still they are still considerably lower than elsewhere. So, how much was this house when you bought it? $14,000 or $15,000?

(1211) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Aesthetically Pleasing

Rose:
$18,000. But it was new back then and it was beautiful.

(1211) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Aesthetically Pleasing

Duane:
But just to show you this is probably $100,000 now... I was going to Drake and...

Rose:
Do you think that you are going back out to Allentown? ...

Has this portrait included everything you believe is vital for me to understand both of your experiences in this neighborhood?

Rose:
Yes, I just have such a genuine love for it. When my parents died I was just devastated. I thought what would I do because the kids would stop down there and everything. People would say how can you live a block away from your parents? But I just loved it. My parents were exceptionally wonderful people, I thought. And wonderful grandparents, the children would learn more from stopping down there. But, the kids love it.
APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW WITH JULIE AND JOHN

So what attracted you to Chautauqua Park?

John:
It was a nice area, but a lot of it was price range too. I mean, we could have moved into a condominium out west with a bunch of other young couples and their kids. But, you know it is the trees and it is amazing how much cooler this neighborhood is. It seems like when you go out west that there has to be a 10-degree difference.

(1 1 2) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Active Choice
(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value

William told me that you guys are putting together a Web Page.

Julie:
Well, neighborhood.com is a national organization that offers pre-built web sites for neighborhood organizations that are recognized by cities. So, they basically have the space and everything set up for us, we just plug-in our information.

John:
It is more content than design. Everything is pretty much already there.

How long have you guys been living here?

John:
We have been here since last March. So, about 15 or 16 months.

Are you guys active in association?

John:
Yes, we went to the first meeting and we keep kind of going.

Do you have a position?

John:
Yes, Julie is the PR person right now.

So you guys are publishing the newsletter yourself?

Julie:
Yes.
(3 1 1) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Social Network

How often?

Julie:

They are kind of quarterly. We started this year and our first one was in the spring.
(3 1 1) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Social Network

5 Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual’s identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
John:
It had been dropped a couple years ago and, we wanted something to do.

(3 1 1) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Social Network

Julie:
We wanted to improve the communication in the neighborhood, also.

(3 1 1) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Social Network

John:
Yes, there is a lack of involvement in association right now. You always have the same six or seven couples there when; you have 125 houses in the neighborhood. So you figure you try to get people information to get them excited. And it seems to work so far.

(3 3 2) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lacking Group Investment

So I know we kind of covered this but, what brought you to Des Moines and specifically Chautauqua Park?

Julie:
I went to school at Drake and John was at Ames so, we were already kind of in this part of the state anyway. So, we wanted to stay and it had already felt like home, kind of. We were from Omaha so it's close to home but far enough away that we can have our own lives. So, we liked it here and it is about the right size city. Omaha is way too big for us now.

John:
The suburbs are really taking over.

Julie:
Even the city is expanding so much it is just a lot of cities in one. But, Des Moines feels just about right. It is also a lot of cities in one but it is more manageable.

So did you find a job right after you finished Drake?

Julie:
Well, we were in Ames for one year while he finished up. Then, we moved back here.

How did you like Ames?

Julie:
I did not like it is much. (Laughter) it is definitely a college town.

John:
We were in married housing. But, I was in a fraternity for four years before that. In married housing, you are so far away from everything.

Julie:
It is really a college town. It was a lot of fun at that point but when you want to have a nice place to eat or go out and do something different there is not always a lot to do. If, you want to go to Welch, that is about it.

Can you remember the first time you learned of Chautauqua Park?

Julie:
Yes, our Realtor brought us here. I think that I had heard of it before because I had done an internship at the historic society downtown and had heard of some of the historic neighborhoods in Des Moines. But, I didn't know where it was and I had never been here before. And, Patty Daniels was our Realtor and we were looking
at this style house and we had looked in Beaverdale but they did not have the house we wanted for the price we wanted to pay. So, she brought us over here and said you might like this area. And, I remember we drove up Burlington Terrace and we came into the neighborhood and all of a sudden it is this huge tree filled place. And we drove into this shady but it was not shady at the time it was January. But, you know this big established looking neighborhood with nice trees and everything. It looked like a totally different place coming off of Hickman to here. I remember being struck by that.

So what was enough to make you purchase the home here?

Julie:
The kitchen. (Laughter) no.

John:
The house was in good condition and we liked the atmosphere of the neighborhood. It seemed like a good place to raise a family. And, we went into buying a home knowing that well, they tell us that most couples buy a first house and live in for four years and chuck-it and move on. Well, we knew that we are looking for something more long term. It had enough bedrooms and it just comes off as a good place to raise kids. But, they're not a lot of kids really on the street but it is quiet and secluded.

Julie:
There is not a lot of traffic that goes through the neighborhood. I think, because of the way the streets are laid out. Well, we get some but, not much.

John:
There is a certain charm to it. And the price was right. We were so afraid that we paid the price they were asking for it. We did not want to offer a lower price and miss out. We just offered what they wanted 92

Julie:
We got them down $500 but not much. (Laughter)

So was it the first time that you saw it that you bid on it?

Julie:
Well, we saw it a couple of times because the first time we could not get in for whatever reason. But gave us a chance to drive around the neighborhood that first time we were here. We walked around the yard and around the house. I think we look at three times before we put the bid in. But, that was all matter of two or three days.

So, were there any pleasures or difficulties that you did not expect once you move in?

Julie:
Um, um.

John:
Well, I guess that it depends on how much of this you are going to write. (Laughter)

Everything is anonymous.

John:
Everything has been great. People are very neighborly. We found that it seems to be a lot of turnover but the people who have been here for longtime are very welcoming. We felt like the new people for a while but that just made everyone want to talk to us a lot more. I think that the association helps but there was a lot going on at that point. They were welcoming but neighbors that don't necessarily go to the meetings but, live around here came up and introduce themselves to us. That was really nice. I did not have that when I was growing up. I lived in neighborhood too, but it was a suburb built in the 70's and people were constantly moving in and out. We really did not have close neighbors. So, I was happy with that.

Julie:
We have some people that we know very well but these guys we don't know very well enough to say hi to or ask how their garden is doing.

So, has the neighborhood lived up to your original hopes?

Julie:
I think so.

John:
I think that it far exceeded mine. The concern with moving into this part of town we got from other couples that lived in Des Moines for a while that that might be in a bad pocket of town.

Being close to?

Julie:
Well just being downtown and closer to lower income areas. Worried about crime and things like that. Most of our friends live in the suburbs so there is kind of a stereotype attached to living downtown.

So, you haven't encountered any problems?

Julie:
Not yet (knock on wood). No, fortunately not.

John:
Except for the raccoons eating our fish in our pond. The wildlife. We have Goldfish and Coy.

So, do you now refer to Chautauqua Park as your home?
Julie:
Um, hum.

John:
Yes.

And, how long did that take to feel like this was home?

Julie:
Not too long. Once, you rake eight million bags of leaves you realize this is your property. This is your home and you're stuck with it. (Laughter) Probably just a couple months. Des Moines I think has been home for a while. This part of town is home.

John:
Yes, and we got lucky with the neighbors. We just wanted to get out of that apartment. We were going to stir crazy in apartment.

You said, "Stuck with it?"

Julie:
No, it just brings it home that it is your first major purchase. You realize that all of this is mine.

So, what is it like to live in Chautauqua Park on a day-to-day basis?

Julie:
You can have this one. (Laughter)

John:
It is fairly quiet, peaceful and calming. It is nice to come home to from work.

Do you both work 8 to 5?

Julie:
Yes.

So what are the weekends like?

John:
So one thing we kind have missed out on is the yard work. Most of the people in the neighborhood are retired so, when I am in the yard on Saturday or Sundays in the blistering heat, everyone else has gotten their yard work done. I'm the only one making noise because everyone else has gotten their work done during the week.

Julie:
Is nice to be able to come home on the evenings and weekends and you can relax because we don't have the sound of traffic off of 6th or anything. There is not a lot of people milling around or making a lot of noise. People do go for walks. There is a lot of traffic that comes through here but it is not the main thorough fair. So, it feels nice and secluded so that you can get away, so that you can relax for the evening or the weekend.
You mentioned walking. It made me think about the fact about that there are no sidewalks. Is this inconvenience or does this bother you?

Julie: I think that eventually I will wish that there were sidewalks because I would rather take the stroller on the sidewalk. But, there is not a lot of traffic. We have not been bothered by it. We walk a couple times a week and there is not enough traffic to worry about.

John: There are not really enough cars that park in the street either. Everyone has got such long driveways.

Julie: I think that it would look totally different if there were sidewalks.

John: I think that it is nice to have that extra yard, also. We actually heard neighbors say that they would throw up their hands if the city came in here and said they wanted to put in sidewalks. Everyone pretty much has grown accustomed to having the extra yard. Of course it's still city property but because there isn't the sidewalk there it feels like a little more that you're welcome here. Well, I don't know. I will come back to that. I will figure out what I'm trying to say. You are recording this whole thing anyway.

Is it more welcoming to me as a resident our an outsider?

John: Well, you are here. You came across that six inches of curb. You did not have to come across well, you know.

So, do you perceive the sidewalk as a boundary?

John: Yeah.

So, you mentioned downtown briefly. Do you guys still travel downtown?

Julie: There is not as much to do since they have closed the movie theater. Otherwise, we loved having that movie theater so close.

John: We could have dinner downtown and then go to a movie. It was right across from Vet's. They had the biggest screen in town.
It was pretty small. It was only two theaters but they closed it to expand the auditorium.

Vision Iowa! (Laughter) which way would you travel to the movie theater?

Julie:
We would usually take 6th into downtown.
(2 2 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Commuting-Movement

Do you find yourself leaving through the back along Hickman or do you go through the gates on 13th?
(2 2 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Commuting-Movement

Julie:
I go through the gates on 13th just because I work at the capital complex. So I go that way and he leaves through Hickman because he works out that way.
(2 2 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Commuting-Movement

So is your daily experience now different than it was when you originally moved in?

John:
I believe so. We just had a neighborhood social at our house last Friday. The association was suggesting that we have one last summer but we were not quite ready to show the house. There were some things we wanted to do before. Now that we showed it we were not exactly where we wanted to be but we went ahead and showed it. It was really the first time we opened up our home to our neighbors and it went over pretty well. We didn't have quite as many people as we expected but we had eight or nine throughout the whole evening.
(2 1 1) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Organized Interaction
(3 1 2) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Individual Property

Was it different from the ice cream social at the gazebo?

John:
Yes.

Did you also go to the ice cream social?
(2 1 1) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Organized Interaction

Julie:
Yes.
(2 1 1) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Organized Interaction

And, is it all the longtime residents that show up for those?

Julie:
This was actually the first one that we had been to. It was one of the only ones that have happened since we had been here. I think that there might have been in ice cream social last year and there usually is an Octoberfest. Because the association meetings have not been well attended those events have not been well attended either. So this was the first one that happened this year. And, we kind of had a mix of people. It was mostly older people that have been here for a while and kids that came without their parents. Like the parents would say "hey kids, there is ice cream over at the gazebo." So we had a few kids and return customers that would keep coming back. So, most of them that were here were longtime residents. And a few were residents that do not turn out for other meetings but came because they saw it in the newsletter or got a flier.
(2 1 1) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Organized Interaction
(3 1 1) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Social Network
(3 2 1) /Investment/Group Investment/GI-Social Network
Did you distribute the newsletter to each of the houses?

Julie:
Yes. We actually mailed the last two. It was too hot to walk around distribute the last bunch. (Laughter) But, fliers were distributed for the ice cream social the weekend before it happened.

And three of you did that?

John:
Yes. It took three hours for job that should have took 45 minutes.

Julie:
That was only because you talked to certain person, which takes a longtime. We just have a chatty neighbor across the street. She just likes to talk. (Laughter)

Are they longtime residents?

Julie:
They have been here for 10 years or so.

From what I am an understanding there are types of changes that are taking place along the way. At first you feel that it is just a new house and then you begin to expand outwards by participating in the association and with neighbors. Was this a process for you? Or am I assuming wrong?

Julie:
That sounds certainly logical, the steps and process. But, making the leap from this just being our house to this neighborhood being our home was not as hard as I expected. Because, when we looked around at other houses one of the questions we asked our realtor was if there was a neighborhood association. Is there a sense of community? And how do we become a part of that? We wanted to know right off the bat. So, it took us maybe a couple of months to be invested in the neighborhood association, to know that we really did want to be a part of that and the commitment. And like John said before we knew that this was not just a house that we were going to live in for four years and then buy another one. We intend to be here and pay it off. We came in not knowing right away that it was our home. It may have taken a couple of months to really call this and this area home. There were some steps in the process that we did not have to go through. So, to answer your question, has the process change since we had been here? I think maybe, I am a little less hesitant to become involved in bigger initiatives in the association. We no longer feel like we are the newbies or we're stepping on someone's toes. Now, we are more inclined to say we live here and this is our community and house and we think things should be done this way. We are a little less hesitant and getting deeply involved in some initiatives. I do not know if that gets to the question or not.

So, you believe it happened a little more natural then maybe you expected?

Julie:
Yes I think so. Because, I never went through this when I was growing up. And my parents never went through this in the neighborhood that I lived in when I was a kid. So, it was all new and I did not know how long it would take to feel like home. Or, how much I would want to be involved in community efforts. But, yeah. It happened a little more natural and a bit quicker than I expected.
For me I guess, knowing that we were going to be here for longtime. I just knew that I did not want to move in and rub someone the wrong way. And, have them for our neighbors and have them hate our kids because of me. But, different from her I believe the neighborhood that I grew up in was very community oriented even though it was a suburb. Growing up as a kid, there were always kids around going to the pool and stuff. And our parents got along and we all played sports together. I just remember playing sports in the front yard with all our neighbors. It just seemed natural that you would say hi to your neighbor. And, it will pay off somewhere down the line. And hopefully it will turn out to be a friendship and nothing else other than that.

So, you were used to a tight neighborhood?

John: Yes, I believe so.

And did you expect that when you moved in here?

John: Yeah, I don't know. I probably did. I knew living in the apartment and the fraternity for years that you did not have any sense of that. We had a sorority on one side of us that hated our guts. There was no sense of community or people wanting you there. There was the fraternity on the other side of the street that hated us as well. And we hated them. (Laughter) yeah, I was ready for the change. I was ready and I was all for it. I made friends with the people next door real quick just saying hello to them and saying hello to their girls.

How old are they?

Julie: Probably eight and 12. And, the couple is in their mid 30's.

How long have they lived there?

Julie: Probably three years.

Can you describe a specific episode or event that exemplifies your daily experience in the neighborhood?

John: The only one that comes to my mind lately is the ice cream social and how that went off pretty successful. There was probably 30 to 40 people that throughout the night. We had not really seen that many neighbors together except for when people were mad.
What got them mad?

John:
There are certain individuals in the neighborhood who, tried to get the neighborhood locally designated as a historic neighborhood in a roundabout way. You probably have heard of this one already. It was about ready to go through when, the rest of the neighbors found out that it was about to go through. And said, that's funny because none of us were asked. And she had coming back that we got 51 percent of all landowners and that's all you need for the rules. And, I didn't ask you because I knew you were against it. So, I just skipped you.

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

Julie:
So, that was interesting meeting! Just after we had moved in. We have never seen that many people from the neighborhood that one place at the same time. There were probably 60 people over in the largest conference room and Cassidy.

So, what stopped it from happening?

Julie:
The same people that spoke at that meeting spoke at the City Council meeting. And, the City Council realized that maybe that the whole neighborhood does not support it. So they asked for a new petition and the new petition did not accumulate. They did not pursue it as hard as they did the first one. It took them three years to gather enough signatures on the first one. That was another reason. The petition was very old. Some of the people had died or moved away. So, the City Council asked for review and couple that was pushing it could not come through.

So, is there a feeling of them and us in here?

John:
Yes, I believe so. Because she had also been on the board at that time. There are a lot of people that I believe don't come to meetings because she is there.

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

Julie:
And maybe they still have residual feelings about the association board because she was a part of the board when that happened.

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

So, does she have a stronghold among a group of supporters?

Julie:
No, I do not believe so. She jumps on new neighbors that don't know what's going on.

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

So there's not a 51 percent that hang out together and the another 49 percent that hang out together?

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

Julie:
No. (Laughter) it is a much smaller, more desperate them, us thing.

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

John:
We purposely had the ice cream social at the gazebo because they usually have it at the park and they live right by the park. And we do not want people not to come because it would be right in their backyard. It is a bad reason but it worked.
So, what would you have done this afternoon if I had not stop down today?

John: Mow the yard, clean the fishpond, yard work. So otherwise Julie would begin some sewing or quilting, getting ready for the little one. So we got all kinds of stuff to do.

Why do you think this ice cream social was important to you guys?

John: It was a good show, because Julie wanted to get this newsletter going. So, it was a good show that our hard work was starting to pay off. The neighbors are really interested in getting re-involved with stuff. And the neighbors really care. For the longest time we would go to these board meetings that are open for anyone and you would see the same five or six faces. And we also wanted to have it on the other side because we don't know neighbors over there. And it was, well we probably met a handful of neighbors that we did not meet before, in addition to the kids that were there. So the wheels of progress are turning and our hard work is turning into something positive. That was what I got out of it.

Julie: And not to harp on this certain individual but, in years past these events have not been well attended because they know she's going to be there. And is behind it. So, a couple of us on the board knew that. And it was in conjunction with national night out which talks about the purpose of getting to know each other. So we knew that if we wanted it to be well attended we needed somebody else to take the reins. So about three of us did it and put it over there. And so it went off and people came. And it was a good chance to meet people. And that was part of the reason we wanted it over there, to meet people. And we never had been at an event at the gazebo.

So when you used the words hard work, what hard work were you referring to?

John: Getting the newsletter started out and taking the time to pass out fliers. Not like they are difficult but,

Julie: And just going to the meetings and getting involved and making the commitment. Not just going because there is a hot issue.

That is interesting because this is a theme that has been the re-occurring. That is investment. Once neighbors are involved that process that I was talking about takes place. It is not use your property but becomes the neighborhood, something larger. So do you believe that investment has shaped or help this process come along for you?

John: I think that there are people that are there, just existing. They think that it is just another party to be involved in. We were open to be a part of the forward progress. There are no new people on the board except us. The people that are there are a couple that have been involved since they were our age. So they want the young
people to come in here and get things fired up because they had done that before. So we were young and wanted to make the investment.

Yes, because they went through the same process when things were a little rougher and the association was almost forced together and take back the neighborhood. And so now people are saying that the problems are not as big so, it's hard to get people together. So what is different? Why are you the only young couple showing up?

Julie: I do not know. I don't know where other young couples that are at the same point in their lives grew up but I always wanted a sense of community but never had that when I was growing up. But, other people have grown up in the suburbs, which were impersonal, and there weren't neighborhood associations or reasons to come together positive or negative. So maybe it's just not part of what they consider living in a neighborhood. It's just something that they don't think about. I suppose that could be a reason some people are not involved. I knew it was possible because he had that experience.

So, from spending time in his neighborhood, you knew there was something else?

Julie: Well, I knew it could happen because of his experience but also because just reading the papers you know that there are other neighborhood associations and groups that a cure positive change in the neighborhood. I also think that in college I was introduced to that. I thought that whatever community I settled in I wanted that to be a part of my experience. They may think it is an old people's group (laughter).

John: There was another young couple down the street that were involved but were turned off because it is really quite negative if you let it be. And they have children now, so I am sure that has a lot to do with it also. So, we have to be prepared not to fall off once we have kids... it is nice to get out and meet people.

So, how would you describe the essence of this neighborhood to a friend that has never been here? Or, a relative over the phone?

Julie: How did we describe it to our parents before they got here?

John: Don't make your judgment on your way here. (Laughter)

Julie: My mother still has trouble with that. I don't know. We started with the house. We told them that it was a quaint little brick house that has a lot of the characteristics of the other houses in the neighborhood. But, it's not
like going to a cookie cutter subdivision somewhere else. The tree-lined streets are what everyone comments on when they come here the first time and the sort of the way the streets just wonder around the block. I do not know what else. Just that we had nice yards.

I know that we all talk to our parents in a different way but now do you mention that association?

John:
To our folks, yes.

Julie:
Even to a friend that I just saw for the first time in a couple of years, they just bought a new house so; I was talking about our house and neighborhood. And in just a few minutes of discussion the neighborhood association does come up. And I think when I mention it to other people my motive is to say that there is a sense of community in our neighborhood.

Julie:
We might have mentioned that we knew one existed. But in so we got involved as much as we have at this point, it was just something that happened every other month. There was a meeting.

John:
Well yeah, the first year you are here you get a free membership. And we thought we might as well give it a try. We passed on to our folks that we knew there was an association and that was what got it nationally designated...

Julie:
That is something. I don't think I mention to people that it is a nationally designated neighborhood. I think that is something we noticed right-of-way pulling into the neighborhood and neat to anybody that comes here. And sure it is significant. But, I don't think that we really mention that to anybody when we tell them about the neighborhood. I don't know why that does not come up.

If you moved into the neighborhood today, do you think that your experience would be any different 16 months later?

John:
It probably would be because of the fact that we are pregnant right now. We would be rushing to get the nursery done. That would be job number one.

Julie:
That would make us spend less time outside. And, we would meet less people then we did last summer.
What was job number one if you do not mind me asking? Before you would show the house.

John:
There was painting upstairs and some stripping of the molding that had to be done.

And did you put the pond in?

John:
No, the pond was in. It just has been maintaining it.

Julie:
That was something else that has to be done. All the perennials were coming up and fishpond had not been maintained all winter long. So that was a priority.

John:
Yeah, the pond was there and there was some design to it. The people that were here had put some work into it...

So, reflecting back on all your experiences as a resident in the Park, can you describe your understanding as it has developed?

Julie:
You go ahead.

John:
As it has developed over time? So, our opinion of the neighborhood?

Sure.

Julie:
Well, only at board meetings it is only a little less peaceful than it looks. I think that one of my first impressions was how peaceful, quiet and secluded it was. And it is all those things but when you throw the neighborly politics apart of and a part from the association there is some conflict that we would have never guessed.

So, what about that conflict? Conflict on the surface is always kind of bad but is it good to have some kind of energy?

Julie:
I suppose it kind of worked in our favor. We are hoping that that would galvanize more people to become involved.

John:
We have made more friends because we are campaigning against certain people. Just to get her off the board. There are elections in November... I think I am going to win the election. I have things stacked my way.

(Laughter)
Julie:
That conflict is galvanizing people to become more involved because there are not any big horrible issues that we're pushing now. So we have to find ways to get people interested. The newsletter is a step in the right direction. To encourage the sense of community we have heard existed. I think that it is not as great as it used to be. There use to be events and welcoming committees that happened all the time. People are just too busy but you know your neighbor someone that can watch your house or feed your fish when you gone.

(3 1 1) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Social Network
(3 3 2) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lacking Group Investment

Do you have anyone that feeds your fish?

John:
Yes the girls next-door (laughter).

So, has this portrait included everything that you believe is vital for me to understand your experience in the neighborhood?

Julie:
Yes I think so. Is there anything that we are leaving out?

John:
I think so. We touched on more than I probably thought we would.
APPENDIX 6: INTERVIEW WITH NANCY^6

So tell me about living in Chautauqua Park. How long have you lived here?

Nancy:
I have lived here probably the year and two months.

And can you remember the first time you learned of the park?

Nancy:
It worked out that, I had a friend that used to live in the neighborhood and I was out looking at houses and, he showed me this one.

Has he since moved on?

Nancy:
He lived here about 10 years ago and moved Ankeny. But, he knew that I was looking for something in an older neighborhood. I had actually been looking in Sherman Hills and a little in Beaverdale.

So, you said you were originally from North Dakota? What brought you to Des Moines?

Nancy:
I was living in Cedar Rapids, working for the company that I currently work for now, and a job opening came up here. So I decided to take that job and move here.

What do you do? If you don't mind.

Nancy:
I work in sales...

So, you mentioned that you were attracted the historic homes.

Nancy:
When I lived in Cedar Rapids, I lived in a historic home there. I grew up in ranch and decided that I would never live in ranch again. I lived in Fargo, North Dakota. So I lived in a very middle-class, Edward Scissors-Hands neighborhood, where everyone had very similar homes.

1970s suburbs?

Nancy:
Exactly! So, I knew I didn't want to live in the house like that. So, when I lived in Cedar Rapids I bought a house and it was an older house and I restored it. I sold it and then I came here. I was looking around probably six months after I had moved here. Then I found Chautauqua Parkway.

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^6 Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual's identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
Was your friend living here?

Nancy: He had lived in the house just around the corner. He was one of the evil renters that they were trying to get rid of.

What attracted you to the Park enough to purchase a home?

Nancy: Um, it was very much a variety of things. Basically, my vision was really that I would be in Sherman Hills, Beaverdale or possibly Drake, because the older homes are still in fairly good shape. And it would have some amenities that I would want. I really like Sherman Hills because I wanted a painted Victorian. But, I could not find anything for sale right then. And then between Beaverdale and here they are very similar but the size of the lots and some of the amenities you to get inside the homes and a wooded area, the seclusion, tilted me this way.

Which amenities?

Nancy: Just because the houses here for example, I like the fact that most of the houses here will have a fireplace. And, you still have a lot of the original things still in the homes. Or else the house has been completely redone. It just seems like in Beaverdale you pay a lot more and don't get necessarily your hardwood floors or your fireplace or there is a lot of rehabbing that is very 70's. They also don't have of a lot of older trees or their lots seem a lot smaller.

So has the neighborhood lived up to your original hopes?

Nancy: A lot of it has. How the neighborhood looks aesthetically, I am very happy. It has only improved and it seems like it is in a great position. Everyone wants to improve the things that they have. The neighbor down the street has a perfect little house redone with a pool and everything. It's just a perfect little house. The people here are very friendly and diverse. And that is pretty cool. There is not a typical resident of this neighborhood at all. Different ages, different races, and different lifestyles. I am probably more disappointed that more people aren't involved in the neighborhood. And I am one of them. With trying to get my home redone I have not had a chance. But, there are a good portion of people that do get involved with the neighborhood and the socials. But, there is a chunk that I think have just decided that everything is done. But, for the most part I am pretty happy. Aesthetically it is good and land values are good. People are very nice. They are social. I don't think I'm disappointed with hardly any thing.

What about with the location to your job?

Nancy:
I work downtown so, it is fabulous. I can get through the jam traffic and laugh. I can get to work in five minutes so; in the case of work it is good.

(2 2 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Commuting-Movement

How do you travel to work? Do you go down 13th?

Nancy:
I go down Martin Luther King and 13th. Both to and from work.

So has there been pleasures or difficulties that you did not anticipate?

Nancy:
Um, not really. Not really in so far, that I have had older homes before and it was in a historic neighborhood that had an association. And a lot of that stuff went on before. So, I was pretty much prepared for what I was getting into and what to expect with the association and neighbors that are working on the homes. I wasn't really surprised by anything.

Do you belong to the association?

Nancy:
I think that I have to renew my membership but I believe I still belong. I'm not sure but I have not gotten anything in the mail.

So, you are not too active?

Nancy:
I probably have gone to only gone to three or four of the monthly meetings. And I have gone to one of the socials. I am probably not too active but I do make an attempt. (Laughter) I am iffy.

You do not hold a position?

Nancy:
No, I do have an excuse.

Can you remember what your first initial response was when you came into the neighborhood?

Nancy:
I don't know if I can. I think that I was surprised to see it. Because I came in from the East (side of the city), Sixth Avenue, where it is more decayed. So I think that my first response was to be surprised at where I was, because it does not fit into the surroundings.

(1 2 5) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Oasis
(2 2 4) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Discovery

Where were you living the first six-months?

Nancy:
I was living right outside of Sherman Hills.

So, you were close to a similar neighborhood at that point?

Nancy:
Yes. That neighborhood is also an older historic neighborhood that is very well kept.

So, do you now refer to Chautauqua Park as your home?
Nancy:
Yes!

How long did that take?

Nancy:
Um, I don't know. I suppose, clarify home.

If you are speaking to a friend from North Dakota.

Nancy:
Yes, probably since after I had move here, a couple months. I would probably make the distinction my new home or my new house. Just to clarify that I moved. But, I probably referred to Des Moines as my home for the last year and a half. So, I don't think I made a distinction moving here.

How long did take you to close on the house? Did you visit the neighborhood a bunch of times?

Nancy:
No, I visited with my realtor once and I made an offer. And, they accepted. And then I made a second visit to scope things out. We had a couple more visits before we finally closed. There were some conditions of sale... it was fairly quick.

So what is it like to live in Chautauqua Park? What is your daily experience?

Nancy:
That is too general!

Do you work 8 to 5?

Nancy:
Yes, I usually go to work later. (Laughter)

What is going on when you arrive at home? Are you busy inside?

Nancy:
Yes, I am usually doing some project. But, typically I will usually take some project one or two nights of the week. And the rest of times I will be out dinking around. My neighbors are pretty working intensive though. My neighbors over here are always out raking or something.

Do you know your neighbors?

Nancy:
Absolutely! Well, I know some of my neighbors. I know my neighbors to the south the best. He's often out the same time of the day that I am. We talk a lot. You know, when you are doing the yard work and then ten minutes later you are sitting there drinking beer and two hours go by. He is a very funny guy. The neighbors across the street are involved in one million of different things. They are always up on things going on. The rest of the people I know fairly casually. You know, they walk by and you say hi.

What is your experience like on the weekends as opposed weekday evenings?
Nancy:
You mean in the neighborhood?
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

Yes.

Nancy:
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
Um, I will spend a lot of time jacking around the house or in the yard. And that is fairly typical of my neighbors. My next-door neighbor will always be out their doing something with his kids or doing something. And I am probably the same way, mowing my lawn or playing with the flowers.
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
(2 2 8) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Yard Work

So, is that when you get the most interaction with the neighborhood?

Nancy:
Yes, I think that is true. A lot of nights we will all be out talking or something. It is very frequent that people will be out taking walks or jogging by or taking their kids to the park. So, I would actually say that people don't restrict socialization to the weekends but people do utilize the neighborhood as a whole at nights as well as weekends.
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
(2 2 8) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Yard Work

It seems like the yard work is the medium to making connections. What about people just walking by? Are they as likely to stop?
(1 1 11) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Pride
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

Nancy:
I am sure. People that I do know in other parts of the neighborhood will stop and say hi, things like that. I think that is a cool thing of the neighborhood. Everyone seems to take pride in it. They tend to make sure everything looks nice. I think that's why everyone tinkers around. People are involved in a lot of things also.
(1 1 11) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Pride
(1 2 11) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Aesthetically Pleasing
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
(2 2 8) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Yard Work

On the downside, with everyone so concerned with aesthetics, are there a lot of people looking over your shoulder?
(1 1 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Middle Class - Respect

Nancy:
Um, I would say in some respects but not really in a bad way. When I first moved here every one of my neighbors knew the exact details of my house. They would say that they did not like the bathroom color. I would say what are you doing? But, they're not harsh or critical. But people are very curious because the neighborhood was so degenerated. So everybody has got a house and rehabbed it in some way. So, people are very curious of what has been done. I was actually voting in the last presidential election and the guy there had known everything about my house. (Laughter)... the neighbors that I had dealt with have been very positive about what I have done. The people have been very supportive. It's not like they are out to get you.
(1 1 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Middle Class - Respect
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
So is your experience now any different from the initial experience moving in?

Nancy:
I think it is a little different insofar that the people I know, compared to who I initially met, were very out going and concerned with what I was doing with my house. I think know I've met a bigger portion of the neighborhood. They are a little more laid-back. I realize now that the original people were very much individuals in the neighborhood, but not really.

(2 1 3) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Neighborhood Politics

How did you describe the neighborhood to your parents?

Nancy:
Um, I think I told them a description like a historic neighborhood, with brick homes and then usually I go right to the fact that it is secluded. The fact that you have the big green way in front of the road and then you have the ravine going across two-thirds of the neighborhood. For some reason that is something I always think about, the fact that it is secluded.

(1 2 7) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Secluded-Quiet
(1 2 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Historic Designation
(1 2 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Architecture-Design Elements

You mentioned the fact that it is a historic neighborhood, where did you fall on the designation issue?

Nancy:
That was an ugly meeting! (Laughter) my vote was actually for the local designation. The local historic district. Only because, well not only because of the economic value. When I first visited Des Moines and our office was right outside of Sherman Hills, I remembered how horrible that neighborhood looked and I saw up close over the rehab that had been done there. And how it had been done so well and consistently to the historic site. And, I really think that makes a difference. Especially since I live in the house that is still fairly historically accurate but I live next to the house with vinyl siding on it and it looks so out of place. That doesn't bother me but if they put up a chain-link fence that would really bother me. It would get to the point where, we have the neighborhood is that is kind of diverse with a lot of traditional brick homes and a few modern homes but, if it would get more and more diluted because people do not maintain the homes for the original vision, I don't think the neighborhood would have the original charm and look it has. That is important just from the property value aspect.

(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value
(1 2 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Historic Designation
(1 2 11) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Aesthetically Pleasing

Kind of the bottom line?

Nancy:
Absolutely!

You want to protect your value?

Nancy:
Yes, and I want to live in a historic neighborhood. So I want that look but at the same time I want to protect the financial value. That has to be a part of it, too. If or when I would move, if I don't have a great historic home that no one wants to buy because it is surrounded by things that just look awkward. So I think both of them are important but still there is a bottom line aspect to it.

(1 2 3) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Value
(1 2 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Historic Designation
(1 2 11) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Aesthetically Pleasing
Can you describe a specific event or episode that describes your daily experience?

Nancy:
I don’t know if I can. Um, I don’t know what I would call my daily experience. I don’t think I can.

Well, an event that kind of interests me, you mentioned yard work with your neighbor that turns into a few cocktails.

Nancy:
Well yes, a pretty typical event here would be a Thursday or Friday after work, after supper I will go out and work in my yard and the neighbors working in his yard and the kids are running around. And, we will chat about something and someone will come by and stop for a few minutes. And we will do the rest of our work and run in and out while maintaining a conversation over the fence. That is fairly typical. Also, walking back and forth. You get home from work and people may just stop by and say hi. You know, this be filled in on what happened last or what association is working on. I think that coming home from work is fairly social time.

So, is this type of event important to you?

Nancy:
I think it is pleasant. It gives you a sense of community. If I have been out of town people ask where have you been? I haven’t seen you. Or, I will collect the neighbors mail for him.

Is there someone that comes over if you take off for long weekends?

Nancy:
Um, if I leave I will have friends from work that will stop by. People outside of the neighborhood just because I have known them longer. But, one neighbor I will water his plants for him or the neighbors across the street I will collect their mail.

Do you believe the neighborhood would be the same if you did not have that type of interaction?

Nancy:
Um, I think that no. This type of neighborhood is a pretty small community. People referred to everybody houses as their last name. Like the blank house, very infrequently by address. There’s a lot of interaction. There really is a sense of small town in here. You know exactly how many houses are here and what’s going on. There are three rentals and what’s for sale and what the houses looks like inside.

Does it ever get too claustrophobic?

Nancy:
I don’t know. I have not been here for very long. Not for me and I am not incredibly social. The neighbors that I have socialized with tend to leave me alone. I think that most of the neighbors are pretty respectful of one another. Like the neighbors two down have a pool party every year. It is a pretty loud party but everyone is aware of it and pretty good with it. They are very courteous of each other at the same time...
A theme that has been coming up is this idea of investment. And I was wondering if this occurs for you when people already know this interior of your house? Do you become more invested when you are making change?

Nancy:
No, I think people like are just curious. The house was pretty ugly when I bought it. And one day there was a big discussion about the color my bathroom. A neighbor and her sister, when I just bought the house, people would come over to see what you're doing. Or they would just say welcome to the neighborhood. But, those two had a brawl about my bathroom. The one thought it was the ugliest color they had ever seen. But, the people are mostly happy about the work I have done. But besides that people are just happy that I am getting things done. And things like that. More supportive and curious then concerned.

If you moved into the neighborhood today, do you believe your experience would be different?

Nancy:
No I don't. The neighborhood really hasn't changed much since I have moved here. I am one of the last people that have moved in. A few people have moved in since I have. So, I don't think so.

Do you have any feelings of being the young kid on the block or the newest person to move in?

Nancy:
Not too much. I have been here a year now. And I caught up on most of the stuff I need to know; you know what's going on. A lot of people moved in before or after I moved in. So it's not like I was the only person to move in. In the last two years it is probably like ten people who have moved in fairly close to me. So, I camouflage myself as one of the new people.

Before, you mentioned that you found the place because the new someone that lived here. Do you feel like the neighbors control who moves in?

Nancy:
No, I don't think that they do. Not all. I think the neighbors have a lot of concerns. Particularly about rentals, the people who have been here longtime back to the point of 15 years. Those people seem concerned about the rentals and keep very close track of those homes. A lot of people are really more easygoing and don't really care. They will know the stories behind it or where they're going or what they are doing. It's back to the small town aspect of it. But, people are just waiting for the next person to move in and wondering what they are like. Do they have kids or are they older.

Do you feel invested in the neighborhood?

Nancy:
Kind of contrasting investment into your home. Is there more than just the mortgage? Or the fact that you cannot just pick up and leave.

Nancy:
I think I do feel like I do have more neighborhood concerns. If you wanted to call it investment you could. Like I said I don't contribute to the neighborhood things as much as I should. But, I did do the neighborhood cleanup if that counts for anything. Yeah, I think that I do. I walk around the neighborhood and kind of keep track of things going on. I am curious of little things going on. Who's moving in, who's moving out? What the
association is looking at, or if they are going to do something different with the gazebo. I think that I have some of the same interest as the longer-term residents. You know where it's going and where it's going to be in a few years. Or what concerns we have with our outlining surroundings. (3 1 3) /Investment/Individual Investment/II-Neighborhood

There are some individuals pushing for Chautauqua Park to expand beyond its borders. Looking to help the other neighborhoods.

Nancy:
I don't know that if the people in Chautauqua Park have it in them to do that.

Why do you say that?

Nancy:
Well this is just my personal bias. But, it seems like people that go into neighborhoods that are in bad shape are a little more idealist. Have some grander visions. Are willing to go into a house in Riverbend and do a ton of work. And those are the same people who will be very invested in the neighborhood association and have a ton of projects. And I think Sherman Hills and Riverbend have more people like that. Where I think that Chautauqua Parkway is much more, a little more relaxed with their ideals. I think that people here tend to do the right thing for themselves or their neighbor. And occasionally do something for their neighborhood. But, I don't think most people in this neighborhood have the social democracy aspect to go and help everybody else. It's much more laid-back. (1 1 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Middle Class - Respect (3 3 1) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment (3 3 2) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lacking Group Investment

So they are more concerned with protecting what they have then proactively changing what is?

Nancy:
It is just an age group or economic bracket that is more concerned about coming home after a hard day of work and spending time with their wife and kids. The mortgage, the kids and doing their homework with them. It is not the people that are younger or don't have families yet or more socially diverse or a little more liberal. (1 1 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Middle Class - Respect (3 3 1) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment

So, it's not the young Democrats that are moving in here?

Nancy:
I don't think so. There had been some changes that everyone that is moving in is younger but I think a lot of people here are more into a middle-aged lifestyle. Maybe even something that I thought was a little less attractive about Chautauqua Park. I really like some of the community aspects where you would have a community garden or there is more participation, things like that. But, I think as a whole this neighborhood at this point is much more of a middle-class group then a dynamic renovating the neighborhood. (1 1 9) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Middle Class - Respect

So, how would you describe to a friend the essence of the neighborhood? A friend from North Dakota who has also recently moved?

Nancy:
It is very Midwestern. It is quiet. It is friendly. Some diversity, comfortable. (1 1 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Friendly-Quiet (1 1 12) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Comfortable

Why do you say some diversity?
Nancy:
Well I think a lot of places in the Midwest are very similar. I just think that it is age wise, where you have some life residents and younger couples or second marriages. It is very diverse in that respect. And just being in the Midwest and having a racially diverse neighborhood is pretty diverse. It was not to down play it. I think that there are different diversities in different neighborhoods. Drake is racially diverse. Where in Sherman Hills there are a lot of homosexual couples living there. Where here it would not be as accepted. Where in Sherman Hills it is a social group in itself and known as one of its diversity. Where here I think that is economically, racially and age make it pretty diverse and definitely unique to the Midwest.

Before when I mentioned that that Chautauqua Park may have a sense of place you roll your eyes. Why?

Nancy:
Um, sense of place. I would say that it does in the very mild way, in a non-pressuring way. I would say that there are other places in Des Moines that would have more of a sense of place.

How would you define sense of place?

Nancy:
I would say that sense of places is almost a conformity. When the think of that place something comes to mind. With Chautauqua Park, if I would have to think of a sense of place, I would think of place that is just relaxed, it is kind of pay old-fashioned neighborhood in a away. That would be very much a sense of place. Where I would think of other places, um, such as was Des Moines as a yuppie sense of place. A very status sense of place, conformity. A colder maybe less interaction. Where as the sense of place here I think is almost a ‘50s neighborhood. Not where it is a college type of place where there are more friendships going on. Definitely you know you neighbor and can walk down the street and talk to them. It is quiet and not a busy thorough fare.

Are those elements or not elements in your idea of sense of place?

Nancy:
I think they are. To me if I would have to say what is a sense of place is, are characters that are similar between anyone that lives here. Would you disagree with that?

There are probably a 100 ways to define it.

Nancy:
I think that it has characteristics that everyone who lives here would use the describe the neighborhood.

And those characteristics for you would be?
Nancy:
I think the fact that it is friendly, it is quiet, and it is relaxed.

(1 1 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Friendly-Quiet
(2 2 6) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Relaxing
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

So how you believe this description has developed for you?

Nancy:
Just through experience. Coming into it I really did not have a preconception of it. It seems like people in Des Moines know that this neighborhood is here and they have preconception of it. I guess I really didn't have the benefit or the disadvantage of having it. I think that my perception of the neighborhood has formed from just living here. Maybe initially knowing the history of Chautauqua Park and how it has improved. I guess I had a little of that from the people that lived here before. I thought that it was probably a neighborhood that was more socially motivated or dynamic and improving kind of thing. But, once I moved here I realize that it is really quite peaceful, easygoing, more introverted kind of thing.

(1 1 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Friendly-Quiet
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

Do you plan on settling here?

Nancy:
Staying in Chautauqua Park? Um, I will probably not stay here indefinitely. But, I think that probably I will stay here the next several years. I can't picture myself staying in this particular home longer than that.

(3 3 1) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment

So you saw this as an opportunity like you had before? A nice home that fit some of your ideals and you could improve upon it? And financially you can walk away?

Nancy:
Yes, and I am someone that likes to fix up homes. So, I will probably never live in a finished home.

(3 3 1) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment

So is that why you said probably not this home?

Nancy:
This home actually because I have space issues that I did not realize. I like more space. I like a house I can paint. I live in a beautiful brick home and don't appreciate it as much as I should. But, I think maybe that will change. I realize just recently that I was happy that I did not find the house I was looking for. Originally, I wanted a Victorian house that was very ornate, bigger and with more things I could do with it. And now I'm very appreciate that I have a brick home that is very low maintenance in some respects. In my minds eye I have already picked out projects that will keep me busy for the next four or five years. I want skylights in my attic and stuff like that. I like the neighborhood and the social situation you tend to be in. But of course five years from now I might not be looking to do that. I might be in a different city with a different job. Or I might be ready to have kids.

(1 2 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Architecture-Design Elements
(3 3 1) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment

If you were married and having kids would you move?

Nancy:
Oh no. That's not a part of it. I would be very comfortable raising my kids in this neighborhood in some respects. I think that my neighbors here are great. As a whole this is a neighborhood that if your kids are running around and they should not be your neighbors will come and tell you. But, at the same time will not be
a pain in the ass. The concerns I would have would be the schools around here and things like that, things that I
don't know the answers to. In some respects this would be a great place to raise kids. People are very
neighborly and there is security of knowing where your kids are. And the fact that they might have interaction
with older people and understand more backgrounds would be a very positive thing for kids. They would not
grow up only seeing themselves like I did. I grew up in a very homogenetic world. We're all very similar... I
really did not know anyone of an ethnic minority until I was in high school. It was really that ridiculous...

(115) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Safety
(118) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Integrated
(212) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

Just to bring it back a second, it was interesting you mentioned skylights. What if the local ordinance did pass?

Nancy:
I think that that was one of the things I was concerned about because at the time when it was going through I
had a lot of work to do to my home. And I was concerned it would constrict me. But, if I would do something
to my home that would hurt the original character, shame on me. But I think that I can trust my judgment. I
think that a lot of people had a bad misconception of what it was. I watched the historic commission and they
are not as restricted as everyone thinks. There are some things that you don't want. You don't want a certain
type of fence in your front yard, or something that would change it significantly. Sure they would have
cconcerns if I would put skylights in the front of my house but if it was in the back the house they would not
have a problem with it. In all good taste I should make allowances for what is appropriate and distinct from
what I want... your jackass neighbors with no taste could do whatever they wanted. And they would be the ones
who complain about it.

(129) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Historic Designation
(1211) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Aesthetically Pleasing

So has this portrait included everything that you think is vital for me to understand this neighborhood?

Nancy:
As far as I know. (Laughter) It is probably boring but I did my part.

You have done more than your part.

Latter, when leaving, Nancy jokingly commented about feeling like an outsider with regards to the long-
standing politics of the neighborhood.

(331) /Investment/Lack of Investment/Lack of Individual Investment
APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW WITH STEPHEN

Again, if you could tell me on tape how long you have lived here?

Stephen:
Six years.

And, can you remember the first time you learned of Chautauqua Park?

Stephen:
Probably the late '70s. I was teaching at a school just west of here and I had students in here. It covered this area and Beaverdale, from 42nd and this is 16th. So it covered quite a large area and this was considered the intercity. So one student when I drove her home after school I found this little area. So I drove through here on my way home. And, I discovered this nice little area. I didn't think much more about it. Later on, when I was doing historic district tour, we had monthly gatherings called a historic restoration group. And we had a couple members from this area and they opened up their house one of the times. It was a group who would exchange information about good plaster or stuff like that. So I reacquainted myself with the neighborhood and really did not stay involved. And six years ago me and my wife got a divorce I was looking for smaller house. I had a 12 room Victorian and I wanted something smaller. And this was on the market and I remember the neighborhood and it was in a reasonable part of the city, to make a short story long.

Were you originally from Des Moines than?

Stephen:
I am originally from Chicago.

What brought you to Des Moines?

Stephen:
I got married. I had worked for three years in Chicago and had tenure in my building. And I wanted to get my Masters in counseling. And I thought I would come out here. My wife had parents with a farm just west of town. So it would satisfy, we would come out here every couple of months to visit anyway. And we found the house in Sherman Hill that was affordable so we decided to say.

So what attracted you to Chautauqua Park enough to purchase a home here?

Stephen:
Well, you would not know it driving up here but, I lost three big trees in a storm the first and second year I was here. It was very shaded and you could hardly see the house. It was kind of enchanted and surrounded by these huge trees. So I like that but, the architecture was not as old as I was used to. It was nice enough and I like older places. I like the over-story canopy and winding roads. It was very quiet and very affordable. I like all those factors and that it was integrated. It was pretty much middle-class in terms of respecting each other's property.

7 Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual's identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
How many times did you visit the home before you purchase it?

Stephen:
Just several. I knew that I liked it right of way.

Did you offer a bid?

Stephen:
Yes, right of way. I didn't bargain too much I guess.

Has the neighborhood lived up to your original hopes?

Stephen:
Yes, I very satisfied. You have some misgivings sometimes when you sell a house but I like the neighborhood because I had lived there for 20 years. But, I was looking for something smaller.

Were there any difficulties that you did not anticipate?

Stephen:
Difficulties in terms of the neighborhood?

Stephen:
No. The other place was more urban in feeling. Where here it is village like because of the shape and the way it is laid out. You don't have as much traffic. So it is just a different feel. It is very quiet, like your own small town verse more urban like with more traffic. More pedestrians and more cars.

Was there a greater feeling of Sherman Hill being a neighborhood?

Stephen:
No, it was just more of a Metropolitan neighborhood. This is more of a small town community, a different flavor.

On the other side, where there any pleasures that you did not expect?

Stephen:
Well again, I was not expecting the quietness. We are just off Hickman, which is a fairly busy street, and it is fairly quiet. You have natural berms and trees created by the hills. So it is quieter than I anticipated. Which isn't a terrible.

So, did you join the association when you arrived?

Stephen:
Well, I was a member of the other board and I felt that I would show support and so I would go to a meeting occasionally. I was real involved with the other one. So here I just laid back and other people like to do it. So you take your turn.
Do you now referred to Chautauqua Park as your home?

Stephen:
Yes.

Is your family still in Chicago?

Stephen:
All my family is now in Des Moines. My father and brother moved out here a couple years later. I grew up in Chicago and I got married there and moved here when I was 26. My father stayed in a rental property I had in Sherman Hills...

So how did you first describe the neighborhood when you called back to your father at home?

Stephen:
This neighborhood?
Yes.

Stephen:
Well, I did not describe anything. I just had them over so they could experience it. I showed them the house before I bought it.

What did they think?

Stephen:
Well my father grew up in an apartment building in Chicago. So, any home is kind of cool to him. And my brother was only a mile away.

So, what is it like to live in Chautauqua Park? In terms of your daily experience.

Stephen:
It is very peaceful. In Sherman Hill for example, because of the traffic more people will stop by and visit. Here you talk to your immediate neighbors while cutting the grass. I don't mean it in a negative sense but there is less intrusion. There is less stopping by other than your friends, in terms of local people coming by. Although people walking by, maybe because I have more bushes in front yard now but they are a backdrop for my plantings. Maybe that’s part of it.

So, do you know your neighbors on both sides?

Stephen:
Yes.

How many people do you know throughout the neighborhood?

Stephen:
15 or 20 people, maybe more because of the neighborhood association. It is more of acquaintances then close friends. In the other neighborhood when you are restoring a house from beginning to end and you have neighborhood people helping out it is a different chemistry and dynamic. While here the houses are for the
most part not following part or being restored, they are for the most part already done. They are maintained or were restored back in the 1970s when there was more of a decline. So I think maybe those people that were here at that time and buying at the same time struck a closer friendship because of their mutual experience. It seems like that at the board meetings. There is not a big attendance vs. my old neighborhood.

How close are you with your neighbors next door? Do they come over when you are away?

Stephen:
Well they are acquaintances. I maybe closer with the neighbors over here because my back door faces theirs. The other ones I just do not see out as much. Other than doing yard work and stuff like that.

So, to go back a little bit and talk about the vegetation around the front of the house. Did you introduce the shrubs that are there?

Stephen:
Yes.

And you did it more as a backdrop to the plantings that there?

Stephen:
Yes. It gave it a feeling of privacy, like the over-story canopy, which I liked. So, it gave me a feeling of definition around. The other house in Sherman Hill had Spirea and it was overlooking downtown. My neighbors had Spirea and the same wall and I wanted to continue the plan. Here, I planted a lot of pine trees because I had spent time in Wisconsin and it reminded me of that. It is something that is green in the winter. So I over planted trees and the shrubs as well. It is not an exclusion of other people as much as a backdrop for my other plants.

It seems like too, if there is not a lot of interaction happening on the street level you not excluding it anyway.

Stephen:
Yes, you are not banning it because there is no sidewalk. If people want to walk, they walk in the street.

Were the sidewalks or the lack of sidewalks a concern?

Stephen:
Less to shovel. But, I have long driveway. I used to have a corner property with lots of sidewalks.

So, is your experience now different from your initial experience when you move in?

Stephen:
It is pretty much the same.

Were there association members or neighbors that welcomed you?

Stephen:
One couple, that I had their children back in school knew me before. They knew that I was coming in so, they introduced me to a few people.

Did they assist in or let you know that the property had been up for sale? I know some people believe that the neighborhood more or less controls who moves in.

Stephen:
I think that in any neighborhood when something goes on the market and someone has an interest in living there, they share that information. Was that your question?
(F 15) //Free Nodes/Re-sale and Control

There was some concern that the existing neighbors control who moves in, maybe not intentionally.

Stephen:
Kind of getting their friends to buy it before someone else. But, the bottom line is if somebody wants it they can up the bid.
(F 15) //Free Nodes/Re-sale and Control

But, there was no one that said quick come in here?

Stephen:
No. Again I think you must have talk to someone that has been here longer.

Can you describe a specific episode or event that exemplifies your daily experience in the neighborhood?

Stephen:
My daily experience is that I am left alone and it is very peaceful. If I need help I can talk to my neighbors or we will talk over the fence about the grass. But, nothing that would be note worthy. Can you give me an example of what you're looking for?

(1 1 6) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Social Attributes/Exclusive-Private
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction
(2 2 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Secluded
(2 2 6) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Relaxing
(2 2 8) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Yard Work

Well I think that is enough in itself. This theme has come up a lot.

Stephen:
And in other words I come home from work and it is a peaceful retreat. And, if I want noise or to see more people, I can stop downtown.
(2 2 6) /Neighborhood Experiences/Environmental Experiences/Relaxing

But, along the lines of the yard work as a means to social interaction with the neighborhood. Is this fairly typical?

Stephen:
Yes, I think so.
(2 1 2) /Neighborhood Experiences/Social Experiences/Non-Organized Interaction

Is this interaction important you?

Stephen:
I think it is great to have interaction with your neighbors. And I think you can be overly bugged by neighbors, too. But, I think there is a nice balance of social interaction and privacy. But, I had that in my other place too. I
had my own private places designed and I had public space. I had a front porch that if I wanted to sit and visit with people walking by they could stop. If I wanted privacy I could be in my backyard. So there you could choose to be social or hermit like. Here, it is pretty much hermit like pretty much of the time.

And do you miss it? That breakdown between public and private space.

Stephen:
Yes, I do. I did like that mixture more so than this. Not that I don't like this at all but maybe because I lived there for 20 years and I grew up in Chicago that is what I was used to. That neighborhood was more of what I was used to. But, I have also grown accustomed to this quite well.

Why is it important to you to have this private getaway?

Stephen:
I deal with crisis at work and I like it here because it is very much the opposite. So, at the ended of the day I can retreat from it all.

Were you intentionally looking for that when you are looking at this neighborhood?

Stephen:
No, I was looking for something that I could afford and something that was less high maintenance. The majority of the time I spend in Sherman Hill I spent restoring two places. I had to do a lot of work and a lot of landscaping. The one house was built in 1881... it was one of those things that you do when you are younger. It was totally a different deal.

So, was this house when you move here completely restored?

Stephen:
Yes, as you can see there is no maintenance. There is a little painting and work on the garage. But, the first five years when I moved here I did not want to do anything. Just to the grass, put a few plants and travel more. And now, I have to do some catch-up work.

If you move to the neighborhood today, do you think that your experience would be different?

Stephen:
No, I think everything would be about the same. The costs of homes may be a little higher. But, I think that is every place. But as for the social climate I think everything is about the same. But, to use the term loosely there was no gentrification. Nobody was restoring dilapidated houses trying to make people banned behind. The housing stock is pretty much together. People pretty much maintain their homes. They may have done more work during the 70's but they have caught up. And, most places look pretty good I think. It is pretty much a middle-class, bungalow, well maintained for the most part neighborhood. It is not a deteriorating neighborhood.

Was that your experience in Sherman Hills? Was it being gentrified?
Stephen:
There were about five people doing restoration projects in the housing stock of 200. And now, there are close to 200 houses restored. It was a totally different situation.

What about physically? You mentioned losing large canopy trees.

Stephen:
I have lost the most trees in the neighborhood. But I had Lynden trees vs. Oaks. But, I have replaced them with pines and Oaks. But, for the most part that canopy is still in place. There have been some minor problems but for the most part it is still in place, because they are Oaks and hardwoods.

How would you describe to your friends the essence of this neighborhood?

Stephen:
What to expect here, the flavor? Um, I would recommend it as a place to live if you want some place quiet, affordable compared to places in suburbia. If they do not mind doing some work on the house or could afford to pay someone to. I have always enjoyed living in a racially mixed neighborhood maybe because I grew up in that. So, because of the housing stock and the population and trees canopy and distance, I like the feel.

You mentioned that the neighborhood is middle-class and diverse at the same time.

Stephen:
When I say middle-class, I define it as people that respect each other's property regardless of income. Most of them are homeowners that live in the property. It is not like they are absentee landlords. It is the house that they own and they keep it up and respect other people's property. They are courteous to one another and don't infringe upon others.

Then, how much interaction do you have with these neighbors throughout the year?

Stephen:
Most of my close friends live outside of the neighborhood. Acquaintances certainly. You do more things with certain people but not a lot of interaction.

Do you think that when you initially moved into the neighborhood you were looking for that middle-class neighborhood in which everyone was taking care of their property? A certain cultural norm that kind of exists.

Stephen:
Bottom-line I came here because I like the architecture of the house. It was unique to me and I could afford it. These were two qualifiers to me. I knew the neighborhood and I knew that there was older architecture but perhaps not as old as I like. But, I could not find something on the market that I could really afford. But, the diversity I had in the other neighborhood was even more diverse than this. I'm sure that it has changed now because the houses are even too expensive for me to go back there. But, that when I lived there and bought there was a wider spectrum of socioeconomic background. It was really quite an interesting neighborhood. People up here probably thought it was a red light district and drugs. And, I never heard that associated with this neighborhood. But again I was not here years ago.
So what do you think you would have done if the social and cultural norms that do exist here, did not fit yours? If you moved in and found out that it was not a quiet neighborhood. Maybe it was a red light district.

Stephen:
Well then, it would have to have other drawls. It would have to have the drawl like the other neighborhood. It would have to be a very reasonable price house, which I would have to do some work to. I would have to get more for my money. I would put up with other things. I don't mind that. And don't mind putting up with screaming kids, drug use, I did all that. It depends where you grew up. If you grew up in rural Iowa you would be like oh my God! You know urban areas. So you put up with the trade-offs. The cultural diversity, I like that. If I didn't like that, I would not be here. You can find less expensive housing in the other parts of town.

Were there other houses you were looking at, at the same time?

Stephen:
Not really. This was it. I found it and I liked it. I wonder now why we do things but nothing is forever.

So reflecting back on all your experiences, as a resident in this neighborhood.

Stephen:
My few experiences.

Well, six years is a longtime.

Stephen:
Well there is a lot of neighborhood interaction but I have been more introverted, less directly involved. I think that people who have children perhaps have more connection. My neighbors to the south have grown children that don't live there. And there's a bachelor on the other side. And I know the renters that live over there and they are great people. So it all depends on your similarities or common interests.

Well, I don't necessarily mean only your social interaction. But also your experience of just pulling into the neighborhood and your experience with the neighborhood as it goes through the seasons. Reflecting back on all that, can describe your understanding as it has developed over time?

Stephen:
Do I understand the history of the neighborhood?

No, can you describe your understanding of the neighborhood, as it is different from when you initially arrived? How your experience has changed. Did you initially come into the neighborhood wide-eyed?

Stephen:
No, not wide-eyed. Having worked on other houses, I saw this as the restful retreat. Not having to do anything. And I discovered I have to paint my house just like I had to before. You have to do yearly tasks, all the stuff that I was not foreseeing. I was thinking that I was going to stay here for the short-term. If a house every came up (the Sherman Hills) that was smaller, I would probably go back. But, this is fine for now. I did not anticipate being here longer than five years. But I have been here for six, so who knows. I am comfortable here.
So, has this portrait included everything that you think is vital for me to understand this neighborhood?

Stephen:
I don't think that I have given you that much information. But, yes I think so. (Laughter)...

I was interested in interviewing residents on the east side. I am developing a sense that,

Stephen:
Us and them? (Laughter)

Yes, does that exist?

Stephen:
I think for me it is just within the confines of what you can see. I don't take walks in the neighborhood. I no longer have a dog that I would walk. So I guess I don't get out as much. I find myself driving everywhere. You cannot walk to a store like you could in the old neighborhood.

Stephen:
Is there less interaction with the association from the east side?

Stephen:
Yes, I think so. We don't have big attendance at the association meetings. There are not a lot of burning issues. Everybody as their own soapbox... but there are not a lot of problems going on. It is pretty safe. And most people are taking care of their properties. And most people are living in their properties.

Where did you fall on the issue of local designation?

Stephen:
I signed it at first because I wanted to show my support, having come from a historic neighborhood. But, the truth is I am against it at this point. I just don't like government intrusion. I think that most people for the most part are taking care of their property. If there were a lot of absentee landlords that were not living here or bastardizing their houses, or were trying to put on crappie additions and were not being sensitive to the architecture or people that are living here but, I do not see that happening. If a person wants you know how to properly restore something there are avenues for that, different offices in the city or other local historic neighborhoods. It is just one more hoop that you have to jump through before you can do something. And, I can understand the need for that in certain situations but I think it is being kept up by the people already. And that would just be one more hassle. That's not to say it would not be a good thing because it was a great thing for Sherman Hills. To stop some of the abuse. And for some people it encourages you to buy. It is a status thing. That is why I'm sure they had this neighborhood designated a national historic district. But, I am not arguing with it. There is history and significance in architecture. But, usually it is done to get people to have pride in their homes or as a marketing tool.

So do you believe than that there may or may not exist some sense of place in this neighborhood?

Stephen:
Can you define sense of place?
I would like not to define it for you.

Stephen:
Then I will define it. If I were to talk to other people and they would say where are you from and I would say here, people would say where is that. Oh, that is small neighborhood. I think that a lot of people I talk to did not know where it was. People have not been in the neighborhood before. I refer to it and may be a third of people have heard of it. And then the other two-thirds when I say that I lived by Broadlands hospital they say oh. Because this area above the interstate there is a lot of low income, a lot of crime, one of the highest crime rates in the city is in this general area. Not in this area but, in this general area. So, people have a stereotype of this area. So when you say sense of place I get a feeling of a sense of place within a sense of place. This is kind of like a village, a quiet village in a larger depressed area for the city.

(1 2 4) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Small Town
(1 2 5) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Oasis
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

What's interesting me now, is that when a landscape architect originally plotted the neighborhood, it was sold in the brochures as having a sense of place.

Stephen:
Well it is because if you look at other neighborhoods like this there are only two in Des Moines. The other is over by 41st Street. I can't think of the name of it, just between forest and Beaver. But, it would be due southwest of here. They were both build on curved street and they were both plotted similarly with a sense of place. The river and green space is incorporated with a nice tree canopy before the houses.

(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

So with your experience do you believe that the sense of place was constructed by the residents and homes within? Or, did this idea of the sense of place exist before?

Stephen:
I think it's a combination. You have trees that have been here over 100 years. Some have been planted with the construction of the houses but it is a combination of both man-made and natural.

(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place
APPENDIX 8: INTERVIEW WITH ELISABETH

How long have you lived here?

Elisabeth:
We have lived here for 15 years.

And, can you remember the first time you learned of Chautauqua Park?

Elisabeth:
Well, we came here and started to look for a house. And, we had first home and garden Realty and we said how many rooms we needed because we still had children and a teenage son at home. When they all come home for Christmas we needed a place to hold them. So, he could just not find a place. We went all over the city. And, I did not want to live in West Des Moines. I came from a farm and my husband was raised in town but he had trees at least. And, I wanted a place that had trees and the sense of country living. So I saw this picture of this house on his desk and he said you don't want to go over there and look at those houses. And I said well why? And he said because it is diverse living. And of course I am from a little town and I don't have any idea of what he's talking about. And I said I don't understand what you mean. And, my father is a minister so; I know that there are black people in the world. (Laughter) and I know that there are other nationalities in the world. My grandfather came from Italy so I am not immune to this. But, he said there are black people in this neighborhood. And I said so. It didn't mean a thing to me. So I said I wanted to see this house. It looked like the picture but it had volunteer trees and bushes all over. You could not even see the house. So we came over here and there were four houses for sale. They were all HUD houses by the way. But, we looked at 4 and we saw this one and my husband said it is not big enough. But I wanted to take a look at it anyway. It was just darling from the outside; this is such a cute house. So, we went in and it had the best floor plan I think Chautauqua has because the living rooms so large. And that is exactly what we needed. The dining room can spread out and it had a screened in back porch, which, we made into a four-season room, which most people are doing now. The kitchen was very small and not adequate and there was a balcony off of the master bedroom. And I said there is so much potential in this house. Because I am a Christian I prayed about it and this was the house we chose because we had direct orders that we needed this house. Believe it or not, we only paid $38,000 for it.

Because of the HUD designation?

Elisabeth:
Because the way the houses had run down and civil rights. A lot of white people were afraid. But I am from Ottumwa where this is all taking place. Anyway, we bought it and the first year we really did not do anything. Bob was getting used to a different organization. And we went from there.

So, your husband's job brought you here?

Elisabeth:
We were in Cresco, Iowa at time. It is a farming community and the Fareway is the biggest store in the whole town. And I said this is just not going to work. And, our son likes the school all right. But, the whole town rolled up and shut the lights all at 5 o'clock. We were used to a little bit larger town. So Chad was marching in

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8 Descriptive accounts appear with corresponding codes after each text passage. The names of the participants have been change to protect the individual's identity. Each participant reviewed a copy of the transcription as to determine his or her comfort in publishing the material.
the state fair parade and Bob said what do you think if I throw my resume around the city of Des Moines? Would you want to move there? Well we talked about it and we thought there were more opportunities. So it was not a week and he got a job. But anyway that is why we moved here.

So, you are looking for a larger town with more opportunities?

Elisabeth:
Yes.

But then when you are looking for a house, you are looking for something smaller that reminded you of the country.

Elisabeth:
Yes. But, we do have animals here. We have red fox, dear, and raccoons. And we have squirrels and rabbits galore. So, yeah we have a lot of different animals in this area because we have the park over here, Spring Creek. So there is a lot of history behind that too. But we came here just as little country folk. But, I love Des Moines and I think it has a lot of opportunities for young people. They just don't see them like we do coming from a small town.

Did the neighborhood live up to your original hopes?

Elisabeth:
You know when we looked at this house we saw people out in the yards. And there were some black people and we went over and met them. And they told us how they found their house... and they found a house that was just like the one they were raised in. So, you see people generally go back to the original ties and their original foundation. Which is good if kids can come from a better foundation. So they were telling us... and so these houses were just in a stagnant mode. When we got them and in the second year we started working on them which, has taking us all 15 years. The 3rd or 4th year we started working on the outside. And then in 1996 is when I really started getting into it. The association asked me if I would help organize a home and garden tour.

So that was in 1996 and you originally moved in 1985?

Elisabeth:
No, 1987. So then, I went to the library and got some books. And I had copies of the national designation in 1990 but I guess I did not pay much attention to it until I went to the library. Because my dad is a minister we did have a campground. Open Bible had a big campground. So, I called my mom right away and I said we are standing on holy ground here and I did not even know it. I did not realize that there was an actual amphitheater over there. Because this history (the designation booklet) tells you about when the houses were built and how she did all the research. Most of the research was done through better homes and garden. And so that's how I found out and I just kept reading and reading. The more you read the more you want know. I did not realize what I was getting into. And so that is why it became such a passion for me.

So, what was the neighborhood like in 1987? I know the worst times were in the late '70s and early '80s. Was the neighborhood on a rebound already as a whole?
Elisabeth:
Yes, when we first came here they had an association. It started in 1985. And it grew and got stronger. When we first came here they said these people are going to be on the board if they want to or not I guess. So Bob, my husband was the first recruit. So we sort of learned from there how bad these properties actually got. A lot of the light fixtures were stolen, which happens in these, blighted neighborhoods. And then we got a housing committee that lived here for longtime. They worked really hard because these houses were up on contract and contract. What they had to do was write original letters to the original owners to try to get these people to sell their properties. Because we knew that if we could get these rentals out people would take pride in the homes and start working on them. And that's what happened. I think we only have two or three rentals in the neighborhood now. But, we worked on it. The last one we worked on across the street was empty for five years. But what we did was watch who went over there. We didn't want anyone to rent it. We kept on their heels telling people that they did not want to live there. We had one house demolished... we were thrilled to get that done. That happened in May of 1990 and we got designated in March of 1990. And then there was another house that caught on fire and we went in as an association to see if there was anything we could do to keep the house. I cannot see how it could be done but a contractor went in and got it done... but I am impressed with these young people that are moving in here and getting it done because of the character of the house. Each one of them will tell you that. They did not move here because it was a cheaper home to buy. Because now they are in the hundred thousand dollar range. The last one sold for $110,000. But anyway, they are moving here because of the character and the trees. And I am impressed with that because these are younger people that would not have to live here. I am very impressed with the young people that are living here. Anytime you see these younger people go gun hoe on these older homes, which, all of us had to do.

(1 2 1) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Landscape
(1 2 10) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Architecture-Design Elements
(3 2 2) /Investment/Group Investment/GI-Physical Environment

How long did take for you when you first move in for this to feel like home?

Elisabeth:
I think right away. I think we really liked this comer lot alot. It is quiet and we really don't have a lot of traffic. We are having a little problem with speed but it took us quite a while for the city to recognize that we needed new curbs and streets. And of course we don't have any sidewalks. We can't have sidewalks here. And the school buses and the MTA can't come on these streets; they are not built for it. So, I think right away it felt like home. I think the atmosphere and the school, which used to be the elementary. We never had any problems with students but now it is school offices.

(1 2 7) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Secluded-Quiet
(1 2 8) /Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Street Relationship

How did you describe the neighborhood when you call back to family and friends?

Elisabeth:
Oh, they love this house. My husband's father thought this was the best and prettiest house he has ever seen.

So did he visit it before you are able to describe it?

Elisabeth:
Yes, he was here many times. I have six siblings they have all been here.

How did you describe it to your siblings before they arrange?

Elisabeth:
Well, we are in Des Moines and this is the quietest neighborhood we have ever been in. We're not far from downtown. We're not far from the interstate. We're not far from any of these entities; it's a 15-minute drive to wherever you want to go. So they will say you can't go to Des Moines they have all these killings there. And
they have all those criminals but we don't have any here. And we are, Bob and I helping the other neighborhoods cope with the crime and the sex offenders especially because we do not want them moving back and forth. We wanted to move clear out. We don't care where they go; we just don't want them here. And we did that.

Do you use the services that the city provides anymore or do you go to the malls more often?

Elisabeth:
I don't like to shop. I am a woman and I don't like to shop (laughter).
I don't even like to go to the grocery store... it's just not far no matter where you want to go.

Do you go much down 13th street and through the rest of the neighborhoods?

Elisabeth:
Yes, somewhat. I don't do alo at but when I go to the United Way because that is where most of our schooling is through Iowa state extension. We meet there for several meetings. There are a lot of times we go there and it is just a hop and the skip. It is a beautiful building. But, this is a great area to be in because you are not far from anything. And, otherwise when you come in here you are sort of secluded. It is the neighborhood, like an oasis in the middle of the desert. And it has been called that before because people that have lived here all of their lives do not even know that it is here...

Were there any pleasures or difficulties that you did not anticipate when he moved into the home originally?

Elisabeth:
The only difficulties that we have here are the constant conspiracy type of thing. There is only one little click that wants to be in charge of everything. And then they want to take the full glory for it. And when do something for this neighborhood it should be for the neighbors and not the association. And until people learn that, they are not going to be happy with themselves, because Bob and I had never done anything for just one neighbor. But, anyway I do think that since we have been here there has been a little conspiracy type thing. If people want to do things like I love to learn about the history, and they don't want to do things that's fine. Someone else will pick up the load. And it is for the neighborhood and not just one or two neighbors. And that's the type of thing we are going through now. We got a grant from the Polk County supervisors... so, like I am trying to tell you this is a terrible neighborhood to live in if you do not want a little click to run you.

So, what is your daily experience in the neighborhood like now?

Elisabeth:
There are a lot of people who walk and jog through here. This is the best neighborhood to do that in because it has hills, if you are trying to get your heart going good. And, the Des Moines school district building uses this neighborhood for a walking area. And, it is a beautiful area to walk through because most people are putting in gardens. They used to be gardens here all the time. But now more and more people are doing it. They are putting out night lighting, which adds security and brightens up your yard. In the summertime when you are out in your yard people come and mingle and visit with each other.
Do you know your neighbors even though they are on only one side?

Elisabeth:
Yes, I know the Des Moines school people and the couple on the other side. We yelled back and forth at each other all the time.

Are these people acquaintances or are they people you can trust with your keys when you go away?

Elisabeth:
Yes, the neighbors have taken care of our dog before when we have gone away. We would just leave the door open a little bit. But, we had a bat come in so we do not do that anymore...

Can you describe a specific episode for event that exemplifies your daily experience?

Elisabeth:
Oh, let's see. Well you know you just do your normal thing. We worked on our yard and gardens constantly. And we just put a flagpole up. When we got back from Chicago that was one of the first things we did... but like I said. When you are out in the yard people really do mingle a lot. But, a lot of people are professionals in this neighborhood. And they are gone a lot. We have about 50 women who are widows or single women or women that their husbands work nights. So, you need to make your neighborhood as safe as you can just for that reason. We were shocked when we went down the list and counted that many. And we feel safe here, very safe here.

Why did this experience of working in the yard standout?

Elisabeth:
Because that is when you get to see more people. And, it gets addictive. Gardening is very addictive.

Was this experience the same or as important when you first moved in?

Elisabeth:
Yes, when we first moved in we were more worried about getting things done on the inside. Decorating the way we want to. The bathroom was in bad shape. And, the kitchen had cupboards that went cleared to the ceiling. But of course that is how they were. A lot of these houses had maids originally. And none of them were built the same. There are not two houses alike in this neighborhood. Which makes it unique in itself. Because, you can't go to a neighborhood anymore that they don't all look alike or basically alike. But, we pretty much stayed in the house and worked on the inside. The first thing Bob did was to put the new railing around the balcony because it was in such bad shape. We redid the balcony of course because we thought that it was a safety issue. And then there was the door going downstairs and we took it off... and then we turn the porch into a four-season room. And that makes it more taxable but, also a part of the house. Just another nice room. And my son liked it in there.

What was your children's experience like in the neighborhood?

Elisabeth:
Well Chad liked it here. He bicycled a lot.
Were there other children in the neighborhood?

Elisabeth:
Yes. They went to school together. They are all about the same age. Most of them are in college now more on their own. But yeah, they went to school together.

Is there a second generation moving in now?

Elisabeth:
Yes. In fact there was at one time three generations that lived here. And that is unique in itself for only 120 houses. That is really neat. And I can tell you a little about this house... and their son comes back every time we have a home and gardens tour. His sister lives in Minneapolis but she always comes. And they just love it; they love what we have done to the house. And these contractors actually foreseen the future... and the first year we had it they cried. Everyone came back that wanted to because we got the news out. I put in a country living book and we put it in a lot of books and every major newspaper. People that are not in historic tours and things like that... and the next day I tried to sit down and remember everything that people said and it just was overwhelming. Because, these people had lived here and went to school here. We had eighty-year-old brother and sisters that were asking if they were going to open the school. There was just emotional. I cannot believe the response we got on that. And neither could anybody else in the neighborhood. Was just overwhelming.

(F 11) //Free Nodes/Time

If you moved in the neighborhood today how you believe your experiences would be different?

Elisabeth:
Well first of all houses are worth a lot more money now. And they would be less to do to your homes because the majority of the kitchens have been redone.

(F 13) //Free Nodes/Neighborhood Change

Do you think that would take away from your experience with the neighborhood and the house if it were already redone?

Elisabeth:
Well, that would be nice. But usually the people that buy these the historic houses buy it because of the challenge.

(1 2 10) //Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Architecture-Design Elements
(2 3) //Neighborhood Experiences/Individual Attraction
(3 1 2) //Investment/Individual Investment/II-Individual Property
(F 13) //Free Nodes/Neighborhood Change

Did you like that challenge?

Elisabeth:
Yeah, because we had lived in four or five cities in Iowa, and this is the fourth house we have redone. And, it is going to be the last. Because we refinshed the woodwork and everything. And when you start projects like that it takes a lot of time and a lot of energy and a lot of money. Because, when you are working on an old house nothing is ever straight. We took the whole basement apart... there are always things like that to do. If you ever moving to an old house like this you need to make a priority list. And that's what we kind of did. And we kept track of how much money we spent. You will never get out of that what you put in because you put your heart and soul into it. You just need to make a priority list... when you buy an old house that's just what you have to deal with. We are just about at our limit for this year...

(1 2 10) //Neighborhood Descriptions/Environmental Attributes/Architecture-Design Elements
(2 3) //Neighborhood Experiences/Individual Attraction
(3 1 2) //Investment/Individual Investment/II-Individual Property
So was that your strategy when you moved into the house being that the neighborhood was on the rebound?

Elisabeth: Yes. Right because everybody else that moved in at that time have to deal with the same thing. They would have to update the kitchens and bathrooms. But they knew that. They just weren't very usable.

So, how would you describe the essence of this neighborhood to a friend?

Elisabeth: I think that it is the best place to live in town.

What makes it the best place?

Elisabeth: Because it is so unique in itself. And we are doing things all the time to make it better. Right now we are looking at slower speed limits throughout the neighborhood because there are no sidewalks. And, we have a lot of hills so you need to get the momentum of the car so fast to get up the hill... we have proposed speed bumps but the city said no before because of fire trucks and things like that...

So, this idea of the neighborhood being unique and then the ability to make it better has come up before. That is the idea that the individual residents are able to invest themselves into the neighborhood not only the home. Were you able to feel like you are able to invest yourself into the neighborhood?

Elisabeth: Yes.

And what made that possible?

Elisabeth: Because I realize that the rest of the neighbors were trying to do the same thing. They were all in this together. They were trying to find light fixtures that would fit and things like this.

So this took place on the individual home level?

Elisabeth: Yes, it is like a domino effect. Because, when we moved in here we started our garden and they really were not a lot of flowers in this neighborhood. And then it just domino effects. When we put night lighting in people realize that it is simple and they put in night lighting. It just takes one person to do things like this and it just takes off. And people are very aware of how much they have spent on their homes and how much they have put into it. Because they have to love it...

Elisabeth: The house, two houses down, has a pool party every year. And they invite everyone. There are people parked clear up to the school. But it is because they like to do this. They work all year for this one-day. So these
neighbors are like that... I think that people on the whole probably have good intentions. There are only just a few individuals on the board. But you just have to overlook that. Not everybody is going to have the same vision as you do or the same mission. And this is what we learned in the management of non-profit organization. You just have to overlook some people...

Reflecting back on all your experiences as a resident, can you describe your understanding of the neighborhood as it has changed over time?

Elisabeth:
Yes, it has changed over time. First of all people are taking more interest because they are seeing now what houses are going for. The first house that's sold after we got them backed up to snuff sold for $97,000. People said wow; they're not worth that much. But, the average house was going for $100,000 at that time. And nobody thought that they could probably get that here. Because, most of the people that came here before that time did not pay very much for them. So they think that is a lot of money. And now the last one sold for $110,000 and that is making me happy. Because if we ever want to sell we know that we would get what we put into the house at least. But no, I can see all around the neighborhood how the yards are better cleaned and when we have a house tour they are even better. Because people have an incentive. That is why in every neighborhood it is important to have people working in an association to have a house tour no matter what. Because it gives the neighbors incentive to clean up their place... the house tours were the best thing we ever done because everybody work hard together. Men work together to get it cleaned up... but if you could have seen when we first moved in and the neighborhood now they're definitely is a big difference.

Has this portrait that you have developed with me today, included everything that you feel is vital for me to understand the neighborhood?

Elisabeth:
Well can I ask you question? What do you think? Have I given you a better understanding of Chautauqua being a sense of place? Or where am I lacking?

No, I think you have shared plenty of information with me. (Laughter) but, let me ask you how would you define the sense of place?

Elisabeth:
A safe neighborhood. A neighborhood where people can walk the streets without getting hurt or getting shot at. Or where there are drug deals going on. Pretty houses and a nice atmosphere. I think that pretty well describes the neighborhood. Keeping things at a calm. Well, we don't have a lot of traffic but I can feel this is a very good place to live. It is a very safe place.

So, has that definition of sense of place has developed for you over time?

Elisabeth:
Yes.

Because, you moved here and the neighborhood was not safe as it is today.
Right.
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

This is something that grew up with you and that you were a part of.

Elisabeth:
Right.
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

So, I think that that is really what I am beginning to understand. That is, how this has developed for you. That is what you have shared with me. How over time all these factors have come together. The idea that sense of place is not a static kind of thing, here is a sense of place. But, it is really a dynamic construct that not only deals with the trees and hills but also the social aspects of the neighborhood.
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

Elisabeth:
Yes, as it has developed.
(F 25) //Free Nodes/Sense of Place

And, I think we have definitely got that some of that.

Elisabeth:
Well, I will tell you that two or three years after we moved here we had the first drive by killing in Des Moines in one of these houses. And, we had a drug house that was on Avalon and we dealt with that. All the people around that area would take down license plates... but these are all things that we had dealt with throughout the 15 years. It has not been perfect but I want people to understand that things happened here first and then they start moving to neighborhood and neighborhood. And that's why I think it is important for this neighborhood to be a beacon for the other neighborhoods... so, we don't want them to jump from one neighborhood to another we want them to move clear out of here. We don't want them here at all. So, when you know where we came from you can understand why we are so proud of our neighborhood now. Because, we worked hard to get it like that.
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