

Spotlight on elders

[Continued from Page 12]

not how young or old they happened to be when they did it.

If this sounds like the Puritan Work Ethic, it was. There was an urgency, hard to imagine today, about the whole colonial venture. Time was of the essence, and idleness was unforgivable. Children began contributing to the household economy as soon as they could, and oldest members continued to as long as they could, incidentally retaining their self respect by doing so.

Smaller and later groups of immigrants might maintain their ethnic traditions, privately, while outwardly adopting the cultural mode of the British-based majority. That majority, quite obviously, was not likely to yield to newer groups. But none of the newer groups brought over particular customs so outrageous as to invite suppression - for example, the exposure of the helpless aged to barren mountainsides, where they quickly died. At the other extreme, we have never, as a nation, seen fit to honor the aged as the Japanese do. They have a special term, otoshiyori, meaning "the honorable elders," and a national holiday, "Respect for the Elders Day." They even recognize the 61st birthday as the onset of old age, with ceremonies resembling bar mitzvah, christening, or confirmation.

Such marked deference to the elderly, in Japan and in certain other cultures represented within our Nation of Nations, makes what we have had, early or late, seem by comparison a virtual non-tradition, closer to an economic formula than to cherished custom.

At the time of the Revolutionary War, as Benjamin Franklin observed, the colonies had twice as many marriages as Great Britain, and twice as many children per marriage. If someone wished to portray the most representative American during the war years, the figure would have to be a young woman leading her oldest child by the hand, carrying her second across one shoulder, and unmistakably pregnant with her third.

Soldiers were less numerous, despite the fighting, and old people were scarcer yet. Young people under 15 made up about half the population. It was a very young country - and it stayed young for the next century and more. As late as 1900, only one American in 25 was 65 or older.

Then things began to happen. The commodious family home, with "always one more bed," became as rare as the family horse and carriage. The family itself exploded and reformed in unfamiliar shapes. Pensions gave retirement a welcome

new dignity and encouraged independent action, but compulsory retirement at a fixed age was a price tag not always welcome. Health improved, and average life span was extended.

Out of this massive upheaval, this cultural revolution, old age has emerged as a myth, a set of beliefs with slight if any basis in fact, and as much in need of correction as any of the older ethnic slurs that hopefully are in decline today. Defining and measuring the hardening stereotypes is difficult, and for this reason we must be grateful for a recent study conducted by Louis Harris & Associates for The National Council on the Aging, with the arresting title, "They Myth and Reality of Aging in America."

What this poll indicates is that a great many in the 18 - 64 age group hold negative views of people 65 and older. Two out of three, for example, consider their elders not very good at getting things done. Only three in ten view them as very bright or alert, and only one in five considers them very open-minded and adaptable. These opinions seem to reflect a general

fear of old age, a belief that most people over 65 are frail and helpless.

But the poll also demonstrates that most older people view their condition as better than they thought it would be, and better than younger people believe it is. Most of them say they do not lack money enough to live on, and even more insist they can usually find meaningful activities. Older people spend far less time in sedentary passivity, like watching television, than younger people believe they do. As a matter of fact, old and young spend about the same amount of time sleeping, reading, "sitting and thinking," participating in organizations and going for walks.

There is no typical older American, just as there is no typical younger person; our national diversities extend through every age group. Accepting false stereotypes, keeping them alive, or enlarging them can only sap that part of our national strength. Without the stereotypes, effective handling of ageism as a national concern will be hard enough; with them, it comes perilously close to being impossible.



Junior and grand champion Angus bull at the 1975 Ohio State Fair, Columbus, was this entry of Pennsylvania State University, University

Park and McKean Brothers, Mercer, Pennsylvania. The top bull was PS Freestate 154.

GT Tox-o-Wix GRAIN DRYER

WILL DRY CORN FOR PENNIES PER BUSHEL
FROM 32 DOWN TO 15% MOISTURE

YOUR NO. 1 GRAIN DRYER ON THE MARKET
FOR EFFICIENCY & QUALITY IT CAN'T BE BEAT

Yes, you can talk to an owner of one of these fine dryers. He will tell you about the quality and efficiency of grain drying this dryer will give you. I am sure a dryer like this is just what you need. Call us today for a price and demonstration.



GT TOX-O-WIX CONTINUOUS RECIRCULATING GRAIN DRYERS

WORLD'S LARGEST SELLING RECIRCULATING
BATCH GRAIN DRYERS BECAUSE

Price is Lower	MODELS AVAILABLE
Costs Less to operate	270 - 250 BUS.
Easier to operate	370 - 350 BUS.
Dries more efficiently	570 - 500 BUS.
Will dry 50 per cent moisture down to 12-15 per cent moisture	

The Only Dryer That WILL NOT Crack Your Grain.

SELF CONTAINED UNITS—

No Extra Augers or Bins Needed For a Complete Operation.

SHENK'S FARM SERVICE

RD4, Lititz, PA

Phone 626-1151



**Virtually
Unpluggable**

**High Capacity
Badger TA-54
Forage Blower**

Unique Thro-Action Hopper makes the Badger Forage Blower virtually unpluggable. Takes only what the high capacity 54-inch blower can handle. Keeps it operating at maximum efficiency. High performance blower has cupped paddles and extra heavy flywheel. Delivers more blow power per horsepower. 50 h.p. tractor with 540 rpm PTO provides ample power for 70 ft silo (100 h.p. PTO available). Badger's blower pipe is carefully tested for strength, straightness and tightness. Electric, Manual Controlled or stationary Level-Flo silage distributors let you pack more silage in, get better silage out.

See Your Local
Badger Dealer



**SHOW-EASE STALL
CO.**

523 Willow Rd.
Lancaster, Pa.
Ph. 299-2536

**GRUMELLI'S FARM
SERVICE**

Mechanics Grove
Quarryville, Pa.
Ph. 786-7318

CARL L. SHIRK

R.D.#5
Lebanon, Pa.
Ph. 274-1436

ISAAC W. HURST

R.D.#2
East Earl, Pa.
Ph. [215] 445-5767

LLOYD E. KREIDER

R.U.#1
Cochranville, Pa.
Ph. [215] 932-2934