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Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in The Department of Sociology

by

Jerome Joseph Salomone
B.A., Southeastern Louisiana College, 1959
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1961
August, 1966
DEDICATION:

To Ruscilla
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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study are: (1) to discuss certain funeral customs in order to provide a socio-cultural background for the analysis of attitudes toward funeral customs in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana; (2) to analyze the attitudes toward funeral customs of two groups of family householders, identified as the death-free group and the bereavement group; (3) to analyze the attitudes toward funeral customs of three subcultural groups—one racial, one religious, one socio-economic—within the family householder groups; (4) to analyze the attitudes toward funeral customs of a group of clergymen.

Selection of the respondents in the death-free and the bereavement groups was made randomly. Clergymen were chosen so that ministerial representatives of both races and of as many different religious persuasions as possible were included. The data were collected during June, July, and August, 1965, using interview schedules, non-participant observation, participant observation, and library research.

An account is given of selected funeral customs, utilizing as an organizational framework a three-step chronological sequence beginning with death and ending with disposition of the body. Included are discussions of (1)
expected and unexpected death in a hospital or home; (2) the services performed by funeral home functionaries; (3) the wake; (4) a case study of a man's funeral and interment services; (5) the funeral service; and (6) the interment service.

Two hypotheses guided the design of the research and the collection and analysis of the data. They are:

1. There are no significant attitudinal differences toward funeral customs between members of the death-free group and members of the bereavement group.

2. There are no significant attitudinal differences toward funeral customs between whites and Negroes, between Catholics and Protestants, and between individuals with high socio-economic status and individuals with low socio-economic status.

These hypotheses deal with attitudes toward the wake, funerals, funeral directors, public ownership of funeral homes, the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish, and the honesty of funeral directors.

The results of the study show that in every respect individuals in the death-free group were more critical of the funeral industry than were persons in the bereavement group. However, persons in the death-free and the bereavement groups did not differ significantly on any of the attitudinal items measured. Therefore, the first hypothesis was accepted.
Negroes favored public ownership of funeral homes significantly more often than whites; their funeral costs were significantly lower than those of whites; they thought funeral costs are reasonable significantly more frequently than whites; and they maintained funeral directors are honest significantly more often than whites. In all other respects proportionately more Negroes exhibited favorable attitudes toward the institution of the funeral, although the attitudinal differences between the races were not significant.

No significant differences were observed between religious affiliation and any of the attitudinal items surveyed.

Persons high in socio-economic status were significantly more critical of the wake and public ownership of funeral homes than persons low in socio-economic status. Persons of high and low socio-economic status did not differ significantly on the other attitudinal items. However, as socio-economic status increased, dissatisfaction with the funeral industry increased.

The above findings forced the rejection of the second hypothesis.

Clergymen considered the wake the least important element of the funeral, ranking it behind the funeral service and the interment service. They generally were familiar with the cost of funerals for their respective religious
groups. Only four of 24 clergymen thought funeral costs are reasonable. Yet, the overwhelming majority of them said they would not advise (if asked) members of their congregations about the cost of funerals. In general, only Negro clergymen and white ministers who pastor denominational and sectarian churches with relatively few members said they would do so.
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM: ITS GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

This would normally be the place to say (as critics of the American funeral trade invariably do), 'I am not, of course, speaking of the vast majority of ethical undertakers.' But the vast majority of ethical undertakers is precisely my concern. To be 'ethical' merely means to adhere to a prevailing code of morality, in this case one devised over the years by the undertakers themselves for their own purposes. The outlook of the average undertaker, who does adhere to the code of his calling, is to me more significant than that of his shadier colleagues, who are merely small-time crooks such as may be found operating in any sphere of business. Scandals, although they frequently erupt, . . . are not typical of the trade as a whole, and therefore are not part of this study.1

From this lead paragraph to the last, Jessica Mitford does not relax her explosive, one sided, well documented journalistic exposé of the American funeral industry. Mitford opened Pandora's box out of which has come a wave of protest against contemporary mortuary practices. Other books and numerous articles subsequently appeared supporting the Mitford thesis that the American public has been duped by funeral directors, casket and vault manufacturers, cemeterians, florists, and monument makers. The revisionists

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say the funeral industry has high-pressured American citizens out of millions of dollars and "non-profit" cemeteries have accumulated spectacular profits for their promoters.\textsuperscript{2}

The protesters have not gone unchallenged, to be sure. The combined assault against them is led by funeral directors and casket and vault manufacturers. Their trade journals have assumed what one might consider a permanently defensive attitude toward anyone who speaks out, however so slightly, against current funeral custom. Mitford was labeled a communist sympathizer intent on destroying a tradition in funeralization extending back to Christ and rooted in Christian mores. In doing this, according to the argument, she was attempting to do away with a vital aspect of the American system of private enterprise. One is led to believe her intentions ultimately are to destroy American capitalism.

The dialogue between antagonists and protagonists has not yet run its course. Whatever its outcome, it has stirred the thoughts and pens of many people, this writer among them.

Scientific interest in social controversy often—more often than the social scientist would like to admit—grows out of the muckraking efforts of individuals outside the scientific establishment. Now that the question of funeral customs and practices has been made an issue for public debate, it is generally assumed that funerary practice is a matter of genuine and serious concern for the "average

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p. 290.
American. " *The Christian Herald*, for example, reports that Mitford's study is "more than a book--it's a growing storm." It is hard to resist the idea that America is on the brink of a revolution in its funeral customs. But is this so? This investigation addresses itself to that question insofar as it examines funeral customs and the attitudes of people toward those customs in Southwest Louisiana.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

This study proposes to describe and analyze sociologically funeral customs and the attitudes of people toward funeral customs in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana. The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part one is an ethnographic account of funeral customs and changes in funeral customs, and it falls within the sociology of social codes. The second part of the study—that having to do with attitudes—is social-psychological.

The ethnographic treatment of funeralizing the dead is important because it provides a socio-cultural background against which attitudes toward death and funeral customs make sense sociologically.

The attitudes of two separate groups of people were

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surveyed: family householders and clergymen.

**Purposes of the Study**

Members of family households were divided into two groups. Group "A," the DEATH-FREE GROUP, consists of members of families of procreation which did not have a death in the family within the last ten years. Group "B," the BEREAVEMENT GROUP, consists of members of families of procreation which have lost through death at least one family member during the calendar year 1964. A principle aim of the study is to determine if there are any differences in attitudes between these two family groups with respect to two main areas: (1) attitudes toward selected funeral customs and (2) attitudes toward funeral costs.

A second purpose of the study is to determine if there are any attitudinal differences between racial groups, between religious groups, and between socio-economic groups insofar as their attitudes toward selected funeral customs and funeral costs are concerned.

A third purpose of the study is to make a comparison of attitudes toward selected funeral customs between

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4 It is recognized that what is being called groups are, in fact, groupings or collectivities of people. They are statistical aggregates created by the researcher for the purpose of the study. They are not social groups in the usual sense of the word; that is, a plurality of interacting people. But the term group will be applied to these groupings throughout this dissertation so as to make this manuscript more readable.
family householders and clergymen.

Significance of the Study

While the question of significance is an important one, it is, to be sure, a difficult question for any author to answer. Writers tend to become enamored with their work until, oftentimes, it takes on illusionary prominence. In the face of this danger, it seems to be the case that whatever significance attaches to this investigation grows out of the paucity of information sociologists have accumulated about funeral customs and attitudes toward funeral customs.

The question needs to be asked, then, "Why have not sociologists studied death and funeral customs more than they have?" Faunce and Fulton reviewed the literature eight years ago, proclaiming the sociology of death a neglected area of research. The situation has changed little since then. A 1965 symposium entitled Death and Identity was edited by Robert Fulton, a sociologist. Of the 41 contributors, only two are sociologists; the others are psychiatrists, psychologists, and anthropologists. It is generally true that social scientists in these disciplines have studied death and funeral customs more extensively and more intensively than sociologists.

Many important aspects of human existence are also

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obvious features of the human scene, and the obvious frequently is overlooked by those interested in studying the complexities of human life. It is no revelation that attitudes toward funeral customs are in some way associated with death. Nor is it earthshaking to discover that death has been regarded from time immemorial as one of man's universally important themes. Since death is associated with funeral customs and since death is important, is it not perhaps the case that this is one of the overlooked, obvious items of the human condition? Whatever the reason, there most certainly is a dearth of information on funeral customs and attitudes toward them in the sociological literature. This study is significant in that it attempts to partially fill this gap in our knowledge about the sociology of death.

The immediate practical consequences of this study should prove useful to a variety of audiences. As a document it contains information which everyone in American society will become acquainted with either vicariously beforehand, or first-hand at the time he suffers a death in his family. Certainly, the local clergy can benefit from the contents of this manuscript inasmuch as the conscientious minister presumably wants to know what his parishioners think about local funeral practices. By no means the least interested is the funeral director. This study provides a basis upon which he can evaluate his "public image" in the community.
II. GENERAL SOCIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Many of the questions raised by sociologists are also questions entertained by other social scientists. For that matter, they are questions with which the humanists deal. But what makes the answers to the questions sociological is the theoretical orientation within which the questions are framed and the answers articulated.

Theoretical Orientation

"Sociology begins with two basic facts," said Ely Chinoy. "The behavior of human beings shows regular and recurrent patterns, and human beings are social animals and not isolated creatures." The most inclusive concept used by sociologists to explain regular and recurrent patterns of expectancies is culture. Robin Williams explains it this way:

Most inclusively, culture is social heredity—the total legacy of past human behavior effective in the present, representing the accumulation through generations of the artifacts, knowledges, beliefs, and values by which men deal with the world.

Generally, culture is considered a learned, shared and transmitted system of symbolic representations (things, thoughts

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and actions), with the emphasis on system.  

To say culture is a system of symbolic representations is to recognize that culture is not a haphazard, accidental, congeries of unrelated elements. That is to say, the patterns of expectations are structured and serve as guidelines for human conduct. Stated differently, culture consists of pre-established forms of procedure.

No one participates in the total culture, nor do collectivities of persons share identical aspects of the whole cultural environment. This fact gives rise to variations in behavior and subsequently to variations in patterns of expectations about behavior. Thus, there develops variability within the total culture. When the cultural variability of groups distinguishes them from other groups in the society, we then speak of subgroups. The patterns of expectations which distinguish these groups from one another

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8 For only one of many statements supporting this position see Linton's treatment of the distinctive aspects of culture in Ralph Linton, The Study of Man (student's edition; New York: Appleton-Crofts, Inc., 1936), pp. 80-91. Leslie White challenges the view that culture must be shared and transmitted, though he concedes this is the usual case. To him, all symbolic behavior is cultural whether or not it is shared and transmitted. Culture must be learned, however.

9 In this discussion we are running the risk of "seeing" the relationship between man and culture as one-directional, with man somehow being helplessly and mercilessly moulded by that extrasomatic continuum called culture. But, in fact, the relationship is two-directional. Man innovates, within the alternatives provided by his culture, and thus shapes his culture as well as being shaped by it.

10 MacIver and Page, op. cit., p. 15.
are called subcultures. While subgroups with subcultures exist, they do so within a total cultural configuration, thereby sharing with each other what Linton refers to as cultural universals. Thus, subgroups and subcultures are neither identical nor mutually exclusive entities. There is always, therefore, an area of overlap among them. It is precisely this overlapping aspect of subgroups and subcultures which commands greatest attention in this study.

Sociologists have identified a number of subcultures, based on race, religion, socio-economic status, ethnicity, residence, age, and so forth. Three of these subcultures are investigated in this study based on race, religion, and socio-economic status. They were chosen because it was felt that they comprise the most important subcultures in Southwest Louisiana. The overlapping or common elements of the racial, religious and socio-economic subcultures in Calcasieu Parish is diagrammatically represented in Figure 1.

In addition to the three subcultures, there are two types of groups which make up an important part of this study. They are the death-free and bereavement groups which were discussed earlier. These groups are not treated as subcultures. Rather, they are viewed as aggregates of

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11 Chinoy, op. cit., p. 16. All cases of subcultures are the products of subgroups. But not all cases of subgroups are cases of subcultures. For example, a family can be thought of as a subgroup within a community, a larger group, without the family demonstrating any distinctive cultural variability.
CULTURE

Negro Subculture

White Subculture

Negro Subculture

RACIAL SUBCULTURE

CULTURE

Protestant Subculture

Catholic Subculture

Protestant Subculture

RELIGIOUS SUBCULTURE

CULTURE

Low Socio-Economic Status Subculture

High Socio-Economic Status Subculture

Low Socio-Economic Status Subculture

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS SUBCULTURE

FIGURE 1

DIAGRAM OF RACIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS SUBCULTURES
individuals who are alike in many respects. They differ, however, in that one group has experienced recently the crisis of death in the family. This difference is considered to be a significant one for this study. The death-free group and the bereavement group are illustrated in Figure 2.

Another group included in this investigation is the clergy. The clergy is, in a sense, a special group for the analysis, and one which has particular significance in the study for comparative purposes.

**Hypotheses**

The above considerations constitute the theoretical orientation of this study. From such an orientation certain hypotheses were derived as guidelines in the collection of the data and the analysis of the findings.

That empirical research is a continuous—sometimes agonizing, sometimes exhilarating—decision-making process is a well understood fact among scientific researchers. Two, among many, important decisions made in this investigation are stated below as hypotheses.

1. From what is known about subcultures we would expect normative and behavioral differences among people who belong to different subgroups because they participate in different subcultures. Thus, we would expect members of different subgroups to have different attitudes toward the same or similar phenomena. Also, we would expect to find normative and behavioral similarities
FIGURE 2

DIAGRAM OF THE DEATH-FREE GROUP AND THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP
among people who belong to different subgroups because they share in common certain cultural elements. Therefore, we would expect members of different subgroups to have similar attitudes toward the same or similar phenomena. One of the unique features of this study is that it focuses on the similarities of subgroups and subcultures rather than on their differences. ONE HYPOTHESIS ADVANCED IN THIS INVESTIGATION IS THAT THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUDINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN WHITES AND NEGROES, BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS, AND BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.

(1a). The specific attitudes with which this hypothesis deals are:

a. Attitudes toward the wake
b. Attitudes toward funerals
c. Attitudes toward funeral directors
d. Attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes
e. Attitudes toward the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish
f. Attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors

2. IT IS FURTHER HYPOTHESESIZED THAT THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUDINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE DEATH-FREE GROUP AND THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP.
(2a). The specific attitudes with which this hypothesis deals are:

a. Attitudes toward the wake
b. Attitudes toward funerals
c. Attitudes toward funeral directors
d. Attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes
e. Attitudes toward the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish
f. Attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors

No hypotheses are offered about the clergymen in this study.

Hypotheses are propositions which can be tested for their validity. No matter what their outcome, they are statements phrased in such a way that they can be answered empirically.12 These statements, or hypotheses, necessarily include some mention of the variables used in the analysis of the problem under study. These variables are specified in what follows.

**Variables of Analysis**

Three subcultural variables analyzed in this study are race, religion, and socio-economic status. By race is understood "a principal division of mankind, marked by

physical characteristics that breed true."13 Two races are dealt with in this investigation: Caucasoids and Negroids. By religion is meant "a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them."14 Two religious groups are dealt with in this investigation: Catholics and Protestants. Protestants are considered a residual category, consisting of all Christians who are not Catholics. Socio-economic status is operationally defined as high or low depending on an individual's mean score on three indices: education, occupation, and income. Persons with socio-economic scores of more than 4.00 are considered to be of high socio-economic status. Persons with socio-economic scores of 4.00 and below are considered to be of low socio-economic status. An individual's socio-economic score was determined by adding his separate scores on an education index, an occupation index, and an income index, summing the scores, then dividing the sum of the scores by three. The three indices and the numerical values assigned to each of them are reproduced

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Death is treated as another variable in that the death-free group is compared and contrasted with the bereavement group.

The clergy is a variable in this investigation. Their attitudes toward funeral customs are compared with those of the two groups of respondents.

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15For a more sophisticated socio-economic index based on the same principle utilized here, the reader is directed to Charles B. Nam and Edward G. Stockwell "Census Research on a New Socio-Economic Index" (paper presented at the annual meetings of the Population Association of America, New York City, May 6, 1961).
Funeral customs are treated in the aggregate as one variable. By funeral customs is meant "the socially accredited ways of acting" with respect to the disposition of the dead. We include under this designation all of the ceremonies and rituals, both sacred and secular, attendant upon funeralization.

The wake is one aspect of the total process of funeralizing the dead. It is another variable of analysis, and is singled out for special attention in this study. By the wake we understand that period when the dead person is exposed for viewing by relatives and friends sometime between death and disposition. The wake may be an all night affair; or, it may be a formally designated and specific visitation period determined by the family of the dead person and/or the funeral director handling the funeral.

Another variable treated in this investigation is the attitudinal one. "The term attitude refers to certain regularities of an individual's feelings, thoughts, and predispositions to act toward some aspect of his environment." The attitudes dealt with in this study are those held toward: (1) the funeral as an institution; (2) the wake as a specific custom associated with the funeral; (3) the funeral director

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16 MacIver and Page, op. cit., p. 18.

and his role in the "drama of the funeral"; (4) the cost of the funeral.\textsuperscript{18}

The variables of analysis have now been made clear and the limitations of the study can be identified more precisely because the limitations of the study follow logically from the theoretical orientation, from the hypotheses derived from the theoretical orientation, and from the variables of analysis chosen for the study.

\textbf{Limitations of the Study}

This study is limited in that it treats a set of data in a sociological framework rather than in some other framework. Moreover, the sociological framework employed is not that of "grand theory."\textsuperscript{19} A more restricted framework is adopted; namely, the analysis of attitudes toward funeral customs in terms of (1) persons who have or have not had a death in their families of orientations within 10 years; (2) persons identified with certain subcultures; and (3)

\textsuperscript{18}Opinions are treated as expressed attitudes. This practice varies somewhat from the usual procedure of distinguishing opinions from the more comprehensive attitudes and value systems on which they are based. See A. N. Oppenheim, "Opinion," \textit{A Dictionary of the Social Sciences}, eds. Julius Gould and William L. Kolb (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1964), p. 477. We are assuming a one-to-one relation between attitudes and opinions, which means the assumption is made that the opinions of the individuals in the study and their attitudes are the same. It is further assumed that people "know their mind" (have attitudes) and "speak it honestly" (express their attitudes truthfully).

persons identified with a particular occupational group.

Only those attitudes toward the funeral industry specified in the hypotheses are investigated, disregarding many other relevant attitudinal questions related to funerals which could have been asked. Furthermore, out of a wide variety of possible subcultures, just three specific ones command attention in this investigation: race, religion, and socio-economic status. Ethnicity, residence, age, etc., are subcultures which are omitted. Finally, clergymen are the only individuals included in the study as an occupational group, while all other occupational groups are dismissed.

In the construction of the socio-economic status index the assumption was made that the intervals between one educational level and the next, one occupational level and the next, and one income level and the next are equal. Furthermore, equal weights were assigned to education, occupation, and income as if they were all equally important as independent variables upon which socio-economic status is dependent. These are dubious assumptions. Nevertheless, the socio-economic status index, notwithstanding its limitations, has greater informative import than any of its indices standing alone.

III. METHODOLOGY

It has already been observed that this study has as its purpose the investigation of selected funeral customs and attitudes of people toward funeral customs in Calcasieu
Parish, Louisiana. The attitudes of members of family households, and the clergy are included in the research design. What this means, methodologically, of course, is that two universes are included in the study. The procedure for selecting a sample of each of these universes is described below.

**Selection of Family Householders**

Members of family households were divided into two groups. Group "A" consists of members of families of procreation which did not have a death in the family within the last ten years.

Group "B" consists of members of families of procreation which have lost at least one family member during the calendar year 1964. All the information from family householders was gathered by the author during June, July, and August, 1965. This means that for group "B," those with deaths, the minimum time lapse between a death in the family and the time the family was interviewed was six months; the maximum possible time was 20 months.

Fifty families were chosen from each of the two groups of family householders.

Among the group "A" householders the distribution of the population in the parish required that interviews be conducted in 14 rural households and 36 urban households. The rural segment of the death-free group was chosen randomly.

A topographical map of Calcasieu Parish, showing the
location of each household in the parish, is compiled and kept current by the Traffic and Planning Section of the Department of Highways of the State of Louisiana. The basic information contained in this map dates from 1962. The map was marked off into sections of 50 houses per section, or some multiple of 50. Some sections contained 50, 100, 150, 200, or 250 houses. A value of one (1) was assigned to each 50 houses; so that a section of the map which contained 50 houses had a value of one (1); a section which contained 100 houses had a value of two (2), and so forth.

Next, the sections were numbered consecutively from 1-28. The value of each section varied with the number of houses contained in the section. If a section had a value of one, then one card containing the number of the section was placed in a box; if a section had a value of two, then two cards marked with the number of the section was placed in the box, etc. After all the cards were in the box, 14 of them were chosen, each card representing one section of the map. After each selection, the card was replaced so as not to rule out the possibility of its being selected another time. After the sections from which the sample was drawn were determined, it remained to choose the household within the section from which interviews would be sought.

In order to determine which house in a section was to be selected, a technique was developed by which a transparent, rotating wheel with x and y coordinates was superimposed over the section. The wheel completely covered every section
from which a house was eventually chosen. The $x$ coordinates, theoretically, are represented by the degrees marked on the circumference of the wheel.

Two parallel lines extending from the center of the circle were drawn one-eighth of an inch apart to the periphery of the wheel. Perpendicular lines one-fourth inch apart cut across the parallel ones to form 25 rectangles on the wheel. The size of these rectangles approximated the size of the households shown as rectangles on the topographical map; therefore, only one house could appear under any one rectangle. The rectangles were numbered from 1-25 and cards with these numbers were placed in another box. The $y$ coordinates are represented by the rectangles extending out from the center of the circle.

What all this means, theoretically, is that each house can be represented by one and only one set of coordinates.

The wheel was superimposed on each section of the map selected, and spun. If a house in the section appeared under only one of the 25 rectangles, then that house was the one chosen from the section. If two or more houses appeared under different rectangles, then the cards bearing the number of the rectangles were chosen one at a time, without replacement, until a card with a number corresponding to a rectangle with a house shown under it was selected. That house became a part of the sample. This process was repeated until all
14 houses in the rural segment of the sample were chosen.\(^{20}\)

Figure 3 illustrates pictorially the technique used to select the rural householders included in the death-free group.

Out of 14 householders chosen, ten interviews were successfully made. Alternative householders were chosen on four occasions because in two cases the house selected was vacant, one occupant refused to be interviewed, and another person was not eligible because he had had a death in his family of procreation within the last ten years. In the event an alternate house needed to be chosen, a standardized procedure of selecting alternately the house to the left and then to the right and then across the street was used.

The urban segment of group "A" was drawn from telephone directories in the parish. Telephone directories recognizably are not the most accurate source from which a sample can be drawn. For example, there are newly arrived residents who are not yet included in the list of names and numbers in the directory, there are unlisted numbers, and upper and lower income groups are underrepresented— the

\(^{20}\)This technique avoids the time-consuming task of counting each house in rural Calcasieu, assigning a number to it and then selecting 14 houses from a table of random numbers. Obviously, the larger the number of units in the universe, the more useful the technique is. This methodological innovation might be of some utility to researchers doing surveys in rural areas where their samples must be drawn from topographical maps listing the location of each house.
FIGURE 3

ILLUSTRATION OF TECHNIQUE USED TO SELECT THE RURAL RESPONDENTS INCLUDED IN THE DEATH-FREE GROUP
former because they have unlisted phones, the latter because they have no phones. However, other, more accurate sources from which a sample could be drawn were not available.

Some of the objections to using telephone directories are less valid today than previously, because of the increased use of telephones.\footnote{21}

As of December, 1965, 83.5 percent of the people in the Lake Charles Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area had residence phones, so that less than 17 percent of the urban population systematically was excluded from the sample.

A number was assigned to each name in the telephone book and a table of random numbers was utilized to choose the urban segment of the death-free group.

Thirty-four interviews were conducted with urban residents. In the process, 57 calls were made. Several reasons account for the 23 unsuccessful stops. Some people were not at home at the time their cooperation was solicited; others were not eligible. For example, a 92-year-old semi-conscious, bedridden woman was selected and had to be replaced. For reasons which were not ascertainable, ten of the people selected refused to cooperate in the study.

No problem was encountered in selecting group "B" families because a complete list of deaths in Calcasieu Parish for 1964 was available. A number was assigned to each

\footnote{In Louisiana, for example, under some conditions, people over 65 who qualify for Old Age Assistance get a $3.00 allowance for a telephone, per month.}
unit (death) and a table of random numbers was used to select the families to be interviewed.

Seventy-five calls were made in order to secure 44 interviews with members of the bereavement group. This was six interviews short of the 50 anticipated at the beginning of the study. A variety of reasons account for the difficulty in obtaining interviews. By far, the most often cause of failure to secure an interview was the researcher's inability to locate interviewees. The reasons for this circumstance were several: (1) in many instances the dead person did not have any living survivors in the area; (2) in some cases the dead person simply did not have any living survivors at all; (3) other potential interviewees could not be found because of inaccurate information (addresses) which the researcher used to locate potential respondents. Only five persons in the bereavement group who were actually contacted refused to cooperate in the study, a surprisingly low refusal rate for a study of this type.

It was assumed that death occurs randomly in the population; therefore, no corrective was introduced for such sociological variables as race, residence, social class, religion, and the like.

Selection of the Ministerial Group

Twenty-four interviews were conducted with members of the clergy in Calcasieu Parish. This sample is neither random nor is it representative. Clergymen from all religious
denominations and of both races were selected so that attitudes could be sampled from as many clergymen of different denominations as possible. This resulted in the over-representation of Negro ministers numerically but not sociologically because of the numerous Negro Protestant denominations represented in the sample area. Seven Negro ministers and 17 white ministers make up this sample.

The author's principle aim in working with the clergy was to get information from them concerning the following areas: (1) funeral customs observed by their members; (2) possible areas of conflict between them and the funeral director; (3) their conception of the usefulness of the wake; (4) their attitudes toward funeral costs; and (5) the extent to which they are willing to advise the bereaved family on secular matters associated with death.

Techniques of Data Collection

The following techniques were used in collecting the data for the dissertation: (1) interview schedules; (2) non-participant observation; (3) participant observation; (4)

22As a non-participant observer, the researcher attended funerals weekly during the three-month period he was in the field. He was able to check discrepancies, where they existed, between what clergymen said about funeral customs and what they actually did in conducting funeral services. On three occasions the researcher was a participant observer in funerals. Since this study began he has had two deaths in his own kinship group. In one of these deaths he was involved in the decision-making process, thereby gaining valuable insights from the mechanics and emotional mechanisms operating in funeralizing the dead. In
library research. In all cases the interview schedules were completed by the writer. Interviews with the clergy were taped and later transcribed.

The nature of the topic under investigation as well as the techniques used to gather the data combined to generate several problems related to the design of the study and the implementation of the field work. These problems are briefly discussed in the next section.

**Problems Encountered in the Research**

The problems associated with this research fall into two classes: those faced while the study was in the planning stages and those encountered in the field.

For purposes of sampling, before the field work began it was necessary to find some way of determining how many deaths had occurred in Calcasieu Parish in 1964. One possibility was to use the obituary listing in the newspapers of the parish, a time-consuming and misleading practice because some deaths are not reported in the newspapers. Another potential source of information on deaths is the records kept by the funeral homes in the parish, but they are not

addition to these two funerals, the writer had the opportunity to accompany a clergyman calling on a bereaved family in a "natural setting." He joined the family and the clergyman in reviewing the body before the wake, in discussing with the family the conditions surrounding the death of the family member, and he joined them in prayer for the deceased. Only from participant observation can the researcher expect to gain insight into the nuances in human behavior made manifest by the death of someone in whom others have a great emotional involvement.
made available by funeral directors for academic research projects. Still another possible source for obtaining the information is the Division of Vital Statistics of the Department of Health. Unfortunately, for those doing serious research, there are state laws prohibiting the dissemination of information on vital statistics, births, deaths, and marriages other than the statistics themselves. Eventually, the problem of finding a suitable universe from which to draw a random sample for individuals with deaths in their families was faced and solved.

Aside from the sample, the author attempted to borrow (or rent) from the Columbia Broadcasting System their 1964 "white paper" account of American funerals. CBS did not respond to this inquiry.

The writer attempted to attend the fourth annual management institute of the Louisiana Funeral Directors' Association, held in March, 1965 on the Louisiana State University campus. The agenda included items such as "Cosmetic Application," "Restorative Treatment," and a merchandising clinic. At the registration desk, the researcher stated his purpose and was told by the receptionist and two funeral directors that he was not eligible to attend the institute.

Once the field work began there were the usual problems of interviewing. Some unique problems were encountered though. There are, of course, always those who, for one reason or another, refuse to cooperate in scientific studies.
Besides these voluntary refusers, however, there was one person involved in this research who was an involuntary refuser. This Negro woman's husband had died at his home of a heart attack allegedly suffered at work. She had filed suit against her dead husband's employer charging, in her words, "They made him work anyway." She had been advised by her lawyers not to speak to anyone because of the pending lawsuit. While she was willing to cooperate in the study, she was not free to do so. In another case, a 92-year-old woman was included in the sample population. She was bedridden and semi-conscious. Needless to say, she was incapable of participating in the research.

One time-consuming, unanticipated turn of events was locating some people in the rural parts of the parish. The task was made more than usually difficult because in three communities the Rural Free Delivery routes had been changed recently and the addresses of the respondents which the researcher possessed were no longer useful. Locating these people required investigation beyond that normally associated with finding people in the country.

The problems did not end with those persons who refused to cooperate or those who could be located only with great difficulty. The interview schedule was an instrument which had to be administered very carefully, especially in the case of those persons who had had a death in their families. On the one hand, it was necessary for the successful completion of the field work that the interviewer obtain certain
information. Often this meant the respondent had to re-think his past, recalling emotionally painful experiences linked with the death of one in whom the respondent had a great affective investment.

In one instance the person was willing to continue the interview, but insofar as it could be determined by outward appearances, the interview would have been too costly psychologically had it continued. The interview was tactfully terminated and an attempt was made by the interviewer to help the person gain her composure before the researcher left. How psychological costs are measured is obviously subjective. But subjective judgments of this kind are built into research in taboo areas. This kind of problem was anticipated from the outset. For that reason, it was decided that the author would conduct every interview, which brings up another problem, the time-consuming nature of the research.

The nature of the research topic as well as the research design prompted the author to rule out questionnaires as a data gathering technique. Interview schedules were used because of the anticipated low return rate among the persons with deaths in their families. Furthermore, "the questionnaire is effective only when the respondent is able and willing to express his reactions clearly." 23 Interview

23 Goode and Hatt, op. cit., p. 171.
schedules have the advantage of allowing the interviewer the opportunity of appraising the respondent's attitude toward the questions. At the same time, when rapport is established between the two, the interviewer can stimulate the deeper levels of motivation and feeling which underlie attitudes and opinions. Interview schedules were chosen over questionnaires as techniques of data gathering so as to insure greater participation by the persons included in the sample as well as to try to achieve a higher level of accuracy among the respondents than would have been obtained by using questionnaires. The consequence of this decision, however, was a substantial increase in the length of time it took the researcher to complete the field work.

It was mentioned earlier that sociologists have neglected the study of funeral customs and the attitudes of people toward these customs. This poses an added problem for the sociologist working in this area. In a very real sense, knowledge generates knowledge inasmuch as hypotheses grow out of the existing state of knowledge. The literature, then, provides guidelines (and blinders, too) for the recognition of a problem and for the strategy which can facilitate its solution. The lack of sufficient prior studies of a phenomenon, then, makes the conceptualization and analysis of a problem particularly difficult.

The extent to which the literature in the sociology of death leaves something to be desired is brought out in
the next chapter where the literature relevant to the sociological study of funeral customs is reviewed.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Any substantive inquiry must take into account the existing body of relevant data collected by others. This indispensable step in developing a scientific project aids the researcher in that it protects him against being a "New Columbus"; it helps him formulate the kinds of questions adequate for the solution of the study problem; and it allows for comparisons of the researcher's findings with those of others who have worked with the same or related problems.¹

Literature bearing on funerals and funeral customs can be classified in many equally valid ways, depending on the purpose of the classification and the criteria used in the classificatory scheme. Porter, in his 1958 dissertation, "Middleville Morticians," divides the literature into historical material dealing with the accumulation of facts in the funeral industry; polemic works, which include books and articles that either attack or defend funeral customs and

practices; trade journals within the industry; and scholarly treatises.\(^2\)

This scheme needs some revision because much that has been done in the eight years since "Middleville Morticians" falls outside this classification. Furthermore, Porter's categories are neither mutually exclusive nor are they logically exhaustive. It seems more appropriate to separate the literature into the following divisions:

1. **Journalistic literature**—articles appearing in popular, commercial periodicals as well as books intended for mass consumption;

2. **Funeral industry literature**—trade journals within the funeral industry;

3. **Investigative literature**—studies undertaken by political bodies, local, state and federal which attempt to discover (or uncover) funerary practices which are either illegal or extra-legally disputable;

4. **Religious literature**—literature which is usually written by clergymen, but sometimes by scientists, for the consumption of clergymen in the conduct of their clerical roles;

5. **Literature of a scientific nature**—books and articles which claim and are accorded scientific status and

which are written by scientists primarily for a professional, academic audience.\(^3\)

An extensive survey of each of these five types of literature is obviously beyond the scope of this dissertation, but certain selected materials will serve as a sample of what is available.\(^4\)

I. JOURNALISTIC LITERATURE

Jessica Mitford leads the list of recent journalistic muckrakers who use their sharpened pens in attacking the American funeral establishment. David Cort in the Saturday

\(^3\)Each of these types of literature may be historical or a-historical, polemical or neutral. It is recognized that every problem involves a time dimension and thus involves history, but the biography of a problem without consideration of the larger whole of which it is a part is considered an a-historical treatment of that problem. Polemic works may either attack or defend funeralization as an institution; those which are neutral, quite naturally, do not take sides.

Review said of her book that it tends "to tear down the mortician's carefully nurtured image as a compassionate, reverent family-friend-in-need and substitute an equally distorted picture of an hypocritical racketeer in black."5

Mitford argues that her book describes the vast majority of ethical undertakers. But the ethics they follow, according to her, conform to a code of morality in the industry created by undertakers for undertakers.

Mitford castigates the sales pitch of the dealers in death, including the owners of cemeteries, vault retailers, and others; she questions the morticians' altruism in selling to the public a false image of themselves and the services they perform; she attacks the real estate boom in funeral plots, declaiming this as a "land office business" where the bereaved are exploited; she exposes a Madison Avenue approach in shaping funeral fashions; she assails the florists and finds that they, too, share in milking the survivor dry; she lays bare the funeral transaction as a one-sided business deal between a grief-stricken customer and a calculating funeral director.

Mitford's The American Way of Death has fulfilled many times the prophecy of E. T. Smith who reviewed the book in Critic, where he said:

There will no doubt be much criticism of this book

from those who's [sic] livelihood is threatened, but it is thoroughly documented and is an excel­lent addition to the literature of consumer economics. 6

Jessica Mitford's intentions are clear. She wants to bring about some radical changes in the funeral industry, particularly in the area of costs. In June of last year she reported that the undertakers were reforming. Since the publication of The American Way of Death, Mitford finds that funeral costs have been cut; florists are cultivating new markets because of slacking demand for funeral florals; less expensive merchandise is now requested by the funeral director from the manufacturers; there has been a sharp rise in the number of cadavers pledged to medical schools across the country; and investigations of funeral practices are under way on both national and state levels. 7

Appearing also in 1963, and patterned along the lines of The American Way of Death, was Ruth Harmer's The High Cost of Dying. While it did not gain as much notoriety as Mitford's book The High Cost of Dying is equally as vindictive in its attack on the funeral industry. Aside from stylistic differences, Harmer's book differs from The American Way of Death in that it is more historically oriented. She has one chapter entitled "Epic Beginnings of Epic Endings" which is

6E. T. Smith, "Brief Reviews," Critic, 22 (October, 1963), 82.

a description of funeral customs from the Egyptians to the
development of modern mortuary practice. Harmer spends one
chapter discussing the role of the Civil War in creating a
need for the funeral industry. Then she develops her central
thesis, where she describes the "economic mechanics" of
funeral homes and cemeteries, expressing a negativistic view.
In the final chapters of her book, Harmer discusses an
American solution to the high cost of dying which she identi-
fies as the acceptance and endorsement of the memorial
movement in America.

II. FUNERAL INDUSTRY LITERATURE

Formal communication within the funeral trade was
inaugurated by Henry E. Taylor in 1871 when he published a
monthly paper called The Undertaker. Many other publications
followed. In spite of limited circulation possibilities,
there are currently nine trade publications which serve the
funeral industry. Four of these are national in scope; five
cover regional areas. Two of the most influential national
publications are The American Funeral Director and Casket
and Sunnyside (a descendent of The Undertaker). Besides
these two national publications, Mortuary Management and
Humane Embalming also enjoy national circulation.

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8 Robert W. Habenstein and William M. Lamers, The
History of American Funeral Directing (Milwaukee: The Bulfin
The Northeast Funeral Director serves the New England area; Southern Funeral Director serves the South; the Midwest is served by The Mid-Continent Mortician; the Southwest is served by Morticians of the Southwest; and Canadian funeral directors are served by The Canadian Funeral Director. Porter made a thorough content analysis of the trade industry's literature in his 1958 study. He found the typical trade journal divided into seven sections: (1) advertising; (2) "professional" articles; (3) technical articles (on embalming); (4) business problems; (5) legal problems; (6) public relations; and (7) current events.

The principle advertisers are casket and vault manufacturers, makers of "rolling stock," commercial carriers, schools of mortuary science, and manufacturers of embalming fluids. Identical advertisements often are found running simultaneously in several journals.

"Professional" type articles include such titles as: Mortuary Education Turns New Corner," "Students Tell Why They Want to Become Funeral Directors," "The Apprentice: Peon or Professional," "Should Funeral Directors Help the Surviving Mate Find a New Life," "What is the Future of Funeral Service."

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9 Ibid., p. 614.  
10 Porter, op. cit., p. 21.  
11 These titles were selected from The American Funeral Director and Casket and Sunnyside from issues beginning in June, 1965 through February, 1966.
The technical section of a trade journal contains helpful hints for the mortician with embalming problems as well as information about products and supplies he might find useful in his work. Examples of the type of article found in this section are: "Try Proven Methods for Embalming," "Ridding Lower Extremities of Fluid," "Body Positioners Marketed as an Aid to Embalming," "Champion Fluid Production Requires Larger Homogenizer."\(^{12}\)

Articles relating to the business "end" of the funeral industry appear monthly. They are quite numerous and include such topics as (1) the most efficient use of plant and personnel; (2) the proper tax-saving moves one should make; (3) the best way to redecorate on a small budget, and so forth.

The legal articles appearing from time to time in the trade journals keep the funeral director cognizant of newly enacted laws as well as modifications in existing legislation. These titles illustrate, in a general way, the type of information found in the legal section: "Illinois Licensing Law Ruled Constitutional," "Knowledge of New Decisions by Higher Courts May Save You from Law Suits or Help You Win Unavoidable Cases," "Review of 1965 Amendments to Social Security Act."\(^{13}\)

Public relations is a vital aspect of the funeral

\(^{12}\)Casket and Sunnyside, April, June and July, 1965 issues.

\(^{13}\)American Funeral Director, September, 1965, January, 1966; and Casket and Sunnyside, April, 1965.
industry. Without a good reputation funeral directors in competitive situations either lose business, or lose out to their competitors. Furthermore, with or without competitors, funeral directors seem to have a stronger desire than most entrepreneurs to cultivate a favorable public image, partly, no doubt, because they work with death, not a very palatable activity. Whatever the reason, nearly monthly there is found in the various journals hints, tips and schemes by which funeral directors can promote good will in the community. Such an article is "Understanding Between Men of Good Will."14

The current events section of the trade journal is a congeries of items including obituaries of funeral industry personnel, activities of the many funeral directors' associations, news of the supply trade, news highlights within the industry and news about promotions, transfers and retirements among funeral functionaries.

III. INVESTIGATIVE LITERATURE

Investigative reports are not intended to be polemical. They supposedly inquire into existing conditions for the purpose of making known publicly what is unknown. Their major purpose, in fact, is to discover, or uncover, in the funeral industry practices which run contrary to the public good, if such practices exist.

14Casket and Sunnyside, December, 1965.
Legislative committees or state departments in three states, California, Colorado, and New York, have examined funeral practices in their respective polities since 1963. A comprehensive document was made known recently after the July, 1964 hearings of the Senate Subcommittee on Antitrust and Monopoly, chaired by Senator Philip A. Hart of Michigan, in which the antitrust aspects of the funeral industry were investigated.

Appearing before the subcommittee in defense of the funeral industry were representatives of the National Selected Morticians and the National Funeral Directors Association, the two leading funeral directors' associations in America.

A union officials, a clergyman, and three funeral directors testified that contemporary funeral practices were not in the best interests of the public. Specifically, Harry Haskill, the director of the death benefit department of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union said:

We are deeply concerned about current high funeral charges which are causing serious hardship to families of our deceased members and to moderate-income American families generally and diverting, into the hands of undertakers, a disproportionate portion of benefits and insurance from union and industry welfare funds.15

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Reverend Howard Johnson's remarks were aimed at both the ornateness of funerals and the sensateness of contemporary America. The following comment is a fair representation of his appraisal of both:

At the time of a deathfall, most Americans—including regular churchgoers—are usually too bemused and numbed to make sound judgments. This makes them especially vulnerable, susceptible to suggestion. If there be such things as 'hidden persuaders,' here they emerge from hiding and go to work. Grief causes the threshold of sales resistance to be low. . . . I submit that the psychological conditions attendant upon death create an emotional temptation well-nigh irresistible. Many do resist it. But to the predators among morticians it is a chance, too good to be missed, to profiteer. The tearful survivors are pushovers.

We are not fighting the undertakers, first and foremost. It should not surprise us that some undertakers, being sons of [their] culture, share its sentimentality and its sickness, and therefore are honestly convinced that they are doing what is needed. Nor should it surprise us that a tiny fragment of the undertakers are callous enough and transcend the culture enough to play this for all it is worth.16

Messrs. Chambers, Daphne and Overton, the three funeral directors, complained to the subcommittee about internal rules and regulations in the industry which they felt are detrimental to the community, and the industry. All three were barred from participation in their state funeral directors' associations because they engaged in price advertising, contrary to association rules.

16Ibid., pp. 172-173.
IV. RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

Religious literature is primarily based on psychiatric and psychological findings, as well as logical inferences made from these findings. Theological considerations, of course, are not absent in what is said about death and its cultural concomitants.

Much of the religious literature is aimed at schooling clergymen in understanding grief; how to preach to peoples' needs; the meaning of suffering; the psychology of pastoral care; ministering to the grief sufferer. Books bearing these titles, in fact, are available. These books are intended as recipes for the clergy in recognizing and coping with peoples' reactions to crises resulting from death.

In any of these books, somewhere is to be found mention of the meaning of grief, the techniques for recognizing grief, the distinction between constructive and destructive grief, the consequences of delayed grief reactions, and the meaning of the funeral. Erich Lindemann's "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," is almost always the point.

of departure for these discussions.\textsuperscript{18}

V. LITERATURE OF A SCIENTIFIC NATURE

Studies of funeral customs which may be called scientific in nature fall into three categories: psychiatric and psychological studies, anthropological studies, and sociological studies. Each of these three types of literature will be discussed in its turn. More attention quite naturally will be focused on the sociological literature.

Psychiatric and Psychological Literature

Favorite themes in the psychiatric and psychological literature are the attitudes toward death of the aged, the mentally ill, and the terminally ill. Other popular topics include reactions to grief, management of grief, reactions to crises and grief, mourning, and anxiety.

On the surface, this literature appears to be unrelated to funeral customs, but this is not the case. It has emphatically influenced the content of the course offerings in schools of theology across the country. Clergymen learn from the social scientists how to recognize and cope with crises and grief. Funeral directors, in turn, take their cues from the clergymen and subsequently adjust their policies, hence, practices and in so doing generate customs

\textsuperscript{18}Erich Lindemann, "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief," \textit{American Journal of Psychiatry}, 101 (1944), 141-148. This article is reviewed in a later section of this chapter.
intended to satisfy both clergymen and bereaved families.

Erich Lindemann's "Symptomatology and Management of Acute Grief" and Edmund H. Volkart's "Bereavement and Mental Health" are recognized as classic statements of the psychiatric and psychological positions on grief and its management. For that reason these articles are treated here.

Lindemann's thesis is that both physical and psychic symptoms betray grief. Sighing respiration, lack of strength, lack of appetite and digestive difficulty are the somatic symptoms. Psychologically, the grief sufferer is likely to exhibit a strong preoccupation with the image of the deceased, usually highly idealized; he can be expected to show feelings of guilt towards the dead person; he often becomes irritable and angry. He likely will demonstrate patterns of conduct which are aimless and he usually is quite restless.

Lindemann distinguishes between normal and morbid grief actions. Normal grief reactions are those which, in time, emancipate the person from the bondage of the dead and allow him to readjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing. On the other hand, morbid grief reactions represent distortions of reality. Examples of distorted grief

\[19\] Ibid.

reactions are the acquisition of symptoms belonging to the last illness of the deceased; the appearance of psychosomatic conditions; alteration in relationship to friends and relatives; furious hostility against specific persons; and lasting loss of patterns of social interaction.

After first admitting that no definitive statement of the social psychiatry of bereavement can be made, since none as yet exists, Volkart, in "Bereavement and Mental Health," goes on to demonstrate how socio-cultural perspectives are bound up in the entire process of bereavement. He asks the usually unasked question of whether or not grief is the result of internal compulsions (biology) or external demand (culture). Volkart's answer to this question lies in viewing bereavement as circumscribed by a set of cultural norms which act as a blueprint for bereavement behavior. That weeping obeys socio-cultural stereotypes is clearly demonstrated by Mary Buffalo's behavior at her brother's funeral.

She wept in a frenzy, tore her hair, scratched her cheeks, and even tried to jump into the grave (being conveniently restrained from this by remoter relatives). I happened to know that she had not seen her brother for some time, and there was no particular love lost between them: she was merely carrying on the way a decent woman should among the Kiowa. Away from the grave, she was immediately chatting vivaciously about some other topic.21

But Volkart goes beyond considering bereavement a psycho-social reaction to cultural prescriptions. It is also

a formal status. Those who legitimately occupy the status of the bereaved do so because they are members of particular family structures. When family structure varies, so too does the bereavement process, says Volkart.

In extended family systems a person's identifications are multiple rather than exclusive. His feelings of love and hostility are distributed more widely. Hence, when there is a death in the extended family, there are other "significant others" available as love substitutes, and the impact of the loss is lessened.

In the American circumstance, where there is found a nucleated family system, the self development of the individual is a matter largely left to the concern of a "narrower" family of orientation. Included are mother and father and siblings, for the most part. The individual, under these conditions, develops strong emotional attachments to a smaller group of kinsmen and has "considerable affective investment in them." Thus, Volkart claims, in a small family system there tends to develop in the self an overdependence and overidentification with other family members who cannot be substituted as love objects in the case of their demise.

It follows, then, that family systems have an influence on self development, either enhancing or reducing the individual's vulnerability to bereavement.

Volkart and Michael, op. cit., p. 283.
The importance of Volkart's thesis lies in the fact that he offers both an anthropological and sociological corrective for a purely psychoanalytic interpretation of reaction to grief. On the one hand, Volkart is impressed with the importance of norms and values as they define the proper extent and intensity of bereavement; at the same time, he sees the social-structural importance of the family in the bereavement process.23

Anthropological Literature

Anthropologists have not neglected death and funeral customs. On the contrary, few anthropological studies fail to take account of these customs. As one example, Ian Hogbin, in his recently published monograph, A Guadalcanal Society: The Koaka Speakers,24 devotes part of one chapter on religion to Koaka funeral ritual, the disposition of the dead and the worship of the dead. Contemporary researchers like Hogbin are following the lead of earlier anthropologists such as Benedict, Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski and before them Morgan, Tylor, and Frazier to mention only a

23 For a more complete current appraisal of the state of the psychiatric and psychological literature on the reactions to death, grief and mourning, see Fulton, op. cit., pp. 181-293.

select few.\textsuperscript{25}

Without doubt, the richest fund of anthropological information of funeral customs is to be found in The Human Relations Area Files where four hundred societies are described and the materials are organized under 80 major headings, including death. Death as a major heading is further subdivided into considerations of life and death, suicide, dying, funerals, mourning, deviant mortuary practices, and mortuary specialists. It is not the writer's intention to comment on each of these topics; that would be far beyond the scope of this investigation. However, throughout the body of this study where it illuminates the findings, information from the Human Relations Area Files and other anthropological sources are used.

In researching the social life of the individual, the anthropologist orients his inquiry in particular directions. Because of his orientation he may find death attributed to a

variety of possibilities such as (1) the malice of spirits, ghosts, or magicians; (2) sins of commission or omission; or (3) physical injury unconnected with any kind of super-naturalism.

The discriminating anthropologist notices the difference between voluntary and involuntary death. He distinguishes between treatment of the dead during periods of epidemics, treatment of the corpses of pregnant women, treatment of stillborn or infant dead, and treatment of enemy dead, where these differences exist.

The disposal of the body is of vital concern to the working anthropologist. He makes every attempt to differentiate among inhumation or interment (concealing the body in the ground or in a mound above the ground), destroying the body by fire, and exposure (the practice of allowing the body to be destroyed by the elements or by animals or by birds of prey). Where preservation or artificial decomposition is customary these practices do not escape the attention of the anthropologist.

If burial is the means of disposing of the body, the anthropologist wants to know if affilial or consangueneous kinsmen are responsible for digging the grave, the position of the grave, and the type of grave. Where cremation is practiced it is important to know the place of cremation, whether any special timber is used for the pyre, who makes the pyre and by what method is it made. In cases of exposure, one of the things to be determined is the type of
platform used for exposing the body. Another consideration is the length of time the body is left exposed. The inquiring field worker will try to find out if the body is visited or avoided by the living during the time of its exposure. Furthermore, it is important to know what happens to the remains when decomposition is complete. Exhumation and secondary disposal is practiced as a part of the funerary rituals of some societies. Where this is the case, the anthropologist inquires into the nature of this phenomenon. Grave goods, ceremonies, sacrifices, mourning, shrines and relics, and memorials are also of anthropological concern.

The ethnographic record is by no means complete when data on all these practices are recorded. But these data provide a fairly broad base upon which more comprehensive information can be gathered. Of course, not every field worker gathers data on all of these customs. But those who do are following the suggestions of a special committee of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland who promulgated these ideas in what can best be called a manual for working anthropologists.²⁶

Sociological Literature

Within sociology proper there are only four contemporary men who systematically concern themselves professionally

with funeral customs. They are Robert Habenstein, Leroy Bowman, William Porter, and Robert Fulton. Habenstein and Fulton's researches for the most part have been subsidized by the funeral industry and the quality of their research findings reflect this fact. It should be added, though, that some of their material is scientifically unobjectionable.

Bowman leans to the other side of the fence. He is a strong advocate of memorial societies and is active in them. His book, The American Funeral, is a strong condemnation of the American funeral as an extravagance made sublime by funerary practitioners who play on the guilt of the survivors of the dead. Porter appears to be fighting his biases, in order to hold to a middle-of-the-road position.

All of this points to an important question in the sociology of death: Where are the neutrals? It seems one chooses sides first (makes up his mind) and then goes out and collects data which supports his position—hardly the scientific ideal.

Robert Habenstein has written a dissertation and two books on funeral customs. Information in the three works is


28The situation is not so different, however, in race relations; and, the same charge could be made with some justification against industrial sociology before World War II.
overlapping but enough is unique about each that they warrant independent comment.

His dissertation is entitled "The American Funeral Director: A Study in the Sociology of Work." It is an historical presentation tracing the early cultural background of modern mortuary belief to Egyptian sources. However, he finds that the most important non-Christian influences on funeral customs have come from among the pre-Christian Jews. Habenstein moves through a discussion of death and burial practices in the European Middle Ages. Finally he arrives on the American scene and reconstructs historically burial and undertaking practices in this country in two periods: (1) The Early American Period from 1650-1850, and (2) The Modern Period from 1850-1950. His principle points seem to be:

1. The occupation of funeral director is the by-product of the evolutionary transformation of American society from a rural to an urban condition. This change in society left a void in peoples' reactions to death. Man in a rural setting was equipped with an adequate cultural response to death; he had the emotional support of an extended family and an entire community of friends to buttress the shock of death. Urban man is less fortunate. He has no "tradition of death" to fall back on; he fails to receive adequate

support from kinsmen and friends and "it becomes the funeral
director's task to fill this void by defining what constitutes
proper conduct and procedure in the disposition of the
dead." The modern funeral director is portrayed as one
who, because of structural changes in society, is called
upon to define death in meaningful terms.

2. There are two ideal typical types of funeral
establishments which can be labeled mass mortuaries and
local mortuaries. They are distinguishable from one another
on the basis of five criteria: (1) In mass mortuaries first
contact with the bereaved family is made by a staff of sal-
aried specialists; in local mortuaries contact is first made
by the owner-operator of the establishment. (2) Mass mor-
tuaries do not reflect community values; locals do. (3)
Mass mortuaries treat each case "in the spirit of formalis-
tic impersonality"; local mortuaries "have an obligation to
the family." (4) The goal of mass mortuaries is "a business
unlimited" ethic; local mortuaries have as their goal a
"business limited" ethic. (5) Mass mortuaries are organized
bureaucratically; locals are organized traditionally.

3. The funeral director is a quasi-professional,
self conscious agent caught up in what Habenstein terms
"client ambivalence." Uncertain of his proper relationship
toward his clientel, the funeral director naturally finds

\[^{30}\text{Ibid.}\]
himself in the dilemma of not knowing precisely what his role is or should be.

The dissertation title is somewhat misleading since the author spends considerably more time discussing the history of the funeral industry and the economic and distributive aspects of funeral service (where there is found a discussion of caskets, embalming chemicals, concrete vaults, casket hardware, cemeteries, crematories and mausolea and florists and types of funerary establishments) than he does discussing the funeral director as an occupant of an occupational status performing a work role.

The History of American Funeral Directing is Habenstein's first book, written in collaboration with W. M. Lamers, and it draws heavily on Habenstein's dissertation.31 Again, the title is misleading, for the authors include much more than American funeral service. The volume deals with folkways and business practices related to the disposal of the dead in many places. Mortuary practices of the Egyptians, Hebrews, Romans, Scandinavians and the early Christians are considered. Out of these discussions it is concluded that the emergence of the undertaker in the division of labor is located first in a sacred then in a secular setting.

Part II of the book traces American funeral service from Colonial times to the present. Monopoly of the technical-solutions of the problem posed by death is seen as

31Habenstein and Lamers, loc. cit.
important in solidifying the position of the undertaker in
the American occupational structure. One such technical
solution was the use of ice as a temporary preservative. Of
far greater consequence, however, was the influence of the
American Civil War on the evolution of funeral service. The
War acted as a catalyst for experiments in embalming. After
all, a ready-made market was now available. Preservation of
the dead became important because parents and wives wanted
their soldier sons and husbands buried at home.

Part III, the final section of the book, deals with
what the authors call the appearance of the "associational
impulse"--the attempt within the occupation to create a
formal fraternity of undertakers, for the purpose of advanc­
ing public recognition of the occupational group as a
"profession." Habenstein and Lamers appropriately stress
the point that the funeral director's chief claim to profes­
sional status is found in "the psychological skills in human
relations necessary to the proper handling of the emotions
and dispositions of the bereaved."32

Criticism of malpractices within the industry is
conspicuous by its absence in the book and is accounted for,
inferentially, by the fact that this study was subsidized by
the National Funeral Directors' Association. The book was
printed by Bulfin Printers Inc., the publishing arm of the
Association.

32Ibid., p. 499.
Funeral Customs the World Over is Habenstein's latest book on funeral customs. Its intention is to present a variety of profiles of funeral customs and procedures from societies around the world. Funeral customs and practices vary so much from one society to the next that the authors find it impossible to provide a comprehensive, encyclopedic account of funerary behavior everywhere in the world.

Selection of groups included in this study was based on two main criteria. First, death beliefs and burial procedures of all the major world religions—Christian, Hebrew, Buddhist, Hindu, and Mohammedan (actually Islam)—are presented. Second, selection of a world-wide sample, not necessarily representative, based on the Outline of World Cultures handbook for the Human Relations Area Files, Yale University, was considered necessary. In all, the funeral customs of 55 societies representing eight geographical areas are surveyed.

The book also contains two appendices where the funeral rites of 79 religious groups and 26 fraternal orders are catalogued. The appendices are "cook book" material for the funeral director who wants to familiarize himself with what can be expected of him if he is called upon to handle a funeral of a descendant of one of these groups.

In the author's words:

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The research upon which the book rests has its bases on information secured from offices in the Foreign Service of the U.S., from their counterparts in foreign diplomatic and consular agencies in this country, from scholars, competent observers and funeral service functionaries abroad, from materials in the Human Relations Area Files, from conventional library sources, and from funeral directors in America, several hundred of whom wrote careful accounts of patterns of funeral procedures in their sections of the country.  

A closer look at the book reveals that these sources are unevenly drawn upon. His principle sources are funeral service functionaries abroad, where they exist; Human Relations Area Files (for contemporary preliterates); and funeral directors in America.

Anthropological sources are available on funeral customs for nearly all non-western societies reported on. Some historical materials are available for the western world; but, for the most part, the social scientist has left unattended the investigation of death practices in western civilization. For example, Habenstein's information on Sweden, Denmark, Yugoslavia, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Ireland, and England comes from funeral service functionaries, foreign travelers, and/or consular agencies in the foreign country.

Three conclusions emerge from this investigation. First, Habenstein concludes that funeralization everywhere is associated with disposition—an observation hardly worth the effort of 973 pages of manuscript. Second, the idea that

\[34\text{Ibid., vi.}\]
the "personality" of the deceased persists as a ghost, soul, spirit or shadow is identified as a cultural universal. This finding, too, is not new. Durkheim said the same thing fifty-one years ago.35

Third, this review of world cultures reveals, according to Habenstein, that funeralization satisfies certain needs of the bereaved. Funerals, it is asserted, are therapeutic in eight ways.

1. The bereaved experiences an emotional catharsis through the THERAPY OF DIRECT EXPRESSION.

2. When the grief stricken "talks to himself" or communicates with others he benefits from the THERAPY OF LANGUAGE.

3. Emotional, physical and financial support received by the next of kin constitutes the THERAPY OF SHARING.

4. Survivors are "forced" out of their immobility and required by custom to participate in the funeral rituals which Habenstein sees as the THERAPY OF ACTIVITY.

5. The memory picture of a lifelike, but sleeping corpse together with the comfort, quiet and beauty of the funeral home (in America) constitutes the THERAPY OF AESTHETICS.

6. Seeing the "remains" itself makes up the THERAPY OF VIEWING.

7. The THERAPY OF CEREMONY is an ennobling and glorifying experience from which the grievers benefit.

8. Guilt feelings and our reactions to them during funeralization constitutes the THERAPY OF SELF-DENIAL AND SUFFERING.36

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The dissertation purports to be a study of funerals and funeral directors from what is known as the functional point of view. Bowman begins by describing the chronology of events following death: the situations in the home of the deceased, the assemblages before the ceremony, the groups attending the funeral, the funeral service, the return home, and the role of the undertaker.

Next, he illustrates these events with five case studies of funerals. The funerals were chosen so as to give a panoramic view of funeral customs and practices. The first case is the funeral of a man in a small village community, another is a Catholic funeral somewhere in a metropolis. Bowman's three remaining cases include the first funeral in a community church in Virginia; the funeral of a wage worker who lived in a community just beyond an industrial district; and the funeral of an evangelical Puerto Rican in New York City. Residence, religion, and social

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class are the important variables with which the author is concerned in these case studies.

Following his functional approach, Bowman finds that funerals serve three beneficient consequences, or integrative functions. They provide the setting for re-experiencing group associations, an individual function; they are the locus for the reassessment of intergroup affiliations, a social function; and they reinforce the normative structure, a cultural function. The extent to which these functions or purposes are satisfied depends, however, on the individual qualities of the deceased person, the community social structure and the harmony in the community between sacred and secular cultural values.

Bowman observes that funeral service can be disregarded only at the risk of offending the community. He insists that the "memory picture," the raison d'être of cosmotology and dermasurgery in embalming, has no basis psychologically and sociologically because the lasting image is derived from experiences prior to death, not from the last look.

Private funeral business in contemporary America is faced with three main threats, according to Bowman. They are the development of public funeral homes, the growth of cooperative funeral ventures, and the threat of large labor groups forming their own funeral establishments.

The American Funeral draws from the data collected by Bowman for his dissertation. This book illustrates well
the use of information by a social scientist for both
scientific and propagandistic purposes. In the book, the
author argues that funerals are less meaningful now than
before. This he considers unfortunate and as a corrective
offers a final chapter on "Meaningful Funerals," where this
categorical assertion is made:

It is time for fundamental changes in the conduct of
funerals in the U. S. The evils connected with them
have continued not only for decades but for genera­
tions. Thousands of families have suffered depriva­
tion because of the unnecessary, unproductive and
unwise expenditures they have made in a pitiful effort
to gain an illusory status for their dead and them­selves. 38

What is needed, according to Bowman, is an independent
commission created for the purpose of studying what constitu­
tes meaningful funeral service. The commission should be
made up of cultural, commercial, and religious representa­
tives drawn from the clergy, educators, social workers,
officials of funeral societies, fraternal orders, medical
schools and research institutions. The commission would
engage in a continuing research program and furnish information
and advice to groups and agencies throughout the country.

Building up to this climax are chapters with such
enticing titles as "Behind the Scenes," "Dominance of Com­
mercial Factors," and "The Bargaining Situation: Family and
Undertaker."

Porter's "Middleville Morticians" is a sociological

interpretation of the historical development of the funeral industry in a middle-sized city in the South.39 He finds that the pioneering efforts of one old line, traditionally oriented individual produced a monopoly on funeral service in Middleville from the time of the Civil War to the depression. This monopoly was created and maintained in spite of the fact that the area was constantly gaining population. Long before 1929, the community had reached a size where more than one funeral establishment could have prospered.

The decade 1929 to 1939 is described by Porter as the "years of struggle." The pre-depression monopoly ended and a successful competitor became powerful through the sale of industrial insurance which "guaranteed" both future funerals as well as profits from the insurance in the meantime. The era 1939 to 1958 is pictured as the "era of stabilization" made possible by what Porter calls the development of "insurance monopolies" by the two competing funeral establishments.

Competition between the two funeral homes in Middleville became a competition for the sale of industrial insurance policies. One by-product of this struggle was the effective exclusion of outside funeral interests in Middleville.

Throughout the study, change is emphasized. Not only organizational change but technological and ideological

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39 Porter, loc. cit.
change as well is clearly identified. Sociologically, this is what is of greatest value in the study.

Porter demonstrates well the importance of embalming and the influence that technical innovation had on funeral service. According to him, it gives to the undertaker "possession control" of the corpse. This shifts the locus of operations from the home to the funeral home and in so doing makes possible more effective merchandising, or, what amounts to the same thing, more expensive funerals.

With the introduction of industrial insurance in Middleville, Porter sees the need for cultivating career type insurance agents who can bring industrial insurance to Middleville's professional and upper-middle classes. Contrary to Porter's expectation, they have turned to life insurance and other types of investments rather than industrial insurance.

Porter also treats of other innovations such as the introduction of ambulance service, the development of branch funeral homes servicing communities surrounding Middleville and the strategic use of "appropriate," effective advertisement by Middleville's morticians.

Robert Fulton's bibliography in the sociology of death is more extensive than that of any other contemporary sociologist.40

Faunce and Fulton's article on death as a neglected area of research appeared in 1958; it was intended to generate interest in this topic by illuminating some aspects of death worthy of study. They point out that no one has considered death from the point of view of a culture complex; rather, what few studies are available deal with a particular segment of the whole.

The varying incidence of exposure to death in different cultures is another potential research area in the sociology of death, according to Faunce and Fulton, especially differences between literate and non-literate societies and urban and rural ones. Death rites and customs need also be studied according to the authors. At the same time death should be studied as a status-passage phenomenon.  

Faunce and Fulton, loc. cit. Kephart actually had made a study of "Status After Death" in 1950 where he investigated social class, death and funeral customs. He found (1) the upper class spent more money on funerals than other classes; but the lower and middle classes spent proportionately more of their incomes on funerals than "Uppers" did; (2) an inverse relationship between class position and
most important study as far as this investigation is concerned is *The Sacred and the Secular: Attitudes of the American Public Toward Death*. This 1962 study included 10,000 householders across the United States living in major urban centers. Respondents were divided into three groups consisting of members of memorial societies, householders who returned questionnaires, and householders who were personally interviewed by sociology graduate students in 25 different urban communities. All major geographical areas of the United States are represented.

Religious affiliation was found to be the pivotal factor around which attitudes toward funeral customs revolve. The more conventional one is with respect to religious participation, the more likely one is to accept conventional funeral customs. The memorial group gave atheistic or deistic responses more consistently to questions of attitudes toward God and death than did the other two groups in the study.

While Fulton assigned greatest weight to religion, or the lack of it, as the independent variable making for deviation from accepted funeral practices, other factors were also involved for those who do not accept "the American way willingness to view the corpse: (3) intellectuals, more than any other group, insisted on cheap, hence simple funeral arrangements; (4) cremation largely confined to the upper class. See W. M. Kephart, "Status After Death," *American Sociological Review*, XV (October, 1950), 635-643.

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Fulton, *loc. cit.*
of death." The rebels who spurn funeral conventions in America are better educated, have higher incomes, and are disproportionately represented in the professions. They deviate from the expected by advocating price advertising, criticizing funeral costs, subscribing to pre-planned funeral services, recommending cremation and spurning the use of flowers.

Members of memorial groups, who constitute the core of America's funerary malcontents, however, are inconsistent. The dissatisfied demonstrate this inconsistency by attempting to keep their children away from funerals, thereby isolating them from an important fact of life. By so doing, Fulton finds that these people, who discourage the phantasies of ghosts, who unveil Santa Claus as a myth and who have attacked our puritanical sex mores, are at the same time, shielding their children from the ultimate truth about death.

In interpreting the data with which he worked, Fulton considers the funeral a ceremony which relates man to God and his fellow man in the form of a gift. The funeral, according to him, is a gift given by the funeral director in the name of the family of the deceased and received by the family of the deceased. This gift received serves two social-psychological functions: (1) it provides for the socially approved expression of anger and hostility; and (2) it cushions the shock of guilt and anxiety experienced by the survivors.

This study was undertaken by Fulton at the request of
the National Funeral Directors Association and his findings were first made known by him in an address to the members of the National Funeral Directors Association at their annual meeting in 1963. He must have pleased his audience when, at the end of his speech, he opined, "I believe the funeral is both socially useful and emotionally valuable. It is not only a RITE for the dead but the RIGHT of the living."

Shortly after this performance, the National Funeral Directors Association subsidized Dr. Fulton's efforts in editing *Death and Identity* with a $4,500 grant.43

The present study draws on Fulton's investigation of attitudes toward funeral customs in that some of the same questions asked by him are included in this research design. In a later chapter a comparison of the findings of the two studies will be made.

In the following chapter attention will be focused on selected funeral customs in the United States and Calcasieu Parish and some changes taking place in those customs. This chapter is intended to provide a general socio-cultural background for the subsequent examination of attitudes toward selected funeral customs in the parish.

43 United States Congress, Senate, Committee on the Judiciary, *op. cit.*, p. 320.
CHAPTER III

SOME CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH
DEATH AND FUNERALIZATION

In primitive society burial rites often have a double purpose: to keep the dead alive, and to keep them away. In the first case, numerous taboos are erected as barriers preventing contact with the corpse and the grave, and offerings are made to escape the wrath of the dead. These customs presuppose the dead are alive, are dangerous, and are to be avoided. In the second case, certain ceremonial rituals such as providing the corpse with weapons and nourishment and attempting to preserve the bodies of the dead suggest an attempt to appease the "living dead" so that they might remain in the "other world."

These customs, it is said, are incompatible; they reflect a fundamental contradiction in the primitive attitude

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1This chapter is not intended to be an encyclopedic account of every custom or practice associated with death and funeralization, nor does it propose to give an in-depth account of those customs which are described. The purpose of the chapter is to set the stage for a later discussion of attitudes toward funeral customs. A secondary purpose of the chapter is to bring to light some new material relative to death and funeral practice.
But is the attitudinal orientation of contemporary Americans toward death and funeralization any less contradictory? Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss say, "American perspectives on death seem strangely paradoxical." They document this observation with nearly 300 pages of manuscript, leaving little doubt that their definition of the situation fits the structure of reality. This paradox grows out of the fact that Americans characteristically are unwilling to face openly the process of dying, in spite of the reality that death remains, as always, a brute fact of life. Because of the American's proneness to avoid the issue of death, America has been labeled a "death avoiding society." Thus, primitive society and contemporary America share attitudinal inconsistencies insofar as death is concerned.

Nevertheless, the American way of handling death is uniformly inconsistent so that what is said about behavioral reactions to death in America is somewhat representative of the way most people react to death in Calcasieu Parish.

Death and funeral customs are the products of the way people behave inwardly toward themselves; they are the products of the way people behave toward each other and toward

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4Borkenau, loc. cit.
the corpse; and they are conditioned by the existing state of the normative milieu. Thus, death and funeralization are multifaceted phenomena involving psychological and sociocultural dimensions which cannot in any ongoing situation be legitimately separated.

For example, when death occurs, the activities of family, clergy and funeral director—customs to be described shortly—are said to be psychologically functional (contribute to the stability or integration of the human psyche) when:

1. The funeral assists in the reinforcement of reality for the bereaved.

2. The funeral aids the necessary recollection of the deceased and the beginning of the recapitulation of the relationship.

3. The funeral, by conveying the element of finality in death, eventuates in the freedom for developing new relational patterns without violation of the integrity of previous relationship with the deceased.

4. The funeral offers an opportunity for the release of authentic feelings.5

The sociological and anthropological consequences of death and funeral customs benefit the bereaved survivors when:

1. [The funeral provides] an opportunity for the manifestation of shared loss and a means by which the support of the community of mourners is conveyed to the bereaved.

2. The funeral expresses social understanding [for the living.] of the living to those who have died. . . .

3. The funeral begins the process of strengthening relational patterns among the living.\textsuperscript{6}

However, ongoing funerals are never as functional as the previous statements indicate. In fact, funeralizing the dead is often more dysfunctional than it is functional.

Whether or not funeralizing the dead facilitates the psycho-social-cultural development of the bereaved is an empirical question—often a psychoanalytical one—and it is only tangentially related to this study. What is of importance is the fact that funeralizing the dead consists of a chain of activities beginning before death, or beginning at the time of death, and culminating with the disposition of the body, or ending at some later date.\textsuperscript{7} These activities are a response to an event (death) which is defined as paramountly significant, and while there are some variations, in large measure, the behavioral responses to death are repetitive. Thus, the procedures for handling the dead become engrained in custom. These procedures or customs are

\textsuperscript{6}Ibid.

\textsuperscript{7}In the case of terminally ill patients it is quite common for the family to begin making preparations for the funeral in advance of death. For that matter, it is an every-day occurrence for perfectly healthy people to make plans for their eventual demise by buying insurance and by investing in pre-need burial arrangements. Mourning continues subsequent to interment on the other end of the life-death continuum. But in this chapter we are restricting our concern to events beginning with death and ending with the committal of the body.
patterned activities associated with caring for dead humans; they can be treated conveniently in a three-step chronological sequence, namely:

1. Customarily certain actions are initiated between the time of death and the time the funeral director gains "possession-control" of the body;

2. Customarily certain actions are initiated from the time the funeral director gains "possession-control" of the body until the time of the funeral service; and

3. Customarily certain actions are initiated from the time of the funeral service until the body finally is interred.

Each of these three sequences is elaborated below.

I. FROM DEATH TO "POSSSESSION-CONTROL"

The kinds of responses generated when death occurs depend on the nature of the death. The person may die in a hospital or at home; furthermore, his death may be expected or it may be unexpected. If the person dies somewhere other than in a hospital or in his home he may be brought to the hospital and can be considered a hospital death (expected or unexpected). Usually, however, once the attending physician pronounces the person dead there is an ambulance from a funeral home waiting to take "possession-control" of the body.

It should also be mentioned at this time that expected and unexpected deaths are considered to be qualitatively similar. If a death in the family is unexpected the processes of disbelief, defense, sorrow, ambivalence, perpetuation of the love object, projection, scapegoating,
mourning and recovery reported by Thomas Eliot, as a general rule, come into play more forcefully. But the activities related to the death are the same. Stated differently, the psycho-social-cultural dynamics of an unexpected death differ in degree, but not in kind, from the psycho-social-cultural dynamics of an expected death.

**Expected and Unexpected Death in the Hospital**

When antecedent cues signal the onset of death for a person admitted to the hospital, the activities of the hospital staff are unambiguous because their customary behavioral reactions are specified in writing in the "Post-Mortem Care" section of a hospital manual. There are two purposes of post-mortem care: (1) preparation of the body, especially the face, in such a manner that the dead person looks natural and (2) the removal of the corpse from the hospital ward to the morgue. Hospital personnel attending the body are always instructed to perform their duties tenderly and reverently out of respect for the dead person.

The post-mortem procedure followed in most hospitals, granting local variations, includes the following steps:

1. The attending physician pronounces the person

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dead and signs the death certificate.9

2. The dead person's family is notified immediately if they are not present at the time of death.

3. At the request of the family, the minister is notified.

4. Then the body is prepared for the morgue. This procedure involves several steps.

   a. All the clothing and personal belongings of the dead person are removed and given to a member of the family.

   b. Dead persons wearing false teeth have their dentures removed, labeled and kept with the body (still referred to as the patient) for subsequent release to the funeral home. This procedure is an obvious concession to the funeral director so that he can more accurately create a natural "memory picture" for the viewers.

   c. If a craniotomy were performed, the shaved hair is also customarily placed with the body--another instance of deference to the cosmetological

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9One nursing manual this writer consulted stated it this way: 'The attending physician will pronounce patient's respiration has ceased and patient has EXPIRED.' Notice the euphemism, EXPIRED, used as a substitute for death. It would be interesting to explore the variations in the use of euphemisms by persons whose work roles potentially bring them in contact with death all the time. Why, for example, are euphemisms commonplace among funeral directors and hospital personnel but not as much in vogue among policemen and firefighters?
concerns of the funeral director. This practice is an illustration of a cultural lag in that wigs are now used by embalmers in craniotomy cases. When asked why the hair of a dead person is kept with the body for the use of the embalmer one nurse replied: "In this way the hair, especially of women, is available if the person dies and the funeral director can arrange the hair in such a way that the dead person would not appear nude in the coffin." Sometimes, however, the family wants the hair of the dead person as a momento.

d. The body is to be cleaned and bathed, if necessary, after first removing the dressings and drainage tubes.

e. Then the body is removed to the morgue.

At no time between death and deposition of the corpse in the morgue is the body left unattended. There are two reasons for this practice: (1) respect for the body, and (2) as a safeguard against having an unsuspecting friend or relative visit with the patient only to be shocked into the realization that the patient is now a corpse. But the practice of maintaining a continuous vigil over the dead body out of respect for it breaks down once the corpse has been housed in the morgue, awaiting the arrival of the funeral home representative. In the morgue the door is sometimes locked, sometimes not, but in any event, no one remains there with the bodies of the dead.
Sometimes the attending physician requests an autopsy in which instance the family is requested (not required) to sign an autopsy release form. An autopsy requested by the attending physician cannot legally be performed without the consent of the family. Whenever an autopsy is performed the funeral director is normally notified after it has been completed. This procedure is intended to avoid having the ambulance from the funeral home arrive at the hospital before the body is ready to be released. But there is another consideration involved— one seldom mentioned. That is, funeral directors have been known to attempt to discourage families from having autopsies performed on their dead kinsmen because it makes the embalmers' job more difficult. Embalmers must be more careful in the exercise of their "restorative skills" when working with bodies which have had autopsies performed on them. One Negro funeral director in Lake Charles resented the way hospital personnel performed autopsies. This funeral director thought doctors and their assistants were less careful in performing autopsies on Negroes than they were with autopsies of whites.

One other set of considerations is as yet unmentioned. Some deaths occurring in hospitals are appropriately called by the hospital staff "coroner's cases." The coroner is called in on a case whenever a patient dies in the hospital within 24 hours after he has been admitted; he is called in in all deaths caused by violence; and he is called in in all accidental deaths. Length of stay in the hospital is not
considered in violent or accidental deaths. The coroner may or may not order (without consent of the family) an autopsy. His decision will depend on the circumstances surrounding the death. If the coroner is called in it is he, not the hospital authority, who authorizes the release of the body from the hospital to the funeral home.

Expected or Unexpected Death in the Home

When death occurs in the home subsequent to some illness the kinds of actions taken depend in large part on the way the situation is structured in the home at the time. Prior to death, the ill person is nearly always attended by a nurse or some nurse surrogate. At least one family member is usually present. The nurse or some member of the family summons a doctor. When he arrives his role is much the same as it would have been had the death occurred in a hospital. He pronounces the person dead, signs the death certificate, and ministers to the medical needs of any bereaved survivors. Other family members are called; they assemble in the home of the deceased, comforting each other whenever possible. The family clergyman is informed of the death. A Catholic priest goes immediately to the place of death where the sacrament of Extreme Unction is administered if this ritual has not previously been performed and if there is reason to believe the soul has not yet departed the body, the soul's earthly tabernacle. An Episcopal priest does much the same thing, but he reserves Extreme Unction for the gravely ill.
If the person is dead when the priest arrives, a ritual called The Commendation of the Soul is held for the spiritual well being of the dead person's soul. Then the clergymen remains with the family as long as necessary to share prayer with them and otherwise offer the bereaved spiritual-emotional comfort.

Clergymen of other denominations also hasten to the home of the deceased and play similar roles except that Extreme Unction or the Commendation of the Soul is not administered. In this respect Catholic and Episcopal priests orient their behavior to the dead (primarily) and to the living (secondarily), while other Christian clergymen uniformly agree that their actions are oriented to the living.¹⁰ The clergymen takes his leave from the home as soon as practicable but he will return for the wake. If an autopsy is not performed and if the coroner is not called in, the funeral home chosen by the family is notified and the body picked up soon afterwards. The family remains at the home of the deceased or with some nearby relative or friend, the less grief stricken members of the family caring for those more severely emotionally affected. Once the body has been picked up by the ambulance dispatched from the

¹⁰Edgar N. Jackson, For the Living (Des Moines, Iowa: The Meredith Press, 1963). It might be well to mention here that the role of the clergy between death and "possession-control" is fundamentally the same whether the death occurs in the home or the hospital.
funeral home the funeral director has "possession-control" of the body.

II. FROM "POSSESSION-CONTROL" TO THE FUNERAL SERVICE

It would have been impossible for "possession-control" to have come about without public acceptance of the funeral home as the proper place for viewing the remains. Porter makes this point and also recognizes that embalming considerably facilitated the advent of "possession-control." Together, these two factors seem to account for the advantage the funeral director is able (in most cases) to exercise over his clients if he chooses to do so. Thus a social organizational change (transfer of the wake from the home to the funeral home) a technological change (embalming) and an ideological change (the acceptance of the idea of the funeral home and embalming)—all three—are involved in the evolution of "possession-control."

Unless specifically instructed to do otherwise, the funeral director—more usually his employee, the embalmer—has the body embalmed. Frederick Strub, in The Principles and Practice of Embalming (Dallas:
and Practice of Embalming remarks that it is extremely unusual for a grief-stricken survivor to instruct the mortician to embalm the body of a dead relative since embalming is a tabooed subject between the funeral director and his client. The funeral director relies on tradition in the matter. Strub concludes that when the bereaved family entrusts the body to the care of a funeral establishment the family implicitly gives its permission to go ahead and embalm.13

But embalming is only one, and not necessarily the first activity in a chain of activities performed by funeral home functionaries after "possession-control." For one thing, there is the funeral transaction involving the funeral director--the seller--and the family of the deceased--the buyer.14

At the family's earliest convenience it is the

L. G. Frederick, 1959); A. O. Spriggs, Art and Science of Embalming and Champion's Restorative Art [n.p.]; A. J. Nunnamaker and C. O. Dhonan, Dissecting Guide for Embalmers [n.p.]; J. Sheridan Mayer, Restorative Art ([n.p.]: The Graphic Arts Press, 1961). Furthermore, the only reason embalming is mentioned is that it is a CUSTOM.


practice for them to visit the funeral home where the viewing is to be held. At this time the family is brought into the counseling room where the funeral director gathers certain data on the dead person, including (1) full name; (2) social security number; (3) address; (4) date and place of birth; (5) United States Armed Forces serial number; (6) occupation; and (7) name and place of birth of the dead person's parents. From this information the unscrupulous funeral director easily can take advantage of his unsuspecting client. Now, he knows, or can easily find out, if the deceased is eligible for social security death benefits (maximum benefits are $255.00); he also knows if the dead person is eligible for veteran's burial benefits ($250.00); and he is generally aware of the social class position of the deceased because he knows the dead man's past occupation. Moreover, the observant funeral director can tell with little difficulty the type of funeral he is likely to sell from the dress and mannerisms of the bereaved family. Even more important than the class position of the family are several other factors which presumably set the tone of the funeral transaction and largely predetermine its outcome. They are:

1. The disorientation caused by bereavement;

2. The lack of standards by which to judge the value of the commodity offered by the seller;

3. The need for the family to make an on-the-spot decision;

4. General ignorance of the law as it affects disposal of the dead; and
5. Ready availability of insurance money to finance the transaction.\textsuperscript{15}

The family is led from the counseling room to the selection or casket room after the funeral director has collected the "family data." They are shown an array of caskets from which they select the casket of their choice. A special strategy aimed at encouraging the family to "buy high" is employed in the arrangement of the caskets. This strategy is described by W. M. Krieger in \textit{Successful Funeral Management}; it is caustically attacked in Mitford's \textit{American Way of Death}.\textsuperscript{16}

Basically, the strategy involves a subtle attempt to encourage the customer to buy a casket in the quartile price range above the median. Two tactics are used to achieve this goal: (1) caskets are displayed, with appropriate lighting, so as to emphasize the suitability of certain caskets rather than others; (2) the casket salesman informs the family that average families buy in price range "X" on the assumption that most families will choose to buy slightly above the average.

There are three funeral homes in Calcasieu Parish which serve whites. None of these establishments display their least expensive casket, though the cheapest casket is

\textsuperscript{15}Mitford, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 18-19.

ordinarily in the display room hidden from view under a draped catafalque. In one establishment, displayed caskets ranged in price from $330.00 to $1,975.00. But this funeral home actually services a $100.00 funeral. Another establishment displayed caskets ranging in price from $375.00 to $5,000.00, yet the funeral director volunteered more than once to tell the researcher that cheaper caskets are available in unusual circumstances. He had a $200.00 casket hidden in the display room. In the other white funeral home the least expensive casket shown was $670.00 while the most expensive one was near $7,000.00. However, the least expensive casket in the casket showroom was $200.00; it was hidden from view.

Casket costs in the Negro funeral homes ranged from about $285.00 to $1,000.00. While no information was gathered on whether or not less expensive caskets are available in Negro funeral establishments, there is every reason to believe they also stock cheaper caskets than they display. As will be shown later, two Negro funerals actually cost less than $285.00.

In discussing funeral costs one funeral director, exhibiting clever business acumen, observed that he would be foolish to try to over-sell a funeral. He said, "In the first place I don't want to sell people something they can't pay for and second, who knows but maybe somebody else in that family will die next month and they will want a $2,000.00 funeral. It's just good business for me to sell people just
what they want and to give the same good service no matter what the cost of the funeral."

At the time of the conference the family is asked if they would care to purchase a vault, which is explained in one public relations brochure for the funeral industry as

... an outer covering for the casket, standing air and water tight between the casket and the earth around it. It is an added safeguard that the person whom you have loved in life will be protected in death.17

Farther along in the same paragraph it is remarked that "your funeral director will probably recommend it, because he gives first consideration to your protection and peace of mind."18

At the time of the initial conference the family also is asked about cemetery arrangements. If previous arrangements have been made, then the funeral director makes sure the sexton is ready to receive the body on the day of the burial. When no prior arrangements have been made with a cemeterian, the funeral director will make whatever arrangements the family desires.

Decisions are likewise made at this time concerning the use of the funeral chapel or the church for the funeral service, the use of special burial garments, and the hour of the funeral service. Negro clergymen in Calcasieu Parish are inclined to favor the funeral chapel over the church as

18Ibid.
the locus of the religious ceremony because, in the words of one Negro minister, "In the winter I have to heat my church and in the summer I have to cool it; but it's the funeral director who gets the money for the funeral, not me. Let him burn his gas and electricity." White, Protestant ministers who pastor small sectarian churches prefer funeral chapel services, but for a different reason. They feel that many people would avoid attending the funeral service of a deceased friend or acquaintance if the funeral service were held in the sectarian church. But, these same people would attend the service if it were conducted in the funeral chapel. Thus Negro ministers favor using the funeral chapel because of economic considerations while some white ministers favor the funeral chapel because they can "preach a bigger funeral." Clergymen in the well established Protestant denominations--Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians--seem to have no particular preference about the place of the funeral service. They are content to honor the family's request in the matter, except that they often commented that persons closely affiliated with the church, such as deacons, members of the board of directors, and the like should, in their opinions, be buried through the church.

Today, many families have discontinued the practice of using a favorite garment, suit or dress, for the dead person when he or she is "laid out." They have begun to use, instead, special burial garments which, the public is told,
are "more convenient and which create a better appearance." All funeral homes stock these articles of apparel which are provided at an additional charge whenever the family requests them.

Finally, the family, the officiating clergyman, and the funeral director, choose a time for the funeral service, though the family's wishes presumably receive priority.

The services the funeral director renders to the family begin when he is notified of the death according to the industry's public relations information; they end after interment. Yet the bulk of these services are concentrated in the period between "possession-control" and the beginning of the funeral service. The public is led to believe that the "minor details" may include more than 200 separate services. Furthermore, assurance is given that not one detail will be overlooked by the competent funeral director. An incomplete list of the "minor details" handled by the funeral director is reproduced from "The Great Controversy Relating to Funerals":

1. Attend to the immediate needs of the bereaved.
2. Notify the family's clergyman.
3. Call the coroner if this is deemed necessary.

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19Ibid., p. 16.

20Catholic families are guided by the rule of the Catholic Church which requires that a Mass be celebrated in connection with the funeral service. Since most Masses are conducted in the morning, Catholics have less choice than Protestants in setting a time for the funeral service.
4. Notify the relatives and friends of the deceased. Send necessary wires.

5. Secure death certificates, burial permit and releases.

6. Remove remains from home, hospital, or depot.

7. Bathe, shampoo, shave and manicure the body.

8. Perform necessary dermasurgery.

9. Prepare, restore and preserve the body.

10. Consult with the family for vital information and details.

11. Notify local and distant newspapers for printing of obituary and funeral notices.

12. Contact cemetery for grave opening—arrange for use of cemetery equipment.


15. Contact pallbearers and vocalist.

16. Contact military and fraternal organizations.

17. Receive, arrange and remove flowers, retain flower cards.

18. Provide acknowledgment, mass cards, memorial folders, and similar items.


20. Provide equipment for various religious and lodge services.

21. Provide seating, special lighting and casket carriage.

22. Make shipping and other arrangements if the deceased is to be interred at a distant point.

23. Arrange for transportation for the family, if needed.

25. Advance the honorarium for the clergy, soloist, cemetery, florist, transportation and other cash items . . . as an added convenience for the family.

26. Provide casket coach, a sedan passenger car, transportation for the clergy and the floral tributes.

27. Provide parking space and personnel.

28. Direct and supervise funeral service according to particular religious, national and local customs.

29. Arrange for church or home service.

30. Arrange auto cortege.

31. Notify family attorney, bank and insurance agent.

32. Assist in securing Social Security and Veterans' Benefits as well as insurance claims.

33. Provide Notary Public service.

34. Advise as to any other benefits which will be due to the family.

35. Assist with any personal problems that fall within his province.21

The quintessence of the funeral director's role in the drama of the funeral is associated with three items listed above, namely: bathing, shampooing, and manicuring the body; performing the necessary dermasurgery; and preparing, restoring, and preserving the body. Remember, however, that the hospital, when necessary, bathes the corpse before releasing it to the funeral home. The corpse certainly is a sanitary object by the time it is placed in the coffin (encasketed, as they say in the funeral trade). These

services (except for bathing) would find no place in the funeralization process without the wake, for it is at the wake that the finished product is displayed for public viewing. Even before the wake officially begins, the family reviews the remains so as to approve the work of the embalmer.

In Calcasieu Parish as elsewhere the quality of the cosmetological and dermasurgical workmanship is noticed and discussed. Among the whites one of the reasons given by respondents for choosing one funeral home over another was that "X's funeral home does much better work." However, what constitutes quality workmanship in embalming, the restorative art, is not definable. Thus, some respondents chose "Y's funeral home because it does better work." Until August, 1966, it was public knowledge that the two Negro funeral homes in the parish (both are located in Lake Charles) employed the same embalmer on a piecework basis. Since then a third Negro funeral parlor has opened in Lake Charles with its own funeral director-embalmer. Consequently, Negro funeral homes, like those of whites, are now involved in dermasurgical and cosmetological competition.  

\[22\] The intrusion of another Negro funeral home in the parish has had other social repercussions. For one thing, in its first six months of business the new funeral establishment handled approximately as many funerals as one of the "old line" Negro establishments handled in the previous calendar year. Its success is due to its superior physical facilities and "rolling stock." Both of the "old line" funeral homes subsequently have reacted by either planning or making improvements in their physical plants. One owner-funeral director is planning a new facility; the other
There is no escape for the family from the necessity to carry out the pattern of funeral activities, except at the expense of offending friends and neighbors who consider the death the inevitable precursor of this chain of social and religious events. Many instances present themselves of the compelling nature of these expectations.

In a small suburb one funeral director has had two burials without ceremonies [the wake]. According to him, the negative reaction of the community was 'terrific,' and proved to be unpleasant to the family for months afterward. Calls came from all over the country, and the most frequent reply to the statement that no funeral [wake] would be held was: 'I never heard of such a thing.' A colored undertaker said that in a long career of successful service he had never had a burial without obsequies [the wake]; there would be no point to that.

Leroy Bowman's comments of 12 years ago document the strength of viewing the corpse as a deeply engrained custom; his remarks are relevant today for most Americans. Cremation and memorial services without the deceased encasketed and in full view are uncommon. When the wake is omitted as a part of the ceremony attending death it is done, even today, at the risk of alienating the community. This owner-funeral director has added a parking lot to his establishment.

Furthermore, area Negroes are getting better service now than ever before. The "old line" homes control the burial insurance in the parish. Hence, they are called to pick up most of the dead bodies. But on several occasions the families of the deceased have violated the norm of "possession-control" by transferring the as yet unencasketed remains to the new funeral home. The "old line" establishments embalm and encasket the corpse without delay now, fearing that if they hesitate they will lose a case. Once encasketed, a funeral director in the same community seldom is willing to service the funeral because he cannot make the profit on the casket.

particularly includes relatives who are often dissatisfied without a wake. A woman who cremated her dead husband in Calcasieu Parish felt the heavy hand of negative sanctions from her relatives because she handled her husband's death unconventionally. This 67-year-old grandmother saw herself as one person among many, who, in her words, "are coming to question funeral customs and costs." In her opinion conventional funerals are too elaborate. But she was tempted to give her husband a traditional funeral despite his wishes to be cremated and even though she wanted to honor her dead husband's desires. The source of her temptation is revealed in this statement:

I almost had a private funeral service, mostly to accommodate my husband's family. His family was upset about the cremation. But most of his relatives lived so far away they couldn't attend anyway.

The widow and her husband had migrated South 20 years ago from the Midwest, so that the couple had lengthened the territorial bond with their kinsmen and presumably, in the process, weakened the emotional bond as well. Yet she momentarily hesitated about cremating her deceased husband. One can imagine the intensity of the social pressure generated against unconventional funeralization when a "local" with many relatives and lifelong friends in the community tries to circumvent the wake.

The term wake is an Anglo-Saxon word which literally means "to watch a corpse." It is a custom of unknown origin and antiquity although waking the dead almost certainly was
invented before the advent of civilization and is found all over the world. It used to be an all night vigil of relatives and friends over the human remains from death until committal of the body and still is among contemporary pre-literate and some Americans, particularly the Irish, Italians and Negroes.

In urban situations in America, the wake is increasingly coming to be an "open house" at a funeral home with visiting hours specified by the funeral director where the sympathizers can view the corpse and offer condolences to the survivors.

The parlor, or room in which the encasketed corpse is housed, is designed so that the corpse occupies the "upstage center" position. The body "lies in state" and is reviewed as the color scheme of the room, the draperies, and the pre-arranged lighting all compliment the restorative art work of the embalmer to give the corpse a natural, slumber-like look.

A social, secular atmosphere prevails at a contemporary wake, a fact often noted by the people of Calcasieu


25This description of the wake does not deal with wakes held in the home of the deceased or in the church, though these practices still exist.

26In Philadelphia, New York, and Houston (and presumably elsewhere) the illusion of a "sleeping corpse" is fostered by placing the dead person, appropriately dressed in a nightgown or pajamas, in a reclining, sleep-like position in a bed located in a "slumber-room."
Parish. For example, a retired logger from a rural part of the parish remarked, "wakes has changed alot. People ought to have more respect for the dead than they do." He continued: "In fact, the whole world is ruint, and fast living is what's done it." A 31-year-old housewife whose husband is a driller thought funeralizing the dead had deteriorated over the years because "wakes are more party-like now and people now-a-days go all-out whether they can afford it or not." A Negro janitor remarked "people don't show as much sympathy at wakes as they did before." These kinds of comments could be considerably extended, for people in the study were very critical not of the wake per se but of the way it allegedly had degenerated. Negroes particularly complained of drinking alcoholic beverages at wakes. Clergymen serving the "Negro community" confirmed this fact although the sympathizers apparently refrain from drinking in the presence of ministers. These remarks lead one to believe that wakes are less desirable today than previously. However, a comment by William Walsh makes contemporary wakes seem puritanical by the standards that prevailed in the 14th century England. Walsh said:

The wake may have originated from a superstition that the body would be carried away or defaced by evil spirits, or from a more rational idea of injury to it from rats or from wild beasts. Christianity introduced the idea of making it an occasion for offering prayers for the repose of the soul of the deceased. . . . But it was found in very early days that, in Miss Edgeworth's words, the presence of liquor turned these meetings 'held professedly for the indulgence of holy sorrow into orgies of unholy joy.' The faithful were warned that
the design of people's meeting together upon such occasions was to join their prayers for the benefit of the dead person; that this ancient and serviceable usage was overgrown with superstition and turned into a convenience for theft and debauchery; therefore for a remedy against this disorder it was decreed that upon the death of any person none should be allowed to watch before the corpse ... excepting near relations and friends of the deceased.27

The funeral director strives to provide a restive, informal atmosphere rather than a festive one. He has achieved this goal to some extent by providing elegant—sometimes lavish—surroundings for the visitors who feel the restraint of the physical environment if not the restraint of the occasion. Yet, the amount and intensity of the activity at wakes varies from group to group.

At some predetermined time—usually 8:00 p.m.—the priest arrives at the funeral home for a Catholic's wake. He comes to say the Rosary and is joined in this series of prayers by the community of visitors. Protestants in the room at the time are welcomed to stay but usually find it more convenient to leave or to retreat temporarily to an adjoining room.

The Protestant minister sometimes visits with the family of a deceased member of his congregation at the funeral home before the wake officially begins and leaves before the first of the sympathizers arrives. But his presence at the funeral home depends in large part on when he is informed of the death. If word of the death reaches

27Walsh, loc. cit.
him late, he has no choice but to visit with the family during the wake. Then, too, some ministers choose to visit the family and offer condolences and prayers at the public viewing. Subsequently, they mingle with other members of their congregation so as to announce publicly by their presence that they are "tending their flocks."

There is a continual circulation of visitors at the wake, some leaving as others arrive. Each new arrival expresses to the family his sorrow over the family's loss with a kiss, a hug, or a handshake. The close relatives and some friends remain throughout the official waking period which is normally held in the early evening and ends sometimes between 9:00 p.m. and 12:00 p.m. All of the funeral directors in Calcasieu Parish, white and Negro alike, favor terminating the wake at a prearranged time. However, the idea has met with some public resistance, especially among the Negroes and whites of low socio-economic status. When the funeral home remains open through the night some family member(s) is always present, although members of the family might take turns keeping watch over the opened casket.

The morning after the wake is the day of interment and includes the funeral service and the burial service. But there is one (sometimes two) intensely emotional hour before the funeral service begins when the sympathizers are regrouping prior to the funeral service as the following
Post-Wake Activities; A Brief Case Study of a 73-Year-Old Man's Funeral Service and Interment Service

It was raining the morning after the wake when the relatives and friends began reassembling between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. at the funeral home. The parlor had remained open all night for some of the immediate family who had remained by the casket through the night. The widow appeared somewhat composed and much more alert than she had been during the wake.

The priest was to arrive at 8:50 a.m. in order to escort the body to the church where the funeral mass would be celebrated. Ten minutes before he arrived the veil was lifted from over the dead person so that those who wished could kiss and otherwise touch the body before the coffin was sealed. These were emotionally charged moments. The youngest son of the dead man began to weep unashamedly (he is divorced and lives with a grown son, a teen-age daughter and his mother in the residence of his deceased father). His weeping set off a round of crying in which all of the children participated. Two grandchildren openly wept, as did a grand-

28The events described below are not intended to represent the "typical funeral." There is no such thing. But it does illustrate the psycho-social dynamics of funeralizing the dead. If a Protestant's funeral were described the sequence of events would differ, but the psycho-social undercurrents would be the same. Furthermore, the cultural norms would differ, but there would be cultural norms, nevertheless.
nephew. During this time the widow was escorted to the
coffin, touched, then kissed her dead husband on the fore­
head; she weakened and was helped to her seat near the
coffin, crying with restraint all the while. At one point
she said forcefully, but not loudly, "Charlie, they are all
looking at you; they are all looking at you." One of the
brothers collapsed, but he never lost consciousness; he was
helped to a nearby seat.

At 8:30 a.m. the pallbearers were assembled in an
anteroom, assigned positions, and given precise instructions
by the funeral director, who was at all times near the casket
whenever it was moved so that he could give directions in
the event of hesitancy on the part of the pallbearers or in
case of some unforeseen eventuality.

The priest arrived precisely at 8:50 a.m. He went
immediately to the widow, held her hand and whispered some
comforting comment(s) to her. Then he recited a passage from
the Old Testament, enjoining the Deity to accept the deceased
into heaven. In all, his ministrations required less than
five minutes.

When the priest concluded his prayers, the funeral
director slightly rearranged the coffin, placing an exposed
crucifix inside the coffin. The coffin was closed. The
widow and children and several grandchildren were unable to
hold back their tears. At this time, persons other than
members of the immediate family began to weep, though not as
openly as the deceased's survivors. The coffin was moved to a special exit where a hearse was ready to receive it. The pallbearers conveyed the coffin to the hearse while the widow cried silently, "Charlie, they are taking you away."

Then the funeral procession formed. It included the priest and his attendants in the lead limousine, the hearse, the pallbearers' limousine and two cars provided by the funeral home for the family. The funeral director drove ahead to the church to make sure that all was ready when the funeral procession arrived.

There were approximately 75 people in church for the Requiem High Mass. As is the custom among Catholics, no obituary, eulogy, or sermon was given. A middle-aged niece lit a candle to Mary, the Mother of Christ, during the Mass, presumably for the spiritual benefit of her dead uncle. Four persons received Holy Communion, one of whom was a son of the deceased. Inconspicuously located in the left rear of the church was an elderly woman who is known to attend all funeral Masses in the ecclesiastical parish.

After Mass the procession regrouped and traveled two miles to the cemetery where a vault was ready for admittance of the coffin. Again the funeral director arrived at the cemetery in advance of the funeral procession to make certain things were in order. It began to rain during the committal service. Umbrellas were provided by the funeral home for the official funeral party. At the grave the priest read a
religious passage especially written for the occasion, never mentioning any specific characteristics of the deceased. Four "Our Father's," four "Hail Mary's," and four "Glory Be to the Father's" were recited in unison by the group in the customary manner, followed by the ejaculation, "May his soul rest in peace." The priest, who did not know the deceased, appeared aloof and disinterested throughout the morning's activities. He evidenced no emotional commitment. His actions seemed like those of a technician performing a series of mechanical tasks. The end of the prayers marked the end of the official ceremony and floral wreaths were placed in the vault opening, hiding the coffin. The widow and her children and grandchildren began to cry again. A son of the deceased was the first to "break down." He was aided by his son and a nephew who called attention to the adverse effect his crying was having on the widow. Then seemingly automatically the gathering at the grave quietly disassembled with the widow and her family—children (and their wives and husbands) and grandchildren—returning to the widow's home.

III. THE FUNERAL SERVICE AND THE INTERMENT SERVICE

The Funeral Service

The funeral service refers to that aspect of the funeralization process traditionally falling between the wake

29 The vault was permanently sealed after the funeral party departed.
and interment and including the rites associated with disposition of the dead which are conducted in a church or a funeral chapel. The funeral service may be a sacred or a secular event. It is considered sacred if a theistic theme permeates the ceremony; it is said to be secular if a non-theistic or, what amounts to the same thing, a humanistic theme permeates the funeral service. A sacred or a secular funeral service may have its wellsprings in the moral commitment of the survivors, in which case the motivations of the survivors are "inner-directed"; or, the funeral service may grow out of the survivors' sense of commitment to community norms, particularly status group norms, in which case the motivations of the survivors are "other-directed." Of course, in any concrete case both types of pressures to conform—the internal-personal and the external-social—are likely to operate. Sometimes the pressures operate at cross-currents, generating conflict. Our concern at this time is with the several elements which comprise the funeral service, particularly the ritual and the sermon.30

30 The secular, humanistic funeral is an important but, as of now, an uncommon type of funeral. It is a service which reflects the faith of a secular community in man's nature and capability rather than "reflecting the ritual and meaning of a community of faith in a religious sense." Irion, op. cit., pp. 129-130. Because the secular funeral is atypical is no reason to omit it from our treatment of funeral customs. But funeral customs are treated in this study so as to provide a basis for discussing ATTITUDES toward funeral customs. No one involved in the sample populations—householders or clergymen—used the humanistic funeral as a point of reference in discussing his views.
The sacred funeral service.—Sacred or religious funeral services are normally conducted in a church or a funeral chapel. In unusual circumstances they are held elsewhere, for example when a ship's captain conducts a burial at sea.

The religious ritual inevitably includes Scripture readings and prayers which are more or less flexible depending on the clergyman representing the religious body conducting the service. Religious groups like Baptists and Pentecostals are relatively free from rules imposed from above concerning the proper Scriptures and prayers to be recited at funerals. Catholics, Episcopalians, and Methodists, on the other hand, are expected to follow special manuals which are used for funerals.

The Ritual of the Methodist Church contains the general services and occasional Offices of that Church. One part of this book deals with "The Order for the Burial of the Dead," where certain prescriptive norms are clearly specified. For example, one reads that:

Funeral services of church members should be held in the sanctuary. The casket should be placed before the alter or the Lord's Table and remain closed. . . .

The service may begin and end with appropriate music selected in consultation with the minister. . . .

The minister SHALL begin the service by reading one or more of the following sentences. . . .

toward funerals. Since the secular funeral is foreign to our study groups it is of no PRACTICAL importance in this study; hence, it is not discussed.
Here a hymn may be sung, and then the minister SHALL say.

Here the minister may offer one or more of the following prayers.

Here one or more of the following psalms may be read by the minister.

Then the people SHALL say or sing.

Here one or more of the following lessons from the scriptures SHALL be read.

Here may be sung a hymn or anthem.

Then may follow a sermon, after which the minister may pray as he is moved, or may offer one or more of the following prayers.

At the conclusion of the religious service we read, "Then the minister SHALL give his blessing."  

The officiating clergyman at a Methodist (or Catholic) funeral service is unable to fluctuate from the expected when the ritualistic component of the funeral service is as circumscribed by church rules and regulations as some of those just mentioned. On the other hand, "The Order for the Burial of the Dead" in a Baptist church might read as follows:

Prelude by the organist.

Hymn; solo or choir.

Scripture reading.

Obituary.

Special music; solo or choir.

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32Ibid.
Message.
Benediction.
Hymn; solo or choir.
Viewing the body.
Postlude by organist.

In every instance where Scripture reading and prayer are customary, the Baptist minister has greater latitude in choosing the appropriate reading or in formulating, spontaneously or otherwise, the prayer. A program for a funeral service conducted in a Negro Protestant Church in Calcasieu Parish is reproduced below illustrating the choices made by the officiating minister (probably in consultation with the survivors) in one specific case.

**HOLY TABERNACLE CHURCH**

Wednesday, August 14, 1965

**SERVICE IN MEMORY OF JASON V. ARTHUR**

Hymn #200: Nearer, My God to Thee

Old Testament Scripture: Job 5:17-26


Hymn #284: Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me.

Prayer: Assistant Pastor

The Obituary and Condolences by
Mrs. Stern Williams, Church Secretary

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33All the names mentioned in this funeral service program are fictitious so as to insure the anonymity of the actual persons involved.
It is generally recognized by clergymen that an important part of the funeral service is the sermon or the message. Sermons are particularly effective at a time of crisis for it is then—in illness, when death threatens, or when death occurs—that transcendental invocations are made. Since clergymen define their roles in the funeral service partly in terms of facilitating the reconstruction of the emotional hygiene of the bereaved, it is important that we ask, "What kinds of sermons are preached at funerals so as to help relieve the grief sufferers?" In a recent survey Protestant ministers were asked to indicate their preferences of themes of sermons they used in funeral services. Four principle themes were generally agreed upon. They are: (1) the Christian's hope in the resurrection; (2) the

34Catholics and Episcopalians may sermonize during the funeral service but the message they preach is more of a homily—an explanation of some biblical passage—than a relatively autonomous feature of the service. Often Catholic priests choose not to preach, although since the recent Ecumenical Council they are encouraged to do so.
strengthening power of God; (3) the Christian's understanding of life; and (4) the Christian's understanding of death.\textsuperscript{35} The point should be made, however, that these themes are complimentary; they are not mutually exclusive. Actually, the first two themes embody the last two. The sermons partially reproduced below illustrate the minister's intention of conveying to his audience \textbf{HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION} and \textbf{THE SUSTAINING POWER OF GOD}.

\textbf{HOPE IN THE RESURRECTION}

\textbf{as illustrated in the sermon:}

"The Pathway of Light"

This is a tender hour, but in no wise an hour of tragedy. There is something utterly appropriate about the going of this one who has lived a long, happy, and useful life, who has put so much of goodness, kindness, love, and service for others and loyalty to God into her years. It is highly appropriate when such a person goes home, to the Home toward which she has journeyed for these many years.

This is not a time of darkness, but rather a time of light. It is not an hour in which to exaggerate grief, but rather an hour in which to comprehend more fully the measure of our gratitude to God. . . .

We shall not talk of death, but rather of life eternal.

\textbf{THE SUSTAINING POWER OF GOD}

\textbf{as illustrated in the sermon:}

"God Makes a Difference"

One day I stood where I should have been able to see the Mount of the Holy Cross in western Colorado,\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{35}Irion, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 16.
but clouds and mist shut out my view. Yet I was reminded of these words from one I know who loved the mountains: 'You always know the mountains are there, even behind the clouds, and that makes a difference.'

Today when clouds of sorrow seem to hide the face of God, we know such is not the case, for we cannot be where God is not, and that makes the difference between hope and despair.

Let that faith be the sustaining factor in this experience, assuring us that as God has been with us in all our yesterdays, He will be with us in our unknown tomorrows. As an old saint of God put it: "O Lord, help me to understand that you won't let anything come my way that you and I can't handle together."

The man of faith finds strength and courage even in life's darkest hours because God is with him.36

Protestant clergymen in Calcasieu Parish unanimously claim they confine their funeral sermons to the themes just mentioned, avoiding the older, negativistic approach of warning the "known sinners" in the congregation of the wrath of the Almighty, all the while beckoning to them to mend their wayward ways. But attendance at most Negro Protestant funeral services and some white Protestant funeral services readily reveals that in actuality the hell-fire-and-brimstone funeral message is far from extinct in the parish. But the type of funeral preached depends, in large part, on where the funeral service is held. When the funeral service is

conducted in the funeral chapel, the sermon more likely will conform to the expectations of the larger community because of the presence of members of church groups other than the one pastored by the officiating minister. When the service is held in the church, however, the minister tends to feel free to sermonize in his customary way, which may or may not coincide with the norms of the larger community.

At the close of the funeral service the opened casket is reviewed by the entire assemblage with the relatives reviewing the body last (sometimes only the family views the body). Then the casket is closed by the funeral director and he leads the pallbearers who conduct the casket out of the church or chapel to the hearse. Then the funeral procession regroups once again and begins its journey to the cemetery. There may be several important departures from the procedure just described. First, the Episcopal Liturgy, like that of the Roman Catholic Church, prohibits an opened casket in church. Thus, the body is not reviewed by Episcopalians or Catholics at the conclusion of the funeral service. Furthermore, these two religious groups require that members of the church be funeralized in the church rather than in a funeral chapel. The Methodist Church, as we have previously noted, stipulates that "Funeral services of church members SHOULD be held in the sanctuary," and further adds "the casket SHOULD be placed before the alter
or on the Lord's Table and remain closed." But this custom is often violated as Methodists frequently have an opened casket funeral service in the church; furthermore, they commonly substitute the funeral chapel for the church. Presbyterians, Lutherans, Baptists as well as lesser known denominations and sects take no official position on the location of the funeral service or reviewing the body at the close of the funeral service, though many of their ministers feel that viewing the corpse after the funeral service destroys much of the imputed therapeutic value of the funeral message.

Once the funeral party has departed the church or the funeral chapel for the cemetery the funeral service has ended and the interment service is about to begin.

The Interment Service

Grave-side services vary according to race, religion, socio-economic status, associational memberships (of the deceased), and so forth. Like funeral services, however, interment or committal services may be sacred or secular and they may be "inner-directed" or "other-directed." In any event, they are nearly always brief, often requiring less than ten minutes. The services usually consist of Scripture readings, prayers, and in some cases poetry readings and the blessing of the grave.

37Ritual of the Methodist Church, loc. cit.
Just over 10 years ago it could be said that the committal service

... is the most dramatic episode in the whole period from the death to the final leaving of the body. Every act is packed with acts and symbols of finality: The grave diggers in their work clothes standing aside but in full view, the hole in the ground and the mound of earth that is to be shoveled over the casket, the placing of the casket over the grave, the casting of earth or flowers, or both, on the casket, the fateful words 'dust to dust,' the strain of the men as they let out the cords and let the casket down, occasionally the lurching of the casket as it is unevenly lowered and, most harrowing of all, the dropping of clods on the resounding casket.38

It is indeed a dramatic episode, but so many changes have been made in the last decade in the funeral industry that Bowman's description of the committal service is no longer accurate for most burials. No longer are there grave diggers standing about; no longer is there an exposed hole in the ground; no longer is the casket lowered during the services; no longer is the grave filled at the conclusion of the ceremony. Today's earth burials are spectacularly different. The grave is often machine-dug, perhaps with a Bungartz T-5 equipped with a Davis D-100 engine and a maximum digging depth of 100 inches. But that is not all. This machine has an automatic starter, lights, 90° steering, and a built-in live hydraulic system. The fresh machine-dug sod and the ground around the grave are now, more than likely, covered with artificial grass. Supreme and Master Grass sets are available. Both are certified "Lifetime Green" and both

38 Bowman, op. cit., pp. 61-62.
have corner concealers to insure a wall-to-wall fit around the grave. Over the grave a canopy frequently is provided as a service to the family. A Steril Manufacturing Company aluminum tent with an aero-flow arched roof is recommended in one advertisement in a leading cemetery publication because this tent withstood the record-breaking storms of 1965 and 1966. The casket may be placed on any number of mechanically operated lowering devices. A Ledyard lowering device, to mention only one, is designed to handle all types of caskets and vaults. It comes in the standard four-wheel model with large air cushion tires. Also available, however, "are a powered model and a two-wheel model with automobile wheels" which can be used behind automobiles on the highway. The casket is no longer lowered into the grave at the conclusion of the committal service as it once was. Now, this detail is taken care of after the bereaved family has left the cemetery. When the grave has been closed (covered with the original dirt) the loose ground can be smoothed and leveled with a Racine Rapack, a gas operated, light weight ram which "eliminates unsightly mounds."  

There is no question but that many technological innovations have altered the traditional interment service. However, there have been other non-technological changes affecting the committal of the dead to the grave. For example, 

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39 The mechanical devices described above are advertised in The American Cemetery, April, 1966, pp. 8, 31, 43, 51, and 55.
the number of people who gather at the site of the grave to participate in the burial ceremony has decreased. One reason for this change seems to be that the ecological arrangement between people most likely to attend interment services and cemeteries is out of balance. The aged frequently live in the city limits where the old cemeteries are often filled. Thus, when one of their peers dies the dead person is often buried outside the city, making it particularly inconvenient for peers, neighbors, and other friends to attend the interment. But a more important reason for decreased attendance at burials appears to be that urbanites are "tied" to an 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. work schedule which conflicts with a morning interment.

Sometimes the body is waked in one community and interred in another one. This is often the practice when the deceased has moved from the place of his birth and is being returned to his home to be buried. When this type of situation is encountered it is not uncommon for the casket to be reopened at the grave so that those relatives and friends who could not attend the wake or funeral service will have an opportunity to view the remains. This custom is frequently practiced in Calcasieu Parish, particularly among Negroes and some Protestant whites. Presbyterians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, and Methodists discourage the practice as much as possible. But other Protestants frequently open the casket at the grave site. Of course, when
this is done the entire family reviews the body once again.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to trace some of the customs and practices associated with death and funeralization with the view that these data will aid in understanding the attitudes of two groups of family householders toward funeral customs in Calcasieu Parish. Chapters IV and V contain a description of these two groups of respondents. In Chapters VI and VII their attitudes toward the non-economic and the economic aspects of funeralizing the dead are described and analyzed.
CHAPTER IV

A PROFILE OF THE DEATH-FREE RESPONDENTS

This chapter describes certain variables considered to be important by sociologists, including race, sex, education, occupation, income, home ownership, residence, age, ethnicity, and religion. Three of these variables are considered basic: race, religion, and socio-economic status.

At this time, no attempt is made to make any sociological generalizations about any of the data. Furthermore, none of the attitudes of the group "A" householders is included in this chapter.¹

I. RACIAL PROFILE

The sample size of the death-free group is 48, two short of the anticipated 50 cases. In the sample there are 38 whites, including three racial hybrids.² Ten Negroes are

¹See Chapters VI and VII for a discussion of attitudes toward selected funeral customs in groups "A" and "B."

²The racial hybrids are enumerated with the white population, and there is justification for doing this. Racial hybrids are colloquially known as Redbones. Sometimes they are considered a tri-racial group, consisting of whites, Negroes, and Indians. This designation is not without some justification. But they are enumerated as white in the decennial census; and they have for years
in group "A."

The total white population is 79 percent of the entire sample. This compares favorably with the proportion of whites in the state which, in 1960, had 2,211,715, or 69.7 percent, whites in a total population of 3,257,022.

Race and Sex

Males and females of both racial types were interviewed in the group "A" sample. Seventeen whites, including one racial hybrid, and seven Negroes are male; 21 whites, including two racial hybrids, and three Negroes are female.

Race and Occupation

Twenty-one persons are employed in the death-free group. All major occupational categories reported in the United States Census are represented in the sample. Five whites are professionals or technicians; four are proprietors or managers; and six are craftsmen or operatives. One Negro is a clerk; one is an operative; two are industrial laborers; and two are domestic workers. Those not reporting an occupation primarily are women, retired elderly males, and the unemployed.

Twenty-three individuals reported someone other than themselves as the breadwinner in the household. Among the attended "white schools." They constitute an inferior status group, as defined by the "pure whites" of the area, but not a distinct racial group.
whites, five of these breadwinners are white-collar workers: two are professionals and three are clerks. The largest single category of workers is in the skilled and semiskilled blue-collar occupations where there are ten breadwinners. Two farm laborers, two industrial laborers and one domestic worker are among the 20 white individuals reporting occupations for someone other than themselves. Three Negroes reported someone other than themselves as breadwinners; all of them are in the semiskilled or unskilled categories; two are service or domestic workers, the other individual is an industrial laborer.

Race and Education

Among the whites there are four college graduates; four other individuals have had some college training. Twenty whites reported they either had gone to high school or completed high school. The remaining whites, ten in all, have had less than a high school education. Nine of them, however, reported some schooling. One white person reported no education.

No Negro has had any college training; three are high school graduates; five have less than ninth grade educations and two report no education at all. Taking the group as a whole, 31, or 65 percent of the sample population, have high school diplomas. The sample population has a higher education attainment than the parish as a whole and introduces an educational bias into the sample which must be recognized in
in any conclusions reached in the study. Introduction of this bias would lead one to believe that the sample population would have more negative attitudes toward funeral directors and funeral customs than is generally found because a direct relationship is reported between educational attainment and negative attitudes toward funeral customs.\(^3\)

**Race and Income**

Whites outdistance Negroes in educational attainment, and they occupy the most prestigeful positions in the occupational structure. It follows, then, that whites could be expected to have higher average incomes than Negroes because of the interdependence of education, occupation and income. The data support this expectation. Thirty of the 38 whites in the sample have incomes of more than $4,000 per year. Of the remaining eight, two individuals report incomes of less than $4,000 and six report less than $2,000 per year.

By contrast, six of the ten Negroes have incomes of more than $4,000; four have incomes of less than $4,000—three of these report incomes of less than $2,000. Figure 2 in Appendix A clearly shows the income differential between whites and Negroes.

Race and Home Ownership

One reflection of socio-economic status is the extent to which one can purchase goods and services defined as necessary ingredients of "the good life," including, among other things, home ownership. If home ownership patterns of whites and Negroes in the death-free group are examined, there appears to be little difference between the two racial categories. Whatever differences exists seems to favor Negroes. For example, nine of the ten Negroes are homeowners, whereas 31 of the 38 whites in the sample own their own homes. What these statistics on home ownership do not reveal, however, is that Negro homeowners generally own less expensive homes than white homeowners. Taken together, whites and Negroes own homes in 40 of the 48 cases observed, making 83 percent of the respondents homeowners.

Race and Residence

The demographic characteristics of Calcasieu Parish show very clearly that immigration has accounted for most of the population gains made in the parish over the last 20 years, or more. The sample reflects this particular condition in that 26 of the 38 whites were born outside the parish. Among the Negroes, only one of ten is a native of Calcasieu. This means that 73 percent, or 35, of the death-free group are not natives of the parish. A closer look at the place of birth of these people reveals that 21 were born within the state; 14 were born in other states. Negroes are
more likely to have come to Calcasieu Parish from other parishes within the state rather than from other states.

Although most of the members of the death-free group were born outside of Calcasieu Parish, they, nevertheless, have been living in the parish for quite some time. This is a fact of some importance because new arrivals perhaps would be unfamiliar with the funeral practices in the community and, consequently, they might not be willing to give their opinions of funeralization.

Forty-one of the 48 respondents have been living in the community ten years or more. Three persons have resided in the parish less than ten years; three have lived in the parish less than five years; and the most recent arrival came to the parish less than one year ago. All of the Negroes have been residents of the parish for at least ten years. Seven whites, on the other hand, came to the parish less than ten years ago.

It has already been observed that Calcasieu Parish is predominantly urban. For that reason, in the research design, care was taken to insure that the urban component of the population would be adequately represented. The death-free sample, therefore, includes 34 urban householders, or 71 percent of the total, and 14 rural householders. The rural householders are further divided into 11 rural non-farm residents—nine whites and two Negroes—and three rural farm residents. All the rural farm individuals are racial
hybrids. This is not surprising because they live in an isolated, rural, endogamous community in the northwestern part of the parish. The urban part of the group "A" householders is made up of 26 whites and eight Negroes.

Race and Age

Only adults are included in this study. Adults of all ages, however, comprise a part of the group "A" sample. The majority of individuals fall between the ages of 35 and 65, 30 of the 48 respondents falling in this category. Twelve persons are between 15 and 35, whereas six are over 65. When race is crosschecked against age, no noticeable discrepancies are found. Negroes are about as evenly distributed throughout the different age categories as are whites except that there are no Negroes younger than 25 while four whites are below that age.

Race and Ethnicity

Only whites are included in this discussion of ethnicity. Thirty-five whites of six different sources of ancestry are included in the death-free sample. Twelve persons are bilaterally French; five others are unilaterally French. Fourteen individuals are Anglo-Europeans (opera-
tionally defined as English, Dutch, German, Irish, Scotch or some combination thereof). Three persons are of Scandinavian extraction. Finally, one Syrian is among the members of the death-free group.

Race and Religion

The sample population is entirely Christian. As a matter of fact, all but four individuals claimed membership in the Catholic or one of the Protestant churches. Of the four non-members, three are white and one is Negro.

Nineteen Catholics are represented; fifteen are white, four are Negro. The 27 Protestants consist of 21 whites and six Negroes. All the racial hybrids are Protestants.

Fifteen of the 25 Protestants are Baptists; six are Methodists; one is a member of the Church of Christ Church, one is an Episcopalian; and two are Pentecostals. These figures are not out of line with statistics on religion for the parish. A 1952 survey of churches and church membership reported 53,246 affiliates, of whom slightly more than half, or 28,080, were Roman Catholics. Except for 100 Jews in Calcasieu Parish, the remaining members were Protestants. The single largest Protestant group was the Southern Baptist Convention with 14,521 members, followed by the Methodists with 6,471. All of the other Protestant churches combined had a membership of less than 5,000. It would appear, then, that representation by religion of the sample population approximates parish figures generally.
Race and Religiosity

Religiosity is almost entirely a subjective phenomenon. Few objective indices of its measurement are available, and they are inadequate. Church attendance, financial support and social participation (committee work, etc.) are three such "measures" of religiosity. But whether or not any methodologically satisfactory conclusions about religiosity are arrived at is of little importance behavioristically. For people act in terms of their definitions of the situation rather than in terms of the objective conditions of the situation.6 Orientation to the supernatural is said to be related to attitudes toward death and funeral customs.7 In an attempt to determine if this observation holds true in this investigation, individuals' perceptions of their religiosity are described.

Forty-seven of the 48 respondents reported on this item. One white refrained. Of the 37 whites who reported on religiosity 15 claimed they are very religious; nineteen claimed to be somewhat religious. Two whites claimed to be somewhat non-religious, and one replied that he is definitely non-religious. All of the Negroes in the sample said they are either very religious (7 of 10), or somewhat religious (3 of 10). When those who claimed to be somewhat religious

7Fulton, loc. cit.
are added to the very religious category, 44 of the 47 respondents, or 93 percent, claimed to be religiously oriented.

One criterion of religiosity, as has been noted, albeit incomplete, is church attendance. Negroes are more faithful churchgoers than whites. All of the Negroes reporting church attendance claimed they attend church services at least once weekly. The whites, on the other hand, were fairly evenly split among those who faithfully attended church, that is, attended once a week or more, and those who were less punctual about church attendance.

Twenty of the 38 whites reporting church attendance frequent church once each week. An additional five attend at least twice monthly. Thirteen others go to church once per month or less; five of these said they almost never attend church, and an additional five stated that they never go to church. The three racial hybrids are delinquent churchgoers. One said he almost never attends church while the remaining two said they never go to church.

II. RELIGIOUS PROFILE

The death-free group consists of 19 Catholics, 25 Protestants and four individuals unaffiliated with any church. Even the non-members are believers, however.

Religion and Sex

Of the 44 members, 20 are men, 24 are women. Seven men are Catholic; 13 are Protestant. Twelve women are
Catholic; 12 are Protestant. All of the individuals not reporting religious affiliation are males.

Religion and Occupation

Forty-four of the 48 respondents indicated that there was a breadwinner in the household. Protestants in the sample fare somewhat better than Catholics in occupying more prestigious positions in the occupational structure of Calcasieu Parish. For example, while the number of Protestants and Catholics reporting the breadwinner's occupation are about the same, five Protestant, as compared with two Catholic, breadwinners are professionals. One Protestant and three Catholics reported managerial occupations. One Protestant and three Catholics reported clerical occupations. Eight Protestants and eight Catholics reported occupations in the blue-collar, skilled and semiskilled work categories. Five Catholics are either domestic workers, farm laborers, or industrial laborers; seven Protestants are employed in these same categories. Except for the discrepancy between Catholics and Protestants who are professionals, there seems to be little difference between the two religious groups with respect to work.

Religion and Education

The Protestants in the sample, on the whole, are better educated than the Catholics. Four Protestants as against one Catholic are college graduates. Two Protestants and two Catholics have had some college education but did not
graduate. Thirteen and nine Protestants and Catholics, respectively, have either graduated from high school or have completed some high school work. Five Protestants compared with three Catholics have between six and nine years of schooling. Only one Protestant reported having less than a sixth grade education whereas four Catholics are in that category. Among the four non-members in the sample, one is a high school graduate, another has less than six years of education, and two report no formal school training.

**Religion and Income**

An interesting paradox presents itself when religion and income are compared. Earlier it was pointed out that as a general rule Protestants are better educated than Catholics but Protestants and Catholics are about equally distributed through the occupational range in the occupational structure. Now, when the distribution of income is examined, Catholics fare somewhat better, though the figures are uneven. Nine Protestants report earnings of less than $4,000 whereas only one Catholic earns less than that amount. But, ten Catholics as opposed to four Protestants report earnings of between $4,000 and $6,000. The picture reverses itself, however, in the $6,000 to $10,000 income bracket where eight Protestants as opposed to four Catholics are represented. Between $10,000 and $14,000 there are three Catholics and three Protestants; one Catholic and one Protestant comprise the $18,000 and above bracket. Two non-affiliated persons earn less than
$2,000 per year; one earns between $4,000 and $6,000 a year; and one earns between $6,000 and $10,000 annually.

**Religion and Home Ownership**

Home ownership between Catholics and Protestants is similar. Seventeen of the 19 Catholics own their own homes, as do 21 of the 25 Protestants. Two of the four non-church members are homeowners.

**Religion and Residence**

The first and most obvious distinction between Catholics and Protestants is the heavy concentration of Catholics in Lake Charles. Sixteen of the 19 Catholics are urbanites, the other three live in rural non-farm dwellings. Among the 25 Protestants in the sample, 15 live in urban areas whereas eight live in rural non-farm dwellings and two live in rural farm dwellings. When migration patterns and religious affiliation are cross-tabulated, no significant differences appear. Catholic immigrants are about as numerous as Protestant newcomers. This is illustrated by the fact that 16 of the 19 Catholics were born outside of the community in which they now live; 19 of the 25 Protestants were likewise born elsewhere. All of the non-church affiliates were born away from their local communities.

Five Catholics and seven Protestants were born in Calcasieu Parish. Eleven Catholics, eight Protestants, and two non-members were born in the state but not in the parish.
Fourteen individuals—two Catholics, ten Protestants and two non-members—were born outside of Louisiana.

It has already been shown that the death-free sample is made up of persons who have lived in Calcasieu Parish for a considerable period of time even though they may have been born elsewhere. For example, 18 of the 19 Catholics have lived in Calcasieu Parish for more than ten years. At the same time, 19 of the 25 Protestants have lived in the parish for more than ten years. All of the non-affiliated individuals have been residents of the parish for more than ten years.

**Religion and Age**

Protestants in the death-free sample, on the average, are older than Catholics. No Catholic is above 65; whereas one Protestant is between 65 and 70, and three are over 70. Two of the non-affiliated respondents are less than 65, both in the 35-45 age range, and one is more than 70. Disregarding religious affiliation for the moment, four individuals are less than 25, eight are between 25-34, 12 are between 35-44, eight are between 45-54, ten are between 55-64, one is between 65-69 and four are over 70.
Religion and Ethnicity

The Anglo-Europeans who came to this area emigrated from the east-central seaboard and the mid-west, particularly Iowa. They brought with them a Protestant heritage which has substantially remained intact. The French settlers, on the other hand, spilled over from south-central Louisiana where traditional Catholicism prevails. By and large, they have remained within the Catholic fold. For example, twelve respondents are French bilaterally; nine are Catholic, one is Protestant; two are non-affiliated. Fourteen individuals are Anglo-Europeans; 11 are Protestant, three are Catholic.

When the white Protestant group is examined along ethnic lines, it can be seen that the Anglo-European ancestry has been kept pretty much intact. For example, eight of the ten white Baptists have no French background, and three of the five white Methodists have no French ancestry. None of the other Protestants is of French extraction.

Religion and Religiosity

A total of 46 respondents answered the question on religiosity—19 Catholics, 25 Protestants, and two non-members. Nine Catholics claimed to be very religious; eight, somewhat religious; and two, somewhat non-religious. Twelve Protestants claimed to be very religious, 13 said they are

8 The ten Negroes are excluded from this discussion of ethnicity so that there is a total of 38 cases.
somet... claimed to be very religious, the other claimed to be
definitely non-religious. Totals for the five categories of
religiosity are: 22 very religious, 21 somewhat religious,
two somewhat non-religious, one definitely non-religious.

Forty-seven respondents answered the question on
church attendance, including 19 Catholics, 25 Protestants,
and three non-church members.

Catholics frequent the church, on the average, more
regularly than Protestants. This is explained by the fact
that Catholic ideology requires, under penalty of mortal sin,
that one discharge his religious duties faithfully by attend­
ing Mass on the Sabbath. Protestants are less insistent in
this respect. Protestants, therefore, can define themselves
as "good Christians" and as "very religious persons" without,
at the same time, having to attend church every week.

Sixteen of the 19 Catholics said they attend church
every week. One attends church about twice per month, one
attends about once a month, one almost never attends. The
Protestant pattern of church attendance is similar to that
of the Catholics. Thirteen of the 25 Protestants frequent
the church at least every Sunday, usually more often; four
visit twice a month, one about once a month, one mainly on
holidays, four almost never, and two never go. One non-
member attends religious services at least once a week, the
other two never attend religious services.
III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS PROFILE

The death-free group consists of 27 persons with socio-economic status scores of 4.00 and below, and 21 persons with socio-economic status scores of more than 4.00. Fourteen persons have scores of 3.00 or less while 12 persons have scores of 5.00 or more.⁹

Socio-Economic Status and Race

There is a significant difference between S.E.S scores of whites and Negroes. For example, all of the Negroes (10) have S.E.S. scores of 4.00 or below; seven of these ten have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below. In contrast, 17 whites have S.E.S. scores of 4.00 and below, while 21 whites have S.E.S. scores above 4.00. Of those whites in the low S.E.S. category only seven have extremely low scores of 3.00 and below; on the other hand, of the 21 whites who fall in the high S.E.S. category, 12 have S.E.S scores of 5.00 and above. It is obvious from what has just been said that whites and Negroes live in marked contrast with one another insofar as the objective criteria of social class are concerned.

Socio-Economic Status and Sex

Sixteen of the 24 males interviewed in the death-free group have S.E.S scores of 4.00 and below; seven of these

⁹Hereinafter socio-economic status will be abbreviated as S.E.S.
individuals have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below. Eight males have scores above 4.00; four of these individuals have S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above.

Eleven of the 24 females in the death-free group have S.E.S. scores of 4.00 and below; seven of these persons have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below. Thirteen females have S.E.S. scores above 4.00; eight have S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above. While females have higher S.E.S. scores than males on the average, the differences between the sexes insofar as S.E.S. is concerned is not so great as to rule out the possibility that the difference could have occurred by chance.

**Socio-Economic Status and Home Ownership**

Home ownership patterns between the two S.E.S. groups are very similar. For example, 22 individuals with S.E.S. scores of 4.00 and below are homeowners; nine of these have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below. Eighteen individuals with S.E.S. scores of above 4.00 are homeowners; eleven of these eighteen persons have S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above.

On the other hand, five individuals with S.E.S. scores of 4.00 and below do not own their own homes; all of these individuals have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below, reflecting the long-established fact that the lower one goes in the socio-economic hierarchy the less likely one is to own a home. Three individuals with S.E.S. scores of more than 4.00 do not own their own homes; one such individual has a S.E.S. of 5.00 and above.
Socio-Economic Status and Residence

Members of both S.E.S. groups were about equally likely to be born outside of the state. But, individuals of low S.E.S. were more likely to have been born in communities in adjacent parishes, whereas individuals with high S.E.S. were more often born outside of the state. In all other respects the two groups are alike. For example, 20 of the 27 individuals with S.E.S. scores of 4.00 and below were born in the state of Louisiana. Fourteen of 21 individuals with S.E.S. scores of above 4.00 were born in Louisiana.

Individuals in both S.E.S. groups exhibit similar residence patterns insofar as length of time in the community is concerned. Among persons with low S.E.S., nine individuals have lived in the community over 30 years; 16 have lived in the community over 20 years; 24 have lived in the community over ten years. This leaves only three individuals with low S.E.S. who have lived in Calcasieu Parish ten years or less. One of these three persons has lived in the parish more than five years; the other two have lived in the parish more than one year.

Among individuals with S.E.S. scores above 4.00, six persons have lived in the parish more than 30 years; eleven have lived in the parish more than 20 years; 17 have lived in the parish more than ten years. Three individuals in the high S.E.S. group have lived in the parish less than ten years. Two of these three have lived in the parish more than
five years; the other individual has lived in the parish more than one year.\textsuperscript{10}

When place of residence and S.E.S. are examined, the most notable observation that can be made is that individuals living in rural farm areas tend to be lower in the S.E.S. hierarchy than others. In all other respects, S.E.S. groups are very much alike in residence patterns. For example, 19 individuals with S.E.S. scores of 4.00 and below live in urban areas; seven of these have scores of 3.00 and below. Five individuals live in rural non-farm areas; four of these persons have scores of 3.00 and below. Three rural non-farm individuals have scores of 4.00 and below; all of them have scores below 3.00. When individuals in the death-free group with S.E.S. scores above 4.00 are examined, it is found that 15 of the 21 persons in this group live in urban areas; ten of them have scores of 5.00 and above. Six persons with scores above 4.00 live in rural non-farm areas; two of them have scores of 5.00 and above.

Among the members of the death-free group with scores of 4.00 and below, four were born in the community in which they now live, 23 persons were born in some community other than the one in which they now live.

There are no noticeable differences between place of birth and S.E.S. scores.

\textsuperscript{10}One individual in the high S.E.S. group did not report time of residence in the community.
Socio-Economic Status and Age

There is a general tendency for individuals with high S.E.S. scores to be younger than individuals with low S.E.S. in the death-free group. No doubt, this is a reflection of the general tendency for older people to be less well educated than younger people. In the low S.E.S. group three individuals are younger than 35 while five individuals are older than 65. The remainder, 19 persons, fall between the 25 to 65 year-old category.

Among the individuals in the high S.E.S. group nine persons are younger than 35, while only one individual is older than 65; the remaining 11 persons are between the ages of 35 and 65.

Socio-Economic Status and Ethnicity

The most noteworthy observation that can be made about S.E.S. and ethnicity in the death-free group is that persons of French extraction tend to belong to the low S.E.S group more so than individuals who are of Anglo-European ancestry. For example, seven Frenchmen are low; four are high. By contrast, four Anglo-Europeans are low; ten are high. Furthermore, in the death-free group there are included in the low S.E.S. group seven individuals of French (and only French) extraction, two persons with French and Anglo-European backgrounds, four individuals with Anglo-European (and only Anglo-European) backgrounds, two individuals of Scandinavian backgrounds, and two racial hybrids. In the
high S.E.S. group there are five people of only French ancestry, one person of French and Italian mixture, two individuals with French and Anglo-European backgrounds, ten Anglo-Europeans, one Scandinavian, one Syrian, and one racial hybrid.

Socio-Economic Status and Religion

There are no significant differences between S.E.S. and religion in the death-free group. Among those persons with low S.E.S., ten are Catholic, 14 are Protestant and three are not affiliated with an organized church. Among those individuals who are of high S.E.S., nine are Catholic, 11 are Protestant, and one is not affiliated.

Socio-Economic Status and Religiosity

There is, according to the data, an inverse relationship between S.E.S. and religiosity as perceived by the respondents in the death-free group, though the relationship is not significant. Among those persons with low S.E.S., 15 persons defined themselves as very religious; ten defined themselves as somewhat religious; one person defined himself as somewhat non-religious; and one individual defined himself as definitely non-religious. On the other hand, among those individuals of high S.E.S., eight individuals defined themselves as very religious; 12 individuals defined themselves as somewhat religious; and one individual defined himself as somewhat non-religious.
When S.E.S. and church attendance are examined, it is found that there are no significant differences between the two S.E.S. groups and church attendance. For example, among individuals of low S.E.S., 18 persons said they attend church once a week or more; one person said he attends church about twice a month; two individuals said they attend church about once a month; two individuals said they almost never attend church; and four said they never attend church services. Among individuals with high S.E.S., 12 persons said they attend church at least once a week; four said they attend twice a month; one individual said he attends church mainly on important holidays; three individuals said they almost never attend church services; and one person said he never attends church functions.

In this chapter the death-free group was described in three ways. Its racial, religious, and socio-economic profiles were sketched, employing as descriptive variables race, sex, education, occupation, income, home ownership, residence, age, ethnicity, and religion. In the next chapter the same procedure is utilized in describing the bereavement group.
A PROFILE OF THE BEREAVEMENT RESPONDENTS AND A
COMPARISON OF THE DEATH-FREE AND THE
BEREAVEMENT GROUPS

The selection of the individuals chosen for inclusion in the bereavement group was based entirely upon the relationship of the respondent to some deceased person. The method by which the deceased was selected has already been described. Wherever possible, the next of kin was interviewed. Hence, no control was exercised over age, sex, residence, religion, ethnicity, and the like.

In this group interviews were held with individuals who stood in the following relations to the deceased: 11 wives, four husbands, two sons, ten daughters, one sister, three brothers, six parents and seven "others." Falling in the "other" category were such relationships to the deceased as grandson, nephew, and friend.

I. RACIAL PROFILE

Forty-four respondents make up the group "B" sample. Of that number, 33 are white, of whom five are racial hybrids; 11 are Negro.
Race and Sex

Females outnumber males in the bereavement group almost three to one—31 females as compared with 13 males. Seven whites and six Negroes make up the male part of this sample; 26 whites and five Negroes are females.

Race and Occupation

Nineteen persons are employed in the bereavement group. All major occupational categories reported in the United States Census are represented in the sample except managers.

Thirteen whites and six Negroes are in the labor force. Two whites are professionals, eight are clerks, three are blue-collar workers. Among the six Negroes, three are service workers, two workers are industrial laborers, and one is a farm laborer.

Two observations seem to be in order here. First, there is a heavy concentration of individuals in the clerical and sales occupations because of the large number of females in the sample. Second, there is a sharp difference between the kinds of work engaged in by whites and Negroes. All the whites are at least semiskilled workers, whereas no Negro is employed in a semiskilled or more technically advanced job.

Twelve respondents report someone other than themselves as the breadwinner in the family. Ten of these are white, two are Negroes. Their distribution in the occupational structure is similar to the occupations of employed
respondents. Two whites are professionals; one is a clerk; five are craftsmen; one is a service worker; and one is an industrial laborer. Both Negroes are industrial laborers.

Race and Education

Eight whites have some formal schooling beyond high school. One is a college graduate, six have had some college training, and one has had training in a vocational school. Racial hybrids are less well-educated than other whites. No racial hybrid has gone beyond high school. Two are high school graduates; one has less than a ninth grade education; and the remaining two have less than six years of schooling. Eleven whites are high school graduates; five have had some high school training; nine have less than a ninth grade education. Of these nine, four individuals have no more than a sixth grade education; one of them has had no formal training.

Of the eleven Negroes in the sample, none is a high school graduate, though four have had some high school training. Seven have a ninth grade education or less; one has a third grade education or less; and one has had no formal education.

Race and Income

Nearly one-half (15 of 33) of the whites reported earnings of less than $4,000 per year. Five reported annual earnings between $4,000 and $6,000; eleven whites earn
between $6,000 and $10,000 yearly and two whites reported earnings of more than $10,000 per year. The racial hybrids tend to hold down the average yearly income of whites in that four out of five earn less than $4,000 per year; the other racial hybrid earns between $6,000 and $10,000 yearly. Negroes earn substantially less than whites as a whole, but they do approximately as well as the racial hybrids. Nine of the 11 Negroes reported earnings of less than $4,000 while two reported earnings between $4,000 and $6,000.

**Race and Home Ownership**

Home ownership patterns in the bereavement group reflects the general socio-economic standing of the persons in this group. Thirty-two of the 44 individuals in the sample are homeowners, 12 live in rented houses. Whites are more likely to own their homes than Negroes. But, if we compare the Negroes with the racial hybrids, Negroes are homeowners more often than racial hybrids. If whites and racial hybrids are examined separately, it can be seen that 24 whites own their homes, four rent; two racial hybrids are homeowners, three rent. Six of the 11 Negroes are homeowners.

**Race and Residence**

There is a notable difference between group "A" and group "B" respondents with respect to place of birth. Earlier it was pointed out that only twelve of the 38 members of the death-free group were born in Calcasieu Parish.
In contrast to this, 23 of the 44 members of the bereavement group are natives of Calcasieu Parish: 18 are white; five are Negro.

Ten persons were born in other parishes within the state; 11 were born in other states. All the out-of-state immigrants to the parish are white. Six Negroes were born outside of Calcasieu Parish.

Four of the 44 members of the bereavement group have lived in Calcasieu Parish less than ten years. Three of the four have lived in the parish between five and ten years; one person has been a resident of the parish for more than one year but less than five years. This means that 40 of the 44 respondents have lived in the parish more than ten years. Over one-half of this number, 23 of 44, have lived in Calcasieu Parish longer than 30 years.

Negroes and whites are long-term residents of the parish. Only three of the 33 whites have lived in the parish less than ten years; only one of the 11 Negroes has lived in the parish less than ten years. This pattern of residence is comparable to the residential patterns noted in the death-free group.

The bereavement group corresponds closely to the urban-rural percentages for the parish population as a whole. Illustrating this point, 33 of the 44 respondents are urban residents, ten of the remaining 11 persons live in rural non-farm dwellings, the other respondent lives on a farm.
If place of residence and race are examined, it is found that eight of the 33 whites are rural non-farm residents, while 25 are urbanites. One Negro is a rural farmer; two live in rural non-farm dwellings; and eight are urbanites.

Race and Age

Thirty-three of the 44 respondents in group "B" are between the ages of 35 and 65. Three persons are over 65 years of age. Eight individuals are younger than 35; four of them are below 25.

There are no important differences with respect to age and race. The only observation that can be made is that, on the whole, the racial hybrids are generally older than the other individuals in the sample. For example, two racial hybrids are over 55, two are over 65, and one is over 70.

Race and Ethnicity

Three individuals in the bereavement group are bilaterally French; 12 are French with some non-French admixture. Ten Anglo-Europeans are included in the sample; seven others are Anglo-European and French. Three members of group "B" are Italians. All five racial hybrids in the bereavement group are of Indian and Anglo-European stock.
Race and Religion

Religious affiliation in the group "B" sample is fairly evenly distributed with 15 Catholics, 27 Protestants and two non-affiliated individuals. Twelve of the 15 Catholics are white; 20 of the 27 Protestants are white. One of the two non-affiliated persons is a racial hybrid; the other is a Negro.

In the bereavement group there are 15 Baptists, three Methodists, one Lutheran, one Christian Scientist, one Church of God in Christ member, two members of the Salvation Army, one member of the Calcasieu Tabernacle, and three Pentecostal Church members.

Four of the seven Negro Protestants in the sample are Baptists; two are Methodists and one is a member of the Church of Christ. Except for the fact that more denominations are represented in the bereavement group than is true of the death-free group, the distribution of Protestants is as expected in that most of the respondents are Baptists followed by denominations which are less well represented in the parish generally.

Race and Religiosity

Seventy-seven percent of the bereavement group claims to be very religious (33 of the 44); eight said they are somewhat religious; one individual said he is somewhat non-religious; one admitted he is definitely non-religious. There appears to be no marked discrepancy between race and
religiosity. For example, eight of the 11 Negroes said they are very religious; the remaining three said they are somewhat religious. At the same time, 26 of the 33 whites claimed they are very religious; three said they are somewhat religious; two claimed to be somewhat non-religious; and two said they are definitely non-religious.

When church attendance and race are cross-tabulated there appears to be no discernible difference. Out of 11 Negroes, eight attend church once a week or more; one frequents church twice a month; one goes to church about once a month, and one never attends church. Among the whites, 25 attend church once a week or more; one frequents church about twice a month; three attend about once a month; two almost never go to church; and two never attend.

II. RELIGIOUS PROFILE

Religion and Sex

Five of the 15 Catholics are males; six of the 27 Protestants are males; both unaffiliated members are males. Altogether, 13 males and 31 females comprise the bereavement group.

Religion and Occupation

Nineteen of the 44 respondents are employed. Seven of them are Catholic, 11 are Protestant and one is not affiliated with an established church. Protestants tend to have more desirable jobs than Catholics; that is, better paying
and more prestigious kinds of work. For example, two
Protestants are professionals; five Protestants, two Cath­
olics and one non-affiliate are clerks; one Protestant and
two Catholics are craftsmen; two Protestants and one Catholic
are service workers; two Catholics are industrial laborers;
and one Protestant is a farm laborer.

Eleven respondents said that someone other than them­
selves is the breadwinner in the family. Four of these are
Catholic, seven are Protestant. Five occupational categories
are represented. One Catholic and one Protestant are profes­
sionals. One Catholic is a clerk. One Catholic and four
Protestants are craftsmen. One Protestant and one Catholic
are industrial laborers. One Protestant is a farm laborer.

Religion and Education

Catholics in the bereavement group have a higher
educational attainment than Protestants. The average number
of school years completed for Catholics is 10.86; that for
Protestants is 9.37. Six of the 27 Protestants have less
than a seventh grade education. No Catholic falls into that
category. The only college graduate is a Protestant. How­
ever, three Catholics and three Protestants have had some
college training. Four Catholics and seven Protestants are
high school graduates; nine Catholics and nine Protestants
have had less than a high school education but more than six
grades of formal schooling.
Religion and Income

Forty-three observations were made on this item. Only two individuals in the bereavement group report earnings of more than $10,000 annually. One is a Catholic, the other Protestant. Six Catholics and five Protestants report earnings between $6,000 and $10,000 per year; one Catholic and six Protestants earn less than $6,000 but more than $4,000 annually; four Catholics, seven Protestants, and two non-affiliated individuals report earnings between $2,000 and $4,000 per year; three Catholics and seven Protestants report earnings of less than $2,000 annually.

It is of some interest to note that more than half, 23 of 43 respondents, indicate earnings of less than $4,000 annually. Thirty of the 43 (69 percent) report earnings of less than $6,000 annually. Six thousand dollars represents about the median income in America today. Therefore, it is easily seen that members of the bereavement group are in a position of relative economic deprivation.

Religion and Home Ownership

Of the 44 respondents, 33 own their own homes. Eleven of the 15 Catholics are homeowners. Twenty-two of the 27 Protestants are homeowners. Neither of the two non-affiliated

individuals own their own homes.

Religion and Residence

Twenty persons were born in the parish: nine are Catholic; ten are Protestant; one is non-affiliated. Eleven persons were born in other parishes in Louisiana—four are Catholic; seven are Protestant. Thirteen persons were born outside of Louisiana—two are Catholic; ten are Protestant; one is non-affiliated.

Catholics and Protestants in the bereavement group are long-time members of Calcasieu Parish. Only two of 15 Catholics have lived in the parish less than ten years; only two of 27 Protestants have lived there less than ten years. Five Catholics and seven Protestants have lived in the parish between ten and 20 years. One Catholic and three Protestants have lived in the parish more than 20 years but less than 30 years. Seven Catholics and 15 Protestants have lived in the parish more than 30 years. One non-affiliated individual has lived in the parish between ten and 20 years; the other one has lived in the parish more than 30 years.

Thirteen of 15 Catholics are urbanites; 18 of 27 Protestants are urbanites. Both non-affiliated individuals live in urban areas. Eight Protestants, as contrasted with two Catholics, live in rural non-farm areas. The only rural farm resident in the bereavement group is a Protestant.
Religion and Age

As a general rule, Catholics tend to be younger than Protestants in the bereavement group. One Catholic is over 65, while eight Protestants are over 65. Below 65 there appear to be no particular discrepancies with respect to age and religion. Four Catholics and three Protestants are below 35. Ten Catholics, 16 Protestants, and two non-affiliated individuals are between 35 and 65.

Religion and Ethnicity

Three individuals in group "B" are French bilaterally; 12 are "mixed" French. Ten persons are Anglo-Europeans; three are Italians; and five are racial hybrids.

Nine persons of French extraction are Catholic; six are Protestants. Among the Anglo-Europeans, however, ten of the 12 are Protestants; two are Catholics. All three Italians, true to tradition, are Catholic. Of the five racial hybrids, one is a Catholic (his ancestry being Irish, French, and Indian), three are Protestants and one is non-affiliated.

Religion and Religiosity

Twelve Catholics said they are very religious; three said they are somewhat religious. Twenty-three of the 27 Protestants claimed to be very religious. Three Protestants said they are somewhat religious; one Protestant said he is definitely non-religious. Two non-affiliated individuals said they are somewhat religious.
Thirty-three of the 44 individuals in the bereavement group attend church at least once each week; two individuals attend church twice monthly; four attend about once a month; two almost never attend church; and three never attend church. Catholics are more regular in their attendance at church than Protestants. Thirteen Catholics attend church every week; one attends twice a month; and one attends about once a month. Among the 27 Protestants, 20 attend church once each week, or more; one attends about twice a month; three attend about once a month; two almost never attend; and one never attends. Neither of the two non-affiliated individuals ever attends church.

III. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS PROFILE

The bereavement group consists of 27 individuals who are defined as possessing low S.E.S. Fifteen of these persons have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below. Seventeen individuals are defined as having high S.E.S. Ten of these persons have S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above.

Socio-Economic Status and Race

The bereavement group is very much like the death-free group insofar as the relationship between S.E.S. and race is concerned. Negroes, once again, typically possess low S.E.S. scores disproportionate to their numbers in the sample population. For example, 11 Negroes are included in the bereavement group—all of them are of low S.E.S. Furthermore, ten
of these Negroes have S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below. Among
the whites, on the other hand, 16 individuals are defined as
having low S.E.S., only five of whom have S.E.S. scores of
3.00 and below. All of the persons defined as having high
S.E.S. are white. As was mentioned earlier, ten of them
have S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above.

Socio-Economic Status and Sex

There is no significant difference between S.E.S. and
sex in the bereavement group. Nine males are defined as
having low S.E.S., whereas four males have high S.E.S.
Eighteen females are defined as having low S.E.S.; 13 females
are defined as having high S.E.S.

Socio-Economic Status and Home Ownership

There is no significant difference between S.E.S. and
home ownership in the bereavement group. Eighteen individ­
uals of low S.E.S. own their own homes; nine do not. Thirteen
individuals of high S.E.S. own their own homes; four do not.

Socio-Economic Status and Residence

Seventeen individuals of low S.E.S. live in urban
areas; 16 urbanites are high in S.E.S. Nine persons of low
S.E.S. live in rural non-farm areas while one person of high
S.E.S. lives in a rural non-farm area. One individual of
low S.E.S. lives on a rural farm, while no one of high
S.E.S. is a farmer.

There is a greater tendency for individuals low in
S.E.S. to be born in the community in which they now live than for persons high in S.E.S. to born where they now live. Sixteen individuals with low S.E.S. were born in the communities in which they now live; four individuals with high S.E.S. were born in the communities in which they now live. On the other hand, 11 individuals in the low S.E.S. group were born in some other community; 13 persons of high S.E.S. were born in communities other than the ones in which they now live.

Furthermore, individuals who belong to the high S.E.S. group are more likely to have been born outside of Louisiana than members of the low S.E.S. group. Only three individuals in the low S.E.S. group were born outside of Louisiana, whereas eight persons of high S.E.S. were born outside of Louisiana.

Members of both S.E.S. groups within the bereavement group tend to be long-time residents of Calcasieu Parish, though individuals of low S.E.S. tend to have lived in the parish somewhat longer than individuals of high S.E.S. For example, in the low S.E.S. group 19 persons have lived in the parish more than 30 years; 25 have lived in Calcasieu Parish more than 20 years; only two individuals have lived in the parish less than 10 years—one having been a resident of the parish for more than five years, the other having lived in the parish more than one year. Among members of the bereavement group who have high S.E.S., four have lived
in the parish more than 30 years; ten have been residents of the parish more than 20 years; and 17 have been residents of the parish more than ten years. No one of high S.E.S. has lived in the parish less than ten years.

**Socio-Economic Status and Age**

There are no significant age differences between the two S.E.S. groups within the bereavement group in the study. Among individuals with low S.E.S. five are younger than 35, six are older than 65, and 16 are between the ages of 35 and 65. Among the individuals with high S.E.S., three are younger than 35, two are over 65, and 12 are between the ages of 35 and 65.

**Socio-Economic Status and Ethnicity**

In the bereavement group, people of French extraction tend to be of lower S.E.S. than people of other extractions. For example, eleven people with French backgrounds are low in S.E.S., while four Frenchmen are defined as having high S.E.S. On the other hand, only three Anglo-Europeans are of low S.E.S., while eight are of high S.E.S. Three Italians are in the bereavement group; all are of high S.E.S. Five racial hybrids are in the bereavement group: three are of low S.E.S., two are defined as having high S.E.S.

**Socio-Economic Status and Religion**

There is no significant difference between S.E.S. and religious affiliation in the bereavement group. Within
the group, nine Catholics are of low S.E.S.; six Catholics are of high S.E.S.; Seventeen Protestants are of low S.E.S.; ten Protestants are of high S.E.S. One individual is not affiliated and is low in S.E.S. One individual is not affiliated and is high in S.E.S.

Socio-Economic Status and Religiosity

There is no significant difference between S.E.S. and religiosity in the bereavement group. Twenty-three individuals of low S.E.S. said they are very religious; 11 individuals of high S.E.S. made that same claim. Three individuals of low S.E.S. said they are somewhat religious; five persons of high S.E.S. said the same thing. One person of low S.E.S. said he is somewhat non-religious; no one of high S.E.S. made that claim. No one of low S.E.S. said he is definitely non-religious; while one person of high S.E.S. made that claim.

Church attendance patterns for the two S.E.S. groups differ in that individuals of high S.E.S. tend to frequent church less often than persons of low S.E.S. The following statistics reveal this fact. Among persons of low S.E.S., 23 individuals said they attend church once a week or more; one person said he attends church twice a month; two persons said they attend church about once a month; and one person said he never attends church. Among members of the bereavement group with high S.E.S., nine said they attend church weekly; one said he attends church about twice a month; two
individuals said they attend church about once a month; two individuals said they almost never attend church and three persons said they never attend church.

IV. COMPARISON OF THE DEATH-FREE GROUP AND THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP

The following statements describe in a summary fashion the similarities and differences between the death-free and bereavement groups. Tables are provided to illustrate the validity of each statement.

1. The death-free group is represented equally by males and females; the bereavement group has an excess of females.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPOSITION OF GROUPS &quot;A&quot; AND &quot;B&quot; BY SEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This inequitable distribution by sex within the sample results from an excess of male deaths randomly selected from the bereavement universe. Of the 44 deaths which comprise
the sample, 30 were male fatalities. Thus, there was greater likelihood that a female survivor would be selected as an interviewee. To correct this situation would have destroyed the randomness of the sample. There is another difficulty associated with the excess of females over males in group "B." Males are less accessible than females during the day for interviewing purposes. An attempt to correct this problem was made by interviewing at night and on weekends. However, night and weekend interviewing did not offset male employment.

2. The occupational pursuits of the respondents in the death-free group tend to be distributed evenly throughout the occupational structure. Those of the bereavement group respondents are clustered in the clerical jobs, owing to the large number of employed women in this group. When the respondent was male, or female with an employed husband, the occupational differences between the two groups decreased.

3. Both sample populations are alike insofar as place of residence is concerned. But, the two groups differ when place of birth is considered. Individuals in the death-free group are more often migrants to the parish than individuals in the bereavement group. Members of the death-free group as a general rule have not lived in the parish as long as members of the bereavement group.
### TABLE II

**COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation of Respondent</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional &amp; technical</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers &amp; officials</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks &amp; sales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen &amp; operatives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial laborers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm laborers</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic workers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aFifty-two respondents not in labor force.*

---

### TABLE III

**COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY RESIDENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural farm</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural non-farm</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IV
COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY PLACE OF BIRTH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Native born</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-migrant</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE V
COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY YEARS OF RESIDENCE IN CALCASIEU PARISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Residence</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 - over</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47(^a)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)One case unreported.
4. The educational attainment of the two groups are similar. Members of the death-free group have completed on the average 9.66 years of school. Members of the bereavement group have completed an average of 9.60 school years. Whites in group "A" have completed on the average 11.02 years of school. Group "B" whites have completed an average of 11.00 school years. Negroes in group "A" have completed on the average 7.00 years of school; those in group "B" have completed 7.70 years.

TABLE VI
COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY YEARS OF SCHOOL COMPLETED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of School Completed</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 - 9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 12</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. The group "A" individuals are, on the average, younger than the group "B" respondents, but the age difference between the two groups is not great.

### TABLE VII

**COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY AGE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - over</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. In ethnic composition, groups "A" and "B" show some variation. No Italians are in Group "A"; three are in group "B." Three Scandinavians and one Syrian are represented in group "A"; none are in group "B." Twelve bilineal French individuals are in the death-free group; only three bilineal French persons are in the bereavement group. But when individuals with some French ancestry are examined, it is found that there are 17 (of 48) "mixed" Frenchmen in group "A" and 13 (of 44) "mixed" Frenchmen in group "B."
TABLE VIII
COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY ETHNICITY AND RACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity and Race</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French and Mediterranean European</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Spanish, Italian)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French and Anglo-European</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-European</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Dutch, English German, Irish, Scotch)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scandinavians</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Swedish, Danish)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial hybrid</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. The racial composition of the death-free and bereavement groups is very similar, as is shown in Table VIII.

8. There is a significant difference in the income levels of the two groups of householders. As expected, the death-free group earns substantially more than the bereavement group.

### TABLE IX

COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY INCOME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $2,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 2,000 - 3,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000 - 5,999</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,000 - 9,999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 - 13,999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14,000 - 17,999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,000 and over</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Groups "A" and "B" are very much alike in religious composition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baptist</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu Tabernacle</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Scientist</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Christ</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God in Christ</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episcopal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salvation Army</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unaffiliated</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>92</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Persons in the death-free group perceive themselves as less religious than persons in the bereavement group.

TABLE XI
COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY THEIR MEMBERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR RELIGIOSITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religiosity</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very religious</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat religious</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat non-religious</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely non-religious</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47(^a)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(\text{aOne case unreported.}\)

Two reasons seem to account for this difference. First, persons in group "B" are predominantly female, and women more than men participate in body and spirit in religious activity.\(^2\) Second, bereavement individuals had come in painful contact with death relatively recently. Persons experiencing crises, particularly death, are inclined to turn to supernaturalistic support.\(^3\)

---


11. The death-free and bereavement groups are similar with respect to socio-economic status.

**TABLE XII**

**COMPOSITION OF GROUPS "A" AND "B" BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Status</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▲ 4.00</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.00 &amp; ▼</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, it can be seen from the foregoing statements and tables that the two groups of respondents differ only slightly with respect to residence, education, age, ethnicity, race, religion, and socio-economic status. However, the differences between the two groups is somewhat greater with respect to sex, occupation, income and religiosity.
CHAPTER VI

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NON-ECONOMIC ASPECTS
OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

I. WAKES

The great debate in America today over funeral customs does not involve the total funeralization complex. Religious services have not come under fire. What have been attacked broadside are the wake and the preparations for it.

Attitudes Toward the Wake

Individuals in the death-free group found considerably more fault with the wake than persons in the bereavement group. Why? Is there something intrinsically worthwhile about waking the dead? Could it be that funeral directors have been successfully propagandizing their clients? Might it also be the case that the funeral industry, as its functionaries insist, is giving the public what it wants? Whatever the reason(s), it seems important to call attention to the attitudinal differences between the two groups. Notice the difference in the percentage of approvers between groups "A" and "B" shown in Table XIII.
TABLE XIII

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WAKE BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward the Wake</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 1.80; \, df = 1; \, P > .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove).

Many reasons were given by the approvers for their conventional views toward the wake. One 51-year-old widow responded as if she were a spokesman for the funeral industry. To her the wake was a comfort "because my husband looked natural and asleep and I got enjoyment from that." Another widow said essentially the same thing. She thought her husband's wake helped her because, in her words, "I saw him at home and in the hospital, suffering and in pain. When I saw him in the funeral home it made me feel much better because he was fixed up so nice and he looked so good."

One Negro male saw clearly the extent to which community pressure encourages a "nice wake." "It's comforting," he said, "and satisfying, too, to know that you buried your loved ones proper." Then he revealed at least one source
of that comfort when he added, "and the public notices it too."

Status considerations provide yet another reason why some people approve of wakes. Witness the remark of a Negro Baptist deacon: "If he [the dead person] is taken care of in a nice modern way with his friends and relatives at his side, then the family can be proud of itself."

Some approvers see the wake as an emotional catharsis, as illustrated by the person who said, "I know the funeral helped me when my father died [15 years ago] because after the wake and the church service I never shed another tear."

Most people, though, see the wake as a time when the survivors lean on friends and relatives for social-psychological support. It is considered an institutionalized social setting where, according to one respondent, "people can come and join in the mourning and give comfort to the sufferers." What follows is a sample of responses from individuals who support the wake as a custom because the bereaved draw comfort, in some way, from the "community of sympathizers."

The wake is good because people don't visit like they used to and it's a time when you see old friends. That makes you feel good.

Because people come to the wake it shows the friendship of the people in the community, and that helps take some of the sting out of death.

I don't know how, but it helps to see friends walk in.
Taking the opposite position was a medical doctor who considered the wake "emotionally and psychologically harmful." He continued, "In the long run I think it is unnecessary. The body should be interred as soon as possible."¹

A college-educated housewife agreed with the doctor while at the same time voicing her distaste for viewing the corpse. She said, "I believe that for my Dad's funeral if the casket had been closed at the funeral home, the grief would have been half as bad."

One respondent was against the wake personally, but hesitated to issue a blanket condemnation of the practice. His comment was: "No, the wake is not helpful; it acts on the emotions. But, I can understand why people want to see their loved ones one more time."

Another person touched on both the psychological and financial costs of the wake in observing, "the wake hurts most families because it makes them feel worse, and most can't afford it."

**Attitudes Toward the Wake According to Race**

In both the death-free and bereavement groups whites are more critical than Negroes of the wake. Table XIV indicates the extent to which the races differ in this respect.

But the difference between the races insofar as their attitudes toward the wake is concerned is not significant.

### TABLE XIV

**ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WAKE BY RACE AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward the Wake</th>
<th>White Groups</th>
<th></th>
<th>Negro Groups</th>
<th></th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approved</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2 = .74; \text{df} = 1; \text{P} > .05$.

(Approve vs. Disapprove)(White vs. Negro).

Racial differences in attitudes toward the wake are most pronounced in the death-free group. If the approvers are contrasted with those who disapprove by race it is found that the difference is statistically insignificant (Chi-square = 3.19; df = 1; P > .05). But when the same observation is made with group "B" whites and Negroes the difference is much smaller (Chi-square = .17; df = 1; P > .05).

**Attitudes Toward the Wake According to Religious Affiliation**

When attitudes toward the wake and religious affiliation are examined it is found that Catholics and Protestants
in group "A" resemble one another in their approval or disapproval of the wake. Catholics and Protestants in the bereavement group, likewise, exhibit similar attitudinal patterns. Table XV clearly points up these similarities.

### TABLE XV

**ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WAKE BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = .00; \text{ df } = 1; \text{ P } > .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove)(Catholic vs. Protestant).

Catholics in both groups were consistent in their responses, but Protestants' attitudes toward the wake varied from one group to another. Protestants in group "A" were more critical of the custom than group "B" Protestants.

It seems worthwhile to notice at this point the solidification of opinion in the bereavement group. No one in group "B" was undecided about the utility of the wake. On the other hand, as Table XV shows, three Catholics, two Protestants and two unaffiliated individuals in group "A"
were undecided about the wake's "place" in the funerary complex.

**Attitudes Toward the Wake According to Socio-Economic Status**

There is a statistically significant difference between socio-economic status and attitudes toward the custom of the wake. Persons low in S.E.S. favor the wake more often than persons of high S.E.S. For example, 85 percent of the individuals with low S.E.S. unhesitantly approve of the custom, whereas only 50 percent of the individuals with high S.E.S. approve of the wake. On the other hand, 39 percent of the persons with high S.E.S. disapprove of the wake, while only 9 percent of the persons with low S.E.S. disapproved of the custom. Table XVI illustrates these points.

**TABLE XVI**

ATITUDES TOWARD THE WAKE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward the Wake</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 Groups</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp; Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2 = 11.53; \quad C = .332; \quad df = 1; \quad P < .05.$

(Approve vs. Disapprove).
(S.E.S. $\leq$ 4.00 vs. S.E.S. $> 4.00$).
When the extremes of S.E.S. are considered, the difference in the attitudes toward the wake between the two S.E.S. groups remains relatively unchanged. For example, among persons with S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above, 11 persons approve of the wake; 11 disapprove of it. Among persons with S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below, 29 persons (94 percent) approve of the wake; two disapprove of it. The relationship between the extremes of S.E.S. and attitudes toward the wake is statistically significant.

### TABLE XVII

**ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WAKE ACCORDING TO THE EXTREMES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward the Wake</th>
<th>S.E.S. 5.00 &amp; ↑</th>
<th>S.E.S. 3.00 &amp; ↓</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 10.89; \quad C = .400; \quad df = 1; \quad P < .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove).
(S.E.S. 5.00 & ↑ vs. S.E.S. 3.00 & ↓).

### II. PURPOSE OF THE WAKE

**Attitudes Toward the Purpose of the Wake**

There was considerable agreement about the question, "What is the purpose of the Wake?" Only four persons—

in the bereavement group—saw it as a pointless cultural anachronism; four individuals could not decide just what its purpose might be.

When members from both respondent groups were asked about the purpose of the wake, their responses fell into seven categories. A description of these categories is given in the following paragraphs.

Most people felt that the wake is a time set aside for the purpose of rendering to the dead the LAST RESPECTS. Respondents were unambiguous in their answers when identifying this purpose of the wake. They usually used the words "last respects" in their replies. When the interviewees were asked why we pay respects to the dead, almost always they responded in a secular, not a sacred, way. "Because he was a relative or friend of mine," was the likely reply rather than, "Because he was a Christian with a soul."

Another purpose of the wake identified by many was COMFORT FOR THE LIVING. Again, householders nearly always used that phrase in answering the question. It was not uncommon for individuals to mention "last respects" and "comfort for the living" together as multiple purposes for waking the dead.

Some people offered a PRAGMATIC response. Individuals giving this type of answer saw the wake and, generally, the whole funerary institution as a set of activities intended as an expedient means of disposing of the dead. Pragmatically
oriented people invariably overlooked the fact that animals other than man are buried without ritualistic fanfare.\(^2\) For example, they said, wakes are necessary "Because we die; if you die you have to be buried, it's our way"; "Because we have to get rid of the dead"; "Because it's [the rites of the dead] something we have in order to put the dead away."

Some respondents saw the wake as a societal CUSTOM. As an industrial employee said, "The whole business is a routine, I reckon. But it's nice to have one. People get together that way. It's essential that you have a wake, it's one of our ways of life." A Negro housewife said the same thing, but with greater brevity: "Really, it's a tradition."

A few people viewed the wake as a RELIGIOUS experience. To them, the wake is a time of prayer for the dead. For one person, the entire funeral ceremony in her words "is a gesture and symbol for turning the dead over to God." One person thought burials and wakes originated with Christ and the Bible, neglecting at least 30,000 years of human burials beginning in Mousterian times with Neanderthal Man.

Others said they did not know what purpose the wake served. "I don't know what the purpose of the wake is; but it is a good practice," was the reaction of one man. Two

\(^2\) It would be a mistake to push this point too far since pet cemeteries equipped to render a "complete funeral service" are now a part of the urban scene in every city of 100,000 people and over.
people were "indecisively undecided" about the purpose of the wake.

The remark of an uneducated 75-year-old, World War I, disabled veteran of racially mixed ancestry is typical of persons caught in the web of indecision. He said: "I don't know what the purpose of the wake is. It must have a cause though." Then he added with some hesitation and considerable puzzlement, "But the Bible says 'let the dead bury the dead.'" His fundamentalist religious background "required" that this biblical passage be translated literally; yet he wondered how the dead could, in fact, bury themselves.

Education, it is claimed, "broadens one's horizons"; the less well educated supposedly live in a world whose limits are relatively restricted. They do not perceive or verbalize possible eventualities and alternatives as well as persons with more formal training. But is does not follow that the uneducated have a monopoly on ignorance of the purpose of the wake. A college-educated, middle aged, Episcopalian housewife said substantially the same thing as the uneducated, 75-year-old Baptist, World War I veteran. "I don't know what purpose the funeral serves," she said, "it's bound to have a purpose though, because everybody uses it. But what it is I haven't figured out."

Four individuals in the bereavement group did not think the wake was a purposeful human invention. Two widows had their dead husbands cremated without a wake. Both
stated they were completely satisfied without the wake and had instructed their children to handle their deaths in like fashion. Two other persons decided the wake was useless after first ceremonializing their dead relatives with a traditional funeral.

The death-free group and the bereavement group differ in two respects insofar as the purpose of the wake is concerned: (1) individuals in the bereavement group expressed the view that the wake is a CUSTOM more often than persons in the death-free group; (2) four individuals in the bereavement group felt the wake was purposeless whereas no one in the death-free group expressed that opinion. Tables XVIII, XIX, and XX point up these differences.

**TABLE XVIII**

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE WAKE?" BY RACE AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of the Wake</th>
<th>White Groups &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>White Groups &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Negro Groups &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Negro Groups &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last respects</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort the living</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 92. Some individuals gave multiple responses.
TABLE XIX
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE WAKE?"  
BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of the Wake</th>
<th>Catholic Groups</th>
<th>Protestant Groups</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;  &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;  &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;  &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last respects</td>
<td>9    6</td>
<td>11    8</td>
<td>0        1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort the living</td>
<td>4    3</td>
<td>6      6</td>
<td>1        1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>8    1</td>
<td>4      3</td>
<td>1        1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>0    5</td>
<td>2      5</td>
<td>0        0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>1    1</td>
<td>2      0</td>
<td>2        0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2    0</td>
<td>2      2</td>
<td>0        0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0    1</td>
<td>0      3</td>
<td>0        0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>24   17</td>
<td>27     27</td>
<td>4        3</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 92. Some respondents gave multiple responses.

TABLE XX
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE WAKE?"  
BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of the Wake</th>
<th>S.E.S. ↓4.00</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp; ↑ 4.00</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups &quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>Groups &quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last respects</td>
<td>7    5</td>
<td>13      10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort the living</td>
<td>4    5</td>
<td>7       5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic</td>
<td>3    0</td>
<td>10      5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custom</td>
<td>1    2</td>
<td>1       8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>1    1</td>
<td>4       0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2    1</td>
<td>2       1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>0    4</td>
<td>0       0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18  18</td>
<td>37     29</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 92. Some respondents gave multiple responses.
Attitudes Toward the Purpose of the Wake

According to Race

Negroes, more than whites, felt the wake is a functional cultural complex. Every Negro thought waking had at least one useful purpose. By contrast, four whites in group "A" and two whites in group "B" said they did not know whether waking the dead is a worthwhile custom. In all other respects whites and Negroes in the two groups exhibit no marked differences, as can be seen in Table XVIII.

Attitudes Toward the Purpose of the Wake

According to Religious Affiliation

Religious affiliation appears to have little influence on how respondents answered the question "What is the purpose of the wake?" See Table XIX.

Attitudes Toward the Purpose of the Wake

According to Socio-Economic Status

Table XX warrants several comments. First, all the individuals with low S.E.S. are satisfied that the wake is purposeful, while four persons with high S.E.S. feel that the wake is purposeless. Second, persons of low S.E.S. more often than persons of high S.E.S. view the wake as a religious experience. Third, persons with low S.E.S. consider the wake a pragmatic human response to the condition of death more often than persons of high S.E.S.
III. FUNERALS

Attitudes Toward Funerals

Persons in the study were asked the question, "In general would you say your attitude toward present-day funerals is: (1) very favorable; (2) mostly favorable; (3) partly favorable, and partly unfavorable; (4) mostly unfavorable; (5) very unfavorable?" There was virtually no difference between the two groups of respondents on this question as Table XXI shows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Toward Funerals</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable; partly unfavorable</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>91a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\^aOne case unreported.

\[ x^2 = .11; \quad df = 1; \quad P > .05. \]

(rows 1, 2 vs. rows 3,4,5).
One of the observations that can be made from reviewing Table XXI is that a large number of persons who, while finding some fault with funerals, nevertheless retain an over-all favorable conception of the custom. Only eight percent (7 of 83) of the respondents saw the funeral in an unfavorable light. On the other hand, 59 percent (53 of 92) of all persons interviewed thought of the funeral as an institution deficient in some way(s).

In both the death-free and bereavement groups the same types of responses were given by individuals with very favorable images of the funeral. With few exceptions, they agreed funerals are better than ever because of technological considerations, as the following statements indicate.

Funerals have improved a great deal. Now we have nice funeral homes and cars and all.

They're just better now that's all.

They have more modern buildings and cars. Medically, they can preserve the bodies longer.

The customs have improved. They use better material now.

Respondents in the death-free and bereavement groups had similar objections to contemporary funeral practice. The high cost of funerals far and away outdistanced any other single complaint about funerals. The comments of some persons were straightforward statements without emotional overtones: "funerals cost too much"; other people indicated funeral directors are dishonest in their business relations with a bereaved family. For example, a 58-year-old housewife
said, "Some people go to arrange for the funeral in the state of shock and when it is all over they find out it cost more than they were led to believe." Another person, a male office manager, was more vindictive, "I think 90 percent of it is a racket," he said.

Besides costs, respondents objected to viewing the corpse, poor service, and artificial sympathy by the funeral director. Table XXII gives a breakdown by categories of complaints of the two groups of respondents.

TABLE XXII
CATEGORIES OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST FUNERALS BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Complaints</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Costs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewing the corpse</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor service</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial sympathy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attitudes Toward Funerals According to Race

Whites and Negroes do not differ significantly in their approval or disapproval of funerals. But the attitudinal difference is greater across racial lines than it is across religious and socio-economic status lines. Notice that Table XXIII, below, shows that all persons with unfavorable attitudes toward funerals are white.

TABLE XXIII
ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERALS BY RACE AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Funerals</th>
<th>White Groups</th>
<th>Negro Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable; partly unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*aOne case unreported.

$x^2 = 3.66; \ df = 1; \ P > .05.$

(rows 1, 2 vs. rows 3,4,5,)(White vs. Negro).
Attitudes Toward Funerals According to Religious Affiliation

There is no significant difference between Catholics and Protestants in their attitudes toward funerals, though it is true that proportionately more Catholics than Protestants object to some aspect of funeralizing the dead. Twenty-three of 34 Catholics voiced some complaint, while 32 of 51 Protestants found fault with the funeral.

Non-affiliated persons were more satisfied with funeral customs than were persons in both religious groupings. Four of the five non-affiliates reporting on this question were completely satisfied with funeral customs. This finding is at odds with the results of Fulton's investigation. He found religious non-affiliation directly correlated with negative attitudes toward the funeral.3

The similarity among individuals by religious affiliation on the question of attitudes toward funerals can be seen by reviewing Table XXIV.

Attitudes Toward Funerals According to Socio-Economic Status

There is an inverse relationship between S.E.S. and attitudes toward funerals, as can be seen in Table XXV.

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3An explanation of the contradiction in Fulton's data and the data analyzed in this research is offered in Chapter IX. See Robert Fulton, The Sacred and the Secular (Milwaukee: Bulfin, 1963), p. 3.
### TABLE XXIV

**ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERALS BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude Toward Funerals</th>
<th>Catholic Groups</th>
<th>Protestant Groups</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable; partly unfavorable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>One case unreported.

\[ x^2 = .01; \; df = 1; \; P > .05. \]

(rows 1, 2 vs. 3, 4, 5) (Catholic vs. Protestant).

### TABLE XXV

**ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERALS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Funeral</th>
<th>S.E.S. ↓ 4.00 &amp; ↑ Groups</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp; ↓ Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable; partly unfavorable</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>One case unreported.

\[ x^2 = 1.20; \; df = 1; \; P > .05. \]

(rows 1, 2 vs. 3, 4, 5).

(S.E.S. ↓ 4.00 vs. S.E.S. 4.00 & ↑ ).
Fifteen persons expressed unfavorable attitudes toward contemporary funerals; 11 were high in S.E.S.

Among persons of high S.E.S., only nine of 37 (24 percent) found no fault with the funeral as an institution. Twenty-nine of 54 persons (54 percent) of low S.E.S., on the other hand, were completely satisfied with contemporary funeral practices.

The contrast is even more marked when the extremes of S.E.S. are examined. For example, five of 22 (23 percent) individuals with S.E.S. of 5.00 or above found no fault with the funeral; whereas 22 of 29 (76 percent) individuals with S.E.S. of 3.00 or less were completely satisfied with the funeral as it is.

IV. FUNERAL DIRECTORS

Attitudes Toward Funeral Directors

Funeral directors are generally highly regarded by the persons in the two sample populations. Among group "A" respondents only six percent (3 of 48) cast them in an unfavorable light. Group "B" respondents were even more generous; five percent (2 of 43) expressed unfavorable opinions of funeral directors. Table XXVI shows that more than half of each sample population gave the funeral director a very favorable rating. Yet, less than half of each sample population rated the funeral itself as very favorable. Thus, in the death-free group and the bereavement group funeral
directors are thought of in more favorable terms than the funerals which they direct.

TABLE XXVI
ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERAL DIRECTORS BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Funeral Directors</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable; partly unfavorable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>48</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>91</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aOne case unreported.

$x^2 = .02; \ df = 1; \ p > .05.$
(rows 1, 2 vs. rows 3, 4, 5).

The type of complaints made against funeral directors were similar to the types of complaints made against funerals. However, the types of complaints voiced by whites differed from the complaints of Negroes. Cost led the list of complaints against the funeral director for whites. It was an often-heard remark among complaining whites that "funeral directors charge what the market will bear." Only one Negro
felt as though funeral directors charge unreasonable prices. The complaints heard most often from Negroes were (1) bad service, and (2) the funeral director's policy to close the funeral home instead of waking the dead through the night.

Catholics and Protestants voiced substantially the same types of complaints against funeral directors, including cost, bad service, and closing the funeral home. Persons of high S.E.S. complained mostly of costs while those of low S.E.S. complained about bad service, and closing the funeral home. It must be kept in mind that all the Negroes fall into the low S.E.S. category which explains the difference in the types of complaints of the two S.E.S. groups.

Attitudes Toward Funeral Directors
According to Race

In every discussion involving whites and Negroes and their attitudes toward funeral customs, whites have been more critical than Negroes. We would expect, then, that whites would be more disparaging than Negroes toward funeral directors. The data bear out this expectation. Notice in Table XXVII that ten whites have unfavorable attitudes toward funeral directors, while none of the Negroes thinks of funeral directors in unfavorable terms.
TABLE XXVII
ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERAL DIRECTORS BY RACE
AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Funeral Director</th>
<th>White Groups &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>White Groups &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Negro Groups &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Negro Groups &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable; partly unfavorable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>91\textsuperscript{a}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}One case unreported.

\(x^2 = 2.06; \ df = 1; \ P > .05.\)
(rows 1, 2 vs. rows 3, 4, 5)(White vs. Negro).

Attitudes Toward Funeral Directors According to Religious Affiliation

Religious affiliation seems to be unrelated to attitudes toward funeral directors. Two comments can be made about Table XXVIII insofar as religious affiliation and attitudes toward funeral directors are concerned: (1) Protestants find less fault (respond very favorably) with funeral directors than Catholics; (2) no Protestant has an unfavorable image of funeral directors, whereas four
Catholics do.

**TABLE XXVIII**

**ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERAL DIRECTORS BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Funeral Director</th>
<th>Catholic Groups</th>
<th>Protestant Groups</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;  &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;  &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;  &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very favorable</td>
<td>8    9</td>
<td>15    22</td>
<td>3    2</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly favorable</td>
<td>9    3</td>
<td>7    3</td>
<td>0    0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partly favorable, partly unfavorable</td>
<td>0   1</td>
<td>3    1</td>
<td>0    0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mostly unfavorable</td>
<td>2    2</td>
<td>0    0</td>
<td>1    0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td>0    0</td>
<td>0    0</td>
<td>0    0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong> <strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>25</strong> <strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong> <strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>91\textsuperscript{a}</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{a}One case unreported.

\[ x^2 = .43; \text{ df } = 1; \text{ P } > .05. \]

(rows 1, 2 vs. rows 3, 4, 5)(Catholic vs. Protestant).
Attitudes Toward Funeral Directors

According to Socio-Economic Status

There is an inverse relationship between S.E.S. and attitudes toward funeral directors, as can be seen in Table XXIX. Among persons of high S.E.S. 19 of 37 (51 percent) found no fault with funeral directors. Forty of 54 (74 percent) persons of low S.E.S., on the other hand, were completely satisfied with funeral directors.

| Attitudes Toward S.E.S. 1 4.00 & |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
|                        | Groups | Groups | Totals |
| Funeral Directors      | "A"    | "B"    | "A"    | "B"    |         |
| Very favorable         | 7      | 12     | 19      | 21      | 59      |
| Mostly favorable       | 10     | 2      | 6       | 4       | 22      |
| Partly favorable;      | 2      | 1      | 1       | 1       | 5       |
| partly unfavorable     |        |        |         |         |         |
| Mostly unfavorable     | 2      | 1      | 1       | 1       | 5       |
| Very unfavorable       | 0      | 0      | 0       | 0       | 0       |
| Totals                | 21     | 16     | 27      | 27      | 91      |

\( \chi^2 = .95; \ df = 1; \ p > .05. \)

(rows 1, 2 vs. rows 3, 4, 5).

(S.E.S. 1 4.00 vs. S.E.S. 4.00 &).
The contrast is even more marked when the extremes of S.E.S. are examined. For example, 12 of 20 (60 percent) individuals with S.E.S. of 5.00 or above found no fault with funeral directors; whereas 22 of 29 (86 percent) individuals with S.E.S. of 3.00 or less were completely satisfied with funeral directors.

V. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FUNERAL HOMES

Attitudes Toward Public Ownership of Funeral Homes

Private ownership of funeral establishments as Americans conceive of it, is typically, though not exclusively, an American phenomenon. When funeral customs the world over are examined, few localities are found in which the organization of the funeral industry resembles the American circumstance. Canada approximates most closely the funeral industry in America. This is due, in no small measure, presumably to the heavy investment of American capital in the Canadian funeral industry and to the physical proximity and cultural similarity of that country to the United States.

Privately owned funeral homes are found in most Western European countries, but they must operate and compete side-by-side with municipally owned ones. Italy is an illustrative case. Habenstein reports:

In general most Italian municipalities control the 'exterior' aspects of the burial of the dead, such as hearse and carriage transportation and earth or mausoleum burial. Private undertaking firms may be
engaged by families to assist in the 'interior' arrangements, such as the making of reports and the securing of necessary forms and permits, the decoration of the home, the furnishing of candles, and the arranging of numerous personal and religious ceremonies.\(^4\)

It can be assumed, then, that Western Europeans generally accept the notion of public ownership, otherwise municipally owned funeral homes surely would have lost out in the struggle for survival with private, entrepreneurally financed ones.

What do Americans think about publicly owned funeral establishments? Fulton reports that over 80 percent of American householders oppose the idea.\(^5\) How do the sample populations surveyed in Calcasieu Parish compare with Fulton's findings?

By examining Table XXX it can be found that 59 percent (53 of 90) of the total respondents in the study do not approve of publicly owned funeral homes. Taking each group of householders separately, the percentage of disapprovers is: 56 percent (26 of 47) for group "A" and 62 percent (27 of 43) for group "B." The difference in the incidence of disapprovals between the two groups is not statistically significant.


TABLE XXX
ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FUNERAL HOMES
BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Public Ownership</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aTwo cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = .77; \text{df} = 1; \text{P} > .05. \]
(Approve vs. Disapprove).

Attitudes Toward Public Ownership
According to Race

It is with the question on public versus private ownership that the first significant difference between racial groups appears. Whites overwhelmingly disapprove of public ownership while Negroes voiced even stronger approval of publicly owned funeral homes, as is seen in Table XXXI.

Negro approval of publicly owned funeral establishments is not surprising. Facilities for funeralizing the dead are segregated in Calcasieu Parish, and Negro funeral homes are visibly inferior to those of whites. Funeral homes utilized by whites are better constructed, better planned, better equipped and aesthetically more pleasing than those which service Negroes. "White 'rolling stock'"
is superior to that of Negroes also. Negroes feel that a publicly owned and operated funeral home, especially a federally sponsored one, would be integrated, thus improving the kind of funeral service available to area Negroes.

**TABLE XXXI**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Public Ownership</th>
<th>White Groups</th>
<th>Negro Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aTwo cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = 17.29; \quad C = .400; \quad df = 1; \quad P < .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove)(White vs. Negro).

After all, the federal government has been the moving force behind many socio-economic and race relations gains made by Negroes in recent years. But what was unexpected was the finding that some Negroes favor state-owned funeral homes over federally owned establishments. The explanation for this apparent anomaly is to be found in the fact that the state rather than the federal government is thought of by
some Negroes as their reference group. The reason for using the state as their point of reference was brought home abruptly to the researcher when, in response to the question, "Would you be in favor of, or against, a publicly owned funeral home in this community?" one Negro laborer said, "Yeah, you mean like the charity hospital." Even though the state hospital system in Louisiana is heavily subsidized by the federal government, it is identified by Negroes as a state agency, not a federal agency.

**Attitudes Toward Public Ownership According to Religious Affiliation**

Catholics are somewhat more tolerant of publicly owned funeral facilities than Protestants. The difference between the two groups, however, is slight. There are too few cases of unaffiliated persons to make any conclusive remark, but the tendency is for the unaffiliated to accept the idea of public ownership more so than either Catholics or Protestants. Table XXXII shows the distribution of

---


7 The Lake Charles Charity Hospital was built recently, in 1963, at a cost of $2,150,318. Its facilities are available to everyone under certain conditions. But usually only the "poor" as defined by the Louisiana Department of Hospitals are eligible for medical care there. Figure 2 in Appendix A illustrates well the disproportionately large number of Negroes who qualify for charity medical care because of their condition of poverty.
attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes of both groups of householders by religious affiliation.

TABLE XXXII

ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FUNERAL HOMES BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Public Ownership</th>
<th>Catholic Groups</th>
<th>Protestant Groups</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aTwo cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = .23; \text{df} = 1; P > .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove)(Catholic vs. Protestant).

Attitudes Toward Public Ownership of Funeral Homes According to Socio-Economic Status

There is a significant difference between S.E.S. and attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes. Table XXXIII shows the extent to which the two S.E.S. groups vary in this respect.

When only the extremes of S.E.S. are considered, the difference in the attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes in the two S.E.S. groups is not appreciably
TABLE XXXIII
ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FUNERAL HOMES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Public Ownership</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp; ↓</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>▲ 4.00</td>
<td>▼ 4.00 &amp; ↓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>90^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Two cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = 15.83; C = .387; df = 1; P < .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove).

(S.E.S. 4.00 ▲ vs. S.E.S. 4.00 & ↓).

changed. For example, among persons with S.E.S. scores of 5.00 and above, only two persons (10 percent) approve of publicly owned funeral homes; 18 disapprove of the idea. Among persons with S.E.S. scores of 3.00 and below, on the other hand, 19 persons (66 percent) approve of public ownership of funeral homes; ten disapprove of the idea. The relationship between the extremes of S.E.S. and attitudes toward publicly owned funeral homes is statistically significant.
TABLE XXXIV

ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FUNERAL HOMES ACCORDING TO THE EXTREMES OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Public Ownership</th>
<th>S.E.S. 5.00 &amp; ↑</th>
<th>S.E.S. 3.00 &amp; ↓</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 12.76; C = .458; df = 1; P < .05. \]

(Approve vs. Disapprove).

VI. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NON-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY: A RECAPITULATION

1. No significant differences were observed between persons in the death-free group and the bereavement group in relation to their attitudes toward wakes, funerals, funeral directors and publicly owned funeral facilities. However, on every item proportionately more persons in the death-free group were critical of the institution of the funeral.

2. Whites and Negroes did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward wakes, funerals, and funeral
directors. They differed significantly, however, in their attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes. Where the races did not differ significantly, proportionately more Negroes invariably exhibited favorable attitudes toward the institution of the funeral.

3. Religious affiliation appears to be unrelated to the respondents' attitudes toward wakes, funerals, funeral directors, and the ownership of funeral homes by public (governmental) rather than private sources. Catholics and Protestants are remarkably similar in these respects.

4. Socio-economic status was not significantly related to the respondents' attitudes toward funerals and funeral directors. However, proportionately more persons high in S.E.S. were critical of these two items than were persons low in S.E.S. Respondents with high S.E.S. differed significantly from persons with low S.E.S. insofar as their attitudes toward the wake and publicly owned funeral homes are concerned.

These findings indicate that socio-economic status and race are the two most promising variables for the analysis of variations in attitudes toward the non-economic aspects of the funeral as an institution. For that reason they are explored somewhat more thoroughly in the subsequent paragraphs.

It has been observed before that whites, as opposed to Negroes, take a comparatively dim view of the wake. However, this is not true of all white persons. By examining
Table XXXV it can be seen that low S.E.S. whites resemble low S.E.S. Negroes more than they do high S.E.S. whites insofar as attitudes toward the wake is concerned. It would seem, then, that attitudes toward the wake are associated more closely with socio-economic status than they are with race. Or, to state it differently, the association between socio-economic status and attitudes toward the wake is stronger than the association between race and attitudes toward the wake.

### TABLE XXXV

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE ACCORDING TO ATTITUDES TOWARD THE WAKE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward the Wake</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S.</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>07%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seven cases unreported.

---

8Throughout the remainder of this section and in the final section of Chapter VII percentages are used where the number of cases on which the percentages are based is not in the neighborhood of 50 or more. This is a dangerous procedure because, as Blalock says, "the use of percentages . . . usually implies considerably more stability of numbers." See Hubert M. Blalock, Jr., Social Statistics (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1960), p. 28. However, the percentages reported in the aforementioned sections are used for comparative purposes within a specific Table so as to make the task of interpreting the Table easier; the percentages should not be used for any other reason(s).
In assessing the relative strengths of socio-economic status and race and their relations to the respondents' attitudes toward funerals and funeral directors, it should be noticed in Tables XXXVI and XXXVII that there is a regular pattern of increasing satisfaction as one reads across the top of the tables from left to right. A majority of the high S.E.S. whites maintained an over-all favorable opinion of funerals and funeral directors; a greater majority of the low S.E.S. whites shared the same opinion; an even greater majority of the low S.E.S. Negroes subscribed to the same view. Thus, both low socio-economic status and "membership" in the Negro race are associated with favorable attitudes toward funerals and funeral directors.

Table XXXVIII must be interpreted like Tables XXXVI and XXXVII. Low socio-economic status and "membership" in the Negro race are both associated with favorable attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes.

Up to this point our discussion of attitudes about the funeral industry has not been focused specifically on the cost of funerals, though occasionally funeral finances have been mentioned. All the attitudinal items treated to this point, however, are in very tangible ways associated with the cost of death. For example, there is a strong correlation between negative attitudes toward the wake, funerals, and funeral directors and the belief that funerals are too costly. In the next chapter attitudes toward costs and the economics of funeralization are discussed.
### TABLE XXXVI

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE ACCORDING TO ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Funerals</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S.</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One case unreported.

### TABLE XXXVII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE ACCORDING TO ATTITUDES TOWARD FUNERAL DIRECTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward the Wake</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S.</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One case unreported.

### TABLE XXXVIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE ACCORDING TO ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLIC OWNERSHIP OF FUNERAL HOMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes Toward Public Ownership</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S.</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approve</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disapprove</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two cases unreported.
CHAPTER VII

ATTITUDES TOWARD ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF
THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

While this chapter is pre-eminently concerned with the attitudes of the death-free group and the bereavement group toward the economic considerations associated with funeralizing the dead, it begins with a statement about the economics of the funeral industry generally, followed by a discussion of funeral costs in Calcasieu Parish. There is good reason for this procedure; after all, the cost of death is an important basis upon which the attitudes of the people in the two study groups are founded.

I. THE COST OF FUNERALS IN GENERAL

Funeral directors attribute what is called the high cost of death to the high cost of living. "Everything costs more today than it did in past years" is the statement which describes the mortician's attitude toward the cost of funerals. Pressed still further, he could be expected to explain that higher funeral prices are justified because modern funeral homes are expensive to build and to maintain; "rolling stock" is prohibitively high; payrolls are up;
funeral furniture costs more; chemicals and cosmetics are higher; casket manufacturers charge more; etc. In sum, technological improvements have driven his costs up and force him to sell a higher priced funeral.

What is the price of funerals in America? Not including burial plots, vaults, flowers, the cost of transportation, headstone, setting the headstone, and opening and closing the grave—not including all these items—not on the average each adult American funeral cost $1,160.00 in 1960. Personal expenditures on funerals in that year totaled an estimated $1.6 billion dollars. Americans spent less on police protection, fire protection and dental care; they spent only slightly more for all higher education.\(^1\) To counteract charges of the high cost of dying the funeral industry points to the fact that medical and educational expenses have risen more than funeral costs. United States Department of Labor and U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare statistics show that between 1936 and 1962,

Medical expenses have increased 6\(\frac{1}{2}\) times; dental expenses are up 6\(\frac{4}{5}\) times; hospital expenses are 19 times more costly; educational expenses have gone up ten times; while funeral expenses have increased only 3\(\frac{1}{2}\) times.\(^2\)


\(^2\)News item, The Southern Funeral Director, April, 1965, p. 21.
The late Wilber M. Krieger, Managing Director of the National Selected Morticians felt the high cost of dying is more apparent than real. He said:

Government statistics show that, in 1936, total expenditures for funerals and burials amounted to $485 million, and in 1962, although constituting proportionately less of the consumer dollar than in 1936, this volume exceeded $1.7 billion. While this dollar volume is referred to by some in the context of the so-called high cost of dying, it is significant that funeral and burial expenditures have not kept pace with increases in total consumer expenditures as reported by the U. S. Department of Commerce. Total funeral and burial expenditures have dropped from 0.775 percent, or just over three-quarters of one percent, of the total personal consumption expenditures in 1936 to 0.479 percent, or less than one-half of one percent in 1962.3

Jessica Mitford uses a comparable period, 1939-1960 to show that the cost of dying has increased faster than the cost of living. And, she uses the same data compiled from the same source as Krieger.4 Whatever else can be said about funerals, there certainly is no lack of conflicting claims regarding their costs.

It is a question of values as to whether or not the cost of funerals is high if you can afford them. It becomes a question of economic urgency if you cannot. Evidence suggests, moreover, that individuals who can least afford expensive funerals are over-represented among those who spend large sums of money on funerals.5

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3U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings, op. cit., p. 7.
5W. M. Kephart, "Status After Death," American
What is the situation in Calcasieu Parish? Are funerals there more or less expensive than they are nationally?

II. THE COST OF FUNERALS IN CALCASIEU PARISH

Thirty-nine members of the bereavement group reported the cost of the funerals in their families. These costs are reported below in Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7. They range from a $50.00 interment service for a still-born, Negro child to $2,000 for each of four white adult funerals. The average funeral costs for all funerals reported in the study is $1,072.35, but this figure includes three funerals handled by funeral directors out of the parish. When adjustments are made for these funerals, the average cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish is $1,026.44 for persons in the study group. If this figure is representative of funeral costs parish-wide, it would mean that funeral costs in the parish in 1964 were approximately $135.00 less expensive than the average cost of funerals across the nation in 1960.\(^6\) Figure 4 gives a breakdown by $300.00 intervals of the funeral costs reported by the bereavement group.

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FIGURE 4

NUMBER OF FUNERALS IN THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP
BY COST IN INTERVALS OF $300.00
The cost of funerals is often confused with the cost of dying; this is a serious mistake in that the non-funeral costs associated with death are considerable, often exceeding the cost of funerals themselves. Funeral costs are usually determined by what is known in the industry as unit pricing, a "longstanding procedure in the funeral field of combining funeral products and services in a single over-all unit price covering the funeral." Essentially, what this means is the cost of the funeral is determined by the cost of the casket which is the unit priced. Customarily included in the system of unit pricing is: calling for and preparing the remains for burial or cremation, care and custody of the remains, caskets, use of the funeral home, parking and related facilities, qualified staff personnel, hearse, limousine for the family, preparation of the necessary papers, handling of flowers, and the registry. The typical funeral firm also provides, at extra cost, at the request of the next of kin, burial clothes, extra limousines, cemetery arrangements and newspaper notices. In addition to the just mentioned "extra costs" there are still others.

Not included typically in the cost of dying are certain expenditures not associated with the funeral home,

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7U. S. Congress, Senate, Hearings, op. cit., p. 18.

8Ibid.
including the burial space, the vault (outside receptacle for the casket), the tombstone or marker and opening and closing the grave. The approximate prices for these items in Calcasieu Parish are: burial space, $150.00; vault, $150.00; bronze marker, $180.00; opening and closing the grave, $50.00.10

These prices apply only to the four perpetual care cemeteries in the parish. Perpetual care cemeteries are either profit or non-profit organizations privately or corporately owned, the purpose of which is the burial of the dead and which, according to variable state laws, are required to establish and maintain a reserve fund for the purpose of maintaining the cemeteries in a state of continuous good repair. The prices, furthermore, apply to pre-need arrangements; in other words to sales which take place before the need for a space, vault, etc., arises. At-need prices are usually somewhat higher for cemetery artifacts and services. In one Lake Charles cemetery the at-need cost of a burial space is 20 percent higher than the pre-need price.

9 A burial space is a single grave; four such spaces are called a burial plot in the cemetery's lexicon. Often the "layman" thinks of a burial plot as the space for one grave.

10 The vault cost cited above is for a concrete perma-seal, water-tight type sold by many cemeteries. If the vault is purchased through the funeral home and is of steel construction the cost is considerably more, $275.00 would be a most conservative estimate. Another, seldom recognized cost of dying is the attorney's fee for handling the dead man's estate, where there is one.
of the same space. The difference in price is a planned incentive to encourage early purchases, though cemeterians take the position that their overhead is higher in an at-need situation. For example, a Lake Charles cemeterian explained that the pre-need opening-and-closing charges are $50.00; but the at-need cost for the same service is $60.00. The reason given was that it sometimes happens that in an at-need situation the opening-and-closing must be done on a weekend when the grave diggers are paid more than their usual wages for their labor.\footnote{11}

The picture of funeral costs in the parish is considerably altered when the cost of funerals is examined in relation to race.

The Cost of Funerals in Calcasieu Parish According to Race

White funeral costs are significantly higher than those of Negroes when $900.00 is taken as the dividing line (chi square = 7.45; df = 1; P < .05). Twenty-four of the 29 whites had funerals costing $900.00 or more; only three out of ten reporting Negroes had a funeral more expensive than $900.00.

\footnote{11It is hardly possible to follow the logic of this reasoning in view of the fact that, presumably, the probability of death, whatever it is, is the same whether or not an individual has made pre-need arrangements. It follows, then, that extra weekend costs are as probable for pre-need arrangements as they are for at-need arrangements.}
The number of Negro cases is too small to yield any conclusive generalizations about costs, though from Figure 5, it can be seen that Negro funeral costs are concentrated in the less expensive categories. By contrast, white funeral costs decidedly cluster in the $900 to $1,199 and $1,200 to $1,499 categories.

The mean costs for white and Negro funerals in the parish highlights the difference in the funeral costs for the two groups. The average white funeral cost is $1,170.92; the average Negro funeral cost is $592.60. The white median is $1,025.00; the Negro median is $562.50.

The Cost of Funerals in Calcasieu Parish
According to Religious Affiliation

Fourteen Catholics and 23 Protestants reported the cost of the funeral in their families. Over-all, Catholics tended to spend more for the burial of their dead than did Protestants; but the difference in the funeral costs for the two groups is not significant when funeral costs above $900 are compared with funeral costs below $900 (chi square = .44; df = 1; P > .05). The average for all Catholics was $1,144; the Protestant average was $1,010. The median costs for the two religious groups is similar: Catholics, $1,075; Protestants, $1,000. Figure 6 graphically represents the cost of funerals by religious affiliation.
FIGURE 5

NUMBER OF FUNERALS IN THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP BY RACE AND COST IN INTERVALS OF $300.00
FIGURE 6

NUMBER OF FUNERALS IN THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND COST IN INTERVALS OF $300.00
The Cost of Funerals According to Socio-Economic Status

There is no significant difference between persons of high S.E.S. and persons of low S.E.S. insofar as the cost of funerals is concerned (chi square = 64; df = 1; P > .05), again using $900 as the breaking point for funeral costs. The average funeral cost for individuals with high S.E.S. scores is $1,118; the average for individuals with low S.E.S. scores is $970. The median funeral cost for both S.E.S. groups is $1,100. Figure 7 shows the cost of funerals according to S.E.S.

If income is abstracted from socio-economic status and examined in relation to the cost of funerals, funeral costs do not decrease as the incomes of the survivors decrease. As a matter of fact, the data show that the cost of funerals for whites is quite similar for all income levels. The average cost of funerals for white survivors with incomes of less than $6,000.00 is $1,184.00 (N = 18), while the comparable figure for white survivors earning more than $6,000.00 is $1,222.00 (N = 11). Table XXXIX points up this fact quite vividly.

All of these findings confirm what has been alluded to by Mitford, Bowman, Harmer\(^{12}\) and other critics of the

NUMBER OF FUNERALS IN THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND COSTS IN INTERVALS OF $300.00
TABLE XXXIX

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNERAL COSTS BY INCOME OF WHITE SURVIVORS
ACCORDING TO CERTAIN INCOME CATEGORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yearly Income of Survivors in Dollars</th>
<th>Under $2000</th>
<th>$2000-$3999</th>
<th>$4000-$5999</th>
<th>Under $6000</th>
<th>$6000 &amp; Over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $2000</td>
<td>$400</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$350</td>
<td>$350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>960</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,666</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,195</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,050</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,130</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,200</td>
<td>1,120</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,385</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,666</td>
<td>1,666</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean: $1,207.14 $1,086.57 $1,321.00 $1,184.00 $1,222.00

Total N = 29 N = 7 N = 7 N = 4 N = 18 N = 11

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American funeral. That is, those who can least afford to "pay the price" are precisely the persons most likely to buy a "high priced funeral."

Now that some specifics have been presented concerning both the cost of funerals in general and the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish as reported by the bereavement group, it is appropriate that we inquire into the attitudes toward funeral costs of persons in group "A" and group "B." Furthermore, the attitudes toward funeral costs of the persons in the racial, religious and socio-economic groups are discussed.

III. EXPECTATIONS ABOUT THE COST OF FUNERALS

Both respondent groups were queried about what they thought is the average cost of funerals in the community. Furthermore, they were asked if they thought this presumed average cost is a reasonable one. Each of these questions is discussed in its turn.

Members of the death-free group tended to be approximately as accurate as individuals in the bereavement group about the average cost of funerals. The only noticeable difference between the two groups is that proportionately more persons in the death-free group thought funeral costs were above $1,500 than was true in the bereavement group. But the difference is very slight.

Table XL shows the extent to which both groups agree on the average cost of funerals.
TABLE XL

EXPECTED AVERAGE COST OF FUNERALS BY $300.00 INTERVALS BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Average Cost of Funerals</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $300</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300 - 599</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 899</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - 1199</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200 - 1499</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 - over</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>89(^a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Three cases unreported.

Expectations About the Cost of Funerals According to Race

But a different picture emerges when the expected average cost of funerals is examined in relation to race. Consistently, Negroes tend to think the average cost of funerals is less than the average cost of funerals reported by whites. Table XLI reflects this fact. This is an accurate appraisal on the part of Negroes, for it has already been shown that Negro funerals are less expensive on the average than those of whites.

Eleven of 21 (52 percent) Negroes reported the cost of funerals between $300.00 and $900.00; the actual Negro
average for this study is $592.60. Contrary-wise, 26 of 68 (39 percent) whites thought the average funeral costs were between $900.00 and $1,500.00; the actual white average for this study is $1,235.57.

Table XLI

EXPECTED AVERAGE COST OF FUNERALS BY $300.00 INTERVALS
BY RACE AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Average Cost of Funerals</th>
<th>White Groups</th>
<th>Negro Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300 - 599</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 899</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - 1199</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200 - 1499</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 - over</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>89a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aThree cases unreported.

E. Franklin Frazier suggests one reason why Negroes are more cognizant than whites of funeral costs. According to him, the folk culture of the Negro is still viable and associated closely with mutual aid societies. These societies often are linked to the funeral industry and comprise a central institution in the life of the Negro--an
institution with which he is, more often than not, quite familiar. Though mutual aid societies are now giving way to industrial insurance, the Negro's interest in the funeral industry remains strong. One Negro widow jubilantly reported to this writer that she had to know when someone in the community died because it was "her job," as she expressed it, "to get out and collect flower money for the funeral." Her comment is but one bit of evidence in support of the idea that the Negro cares and knows about funerals. Anyone familiar with Negroes in Calcasieu Parish, moreover, can easily attest to the fact that the "Negro community turns out" for a funeral.

Another suggestion which undoubtedly partially explains why Negroes are more accurate in their appraisals of the cost of funerals is that Negroes have less money than whites; consequently they are more familiar with the price of everything which makes up their style of life from margarine, to used cars, to caskets.

It is quite instructive to notice that 25 whites reported funeral costs above $1,500.00, well above the actual average. In fact, one estimate was $2,500.00; another was $3,500.00. Over-appraising the average cost of funerals by whites should be borne in mind when, later, we inquire into the respondents' attitudes toward funeral costs.

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Expectations About the Cost of Funerals
According to Religious Affiliation

Catholics were somewhat less accurate than Protestants in estimating the average cost of funerals. Notice in Table XLII that Catholics—especially Catholics in group "A"—tended to over-estimate funeral costs. It is a fact, however,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than $300</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300-$599</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600-$899</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900-$1199</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200-$1499</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500-over</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aThree cases unreported.

that Catholics have more expensive funerals than Protestants on the average. Thus, Catholic cost expectations are in the proper direction.
Expectations About the Cost of Funerals

According to Socio-Economic Status

There is a direct relationship between socio-economic status and the expected cost of funerals; the higher one's S.E.S. the higher one expects the cost of funerals to be. This observation is true for both groups of respondents as can be seen in Table XLIII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Average Cost of Funerals</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp;↓</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Groups &quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>Groups &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $300</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$300 - 599</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600 - 899</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>900 - 1199</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200 - 1499</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1500 - over</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aThree cases unreported.
IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE COST OF FUNERALS

Individuals in the two respondent groups were fairly evenly divided with respect to their attitudes toward funeral costs, but more people approved than disapproved of funeral costs. The figures were 47 approvers and 37 disapprovers out of 84 respondents. The difference between the two groups is not significant. Eight individuals had no idea of what the costs might be and consequently did not voice an opinion about how reasonable funeral costs are.

Persons who condoned funeral costs were less vociferous in their praise of the industry than were the disapprovers who were not at all reluctant to speak out in condemnation. A sample of responses is included in the following paragraphs.

One Negro, male laborer simply said, "I think they [funeral costs] are mighty fair." Another white, male supply clerk who had buried his mother six months previously at a cost of $960.00 said, "As a whole I'd say costs are O.K.; but," he added, "there's no shopping time when a person dies." One woman believed that funeral prices are not entirely out of line with other prices. Her comment was: "I wouldn't say prices are unreasonable, even though they could be cheaper--the doctor's prices could be cheaper too." A widow who had suffered the loss of her husband and two sons in a Fourth of July auto accident was not critical of costs although the triple funeral cost her $5,000.00. Her
statement was: "I'm not complaining, that man put my family away well. I appreciated what he did." 14

Some respondents in both groups took the position that the funeral director is a businessman and is therefore entitled to charge a COMPETITIVE PRICE which, among other things, means charging the customer what the market will bear. For example, a 22-year-old, college educated housewife said unapologetically, "it's their business and they should [charge what the customer is willing to pay]." A Negro industrial laborer revealed a deep-seated capitalistic prejudice when he commented: "They are in business like everybody else and they try to get every penny they can." He continued, "They know all the loop-holes and how to go about soaking you." A woman whose mother had died six months before the interview said, "it's their business to sell you the highest priced casket they can."

One woman refused to cooperate in the study itself, yet she contributed one parting comment as she closed the door in this writer's face. She said, "I don't talk to anyone who comes door-to-door, but you can put this in your book, funerals is too much." A 42-year-old, uneducated truckdriver--the father of three children--was emotionally moved when asked if he thought the price of funerals is

14 It is an interesting commentary that her actual financial situation was in a precarious status at the time she made that statement.
reasonable. His immediate reply was,

Oh, they are too high—too damn high. I believe they [funeral directors] are robbing the people, and they all do it. They sell cheap caskets for high prices. Funeral homes are not for poor people. They got it all figured out. They make you pay insurance till you die and then they take it all back. . . . I know a man who had $10,000 insurance and the funeral home buried him for $9,000.00.

This man had recently canceled his burial insurance in favor of a life insurance policy. An irate survivor who thought "dying today is a luxury" described her experience with a Lake Charles funeral director when she went to the funeral home to arrange for her dead husband's funeral. She said, "If you don't know what you want beforehand they will overcharge you. I had three deaths in my family before my husband so I couldn't be pushed into something I didn't want." As an afterthought she added, "I saw a $595.00 casket and I wouldn't bury my dog in it." Thus, the pro's and con's of opinions about the cost of funerals seem endless. But the approvers and the disapprovers are nearly equally distributed in the two groups of householders. Table XLIV shows the extent to which groups "A" and "B" resemble one another insofar as persons in the two groups perceive the cost of funerals as reasonable or unreasonable.
TABLE XLIV
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU THINK THE AVERAGE COST OF FUNERALS IN THIS COMMUNITY IS REASONABLE?"
BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the Price of Funerals Reasonable?</th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>84&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Eight cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = .54; \text{ df } = 1; \text{ P } > .05. \]

Attitudes Toward the Cost of Funerals

According to Race

Whites were more likely to complain about funeral costs than Negroes. The difference between the races in this respect is statistically significant. Among white respondents, members of both the death-free group and the bereavement group agreed on the reasonableness of funeral prices. With the Negroes, however, the situation was different. Negroes in the bereavement group were less critical of funeral costs than were Negroes in the death-free group. Table XLV illustrates these points.

Attitudes Toward the Cost of Funerals

According to Religious Affiliation

Religious affiliation appears to be unrelated to attitudes toward funeral costs. Catholics and Protestants
TABLE XLV
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU THINK THE AVERAGE COST OF FUNERALS IN THIS COMMUNITY IS REASONABLE?" BY RACE AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the Price of Funerals Reasonable?</th>
<th>White Groups</th>
<th>Negro Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19 14</td>
<td>5 9</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17 15</td>
<td>4 1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>36 29</td>
<td>9 10</td>
<td>84&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Eight cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = 4.49; \quad C = .224; \quad df = 1; \quad P < .05. \](White vs. Negro).

Individuals not affiliated with any organized religious group were more critical of the reasonableness of funeral costs than either Catholics or Protestants (Table XLVI).

TABLE XLVI
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU THINK THE AVERAGE COST OF FUNERALS IN THIS COMMUNITY IS REASONABLE?" BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the Price of Funerals Reasonable?</th>
<th>Catholic Groups</th>
<th>Protestant Groups</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10  8</td>
<td>13 15</td>
<td>1  0</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7  6</td>
<td>11  9</td>
<td>3  1</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>17 14</td>
<td>24 24</td>
<td>4  1</td>
<td>84&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Eight cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = .06; \quad df = 1; \quad P > .05. \](Catholic vs. Protestant).
Attitudes Toward the Cost of Funerals

According to Socio-Economic Status

The difference in attitudes toward the reasonableness of funeral costs and S.E.S. is hardly noticeable. It does not matter how responses are manipulated, the same results obtain: S.E.S. is statistically insignificant insofar as attitudes toward funeral costs are concerned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the Price of Funerals Reasonable?</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp; I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot; &quot;B&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10 8</td>
<td>14 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10 6</td>
<td>11 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>20 14</td>
<td>25 25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^Eight cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = .89; \text{df} = 1; \ p > .05. \]

(S.E.S. \( \geq 4.00 \) vs. S.E.S. 4.00 \& I).

When individuals with S.E.S. scores between 3.00 and 5.00 are screened from the two sample populations, a less homogeneous picture emerges. Respondents with S.E.S. scores at 5.00 and above are considerably less satisfied with the cost of funerals than persons with scores of 3.00 and below.
Table XLVIII illustrates this finding, which shows that as S.E.S. increases satisfaction with the presumed average cost of a funeral in the community decreases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the Price of Funerals Reasonable?</th>
<th>S.E.S. 5.00 &amp; S.E.S. 3.00</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 4.17; C = .282; df = 1; P < .05. \]

This inquiry into people's perception of the reasonableness of funeral costs, if nothing else, points up the diversity of opinion this question generates. It is not unusual for an individual to think costs are excessive without, at the same time, attributing the high cost of the commodity to some unscrupulous merchant who sells the product. For example, many people feel the cost of food is too high; yet most people do not accuse the manager of the supermarket of taking advantage of them. On the other hand, there is great concern in some quarters about whether or not funeral
directors capitalize on their grief-stricken clientel by selling them a more expensive funeral than they otherwise would purchase in a less emotionally laden context. That the at-need funeral transaction occurs at an inopportune time for the purchaser is certainly an understatement. But do people see this transaction as a business deal between an exploitative capitalist and an emotionally disarmed customer; or do they see the funeral transaction as a necessary step in the disposal of the dead, made easier by the helping hand of the funeral director? It is to this question that we now turn.

V. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HONESTY OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

In answer to the question, "Do you think funeral directors take advantage of a family's grief when they are selecting a funeral service?" a variety of responses were received. These responses fall into three main types: unqualified no, qualified yes, unqualified yes. The comments of respondents reported below illustrate each of these types.

UNQUALIFIED NO

No. They are most lenient with you.

I don't think so. At least ours didn't. He was a close friend of my husband and he did everything he could to help.

No, they don't cheat you. If you go to pick out a casket for your mother, you want the best—that's what runs the cost up.
No, they don't [take advantage of the survivors], especially if the person is old. And, after all, [funeral home] has a lot of money.

QUALIFIED YES

Some funeral directors might, but ours wouldn't.

Yes, I guess some take advantage, but I know we were not pressured into anything.

That would depend on the funeral director, but knowing businessmen I'd say they do. I'm sure there's some sons-a-bitches among them.

UNQUALIFIED YES

Yes they do take advantage of you. Time and again I know that this is true.

Oh, yes sir they do. In the selection of the casket they try to sell you a more expensive casket. I dropped a policy with an established funeral home because they practice that policy.

Yes, they high-pressure salesmanship you.

Definitely, they try to oversell everybody. They show you the best caskets first and then when you get down to something you can afford, you don't want it because it's too cheap.

My insurance man told me never to tell the funeral home how much insurance I have on my husband because if I did, they would try to get as much of it as they could.

Few persons in either of the two respondent groups were willing to issue a blanket condemnation of funeral directors as a class. More typically, respondents would admit that SOME funeral directors would take advantage of survivors. But they likely considered this circumstance the exception. It was a common occurrence to hear the comment, "Some funeral directors might take advantage of you, but ours
is honest."

When the respondent groups are juxtaposed, it is found that persons in the bereavement group are more confident than persons in the death-free group that funeral directors are honest in their dealings with persons in need of their services. Both groups, however, were highly critical of the funeral director's integrity as can be seen in Table XLIX.

TABLE XLIX
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DOES THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BEREAVED SURVIVORS?"
BY GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group &quot;A&quot;</th>
<th>Group &quot;B&quot;</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take Advantage of Survivors?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>90&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup> Two cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = .92; \ df = 1; \ P > .05. \]
Attitudes Toward the Honesty of Funeral Directors According to Race

Negroes were more satisfied than whites that their funeral directors are fair in serving the needs of the Negro community. The difference between the attitudes of whites and Negroes in this respect is statistically significant.

Sixty-seven percent of the whites questioned the honesty of funeral directors, while only 33 percent of the Negroes shared this sentiment. This finding is consistent with the observation made earlier that Negroes find less fault with the funeral in general than do whites.

TABLE L

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DOES THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BEREAVED SURVIVORS?"
BY RACE AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Funeral Director</th>
<th>White Groups</th>
<th>Negro Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take Advantage of</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survivors?</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aTwo cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = 6.07; \quad C = .245; \quad df = 1; \quad P < .05. \]

(White vs. Negro).
Attitudes Toward the Honesty of Funeral Directors
According to Religious Affiliation

There is no significant difference between religious affiliation and attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors. Catholics and Protestants and unaffiliated persons respond quite consistently in this respect, as Table LI illustrates.

**TABLE LI**

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DOES THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BEREAVED SURVIVORS?" BY RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Funeral Director Take Advantage of Survivors?</th>
<th>Catholic Groups</th>
<th>Protestant Groups</th>
<th>Non-Affiliated Groups</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Two cases unreported.

\(x^2 = .11; \ df = 1; \ P > .05.\)

(Catholic vs. Protestant).
Attitudes Toward the Honesty of Funeral Directors by Socio-Economic Status

There is no significant difference between S.E.S. and attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors, although proportionately more persons with high S.E.S. think the funeral director takes advantage of bereaved survivors than do persons with low S.E.S. But there is no appreciable difference between the actual cost of funerals as between the two S.E.S. groups. Thus, individuals with low S.E.S. are the ones who are most often disillusioned by the actual cost of funerals when they come face-to-face with the experience of funeralizing their dead. In spite of this fact, people with low S.E.S. are less critical of the funeral industry and the funeral director than persons of high S.E.S. This attitudinal inconsistency is important to mention but difficult to explain. Table LII points up the difference between the high and low S.E.S. groups insofar as their views of the funeral director's honesty is concerned.
TABLE LII
RESPONSES TO THE QUESTION "DOES THE FUNERAL DIRECTOR TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE BEREAVED SURVIVORS?" BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Funeral Director Take Advantage of Survivors?</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00</th>
<th>S.E.S. 4.00 &amp; ↓</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;A&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;B&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>90^a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

^aTwo cases unreported.

\[ x^2 = 1.01; \text{ df } = 1; \text{ } p > .05. \]

\( (\text{S.E.S.} \uparrow 4.00 \text{ vs. S.E.S.} 4.00 \text{ & ↓}). \)

VI. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY: A RECAPITULATION

Funerals are an expensive item in the "typical" American's budget, averaging $1,160.00 per adult funeral in 1960. Residents of Calcasieu Parish fared somewhat better in that the average cost of funerals for members of the bereavement group was $1,072.35. Added to this figure, however, were cemetery and other costs which usually conservatively amount to $500.00 - $700.00 per burial.

1. Persons in group "A" did not differ significantly from persons in group "B" in their attitudes toward the cost
of funerals. They did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the funeral director's honesty. Compared with persons in group "B," however, proportionately more persons in group "A" thought funeral costs were unreasonably high and they thought funeral directors are dishonest.

2. The cost of funerals was significantly higher for whites than Negroes. Whites thought funeral costs are unreasonably high significantly more often than Negroes. Whites claimed funeral directors are dishonest with greater frequency than Negroes; the difference between the races was significant.

3. No significant difference was found between religious affiliation and the cost of funerals in the bereavement group, although Catholics had slightly more costly funerals than Protestants and unaffiliated persons. Religious affiliation was not related significantly to attitudes toward the cost of funerals, nor was it related significantly to attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors.

4. No significant difference was observed between socio-economic status and the cost of funerals, between socio-economic status and attitudes toward the cost of funerals, and between socio-economic status and attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors. But as socio-economic status increased, it was noticed that dissatisfaction with the cost of funerals and skepticism of the funeral director's honesty increased.
Earlier it was reported that cost of funerals in the bereavement group fluctuated only slightly with the socio-economic status of the survivor-respondents. When a third variable, race, is introduced into the analysis, however, the cost of funerals varied considerably with socio-economic status. Table LIII shows that funeral costs of whites were very similar irrespective of socio-economic status. But low S.E.S. Negroes differed a great deal from low S.E.S. and high S.E.S. whites, indicating that the association between race and inexpensive funerals (below $900) is stronger than the association between socio-economic status and inexpensive funerals.

TABLE LIII

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE
ACCORDING TO THE COST OF FUNERALS IN THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Cost of Funerals</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S Whites</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S Whites</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td>Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below $900</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$900 and above</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cases</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five cases unreported.
High S.E.S. and low S.E.S. whites resemble each other in their attitudes toward the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish and attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors. However, it is shown in Tables LIV and LV, that Negroes differ considerably from whites insofar as these attitudes are concerned. Therefore, it can be said that the association between race and attitudes toward the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish and attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors is stronger than is the association between socio-economic status and these two attitudinal items.

**TABLE LIV**

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE ACCORDING TO ATTITUDES TOWARD THE COST OF FUNERALS IN CALCASIEU PARISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the Price of Funerals Reasonable?</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S.</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight cases unreported.

**TABLE LV**

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND RACE ACCORDING TO ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HONESTY OF FUNERAL DIRECTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does Funeral Director Take Advantage of Survivors?</th>
<th>HIGH S.E.S.</th>
<th>LOW S.E.S.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>Negroes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total cases</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two cases unreported.
The discussion of the relationship between socio-economic status and race according to the respondents' attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors concludes our investigation of attitudes toward the economic aspects of the funeral industry. In the next chapter attention is focused on individuals in the ministerial group who were mentioned earlier in the study. Their attitudes toward the economic and the non-economic aspects of the funeral industry are described and analyzed there.
CHAPTER VIII

THE MINISTERIAL GROUP: THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NON-ECONOMIC AND THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

I. THE MINISTERIAL GROUP: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

The ministerial group consists of 24 individuals, including 17 whites and seven Negroes, one of whom is a female. Every minister interviewed pastors a church in the Greater Metropolitan Area of Lake Charles which includes the communities of Lake Charles, Sulphur, and Westlake. Nearly all of the clergymen, however, at one time during their ministry have had experience working in rural churches. Seventeen different denominations or sects, representing most of the religious bodies in the parish, are in the sample. They are: Assembly of God, Baptist, Calcasieu Tabernacle, Roman Catholic, Church of Christ, Church of God, Congregational Christian, Episcopal, Jewish, Lutheran, Methodist, Church of the Nazarene, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Seventh Day Adventist, and the Spiritualist Church.
II. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NON-ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY

Attitudes Toward the Wake

Calcasieu Parish clergymen are divided in their opinions about the wake as a custom which contributes to the emotional stability of the deceased's survivors. Only one clergyman wants to discontinue the custom. This white, Protestant clergyman unequivocably opposed the wake because:

... it exposes your loved ones to the public. And the more you look at someone you love—the more you think of your experiences with that person—the greater grief you have for her. When you view the body and play sad music at the same time that throws people into fits. I don't want that kind of thing for me and my family.

This man also wants to abolish the funeral service. Thus he is a clerical maverick in this respect. He would like to have the body taken from the embalmer's preparation room directly to the grave for what he terms "a quick, quiet disposal."

Twelve other clergymen were critical of certain aspects of the wake, but they did not go so far as to advocate its abandonment. One clergyman who pastors a small but well-established church in Lake Charles thought "viewing the body is detrimental because it leaves a lasting impression which is artificial." He would prefer that the wake be a semi-private affair (relatives and close friends), held preferably in the church or in the home of the deceased with the casket closed. But he was regretfully confident his
private feelings did not reflect the sentiments of his congregation who consistently waked their dead in the funeral homes of the city and who viewed the corpse in the process. Moreover, he saw no real chance of changing the custom. His lamentation bordered on despair when he said, "My people all know better, but they just follow what all the other people in the community do."

Another white, Protestant clergyman modified his criticism of the wake somewhat but essentially he considered the wake more harmful than helpful. His comment was:

In some cases the wake is very detrimental, depending on the cause of death, the circumstances surrounding the death, the family circumstances, and the health of the survivors. The wake is usually a physical and mental strain on them.

But the principle criticism of the wake was not expressed in terms of its dysfunctionality. The claim most often made was that the contemporary wake is non-functional. Ten ministers, 46 percent of the total, took this position. When asked if the wake helped the family of the deceased, these ministers made comments such as:

The wake doesn't do any harm or good. The intelligence of the family has a lot to do with it. If the family is not very intelligent, it seems to stir their emotions up much more than if the person is intelligent [Negro, Protestant].

I don't think the wake helps, not one iota [white, Protestant].

I'm inclined to believe that the wake does not have any significance as far as the family is concerned. I just don't think there is much to be gained from it [Negro, Protestant].
The wake has no spiritual benefit. It doesn't increase the grief but it doesn't do a lot to alleviate the grief either [white, Protestant].

Clergymen who believed the wake is non-functional do not pastor churches with large congregations. None of these white ministers, for example, pastors a church with more than 300 members. No white, Baptist minister or Catholic priest questioned the beneficiality of the wake. A white, Catholic priest stated his church's position relative to wakes when he remarked, "The wake is a spiritual aid to the family because it is a time of special prayer and the wake, itself, is a source of penance which strengthens the survivors in the long run." He moved from a theological justification of the wake to a social-psychological one when he commented, "Even though there is grief at a wake, it's a healthy type of display of emotions. . . . Also, the memory of the visitors who come to the funeral home will be a great source of consolation. You know, sorrows shared are halved, like joys shared are doubled." A Protestant clergyman, pastor of a Pentecostal church, agreed that the wake is a worthwhile part of the process of funeralization. He said:

It does the loved ones a lot of good for the body of the deceased to lie in state so the people can pay tribute to it. I would say it affects [increases] the grief but not as bad [much] as the final conclusion at the grave. It apparently helps people spiritually because—I don't know if you could contribute [attribute] it to the lying in state—it puts the church deeper into their lives.

Another Protestant clergyman believed there is a satisfaction derived from wakes which outweighs the grief generated by
them because wakes "help cause tears and grief, and grief brings relief." The sociologist, Habenstein, referred to the value of grief as the therapy of expression. Actually, this idea runs throughout the religious literature on the funeral. Edgar Jackson maintains that "... crying can be a healthy and useful way of discharging pent-up emotions. When one is faced with so powerful an emotion as grief, weeping is singularly appropriate and helpful. We should not be afraid to cry. We should recognize that others have the right to cry if and when they want to."\(^1\) It is one thing to say that crying and grieving may be psychologically therapeutic for a bereaved person--no one is challenging that idea; but it is quite another thing to believe that crying and grieving MUST BE "WORKED OUT" AT A WAKE if the so-called therapy of expression is to be functional. Nowhere has it been demonstrated empirically that that is, in fact, the case.

The finding that Negro ministers are unimpressed with the wake as a custom which benefits the family of the deceased is unexpected. It has been mentioned previously that Negroes in both groups of respondents gave considerable support to waking the dead; thus, there is an inconsistency between Negroes and their ministers insofar as the wake is

---

concerned. The nature of the data does not permit us to resolve this inconsistency, but there is one possible explanation. Perhaps Negro ministers feel that the drinking of alcohol which was reported at some Negro wakes destroys whatever potential benefit the wake might possess. This appears to be the case in that Negro ministers interviewed oppose drinking while the Negroes themselves, as a rule, share no such dislike of alcohol.

When the ministers were asked about the purpose of the wake their responses were similar to those of the family householders. Only one clergyman perceived the wake in a sacred context. He is a Catholic priest who thought of the wake as a time of special prayer, penance, and sorrow. Two other Catholic priests, however, joined with all the other clergymen in considering the wake a secular affair primarily for the purposes of paying last respects to the deceased and of comforting the living. Also the wake was often identified as a custom. In one instance the wake was said to have no purpose. The comments of several clergymen illustrate these

PURPOSES OF THE WAKE.

I think the reason we have wakes is to show respect for the dead and at the same time the wake helps strengthen the faith of the living by reminding them of death.

The wake gives friends and relatives an opportunity to come to the aid of the family who's involved.

The wake is just a custom or tradition. It's been practiced so long that the family probably would be embarrassed if they didn't have one.
I think the wake doesn't have really very much of a purpose. The only purpose I can see, and that's not really a purpose, is the last look.

Notice in the first quote a religious value is imputed to the wake because, through the experience of the wake, the bond between the participants at the wake and the Deity is assertedly strengthened. Also, the minister who considered the wake a long-standing, tradition-bound activity inferred that community pressure encourages waking the dead.

**Attitudes Toward Funerals**

Area clergymen uniformly agree that the funeral (the wake, the funeral service, and the interment service) is an institution of importance. The weights assigned by them to each element of the funeral differ, however. The wake generally is considered the least important part of funeralizing the dead, while the funeral service is thought of as the most important element of the funeral. The funeral service is almost unanimously hailed as beneficial to the survivors religiously and psychologically. "It serves as a warning to those that are slow in their religion and it serves as encouragement to the ones with faith," said one Negro, Protestant, who went on to say, "The funeral sermon and the words at the grave remind us that we have to prepare ourselves for this hour." Another clergyman who considers the wake non-functional agreed but added, the funeral SHOULD be

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2 There was one dissenter who was mentioned earlier.
directed toward the living. He said:

The funeral service is beneficial to the family of the deceased, provided it is directed toward the living. The funeral service tends to relieve the family’s grief. We would improve the funeral if we eliminated some of the practices that tend to, more or less, call attention to the deceased more so than the family.

Typically ministers emphasize the role of the clergyman in comforting the living, but how one goes about comforting the living varies from one clergyman to the next. Many pastors believe they can comfort the living best with Scripture readings and prayers and by avoiding eulogizing the dead. James Hobbs, a clergyman, expresses it this way:

Experience goes to show that Scripture plays the most important part in bringing comfort to those in sorrow. Accordingly it should be given the major place in the funeral service. More time may be spent in reading the Scriptures than any other feature of the service. Next to the Scriptures in importance is prayer. This should be neither too short nor too long, and above all things, it should not be florid.

As to the address or sermon, it should be borne in mind that brevity is a real virtue. Ten minutes are sufficient for any sermon or address unless the departed is of unusual prominence. The address or sermon should never be eulogistic for two reasons: first, however kind the things said about the dead, they are never sufficiently glowing to the over-wrought feelings of the bereaved. On the other hand, such kind remarks may seem overdrawn to those who are not bereaved and may prove a matter of embarrassment to the minister.

But not all ministers subscribe in practice to what they espouse in theory. The socio-economic status of the clergyman (and his congregation) seems to be one of the most

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important factors which underlies the type of funeral service held for the deceased. For example, Baptist clergymen apparently are divided along socio-economic status lines rather than along racial lines with respect to the type of funeral service they conduct. One white, Baptist minister who pastors a large, prosperous, prestigious church in Lake Charles closely follows "proper" church procedure at a funeral service. But one of his white colleagues—the pastor of a small, low status Baptist church—is reported to be an old-fashioned sensationalist when he preaches a funeral. Moreover, some "high class" Negro, Baptist ministers conduct a quiet, reserved service while some "low class" Negro, Baptist ministers engage in a curious kind of exhibitionism.

In summary, it can be said that clergymen feel that the institution of the funeral contributes to the amelioration of the grief of the survivors. But, of the three elements comprising the funeral, the wake is said to play a relatively insignificant part in the social-psychological adjustments of the bereaved to a world devoid of a recently lost love object. In fact, nearly one-half of the ministers maintain that the wake is non-functional for the survivors religiously and social-psychologically. On the other hand, all but one clergyman agreed that the funeral service and the interment service aid the survivors spiritually and psychologically.

Attention has already been called to the importance of location as a factor in the funeral service. See Chapter III.
Attitudes Toward Funeral Directors

Since many clergymen are less than enthusiastic about the wake—that aspect of the funeral which the funeral director controls—it seems appropriate that we ask, "What kind of relationship(s) exists between clergymen and funeral directors in Lake Charles?" More specifically, are there areas of conflict between members of the two groups? Apparently not. Clergymen and funeral directors of both races say they cooperate very well with each other.

The complaints of the clergy were infrequent and minor. A Catholic clergyman apparently was serious when he remarked, "Sometimes funeral directors in the goodness of their hearts want to make all the arrangements and they put the clergy too far away from the family." Several other ministers said they occasionally came in conflict with the funeral director over the time of the funeral service. But normally this problem is overcome with little difficulty. The usual response to the question "Have you ever had any problems with funeral directors in this community?" was simply and emphatically NO.

Thus relations between funeral directors and clergymen in the Lake Charles Area apparently are characterized by a minimum of disagreements in contrast to the Fulton report of 1961 in which it was stated that "criticism of the funeral director and of funeral practices by the clergy is both intensive and extensive in America." The principle complaints
of American ministers, he found, revolved around three themes. First, the clergy objected to what they considered an overemphasis on the body with the subsequent diminution of attention to the spiritual meaning of the funeral. Second, clergymen throughout the nation have negative attitudes toward the funeral director because the funeral director is involved in the dual role of businessman and professional man. As a businessman he is involved in the commercial end of the funeral; as a professional man he is seen by the clergy as identifying with the sacred aspects of the funeral. Thus, the ambivalence of the funeral director's business-professional role gives rise to an attitudinal ambivalence on the part of the clergy toward the funeral director. Third, Fulton says:

For the individual clergyman, the funeral is one of the most significant ceremonies in his church. Moreover, by the very nature of faith he believes that his church's particular rites, ceremonies and beliefs command what has been called a 'priority of sanctity' over all other churches. There is as a consequence, a fear of taint that is evidenced sometimes when a clergyman or relative requests or insists that the funeral director be of the same faith as the deceased. It seems that when the funeral director makes his services available to people of different faiths, or relates all funerals past and present in an apparent effort to establish the claim of equal sanctity for all of them, he leaves himself open to the charge of paganism from clergymen of different persuasions.5

Perhaps the harmonious relations between clergymen and funeral directors in Lake Charles partly explains their

negative attitudes toward publicly owned funeral establishments. More likely, however, their attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes reflect a conservatism which seemingly is an institutionalized part of the clerical role, and an internalized aspect of the clergyman's personality.

**Attitudes Toward Public Ownership**

of Funeral Homes

Clergymen were asked, "Would you favor having one funeral home in the community owned by the city, the state, or the federal government?" The immediate, unambiguous reply in 21 instances is illustrated by these comments:

No. I'm not interested in the federal government having any more hold on me than it has.

No sir! As far from the government as I can get, the better off I feel. I think all the funeral homes ought to be individually owned. I don't think the U.S.A., Louisiana, or Lake Charles or anybody else ought to have anything to do with them.

Three ministers, all of them Negroes, favored publicly owned funeral homes because they all believed that the underprivileged could then have what one of them called "a good funeral."

**III. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY**

**Expectations About the Cost of Funerals in Calcasieu Parish**

When attention is focused on the economic aspects of the funeral it is evident that clergymen are generally well
informed about the cost of funerals. Twenty-two clergymen answered the question, "What do you think an average funeral costs in this community?" When their responses are averaged it is found that they think a funeral costs approximately $918.00. The actual average cost of a funeral reported in Chapter VII for the bereavement group is $1,072.35. Therefore, the ministers only slightly underestimated the actual average cost of funerals. Whites and Negroes are approximately equally correct in their estimates of the average cost of funerals for their respective racial groups, but white clergymen underestimated the actual average cost, while Negroes overestimated the actual average cost. For example, whereas white clergymen reported the average cost of a funeral in Lake Charles to be $1,062.00, the actual average cost in the bereavement group for whites was $1,170.92. Negro clergymen reported the average cost of a funeral to be $686.00, whereas the actual average cost in the bereavement group for Negroes was $592.60.

Attitudes Toward the Cost of Funerals in Calcasieu Parish

Area clergymen, according to the data, are concerned that the cost of funerals is too high. Twelve of them claimed funerals are overpriced. Six of them refused to answer the question; two of them said they did not know what funerals cost. Only four ministers—two whites and two Negroes—believed that funeral costs are reasonable. Even
though less than 17 percent of the clergymen think funeral costs are reasonable, most of them define their clerical roles in such a way that they hesitate to advise bereaved members of their congregations on the financial arrangements associated with funerals. The question was asked, "As a clergyman, are you ever asked by a person in your congregation to help him (or her) plan a funeral, including selecting a casket?" This request is infrequently made of the clergy, although most of the ministers in the study said that at some time in their ministerial careers they had been approached by a family and asked to help them choose a casket. Ministers, however, are divided over the issue. Some of them do give SECULAR aid to bereaved survivors; some do not.

Negro clergymen are more willing than white clergymen to advise members of their congregations on matters relating to the cost of a funeral. In fact, every Negro clergyman said he would aid one of his church members in this matter, while an important group of white clergymen said they would not advise their church members on financing funerals; these white clergymen said they would give only spiritual advice to the bereaved. Furthermore, two Negro clergymen said they periodically and systematically advocate from the pulpit that funerals be conducted simply and inexpensively. Negro clergymen who do not formally discuss funerals during religious services do so informally with their congregations before a death ever occurs. They also speak to members of
the bereaved family about the cost of the funeral, if, in their judgments, it is necessary, even if their advice is not requested. The following dialogue between this writer and one Negro minister, identified by many Negroes as a leader in the "Negro Community," illustrates one minister's willingness, even eagerness, to offer financial advice to his congregation on secular matters related to the funeral.

Question: Are you ever asked to accompany a family in selecting a funeral?

Answer: Sometimes.

Question: And, what kinds of advice might you give a family under these circumstances?

Answer: That depends. First I try to find out some of the things that the family wants. I never try to tell them point blank what I wouldn't do, but I try to make them think what is best to do. Say, for instance, like spending money, some people go in debt to a great extent because they want to make "a show." They don't think about the aftermath—the obligations that they have afterwards paying that debt. And, many times the undertaker himself will not use scrutiny [be honest] in trying to sell them a funeral, you know. He'll try and make all he can out of it. Now there may be some undertakers who have more ethics than others, but I've known undertakers to try and "stick" the individual because he is emotionally disturbed and he can't reason proper and the result is he will do anything the undertaker says. Now the minister should be there to think through that.

Question: Do you counsel with the family before you get to the funeral home?

Answer: Yes, yes, I've done that. I've done that many times because I've known too many people who have lost their homes just that way, by overspending on a funeral.

Question: Oh, is that right?
Sure. They will mortgage their homes. They will do anything. They want to put their father and their mother in the grave and the undertaker, of course, he's after the money—some of them. Of course, I want you to understand I don't mean all of them. Some of them, they are just after the money and of course if you got a home, well he'll take a mortgage on your home. And, I've known people to do that because they are not thinking about how they are going to pay that [debt]. Right now they are thinking about getting that loved one buried. And they'll do it.

Then they'll loose their job, or they have so many obligations that they can't meet their payments. The result is the undertaker has their home. That has happened in many cases.

Would they mortgage their home with the undertaker or with the bank?

With the undertaker. With the undertaker.

I certainly wouldn't ask you to name any places but do you know of any instances of this happening locally?

[Clergyman nodded in the affirmative].

You mentioned earlier that sometimes you are called upon to help a family in selecting a funeral. How do you think the funeral director reacts to your presence in the funeral home?

Well, I really couldn't say how he reacts. I've never had one to react other than being at ease.

I mean, do you think he resents your presence there?

No, no, because I don't do anything but be there with them—with the family. I don't make any suggestions THEN at all. I may just say, "well, that's nice," or something like that. And, of course, he has no reason for resenting my presence.

Certainly it would be unjust to say that all Negro ministers in Lake Charles are as outspoken against the "high cost of
funerals" and the ethics of the funeral directors as is this particular minister. However, they do agree with this man in that they advise bereaved survivors not to "put all their money in the ground."

White clergymen who pastor Protestant churches, especially the denominations and sects with relatively small representations in the Lake Charles area are inclined to agree with the Negro clergy. They also advise their congregations against overspending on funerals. But not one Catholic priest (3 were interviewed) or white, Baptist minister (2 were interviewed) is willing to counsel with his congregation on money matters and funerals.

The question arises, "Why do some clergymen consult with the bereaved family on the economic arrangements associated with the funeral, and why do other clergymen refuse to do so?" The data collected do not allow for any definitive statement. But acquaintance with the area, and familiarity with the social structure of the community and the churches in the community suggests several possibilities. First, the American Negro has had to fight a legalized system of slavery before the Civil War; since then he has fought against a legal system of racial segregation which "stigmatizes him as unfit for human association. . . ." Frazier continues:

[Every type of propaganda] was employed to prove that the Negro was morally degenerate and intellectually incapable of being educated. Living constantly
under the domination and contempt of the white man
the Negro came to believe in his own inferiority,
whether he ignored or accepted the values of the
white man's world... 

During this campaign to prove that the Negro
was subhuman and unfit for human association, the
masses of Negroes found a refuge within the isolated
world of the Negro fold. THEIR LIVES REVOLVED PRINCI-
PALLY ABOUT THEIR CHURCHES, WHERE THEY SANG THEIR
SONGS OF RESIGNATION AND LOOKED FORWARD TO ANOTHER
WORLD IN WHICH THEY MIGHT ESCAPE THE CONTEMPT AND
DISDAIN OF THE WHITE MAN [emphasis ours].6

The American Negro's history, then, made (and continues to
make) his church an unusually important institution order in
his world.7 Under these conditions it is understandable
that the leader of the Negro church—the clergyman—would
become a person of considerable power, authority, and influ-
ence in the Negro social order. The Negro clergyman in
nearly every "Negro community" is identified as a person of
"good judgment." Thus, he is called upon to help the members
of his congregation (and others as well) in making all kinds
of decisions, including helping them decide on the nature
and type of funeral one should have for a dead relative.
Since the Negro clergyman is accustomed to offering guidance
in many "this-worldly" matters, he is usually also willing
to aid the family in arranging ALL the details of funeral-
izing the dead.

6E. Franklin Frazier, Black Bourgeoisie (Glencoe: The

7Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Character and Social
Structure: The Psychology of Social Institutions (New York:
Second, white ministers who pastor small denominational or sectarian churches and Negro ministers as well, generally know their church members quite well so that the community of believers constitutes a quasi-status group with the clergyman, in the ideal typical case, linked to each family in his congregation in a primary group relationship. Thus, he has a right and an obligation to assist a bereaved family both spiritually and materially. Moreover, the family expects him to intervene in their "other-worldly" and their "this-worldly" affairs when death occurs.

Third, knowing their church members as they do, these Negro and white clergymen are aware of the economic conditions of persons and families in their congregations. These persons usually are financially disadvantaged; they are often employed as semiskilled or unskilled workers; and they are less educated than other persons in the area. Consequently, these people have less money to spend on funerals (as well as other services). At the same time, however, in Chapter VII it was shown that the economically underprivileged appear to be especially anxious "to give their loved ones in death what they did not give them in life; that is, 'lay them out' expensively." An elaborate funeral appears to carry greater status significance for Negroes and persons of low socioeconomic status than it does for individuals of high socioeconomic status. Otherwise, why would the movement away from elaborate funerals be led by persons in Memorial Societies who have unusually high educational attainments, who
have a disproportionately large number of persons in professional occupations, and who have a yearly income double that of the average American family?®

Even if the validity of the foregoing arguments is granted, we still have to explain why some ministers refuse to help their members select a funeral. A conversation with a Lake Charles Baptist minister who pastors one of the four largest white, Baptist churches in Lake Charles (over 1,200 members) reveals one widespread source of the clergyman's reluctance to help a bereaved family "choose a funeral."

Question: As a part of your ministerial duties are you ever called upon to help a family in selecting a funeral?

Answer: I have been.

Question: And what role do you assume when you are called upon to do this type of thing?

Answer: My feeling is that the main thing is my presence there. There are so many dynamics, or as you would say psycho-dynamics, involved in a death experience that no outsider is competent to tell a family what they should or shouldn't do. I don't know what their feelings are.

I might be able to protect them financially if they needed it, however, I am not so sure they need protecting. But if they overspend, it may be that there is a need in them to overspend because I know that at the time of death many families, in another's religion's terms, have some penances and atonements that they have to take care of. And the dollars I might help them save might not be quite equal to what they would buy maybe in atonement for something that happened that I don't know about.

Question: I take it that you think there might be some therapeutic value in overspending?

Answer: Oh, I know there is. There is no doubt in my mind on this. I have been with it [the ministry] 25 years; I've watched it up and down.

The funeral is for the living . . . and not for the dead and there are a lot of things that the family has to straighten out because actually this is the last time that they can straighten something out, not with the public—I don't think the average family cares what the public thinks—but in death the many things that we should have done, could have done, didn't do, many times this is the last opportunity to minister to our own inner needs. And sometimes we've got to do our last penance. Here I am a Baptist talking about a penance, but I think you know what it is. So when a family overspends and buys more than they can afford, and they are in debt for years, I think they do it because they need to, not for anyone else except themselves.

Question: Would you, then, consider yourself an outsider in accompanying the family?

Answer: I would define myself as one giving them spiritual support in a decision that they have to make that I might think is very foolish, but I would give them the benefit of thinking they are using all the wisdom in the world.

Question: You would not then advise the family one way or the other about the type of funeral service they should select?

Answer: As a young man, I would have. At my present age, this I would not do. If they chose a very economical one I would commend them. If they spend beyond what they can afford, I would understand them.

There is, then, a therapeutic value in overspending according to this clergyman. He is not alone in this view. The theory of THERAPEUTIC OVERSPENDING was called a widespread theme or idea among clergymen for good reason.
Reverend C. Charles Bachmann, in a recently published book says:

Reaction to guilt sometimes finds its expression in over-spending on funeral arrangements, buying a more expensive casket or tombstone, or giving more to philanthropic organizations and various causes as a 'peace offering' to atone for the guilty conscience for what was not done. If this is done, however, it may be worth the price and should not be unnecessarily condemned. It may save countless medical-psychiatric bills later, so long as it does not deplete the family resources in the process.  

One might ask why Reverend Bachmann is so concerned about depleting the family's resources. If the guilt is unresolved through over-spending, he says, it might have to be resolved through psychoanalysis, a rather expensive therapy and the resources of the family would be depleted anyway.

In another widely circulated book Edgar Jackson asks, "Should a person go into debt for a funeral?" His answer is:

Some people never buy anything unless they can pay for it in cash. Others are continually using in the present what they will pay for in the future, and each year billions of dollars' worth of contracts are written by men and women who buy cars, homes, appliances, vacations and even their marriages on the installment plan. Wisely handled debt is encouraged rather than discouraged by American business methods.

When persons are called on to arrange a funeral, they are sometimes obliged to ask the funeral director to help them meet an immediate crisis with the understanding that payment will be made in the future. We seldom realize how much money is advanced by funeral directors. In effect they run a private banking service for people who are faced with the problems of death and the disposal of physical remains.

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It would be emotionally distressing for a person who never incurred debts to have to go into debt for a funeral or anything else. On the other hand, in our society, the practice of delayed payment is so common that it presents no emotional obstacles to those involved. THE IMPORTANT MATTER TO BE CONSIDERED HERE IS NOT SO MUCH THE MATTER OF THE INCURRING OF THE DEBT ITSELF AS WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP PERSONS EFFECTIVELY MEET THE CRISIS OF THEIR LIVES. IF DEBT IS AN AID IN DOING THAT, THE DEBT MAY BE GOOD [emphasis ours].

But even where overspending is not considered psychologically or sociologically beneficial to the survivors, ministers are told that "clergymen should be clergymen" and they should leave the funeral arrangements to the bereaved family and the funeral director. Andrew Blackwood, author of a source book for ministers, writes:

At the first call after a death there may not be much for the minister to do. If the neighbors report at once, he may arrive before the mortician. The ensuing call is pastoral. As a rule it should be short. THE MINISTER VOLUNTEERS NO ADVICE ABOUT THE APPOACHING SERVICE. He expresses his sympathy. If he is to be in charge of the funeral he may suggest that he return at a later hour. Meantime the family can determine what they wish to do. THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE MORTICIAN IS IN CHARGE OF EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE RELIGIOUS EXERCISES.

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10 Jackson, op. cit., pp. 85-86. The author is not confusing going into debt with overspending. But he is taking the position that generally when people go into debt for a funeral they are overspending. It is true that many debts do not qualify the spender as one who overspends in America. But when a person goes into debt for funeral expenses, particularly when the dead person is the male head-of-the-household, the earning capacity of the family is so jeopardized that the debt rarely can be rationally justified (i.e., can be considered a debt which does not involve overspending). See Table IX for a comparison by income of the death-free group and the bereavement group in this investigation as an illustration of the precarious financial status of persons in the bereavement group. The above quotation used by permission.
A Catholic priest in Lake Charles whose parish is predominantly Negro follows Blackwood's advice. He said he takes a "hands off" policy on the secular aspects of the funeral because one Negro funeral director in Lake Charles is Catholic while two others are Protestant, and he fears that he would be accused of "steering" people to the Catholic funeral director if he advised families about the MATERIALISTIC aspects of the funeral.

A white, Baptist minister stated that he refuses to counsel his church members about funeral finances because money is a taboo topic between him and his congregation. The only time he discusses money matters with them, he said, "is when they make a good buy on an automobile or when they are about to declare bankruptcy." He went on to say:

There is a great risk involved in giving a bereaved family advice on the financial aspects of the funeral because if the clergyman recommends an economical funeral and the people at the funeral home complained about how "plain" the funeral was—and if this news got back to the family, then the clergyman would get caught in the middle; he would be blamed. If the clergyman recommended a more expensive funeral, on the other hand, the family might later decide that the funeral was a "waste" and the minister would get the blame again. So, you see, it's just not good sense to get mixed up in it in the first place.

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A common rationale underlies the responses of the Catholic priest and the Baptist minister. Both men appear to be engaging in what LaPiere calls the "calculative process," searching for whatever possible individual social-psychological gains might accrue to them as a consequence of advising or refusing to advise families about the material side of the funeral. Both men have calculatively (as opposed to rationally) chosen to remain neutral because there is more security in neutrality than there is in advocating a particular kind of funeral (economical or expensive) for a bereaved family. After all, when one commits himself to ANY position he can be attacked, legitimately or illegitimately. Any clergyman, for example, who openly advocated inexpensive funerals runs the risk of finding himself at odds with the funeral director(s) who frequently is influential in the community power structure. If the clergyman pastors a "respectable," well-established church, he, too, often is a community leader. Thus, the two men, the clergyman and the funeral director(s), probably jointly participate in a variety of community-wide projects. In the process they come to know each other as persons rather than as mere functionaries. Stated simply, they are friends. Furthermore, the bond between the two men often is reinforced because the funeral director is a member of the "respectable" church

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pastored by his clergyman friend. But, even if the funeral
director belongs to some other "respectable" church in the
community, the clergyman is indirectly tied to the funeral
director through his association with the pastor of the
church to which the funeral director belongs.

It is a simple matter for the clergyman to avoid con­
flicts with the funeral director by refraining from getting
involved in funerals except in a sacred context. He partici­
pates in a kind of institutionalized silence insofar as the
secular aspects of funerals are concerned. At the same time,
the clergyman seldom alienates the person seeking his help
because the person is tactfully told that selecting a funeral
is a personal matter.13

On the other hand, Negro ministers and whites who
pastor small denominational and sectarian churches do not
jeopardize their positions in the social structure of the

13Several points should be made about the above ex­
planation. First, it is AN EXPLANATION not THE EXPLANATION
of why certain ministers do aid members of their congrega­
tion in selecting a funeral while other ministers refuse to
do so. Second, the overwhelming majority of people, white
and Negro, in the Lake Charles area (as well as in Calcasieu
Parish and the United States generally) do not look to the
clergyman for advice of this sort when death occurs; they
consider it a personal, family matter. In this discussion,
however, we have been concerned exclusively with those
ministers who say they would refuse to help persons care for
the non-religious arrangements associated with funerals.
Third, two white ministers who pastor well-established, long­
standing Protestant churches in Lake Charles said they do
speak privately, but not from the pulpit, to members of their
congregations about the cost of funerals and other related
non-religious matters associated with funerals.
community by telling their congregations to avoid spending "too much" money on funerals. Negro ministers have nothing to lose; they are usually more influential than Negro funeral directors. Consequently, Negro funeral directors find themselves in a position of not being able to criticize overtly the ministers. At the same time, white ministers who speak out against costly funerals generally do not have to concern themselves about losing status in the community because they are not part of the community power structure in the first place.
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In recent years the publication of several books attacking the funeral industry as a merciless exploitation of bereaved families has ignited a series of censorious charges made by the newspaper, movie, and television industries against funerals. In turn, these charges have set off a succession of countercharges by the funeral industry assailing those who attack it. Against this background of funerary antagonists and protagonists the present study was conceived. Its purposes have been to inquire into some funeral customs and practices in Calcasieu Parish and to describe, analyze, and compare the attitudes toward funeral customs of two groups of family householders in the parish. Persons in one group, the death-free group, were selected because they had not had a death in their families of orientation for ten years prior to the study. Persons in the other group, the bereavement group, were selected because they had a death in their families of orientation during the calendar year 1964.

Within the family householders, persons in three subcultural groups, one racial, one religious, and one socio-economic, considered to be important were delineated and
their attitudes toward funeral customs were described, analyzed, and compared. Furthermore, the study included a discussion of the attitudes toward funeral customs of a group of clergymen in Calcasieu Parish.

Selection of the sample populations was made on a random basis. Data for the study were gathered from December, 1965 through the completion of the analysis and write-up of the study, but the field work was done during June, July, and August, 1965. Two null hypotheses were derived from the general body of sociological theory; they guided the design of the research and the collection and analysis of the data. These hypotheses are:

1. THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUDINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE DEATH-FREE GROUP AND MEMBERS OF THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP.

1a. The specific attitudes with which this hypothesis deals are attitudes toward (a) the wake; (b) funerals; (c) funeral directors; (d) public ownership of funeral homes; (e) the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish; (f) the honesty of funeral directors.

2. THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUDINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN WHITES AND NEGROES, BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS, AND BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.

2a. The specific attitudes with which this hypothesis
deals are attitudes toward (a) the wake; (b) funerals; (c) funeral directors; (d) public ownership of funeral homes; (e) the cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish; (f) the honesty of funeral directors.

Before the findings related to these hypotheses are reviewed, the funeral customs examined in this investigation are summarized so that the findings can be placed in their proper context.

Funeral customs were considered the products of the way people react inwardly toward themselves, the way they react toward each other and toward the corpse, and the way they react toward the cultural environment. In this sense, death and funeral customs can be psychologically and socio-culturally functional, though, in specific instances, funeralization might be more dysfunctional than it is functional.

A time-order sequence, beginning with the death and ending with burial, was established as a framework for discussing funeral customs. Three chronological periods were identified: from death to "possession-control" (when the undertaker takes control of the body); from "possession-control" to the funeral service; and from the funeral service to the burial. In tracing the chronology of events associated with death, the activities of the hospital staff, the family, the clergy, and the funeral director were described. Attention was focused particularly on the importance of the
custom of embalming and its significance as a technological innovation which provided a rationale for viewing the corpse at the wake. The wake, itself, was seen as an institutionalized part of the over-all process of funeralization. And a specific illustration was given of the post-wake activities of a 73-year-old man's funeral service and interment service.

The funeral service was considered one major component of the complete funeral which includes, in addition to the funeral service, the wake and the interment service. The message or sermon, Scripture readings, and prayers were discussed as constitutive elements of the funeral service. Finally, the rapid rate of technological change associated with the interment service was emphasized as mechanical devices for digging the grave, lowering the casket, and re-filling the grave were applied to the maintenance of many perpetual care cemeteries in Calcasieu Parish as well as elsewhere in America.

I. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY IN THE DEATH-FREE AND BEREAVEMENT GROUPS: FINDINGS

1. Persons in the death-free group (group "A") were more critical of the wake than persons in the bereavement group (group "B"); but the difference between the two groups was not significant.

2. Persons in group "A" and group "B" differed only
slightly in their attitudes toward funerals. However, individuals in the death-free group were the more critical. In both groups respondents approved of the funeral principally because of technological advances which have been made in the funeral industry over the years. Respondents disapproved of the contemporary funeral because of the high cost of funerals, poor service (particularly the trend toward fixed waking hours), the custom of viewing the body, and artificial sympathy of the funeral director, in that order.

3. Persons in the two groups of householders did not differ significantly in their attitudes toward funeral directors; although, proportionately more individuals in group "A" voiced some complaints against them.

4. More persons in group "A," as opposed to persons in group "B," were willing to allow a publicly owned funeral home to operate in the community. But public ownership of funeral establishments was generally frowned upon in both groups. For instance, 56 percent of the persons in the death-free group and 62 percent of the persons in the bereavement group disapproved of publicly owned funeral homes. Nevertheless, the difference in the attitudes of the two groups was insignificant. By comparison, Robert Fulton found that in a nation-wide study the percentage of disapprovers was considerably higher; it was 81 percent. 

5. Persons in both groups "A" and "B" were about equally accurate in their estimates of the average cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish. No significant difference was observed between the two groups in this respect.

6. Funeral costs were considered reasonable by the majority of people in the two respondent groups. The difference between groups "A" and "B" was found to be insignificant. The percentages of persons who thought funerals were reasonable were 53 percent for group "A" individuals and 59 percent for group "B" individuals.

7. There was no significant difference between the two groups of householders in their responses to the question, "Do you think funeral directors take advantage of bereaved survivors?" But members of the death-free group were more skeptical of the funeral director's honesty than were members of the bereavement group. Sixty-five percent of the persons in group "A" said funeral directors take advantage of the bereaved, whereas 52 percent of the persons in group "B" shared that feeling.

In every respect individuals in the death-free group were more critical of the funeral industry than were persons in the bereavement group. It must be concluded from this evidence that for most people favorable sentiments\(^2\) (affection, sympathy, respect, pride, and nostalgia) are attached

to the institution of the funeral. Furthermore, the evidence supports the hypothesis that **THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUDBINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE DEATH-FREE GROUP AND MEMBERS OF THE BEREAVEMENT GROUP.** Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted; but the qualification should be added that there may be attitudinal differences between these two groups which have not been surveyed in this study.

II. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY AMONG WHITES AND NEGROES: FINDINGS

1. Most whites and Negroes considered the wake a worthwhile custom. Only 24 percent of the whites and 14 percent of the Negroes viewed it with disfavor. While whites were more critical than Negroes of the wake, the difference in the attitudes of the two racial groups was not significant.

2. Both racial groups overwhelmingly favored funerals, although 62 percent of the whites found some fault with them and, of that figure, 21 percent of the whites considered the funeral reprehensible. At the same time, 45 percent of the Negroes disliked some feature(s) of the funeral while retaining an over-all favorable evaluation of the institution. No Negro maintained a predominantly condemnatory view of the funeral. In spite of these attitudinal variations between the races, they did not differ significantly in their approval or disapproval of the funeral.
3. Whites and Negroes found even less fault with funeral directors than they did with funerals. Whites looked with more disfavor on funeral directors than Negroes. However, no significant difference between the racial groups was observed. It seems important to repeat that no Negro thought of funeral directors in disparaging terms, while ten whites viewed them unfavorably.

4. A significant difference was found between whites and Negroes and their attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes. Seventy-six percent of the Negroes approved of publicly owned funeral homes, but only 25 percent of the whites agreed with them.

5. The cost of white funerals was found to be significantly higher than the cost of Negro funerals. On the average, funerals of whites cost $1,170.92; the comparable figure for Negroes was $592.60.

6. Whites and Negroes differed significantly with respect to their attitudes toward the cost of funerals. The whites in the study complained about the high cost of funerals more frequently than did the Negroes.

7. Whites were significantly more skeptical than Negroes of the honesty of funeral directors. Sixty-six percent of the whites and 30 percent of the Negroes thought funeral directors take advantage of people who have suffered a death in their families.

Compared with whites, Negroes professed greater adulation for the funeral as an institution, and they were
considerably more confident about their funeral directors' honesty.

III. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION: FINDINGS

1. Religious affiliation was not related significantly to attitudes toward the wake. According to the data, 85 percent of the Catholics and 80 percent of the Protestants approved the custom of waking the dead.

2. Catholics and Protestants differed very little in their attitudes toward funerals. The difference between the two religious groups was not significant. Eighty-five percent of the Catholics and 80 percent of the Protestants had an over-all favorable impression of the traditional funeral.

3. There was no significant difference between Catholics and Protestants in their attitudes toward funeral directors. Eighty-five percent of the Catholics and 92 percent of the Protestants maintained generally favorable attitudes toward them.

4. Catholics and Protestants reacted similarly when asked if they favored public ownership of funeral homes. Both religious groups in general opposed the idea. Sixty percent of the Catholics and 67 percent of the Protestants disapproved of publicly owned funeral facilities. Moreover, it should be mentioned that, for the most part, those who advocated public ownership were Negroes affiliated with these religious groups.
5. Catholics, especially those in the death-free group, tended to overestimate the actual average cost of funerals in Calcasieu Parish. But Catholics, in fact, do generally have slightly more expensive funerals than Protestants.

6. Religious affiliation was not related significantly to attitudes toward funeral costs. Sixty percent of the Catholics complained of the cost of funerals; 60 percent of the Protestants made the same complaint.

7. There was no significant difference between religious affiliation and attitudes toward the honesty of funeral directors. Sixty percent of both religious groups thought funeral directors take advantage of bereaved survivors.

These findings demonstrate that religion did not explain the differences in attitudes toward the funeral industry in Calcasieu Parish. But in one respect the religious factor is important. Fulton, in his study of the attitudes of the American public toward death, said "Religious affiliation or its absence is . . . the most important factor explaining the attitudes expressed in this study." How Fulton arrived at this conclusion is interesting. He found that persons most critical of today's funerals are members of

---

memorial societies, many of whom are unaffiliated religiously. Only 22 percent of these persons said they believed in a divine God in the traditionally Christian sense of that concept. The others were either deists or atheists. Furthermore, 22 percent of the memorial group respondents were unaffiliated with any church. When Fulton compared respondents in the memorial group with two other groups of respondents selected randomly from the nation, he found that persons in these two groups were more satisfied with contemporary funeral customs and, importantly, that nearly 70 percent of them professed a traditional conception of the Christian God. Moreover, only ten percent of them were unaffiliated religiously. Thus, he concluded that persons who belong to an established church and who hold to a traditional Christian conception of the divine God are more conventional in their attitudes toward funeral customs than are persons who do not belong to an established church and who maintain deistic or atheistic views.

Fulton's data are open to another interpretation—one which this study suggests is more tenable. Six persons in this study were unaffiliated with an established church, certainly too small a number from which to make generalizations. However, contrary to Fulton's findings, unaffiliated persons in this study accepted contemporary funeral customs

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4 An even larger percentage (37) of persons in the memorial group, as Fulton called it, were Unitarians.
more readily than Catholics and Protestants. For example, only one of them disapproved of the wake, the funeral, and funeral directors. All other unaffiliated persons found absolutely no fault with funeral customs. However, four non-affiliated individuals favored publicly owned funeral homes, and four of them thought funerals were overpriced. The values underlying these attitudes are not related to religious affiliation or the lack of it; these are values which reflect the socio-economic status of the non-affiliated individuals. Only one non-affiliate qualifies as a person of high S.E.S., and he happens to be the lone dissenter mentioned earlier.

In Fulton's study the memorial group respondents had completed 16.5 years of school (the national average was 10.5); they earned an average of $14,117 annually (the national average was $6,900); 75 percent of them were professional (the national average was 11.2 percent). Members of memorial societies clearly are persons of extremely high S.E.S. Thus the argument is here advanced that it is the S.E.S. of the persons in the memorial group, not their religious affiliation or the lack of it as Fulton maintains, which predisposes them to deviate from conventional funeral practices.

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Figures given for the national averages are for 1960; Fulton's data were collected in 1961.
IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FUNERAL INDUSTRY AMONG PERSONS OF HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND PERSONS OF LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS: FINDINGS

1. There was a significant difference between persons of high S.E.S. and persons of low S.E.S. in their attitudes toward the wake. Respondents high in S.E.S. were equally divided between approvers and disapprovers, whereas respondents low in S.E.S. overwhelmingly approved of the wake (85 percent).

2. Socio-economic status was not significantly related to attitudes toward funerals. However, proportionately more persons of high S.E.S. complained about the institution of the funeral.

3. No significant difference was observed between socio-economic status and attitudes toward funeral directors, but proportionately more persons of high S.E.S. found some fault with funeral directors.

4. Persons of high S.E.S. differed significantly from persons of low S.E.S. insofar as attitudes toward public ownership of funeral homes is concerned. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents with high S.E.S. disapproved of public ownership of funeral homes; on the other hand, 55 percent of the respondents with low S.E.S. approved of publicly owned funeral homes.

5. The cost of funerals was found to be approximately the same for persons in the bereavement group irrespective of
6. Persons high in S.E.S. did not differ significantly from persons low in S.E.S. in regard to their attitudes toward funeral costs. Fifty percent of the respondents with high S.E.S. thought funeral costs are reasonable, while 58 percent of the respondents with low S.E.S. thought funeral costs are reasonable.

7. Socio-economic status and attitudes toward publicly owned funeral establishments are significantly different. Only 14 percent of the high S.E.S. respondents approved of public ownership of funeral homes, whereas 58 percent of the low S.E.S. respondents supported this idea.

The above findings indicate that as socio-economic status increases the attitudes of the respondents toward the funeral industry tend to become progressively unfavorable. While this is true as a general statement, it must be borne in mind that all of the Negroes in this study are in the low S.E.S. group and it has already been shown that Negroes definitely have more favorable attitudes toward the funeral industry than whites.

The hypothesis that THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUDBINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN WHITES AND NEGROES, BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS, AND BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS WITH HIGH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS is not supported and, consequently, is rejected. However, race appeared to be the most
significant variable associated with variations in the respondents' attitudes toward the funeral customs examined. Socio-economic status appeared to be the second most important variable associated with differences in attitudes toward funeral customs. Religion appeared to be the least important factor (i.e., statistically insignificant) related to attitudinal differences toward funeral customs among the respondents. In fact, had the hypothesis been stated as three independent hypotheses matching the variables of (1) race and attitudes toward funeral customs; (2) religion and attitudes toward funeral customs; and (3) socio-economic status and attitudes toward funeral customs, it would have been possible to accept the hypothesis that THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT ATTITUdINAL DIFFERENCES TOWARD FUNERAL CUSTOMS BETWEEN CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS, with the qualification that there may be attitudinal differences between Catholics and Protestants which have not been surveyed in this study.

V. THE MINISTERIAL GROUP: FINDINGS

It was found that clergymen in the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area of Lake Charles are less impressed than laymen with the custom of the wake. One clergyman wanted to abandon the practice. Nearly one-half of the 24 ministers interviewed considered the wake non-functional. Of special interest was the fact that the Negro clergy and their parishioners held somewhat different attitudes toward
the wake. The former were more critical of the custom than the latter.

Clergymen generally considered the funeral an important institution. But they did not think its three elements—the wake, the funeral service, and the interment service—were equally important. The funeral service, the interment service, and the wake in that order, were defined by the clergy as spiritually and social-psychologically beneficial to the bereaved survivors.

A cooperative atmosphere characterizes the relations between ministers and funeral directors in Lake Charles irrespective of racial and/or denominational affiliations. Clergymen were even more opposed to the concept of publicly owned funeral homes than laymen. Only three Negro ministers advocated public ownership of funeral homes in the community.

Most clergymen are familiar with the average cost of funerals for their respective religious groups. But only four of them thought funeral costs are reasonable; 12 ministers said that funerals are overpriced; six of them refused to answer the questions on funeral costs. Nevertheless, as a general rule, only Negro clergymen and whites who pastor small denominational and sectarian churches are willing to advise members of their congregations about the financial aspects of funerals. All the Catholic priests and white, Baptist ministers interviewed said they give only spiritual comfort and advice to bereaved families.
Importantly, 80 percent of the church members in Calcasieu Parish are Catholics or Baptists.

The argument was advanced that Negro clergymen advise members of their congregations about funeral costs because of the special significance the Negro church and the Negro clergyman have in the "Negro community"—a significance explained by the Negro's history in America. Furthermore, Negro clergymen and whites who pastor churches with few members tend to give advice on money matters and funerals because they are tied to families in their congregations in a constellation of separate primary groups so that advice of a secular nature, when offered, does not offend the bereaved survivors. Finally, these clergymen, for the most part, serve churches whose members are educationally and economically underprivileged. Furthermore, these are the people who want expensive funerals because of the status significance assigned to the funeral.

One clergyman who said he would not advise members of his church about the secular side of the funeral thought overspending has a therapeutic value. This is a rather widespread notion among clergymen and it has found expression in a leading book whose subject is grief and suffering. However, the principle reason why ministers refuse to help their members select a funeral seems to be that they calculatively chose to remain neutral because they and the funeral directors are integrally related, directly or indirectly, in the social structure of the community.
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SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX A

SELECTED GEOGRAPHIC, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA
APPENDIX
APPENDIX A

SELECTED GEOGRAPHIC, DEMOGRAPHIC, AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA
FIGURE 1

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA
### TABLE I

**POPULATION, RANK, AREA, AND POPULATION DENSITY OF CALCASIEU PARISH: 1940-1960**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population, Rank, Area, and Population Density</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>56,506</td>
<td>89,639</td>
<td>145,475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rank among 64 parishes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land area—sq. miles</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>1,104</td>
<td>1,104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population per sq. mile</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>All classes*</th>
<th>Whites</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Negroes</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>145,475</td>
<td>115,100</td>
<td>79.1</td>
<td>30,392</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>89,635</td>
<td>69,052</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>20,563</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>56,506</td>
<td>41,544</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>14,952</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>41,963</td>
<td>29,844</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>12,112</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>32,807</td>
<td>24,068</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>8,736</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>62,767</td>
<td>45,884</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>16,562</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>30,428</td>
<td>24,267</td>
<td>79.7</td>
<td>5,966</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>20,176</td>
<td>16,834</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>3,194</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>12,484</td>
<td>10,077</td>
<td>80.7</td>
<td>2,407</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>6,733</td>
<td>5,171</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>1,457</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>5,928</td>
<td>4,451</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>1,476</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>3,914</td>
<td>2,718</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>1,196</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840</td>
<td>2,057</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>65.5</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total white and Negro populations does not equal "ALL CLASSES" category because some orientals are excluded from this enumeration.

### TABLE III

NUMBER OF CHURCHES AND MEMBERS BY RELIGIOUS GROUPS, CALCASIEU PARISH, 1952

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Groups</th>
<th>Both Churches and members reporting</th>
<th>Churches Only Reporting</th>
<th>Members Only Reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of members</td>
<td>No. of churches</td>
<td>No. of churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Day Adventists</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assemblies of God</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Baptist Convention</td>
<td>14521</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God (Anderson, Ind.)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of God in Christ</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of the Nazarene</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congregational Christian Church</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Congregation</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Methodist Church</td>
<td>6471</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian Church in U.S.</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestant Episcopal Church</td>
<td>1567</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman Catholic Church</td>
<td>28080</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilgrim Holiness Church</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disciplines of Christ Int'l. Conv.</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>53246</strong></td>
<td><strong>82</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2

FAMILY INCOME BY RACE, CALCASIEU PARISH, 1960

FIGURE 3

SELECTED LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS BY RACE, CALCASIEU PARISH, 1960

TABLE IV

COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF CALCASIEU PARISH

BY AGE AND SEX, 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>938</td>
<td>1,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 14</td>
<td>2,064</td>
<td>2,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 24</td>
<td>3,984</td>
<td>3,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>6,855</td>
<td>6,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>9,420</td>
<td>9,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>10,961</td>
<td>11,025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>11,325</td>
<td>11,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>16,366</td>
<td>16,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over</td>
<td>10,968</td>
<td>10,690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population 25 years old and over</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>Calcasieu Parish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median school years completed</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent completed less than 5 years of school</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent completed high school or more</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>39.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE VI

COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF LOUISIANA AND CALCASIEU PARISH BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE, 1960

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Louisiana</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Calcasieu Parish</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>3,257,022</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>145,474</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total rural pop.</td>
<td>1,196,416</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>38,016</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural nonfarm</td>
<td>963,278</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>36,183</td>
<td>24.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural farm</td>
<td>233,138</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>1,833</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total urban</td>
<td>2,060,606</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>107,459</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 4

A PORTION OF CALCASIEU PARISH'S INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX
FIGURE 5

A PORTION OF CALCASIEU PARISH'S
INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX
FIGURE 6

ECONOMIC SETTING OF THE CITY OF LAKE CHARLES AND CALCASIEU PARISH, LOUISIANA
### TABLE VII

**NATIONAL MANUFACTURERS LOCATED IN CALCASIEU PARISH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anacon Chemical Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Three Industrial Gas and Equipment Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcasieu Chemical Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cit-Con Oil Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities Service Oil Company</td>
<td>Refining division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities Service Oil Company</td>
<td>Petrochemical division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cities Service Oil Company</td>
<td>Production and drilling division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Carbon Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Oil Company</td>
<td>Refining division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Oil Company</td>
<td>Petrochemical division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continental Oil Company</td>
<td>Production and drilling division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firestone Tire and Rubber Company</td>
<td>Synthetic Rubber and Latex division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W. R. Grace and Company</td>
<td>Davison chemical division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hercules Powder Company</td>
<td>Polymers department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideal Cement Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lockheed Aircraft Corporation</td>
<td>Lockheed aircraft service company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lone Star Cement Company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnet Cove Barium Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Distillers and Chemical Corporation</td>
<td>Industrial chemicals division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation</td>
<td>Chemicals division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petroleum Chemicals, Incorporated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company</td>
<td>Chemicals Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stauffer Chemical Corporation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FIGURE 7

LAKE CHARLES HARBOR AND TERMINAL DISTRICT: MAP SHOWING
DISTRICT LIMITS, MARINE TERMINALS, INDUSTRIAL
AREAS AND LOCATION OF AREAS FOR POSSIBLE
FUTURE INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION
### TABLE VIII

**LAND USE, CALCASIEU PARISH, 1919-1959**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1919</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>1939</th>
<th>1949</th>
<th>1959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Land Area</strong></td>
<td>695,040</td>
<td>695,040</td>
<td>706,560</td>
<td>706,560</td>
<td>706,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land in farms</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of land in farms</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average size of farms</strong></td>
<td>157.9</td>
<td>114.1</td>
<td>102.3</td>
<td>211.7</td>
<td>607.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land Used for Crops</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harvested Per Farm</td>
<td>81,009</td>
<td>93,255</td>
<td>86,150</td>
<td>85,904</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland not harvested and not pastured</td>
<td>62,385</td>
<td>78,214</td>
<td>74,907</td>
<td>80,241</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Pasture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cropland used only for pasture</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>104.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other open</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland</td>
<td>66,088</td>
<td>252,481</td>
<td>110,497</td>
<td>77,906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland not pastured</td>
<td>13,142</td>
<td>34,224</td>
<td>77,906</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5,498</td>
<td>7,746</td>
<td>3,670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Farmland used for crops</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Farmland used for pasture</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>76.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE IX

**NUMBER OF FARMS, FARM TENURE, BY COLOR, CALCASIEU PARISH, 1920-1959**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Farms</th>
<th>Full Owners</th>
<th>Part Owners</th>
<th>Percent Operated by Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1776</td>
<td>852</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1352</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Farms</th>
<th>Full Owners</th>
<th>Part Owners</th>
<th>Percent Operated by Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1776</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>1235</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Farms</th>
<th>Full Owners</th>
<th>Part Owners</th>
<th>Percent Operated by Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>922</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1565</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>1776</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>55.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1/ Includes Croppers and all classes of tenants

2/ Not Reported

## TABLE X

**MAJOR CROPS, CALCASIEU PARISH, 1919-1959**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crop</th>
<th>1919 Acres</th>
<th>1934 Acres</th>
<th>1939 Acres</th>
<th>1949 Acres</th>
<th>1959 Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>3528</td>
<td>463</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of harvested cropland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn harvested for grain</td>
<td>5726</td>
<td>13296</td>
<td>11362</td>
<td>733</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of harvested cropland</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>35436</td>
<td>35044</td>
<td>58566</td>
<td>70166</td>
<td>71027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats for grain</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All hay, excluding sorghums</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>1590</td>
<td>2508</td>
<td>8057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans &amp; Cowpeas</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lespedeza</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>4296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small grain</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa and clover</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>745</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other hay</td>
<td>97</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1009</td>
<td>2344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts, all purposes</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potatoes</td>
<td>974</td>
<td>1579</td>
<td>1196</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish potatoes</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugarcane for syrup</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial vegetables</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>824</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>189</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peaches</td>
<td>3345</td>
<td>3242</td>
<td>3482</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pecans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5904</td>
<td>3791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

SCHEDULE USED TO INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS
A STUDY IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEATH:
Attitudes Toward Death and Death Customs

Name of Interviewer: ________________________________
Time Interview Ended: ______________
Time Interview Began: ______________
Time of Interview: ______________
I am ______________ from Louisiana State University and I would like to talk to you about your ideas and opinions of death and death customs. You have been selected by chance from among all the people in this community who have experienced death in their family during the past 18 months. Your selection was completely accidental, but your cooperation is essential to the understanding of human behavior during periods of crisis.

I hope through this study to arrive at certain conclusions which will help social scientists and doctors better understand the experience you and others like you have had.

Your replies to these questions will be confidential. Nowhere will your name appear; nor will you be asked to sign anything.

Thank you for your help.

1. Sex: Male__, Female__

2. Are you employed? (check one)  
   Yes__, What is your occupation?_________  
   No__, What is your usual occupation?_________  
   Retired__, What was your occupation?_________  
   Housewife__, What is/was your husband's occupation?_________ (circle IS or WAS).  
   Other (probe for source of income)______________

3. Name of Parish:______________  
   What is the name of this community?______________  
   Rural: (Farm)__ (Non-farm)__ Urban __  
   Were you born in this community? __Yes; __ No.  
   Where were you born?________________________________  
   How long have you lived in this community?_________

4. Educational background (circle highest grade completed)  
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12  
   College: 1 2 3 4  
   If college graduate, specify degree:______________  
   If graduate or professional school, specify:______________  
   Technical, trade or business school, specify:______________

5. What is your present age?____

6. What is your ethnic or racial background? (for example, English, French, Negro, Italian, etc.)______________
Do you own this house? Yes__, No__ (if Yes, ask)

What is the estimated value of the house and property?

7. What is your family's approximate average yearly income?
   __ Under 2,000
   __ 2,000 but under 4,000
   __ 4,000 but under 6,000
   __ 6,000 but under 8,000
   __ 8,000 but under 10,000
   __ 10,000 but under 12,000
   __ 12,000 but under 14,000
   __ 14,000 but under 16,000
   __ 16,000 but under 18,000
   __ 18,000 but under 20,000
   __ 20,000 and over

8. Religious affiliation:
   __ Protestant (specify denomination)
   __ Roman Catholic
   __ Jewish; specify type
   __ Other; specify type
   __ No religious affiliation

9. How religious a person would you say you are?
   __ very religious
   __ somewhat religious
   __ somewhat non-religious
   __ definitely non-religious

10. How often do you attend church?
    __ once a week or more
    __ twice a month
    __ about once a month
    __ mainly on important holidays
    __ almost never
    __ never

11. Which of the following statements most closely describes your ideas about God? (check one)
    __ I believe in a Divine God, Creator of the Universe, Who knows my innermost thoughts and feelings and to whom one day I shall be accountable.
    __ I believe in a power greater than myself, which some people call God and some people call nature.
    __ I believe in the worth of humanity, but not in God or a Supreme Being.
    __ I believe in natural law and that the so-called universal mysteries are ultimately knowable according to the scientific method.
I am not quite sure what I believe.
I am an atheist.
Other response.

12. What do you think happens to us after we die?


14. How often do you think about dying?
all of the time
frequently
occasionally
rarely
never

#15. What funeral home did you choose during the time you were in need of one?

(give name and location of funeral home)
Why did you choose this one?

#16. Would you describe for me as best you can the way in which you selected the casket?

#17. What was the cause of death?__________________________

#18. How long was the deceased ill (to the extent that the illness made him/her dependent on others)?________

#19. Who was primarily responsible for his/her care during that time?__________________________
Remarks:__________________________

*20. What funeral home would you choose in the event you needed the services of a funeral director?

(give name and location of funeral home)
Why would you choose this one?

*21. When did you last attend a funeral?__________________________

What was the relation of the deceased to you?
close personal friend

#Indicates questions asked only of the bereavement respondents.
*Indicates questions asked only of the death-free respondents.
acquaintance
relative; specify_________________________
other; specify_________________________

*22. Have you ever had a death in your immediate family:
   Yes___, No___ (if yes) how long ago_____________________
   What was the relation of the deceased to you?
   ___father
   ___mother
   ___brother
   ___sister
   ___wife
   ___husband
   ___son
   ___daughter

*23. How old was the person at the time of his/her death?___

*24. What was the cause of death?__________________________

*25. Was the person dependent on others before his/her
death? Yes___, no___

*26. How long was he/she dependent on others?______________

*27. Who was primarily responsible for his/her care?_____

28. What purpose should the wake serve?

29. Does the wake serve these purposes adequately?
   Yes___, No___ (if No, explain).

30. Did the wake help you in any way? Yes___ No___
    (if Yes, how?)

31. Do you believe the wake helps the family of the
deceased in general? Yes___, No___

32. Do you believe funeral customs have changed in any
    important ways over the years?
    Yes___, No___ (if Yes, how?)

33. Are new changes or revisions needed in funeral
customs? Yes___, No___ (if Yes, what changes are needed?)

34. What kind of funeral and burial arrangements do you
    think most desirable?

35. Do you think children should be taken to funerals?
    Yes___, No___ (please explain)?

36. What should the duties of the clergyman be at a
    funeral service?
37. What should the duties of the funeral director be at a funeral?

38. Where would you rank the funeral director (owns his own parlor) in this list of occupations? (give respondent card with list of occupations).

39. Which statement comes closest to expressing your feelings about a funeral director?
   ___ The funeral director is a professional man who is thought of in his community as being on the same level as a doctor or a lawyer.
   ___ The funeral director has a professional standing in his community but not as high as a doctor or lawyer.
   ___ The funeral director is thought of as a man who combines a professional service with a business service.
   ___ The funeral director is thought of as being a businessman rather than one who gives a professional service.
   ___ The funeral director is thought of as one whose standing in the community is not as high as the average businessman's.

40. In general would you say that your attitude toward present day funerals is (check one)
   ___ very favorable
   ___ mostly favorable
   ___ partly favorable and partly unfavorable
   ___ mostly unfavorable
   ___ very unfavorable
   If unfavorable, what do you dislike about funerals?
   If favorable, what do you like about funerals?

41. In general would you say that your attitude toward present day funeral directors is (check one)
   ___ very favorable
   ___ mostly favorable
   ___ partly favorable and partly unfavorable
   ___ mostly unfavorable
   ___ very unfavorable
   If unfavorable, what do you dislike about them?
   If favorable, what do you like about them?

42. Do you recall the cost of the funeral in your family? (record specific amount here—or)
   ___ under 300
   ___ 300 but under 600
   ___ 600 but under 900
   ___ 900 but under 1200
   ___ 1200 but under 1500
   ___ over 1500
   ___ don't know
What services were included in this price?
What services were not included in this price?

*43. What do you think is the average cost of a funeral in this community?
   - under 300
   - 300 but under 600
   - 600 but under 900
   - 900 but under 1,200
   - 1,200 but under 1,500
   - 1,200 but under 1,500
   - over 1,500
   - don't know

What services would be included in this price?
What services would not be included in this price?

44. Do you think this is a reasonable price to pay for a funeral? ___________________

45. What do you consider a reasonable price to pay for a funeral? ____________

46. Would you say the average person in your community selects a funeral at this price? Yes__, No__.

47. What do you think is the average price for a funeral in your community? ____________

48. Do you think funeral directors take advantage of a family's grief when they are selecting a funeral service? Yes__, No__ (if Yes, in what way?)

Do you know, first hand, of any such incidents?

49. Do you think it's right for a funeral director to advertise his services? Yes__, No__ (Why?)

50. Do you think it's right for a funeral director to advertise prices? Yes__, No__. (why)

#51. What financial arrangements did you make to pay for the final expenses?

- Expense pd. by:
  - head of house
  - brothers and hold
  - sisters
  - state or federal agency

- Made:
  - payment
  - cash
  - loan

- Expense shared by:
  - parents
  - other relatives

- Loan:
  - from bank
  - from family
  - other

- Payment:
  - cash
  - check
  - other
#52. Did the deceased have any burial insurance?  
Yes___, No___ (if Yes)  
What was the name of the Insurance Company?__________  
Was the Insurance Company affiliated with a funeral home? Yes___, No___  
(If Yes) What was the name of the Funeral Home?___  
What was the total value of the insurance policy?______

#53. Have you made any plans or arrangements with a funeral home for your funeral?  
Yes___, No___ (if Yes, what arrangements have you made?)  
(if applicable) Were these arrangements made (before__) (after__) the death in your family?

*54. Do you have any burial insurance?  Yes___, No___  
if yes, what is the name of the Insurance Co.__________  
Is it affiliated with a funeral home? Yes___, No___  
(if yes, what is the name of the funeral home?)__________  
What is the total value of the Insurance Policy?______

*55. Have you made any other plans or arrangements in the event of your death? Yes___, No___ (if Yes, what arrangements have you made?)

56. Would you favor having one funeral home in the community owned by the:  
City__________  
State__________  
Federal Government__________

#57. Who was of greatest comfort to you immediately following the death in your family? (probe by asking WHO, HOW, etc.)

#58. Where is your family member buried? (where is the cemetery located?)  
What type of cemetery is it?  
___ family cemetery  
___ public municipal  
___ private (church cemetery)  
___ military cemetery  
Perpetual care? Yes___, No___

#59. How did your behavior change as a result of the death? (Probe for "mourning" customs)
#60. How has the death affected other members of your family?

61. Have you read any books or articles in the past few years concerning the funeral industry? Yes___, No___ (if Yes, what was your reaction to them?)

62. Additional remarks:

EVALUATION:
VITA

The author was born January 13, 1934 in New Orleans, Louisiana. He received his elementary and high school training in the Catholic schools of Orleans Parish, and graduated from St. Aloysius High School in May, 1951. From September, 1951 to June, 1953 he attended Southeastern Louisiana College in Hammond, Louisiana.

In August of 1953 the author joined the United States Coast Guard, serving four years on active duty. In September, 1957 he re-entered Southeastern Louisiana College and graduated from that institution in May of 1959, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in social science.

On December 3, 1955 the author married Ruscilla A. Guidry. He is the father of four children.

The author has pursued all of his graduate work at Louisiana State University which began in June, 1959. He received his Master of Arts degree in Sociology with a minor in Anthropology in June, 1961. He then took a teaching position as Instructor of Social Science at Francis T. Nicholls College in Thibodaux, Louisiana, where he remained until September, 1964. At that time the author returned to Louisiana State University as a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Sociology while he worked toward his Doctorate
in that department with a minor in Anthropology. In 1965
the author was awarded a Special Lectureship in the Depart­
ment of Sociology. He is at present a candidate for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
Candidate: Jerome Joseph Salomone

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: An Attitudinal Study of Funeral Customs in Calcasieu Parish, Louisiana: A Sociological Analysis

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

William G. Haag

Alfred J. Johnson

Perry H. Howard

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George L. Wilber

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Date of Examination:

June 27, 1966