

**LEONARDVILLE: CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN A RURAL
CENTRAL TEXAS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

A Thesis

by

KASH KRINHOP

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 1999

Major Subject: Anthropology

**LEONARDVILLE: CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN A RURAL
CENTRAL TEXAS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT**

A Thesis

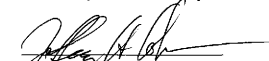
by

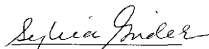
KASH KRINHOP

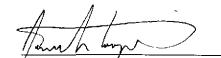
Submitted to Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of


MASTER OF ARTS

Approved as to style and content by:


Jeffrey H. Cohen
(Chair of Committee)


Sylvia A. Grider
(Member)


Jonathan C. Coopersmith
(Member)


Vaughn Bryant
(Head of Department)

August 1999

Major Subject: Anthropology

ABSTRACT

Leonardville: Cultural Expression in a Rural Central Texas Volunteer Fire Department.

(August 1999)

Kash Krinhop, B.A., Texas A&M University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Jeffrey H. Cohen

This ethnography of a volunteer fire department (VFD) in Leonardville, Texas documents the maintenance and reproduction of community in rural Texas. Through ethnographic analysis I illustrate how the VFD becomes a setting where the social world of Leonardville is created and where the people of Leonardville become stakeholders in their community. This project builds upon the growing interest in the ethnography of North America, the anthropological analysis of work and what is often called "worklore" or the folklore of the work place.

To understand the VFD and its place in both Leonardville and the state, I develop the concept of the "conventions of work place" or the job-specific actions and communicative practices that define the VFD as a social entity and establish a sense of membership, camaraderie and trust among its participants. Also, I use "conventions of mutual obligation" to talk about the responsibilities and commitments volunteers have to each other and their community. Finally, the VFD is examined in the context of its "social fields" (community, service area, county, and state) to understand the links that exist between Leonardville, the VFD and state programs/regulations as well as private organizations and businesses.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many people I want to thank for helping me obtain my master's degree here at Texas A&M. First, my committee members, Dr. Sylvia Grider and Dr. Jonathan Coopersmith. You have my very sincere thanks and utmost gratitude for all your interest, guidance and support during my trials and tribulations as a graduate student. You have both been a joy to work with.

Also, I thank my committee chair, Dr. Jeffrey Cohen, for all of his guidance, support and thought provoking conversations. You went above and beyond the call of duty and took a personal interest in my ongoing development as a student and anthropologist. You also have my thanks for playing a key role in my admittance as a graduate student. That being said, I want to thank Dr. Norbert Dannhaeuser and Dr. Gentry Steele for also putting in the good word that assisted in my acceptance as a graduate student to the Anthropology Department. Thanks for the chance to do good.

In addition to all the professors I am forever indebted to, I express my love and thanks to my parents, Brenda and Dallas and my grandma, Thelma, for their love and support (both moral and financial) and having the faith in me to achieve whatever I decided to achieve, regardless of whether or not they always understood it. Additionally, my grandpa, Leonard, whose memory I have dedicated this thesis to, has my eternal gratitude and love for making me understand that "a man can never have too much education."

My beautiful wife Sam, who I have also dedicated this thesis to, deserves a special thanks. You have my undying love for continuing to live with me after I began the writing process of my thesis. You are a wonderful listener and have infinite patience and tolerance. Thank you for your love, support and making me happy.

I also thank my friends who made my graduate student experience enjoyable. Furthermore, they continued to support me while listening to me ramble for hours (sometimes incoherently) about my research and writing. In particular, I thank Damon Burden, Allen Gillespie, Pat and Bucky Roman, Chuck Rheay and Rhett Clark.

And last but certainly not the least, I thank the men and women of the “Leonardville” Volunteer Fire Department. Without your cooperation and enthusiasm, there is absolutely no way I could have begun this project, much less completed it. You welcomed me into your organization, community and homes, giving your time and trust to me without regard for profit or any hint of self-interest. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the interviews and the socializing during my visits. Thank you very much.

Completing my graduate studies and thesis would have been impossible without the assistance and support of everyone mentioned above. Here, I reiterate my gratitude and indebtedness to all of you. Thank you *all* for your support, guidance and your unique capacity for patience, tolerance and trust.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1. Thesis Description and Objectives	1
2. Previous Research and Theoretical Approaches	13
Concept of Work	15
The Cultural Approach	20
Conventions of Workplace and Mutual Obligation	23
Social Fields	24
3. Procedure	25
CHAPTER II SETTING AND HISTORY	28
1. The Community	28
2. The Leonardville Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)	34
3. Conclusion	42
CHAPTER III THE WORKPLACE	44
1. Conventions of Mutual Obligation: The Workplace	47
Attendance	47
Response	52
Realization of Physical Needs	53
2. Conventions of the Workplace	55
Motivations, Rewards and Camaraderie	58
Satisfaction	59
Prestige	60
Rite of Passage	61
Civic Duty and Reciprocity	63
Jumping-off Point	65
Camaraderie	67

	Page
Technical Terms and Procedures	70
SCBA	71
Attack or Angle of Attack	71
Hose Teams	73
Full-fog	73
Positive Ventilation	74
Experience and Task Assignments	78
Recognition of Leadership and Adaptability	83
Team Work	90
3. Conclusion	95
 CHAPTER IV MUTUAL OBLIGATION AND SOCIAL CONTEXT	 97
1. The Community: Mutual Obligation and the Social Environment	98
Conventions of Mutual Obligation	98
Control and Stability	99
Mutual Obligation as Rite of Passage	104
Parades, Community Service, and Bar-Be-Que	108
Parades	110
Community Service	111
Bare-be-que	113
Cake Auction	116
2. Social Fields	120
Community	121
Inter-Community Context: Service Area and County	128
Service Area	129
County	134
State	137
3. Conclusion	142
 CHAPTER V SUMMARY	 145
 ENDNOTES	 155
 REFERENCES CITED	 161
 APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	 169

	Page
APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM	176
VITA	177

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Thesis Description and Objectives

Modernization and increasing urbanization have a major impact on life in rural Texas. Maintenance and reproduction of the rural community as a social place, in an environment of social, political, and economical change, is a topic of interest in this study and to anthropology in general. I will examine the role of the volunteer fire department (VFD) in the maintenance and recreation of group and community identity in rural Texas. My research analyzes socio-cultural processes and human behavior through participant observation and will relate it to discussions in occupational folklore, organizational culture and community studies. Involvement and participation in the VFD is one characteristic that defines Leonardville, Texas¹ as a community. I propose that participation in the VFD provides the local citizenry a stake in their community's affairs. Additionally, the contributions of time and labor by volunteer fire fighter/emergency medical technicians (EMTs)² are recognized by other non-VFD participants, thus providing these individuals with a degree of status and prestige.

This introductory chapter contains a brief overview of the thesis, including a statement of purpose, a literature review and methodology section. I will accomplish

This thesis follows the style and formatting of American Anthropologist.

two goals in this research project. First, the ethnographic analysis of the Leonardville, Texas VFD as a social institution in which cultural expression of community and identity occur through work and participation. The workplace is a setting in which culture both affects and is affected by participants' ideas and deeds in a dynamic, interactive social system. Cultural expressions in the workplace are a means through which a common identity is constructed and maintained. The analysis of the Leonardville VFD is presented as a model through which we can understand how and why this community is organized by its population.

Secondly, I will examine the Leonardville VFD in the context of broader regional and state processes. The VFD is one institution that serves to maintain community identity when outside forces, such as state bureaucracy, economics, and population issues effect social change. Overall, the social characteristics of this rural Central Texas VFD will be examined within the context of work and occupational folklore, human organization, and social environment.

Focal points of this VFD's examination will be inner group behavior, group communication and work techniques as cultural expressions. The workplace is part of the social system in which local citizens live and act and is a legitimate area for examining social processes. I will argue that being a local volunteer fire fighter is not simply a job for putting out fires or a job that someone *has* to do. Instead, it is a means through which local citizens, sharing a common goal, come together in social cooperation to contribute time and labor to their community (Perkins and Metz, 1988: 17). In this organization, social processes such as worker, friend, family and community

relations are acted out and prestige or status is sought and achieved. Participation in the VFD also serves as a rite of passage or a means of gaining local status as an adult and/or common recognition as a citizen of the community (Simpson, 1996: 22).

Chapter II is a description of the setting and history of Leonardville from its founding in the mid-19th century by Czech immigrants. This chapter also presents a discussion of the events which eventually led to the formation of the VFD and its subsequent development as a local institution within Leonardville.

In the third and fourth chapters, I propose that fire fighter/EMT identity, behavior and communication are embodied in "conventions" of mutual obligation and workplace. Conventions of mutual obligation are a shared set of beliefs, values and corresponding actions concerning devotion and assistance among individuals belonging to a community or group. Conventions of workplace are the shared work practices associated with task accomplishment and the behavior among workers who perform work. The idea of "conventions" is based upon John Watanabe's research on community meaning and identity in rural Guatemala (1992). Conventions are "acts of communication through the use of symbols that entail both the context of articulation [social and geographic setting], . . . and those doing the articulating, the interlocutors." These conventions define patterns of social action and relations, whose meanings are commonly understood among community or group members and are an expression of group or "local solidarity" (Watanabe, 1992: 13, 184). In other words these conventions help volunteer fire fighters maintain individual, group and community identity even as the workplace or community is in a state of change. Conventions include:

- commitment to each other and to the community
- appropriate behavior in the fire house and on emergency scenes; ability to follow orders, attending meetings, not responding to emergency calls intoxicated, etc.
- communication such as the ability to learn and/or instruct during training sessions, sharing insights regarding the VFD and associated work or simply being able to communicate with others about everyday events, etc.
- and attitudes and ideas; positive association with being a volunteer and understanding the importance of the VFD to Leonardville and surrounding area, willingness to work and participate as a volunteer or simply being able to work well with others.

Furthermore, conventions of mutual obligation and workplace are enacted in conjunction with conventional notions of morality and community assisting in the overall social construction of Leonardville as a community. Conventions of morality are a "way of being that alludes less to individual personality than to the shared - and therefore moral - proprieties of the community from which" a person comes.³ Morality, in this sense, regards shared and commonly understood standards of personal behavior in relation to the "normality" of the community (Watanabe, 1992: 81-83). Conventions of community are the shared sense of meaning associated with citizenship in Leonardville. This local identity is created through conventions stemming from the community's

physical proximity, "the particular past that this place possesses [and] the immediacies of life in the here and now shape how they [citizens of Leonardville] use this heritage." The sense of "belonging to a place" is socially (rather than geographically) realized through the interactions of conventionalized knowledge regarding mutual obligation, workplace, morality and community (Watanabe, 1992: 76-80).

Chapter III focuses on both conventions of mutual obligation (in the VFD itself) and conventions of the workplace. Mutual obligation in the workplace includes:

- attitudes regarding the faithful attendance of meetings and training sessions
- prompt response to emergency calls
- and possession of a common understanding of the physical need for fire protection/emergency medical service (EMS).

Volunteers share these conventions and use them as a basis or framework for action and evaluation. In other words, these conventions are necessary to maintain the VFD as both a social and emergency service organization. Also, shared notions and understanding of mutual obligation is necessary in maintaining group identity and efficacy.

Conventions of workplace are the job-related actions and communicative practices of VFD members and as Robert McCarl points out, they act to coordinate thoughts and actions (1985: 159). Conventions of workplace are necessary to the maintenance and reproduction of the workplace as both an effective fire department and social organization. These conventions are created in the repetition and modification of

past behavior and communication. They also aid fire fighters as they successfully deal with emergency calls and eliminate or modify unsuccessful job-related interaction. Thus, these conventions are basic to survival and to complex manners of behavior and communication. Additionally, these conventions are found during administrative meetings, training sessions, and actual emergency responses. Included in the conventions of workplace are:

- motivations/rewards;
social activity such as bar-be-queing at meetings and feelings of pride in providing an important service to the community such as fire protection/EMS
- camaraderie;
developed over time through shared experiences during fire protection service and EMS
- technical terms and techniques regarding fire fighting/EMS;
the use of techniques such as positive ventilation (forcing smoke through a space rather than drawing it out) during structure fires
- teamwork;
volunteers working together fluidly and effectively to accomplish a task
- experience;
having responded and practically participated in varying emergency situations, gained by volunteers over time and lends to personal status within the VFD (becoming an elected officer or a recognized leader on emergency scenes)

- task assignments;
directing others in specific tasks that must be performed in order to accomplish particular goals both in the fire house (maintenance of equipment) and on emergency scenes (checking for gas lines/tanks at fires). Knowledge of needs and/or potential dangers allow experienced volunteers to assign tasks to less experienced volunteers.
- and individual/group recognition of leadership;
stems from the experience as well as officer elections but an experienced volunteer does not have to be an officer to be recognized as a good leader or knowledgeable fire fighter/EMT.

Conventions of mutual obligation and workplace are not mutually exclusive entities. Instead they overlap and interact with each other. For example, the need to keep equipment as basic and uniform as possible is a combination of the use of technical terms and techniques resulting from experience. This practice insures that training and use of tools during emergency situations does not become confusing or, worse yet, hazardous for less experienced volunteers due to the fact that they do not utilize fire fighting equipment/procedures on a regular basis. Many volunteers do not even use this equipment on a semi-regular basis. Complicated and/or various kinds of equipment can lead to valuable time being lost or accidents resulting in loss of property, injury or death.

The conventions of workplace and mutual obligation create and build upon networks of social relations (verbal and non-verbal) that are often ordinary ideas, acts or

communications for the insider and sometimes very difficult for the outsider to recognize and understand. Detailed examination and understanding of these conventions provide insight into group dynamics, characteristics, social processes and the shared, tacit knowledge of the members of this organization and community.

Chapter IV addresses the conventions of mutual obligation as they pertain to the relationship between the VFD and Leonardville and the VFD's social environment. The social environment I discuss is based on the already well delineated geo-political boundaries of the community, the service area (Voting Precinct 3), the county (Donnell County) and the state. I examine the social actions and interactions occurring in and between the VFD and other people/organizations located in each of these areas.

Conventions of mutual obligation observed at the community level establish trust and offer opportunities for volunteers to demonstrate their devotion to the community. These conventions also create shared responsibilities and addresses the burdens of sometimes dangerous and/or traumatic emergency situations such as house/grass fires or car accidents. Mutual obligation maintains local identity and social stability and are one way individuals establish and validate their membership/citizenship in Leonardville.

The reproduction of community as a social place is created through the efforts of citizens as they fulfill particular roles in specific manners. Participation in the community is both expected and required of volunteers to remain in "good standing." Expectations regarding the notion of "good standing" are created from shared beliefs about what it means to be a good member of the VFD (and community) which include

concern about and involvement in issues that affect the community (Goreham, 1988: 89). In this particular case concern and involvement are in the form of providing fire protection service and EMS to the citizenry of Leonardville and the VFD's service area. I propose that many individuals who participate in the Leonardville VFD volunteer as a means of community involvement. Volunteering is a way for individuals to gain a stake in their community; to make a contribution and through which they will receive a degree of social capital. Social capital is group membership and the benefits gained through commitment, interaction and participation in a group (Bourdieu, 1986, Coleman, 1989: S119). Involvement and participation in the VFD is cultural expression of communal identity through volunteerism. Furthermore, this volunteerism is public. Group and community involvement are observable in parades, community service and fund-raising events. It is for all within the VFD and community to see (Simpson 1996: 17). Like other community, political or religious functions and rituals, the actions of the VFD create and maintain a public image and identity for the volunteers. This public participation also creates a sense of belonging while it establishes the parameters of correct behavior. By this, I mean that volunteers are not merely reactionary agents responding to forces such as fires or medical emergencies but instead are actively involved in the "production and reproduction" of their community. This is accomplished by actively engaging in both the practical and symbolic actions related to service and ceremony (such as emergency response and/or parades) in the local setting where the "world as lived and the world as imagined" merge and become the same (Geertz, 1973: 112-13, Ghani, 1995: 38, Ortner, 1984). Or more simply, volunteer fire fighters create

and fill a position in society (especially in their local community) that serves not only the actual, physical need for fire protection and EMS but also the symbolic role of representing the positive aspects of a community. Volunteers embody the collective desire and ability of citizens to join and work together for the greater good: protecting and saving lives and property.

Although all fire departments require fire fighting equipment and storage facilities for equipment (the firehouse), the fundamental components of a fire department, voluntary or otherwise, are its fire fighters. The Leonardville VFD relies almost solely upon its local citizens for its volunteers and its financial support. With the exception of \$200 from Donnell County for every fire call the VFD responds to outside of the city's limits, this fire department receives no direct assistance from the government (local or state). The Leonardville volunteers maintain their independence from government bureaucracy and funding. Continued independence from government bureaucracy and funding is conscious resistance to outside control or influence. According to one long-time volunteer: "We don't want anybody coming in here telling us what we can and can't do. The way we do things is pretty good plus we don't have a tax added to our water bill every month. If we did, non-members would start trying to tell us how to run our business. No Way!" Financial independence and lack of municipal control allow volunteers to retain a high degree of control over their organization's affairs and operations. The Leonardville VFD's support comes primarily from the good will and self-organization of the local citizenry. In turn, VFD participation allows a portion of local citizens to come together in a formalized setting to

organize fire protection service and discuss matters of the community as well as providing an opportunity to publicly demonstrate their citizenship to fellow volunteer fire fighters and non-volunteers alike through volunteerism.

Volunteerism allows for and perpetuates the continuance of the local VFD as a viable entity in and for the community (Putnam 1993: 89). Successful individual participation and acquisition of social capital, status and/or prestige within the VFD demonstrates to other community members that this organization provides an opportunity for the volunteers to serve the community while simultaneously gaining recognition as a community member through positive association, thus keeping the VFD viable as an institution by continuing to attract volunteers (Jordan, 1989: 6). Likewise, the success of this VFD perpetuates and reproduces community identity when the local citizenry is confronted, both internally and externally, with change. The actions of people in this organization and community might seem mundane. However, when examined in an anthropological context; codes of commitment, conduct and community set the standard and stage for practice and construction of expected and acceptable behavior, duties and rights (Ghani, 1995: 38).

In the second part of Chapter IV, I discuss the fact that Leonardville is not an isolated rural town nor does the VFD serve only its immediate community. Rather, Leonardville is located in progressively larger social and geographical settings that consist of:

- the community; Leonardville
- the service area; (area that the VFD is responsible for providing services to, Voting Precinct 3)
- the county; Donnell County (South-Central Texas)
- and the state; Texas.

Separation of the Leonardville VFD from its social context is no more theoretically legitimate than the separation of culture from the workplace. The volunteer fire department assists and cooperates with small neighboring community VFDs and organizations as well as county/state bureaucracies and private businesses. It provides people with emergency fire protection and medical service in a 181 square mile area (service area). Similarly, William Roseberry (1995) discusses Eric Wolf's idea of the social setting and places the community in a broader sociological context or what Wolf calls "fields of power" (Roseberry, 1995: 56, Wolf, 1969, 290). The "local" exists in the larger "social field" which are macro-political and economical processes that engage and are engaged by microsocial or local and individual political and economic actors. An understanding of connections within and between progressively larger social groups and communities is necessary to account for socio-cultural processes and action as well as the acquisition of resources and power (Roseberry, 1995: 57). I will use this idea as a model to analyze the Leonardville VFD as a "local" entity in its social fields. The interaction between the VFD and other local groups and citizens provides insight into local social dynamics. Examining the VFD's service to the non-local population in the

service area is also important because it highlights volunteers' behavior toward and relationships with people who are not actively involved in the VFD (or community) and who, often, do not contribute to the maintenance of or have ties with the VFD. The focus on county-wide context demonstrates the inter-organizational interaction between various communities in Donnell County. And the discussion regarding the VFD in Texas concerns the VFD relations with state government bureaucracy and private business.

Chapter V is the discussion and conclusion. In this chapter, I reiterate the primary foci of my research project which is examining both the inner workings of the VFD as expressed through conventions of mutual obligation and workplace as well the VFD in its broad social context or environment. Furthermore, informed opinions or projections regarding the future of the Leonardville and its VFD are presented. This information is given for the explicit purpose of assisting future anthropological studies regarding the anthropology of work and rural communities.

2. Previous Research and Theoretical Approaches

Early research in the United States regarding culture and work as an integrated topic was primarily carried out in the context of sociological community studies in the first half of this century (see for example Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown*, 1930). It was not until the late 1970s and 1980s with the increase in economic competition between the United States and Japan began that research of work as part of culture became a legitimate topic of interest for anthropologists (Jordan, 1989: 2). The

following is a brief literature review of organizational social structure, the anthropology of work and how this information relates to my thesis topic. Also included with these topics is a brief section regarding Eric Wolf's notion of "fields of power" (see Roseberry, 1995, Wolf, 1956, 1969: 290). I use Wolf's idea as a means of demonstrating and describing relationships of the Leonardville VFD to its broad socio- political surroundings. Work and how we organize ourselves is an integral part of the human condition. Yet, we, as people and as social scientists, sometimes underestimate its significance and influence in our lives. In my thesis, I hope to convey to the reader the importance of work and its role in human social organization. In this literature review, I examine how various scholars approach the study of work and develop models of work and human organization.

To begin, it is both necessary and appropriate to provide the reader with definitions of culture and work. Culture, as defined by Herbert Applebaum (1992), is "knowledge, ideas, beliefs, values, and behavior which are shared and transmitted to others." Culture is what we do, how we do it and what we think about our actions. It is our actions and thoughts. Similarly, work includes the social roles, beliefs, techniques, knowledge and appropriate behavior for attaining "a certain level of productivity and quality." In other words, work is specific tasks and relationships with prescribed behavior and concrete goals. Additionally, people do not *just* work. Work necessarily demands reciprocity and rewards; there must be some purpose or advantage to accomplishing tasks (Applebaum, 1992: 2, 3). A basic premise on which my research depends is that human behavior and interaction exist in the work environment as much

as they exist in kinship systems, political systems or religious institutions. Culture cannot be separated from the context of labor and work environments are legitimate areas for cultural study. They are areas in which anthropologists can observe, analyze and understand cultural processes taking place (Sachs, 1989: 1).

Concept of Work. The Leonardville VFD does not physically "produce" anything. However, fire fighting is a job in which protection of life and property is provided and is "linked to the control of a natural element [fire] once it has gotten out of control." (McCarl, 1981: 12). Applebaum's description of work is just as applicable to this type of service-oriented job. But more importantly, his definitions of culture and work give credence to the concept of the workplace as a cultural setting.

The workplace is a social setting created through culturally based social practices/social actions. The physical nature of the workplace is a location that greatly influences the social behavior of workers. This behavior is learned and passed from individual to individual. The way people act in the work environment is important to the future success of individuals entering the job and of the company or organization itself which in this case is the VFD. Work environments are places which demand certain codes of behavior (Applebaum, 1984: 4). These codes are common to all that participate on the job and are both spoken (explicit) and unspoken (implicit). In other words there are things that everyone *must* do and things people *can* do.

There are several key elements in Applebaum's concept of work worth noting. First, workers must be motivated to perform their duties. This motivation is not necessarily financial. It can include motivations such as gaining appreciation, respect,

status or simply helping someone in distress. The worker must also possess the ability to complete assigned tasks and be able to accomplish tasks efficiently. In order to do this, the worker must be able to follow rules. Specifically regarding the VFD, rules are usually spoken or explicit such as directions on water pump operation or hose-nozzle operation. Unspoken or implicit rules may include things such as appropriate language in certain settings or assumptions of trust between group members. Interpersonal skills are also vital to the success of a worker and often times require being able to control personal feelings and emotions (Applebaum, 1984: 18-19). The control of feelings and emotions is especially important for fire fighter/EMTs because of the sometimes traumatic nature of working with accident and fire victims. For example, the following excerpt from an interview with Damon Burden is a good indicator of the, sometimes, horrible events encountered as a volunteer. Damon has been a volunteer in Leonardville's VFD for 12 years but had only been a member in the organization for 3 years (but was already EMS certified) at the time of the following story.

Kash: "What are some of the more memorable emergency calls you have assisted with?"

Damon Burden: "One really comes to mind from back in 1990. It was an EMS call. A truck load of kids, two in front and three in back [in the bed of the truck]. That call broke a lot of members from going on EMS calls from then on. They were all drunk, went around a curve and went up under a big rig trailer. It was a bunch of Ezra High

School kids. Killed three of them. Had to cut one out; the driver."

"First person I walked up to was propped-up in the upright position with his legs dangling over the end of the truck and kinda leaning against a girl. Man, you saw light go straight through his skull. The girl was dead too. The kid further in the back of truck survived. Didn't get a scratch on him. I don't know how that happened. The passenger in front got a broken leg but the driver died the next day. The whole cab of the truck had wrapped around his head and chest. If he would have lived through it he would have probably been a vegetable."

Kash: "How do you deal with that kind of stuff?"

Damon: "You just gotta do what you gotta do to get the job done. That episode broke a lot of the non-certified volunteers from going to EMS calls. But they're still fire fighters. The prospect of actually helping someone in a situation like that is motivation enough for a lot of people to do it but not others. Depends on the individual."

"We watch out for each other. People can get messed up from seeing something bad. It's usually the new guys; the rookies, that you have to watch out for. They're all young, dumb and full of cum and act tough. They usually won't say anything but if they act

kinda funny then we try to get them to talk about it. We always come back to the fire house after a call and talk about things like what we could have done differently or better and how."

"That's a pretty extreme case. Usually, things don't get that bad."

Awareness of the varying elements in the workplace provides the researcher with an informational basis to understand and explain the cultural and social nature of work. The work environment is a social setting that both influences and is influenced by the worker. Codes of behavior and information are transmitted from worker to worker, both consciously and unconsciously. As Damon first stated in his account of the deaths of three teenagers, volunteers "have to do what [they] have to do" or possess the ability to get the job done which often time requires setting aside personal emotions, at least temporarily. Volunteers who can successfully manage these emotions are the ones who continue functioning as EMTs. Those who continue to act as EMTs must also be motivated to perform duties that include dealing with accidents such as the one described. Motivation is stated (by volunteers) as the desire to help people in trouble but may also include the anticipation of gratitude and appreciation that is often reciprocated by accident survivors (Perkins, 1996: 21). Additionally, volunteers "watch out for each other." This is especially true of experienced volunteers looking out for rookies who may not have encountered "something bad" and with such events had the opportunity to decide from experience whether or not to continue assisting with EMS. Furthermore, volunteers may not want to appear unable to perform on the job due to pride or desire to

prove themselves to other volunteers. This leads to issues of communication which, as Damon stated, are often *implicit* such as when volunteers “act kinda funny.” This is usually noticed from a lack of conversation or evident emotional stress. There is also an account of *explicit* communication in Damon’s story. This is when volunteers come back to the fire house and discuss the events of an emergency call. Volunteers consciously make an effort to improve on technical aspects of their work through discussion. This time also provides an opportunity for sharing personal feelings or thoughts regarding calls. Acquiring and using cultural knowledge (i.e. experience) is necessary for the success of both the worker (volunteer) and the organization (VFD). Furthermore, the ability of individuals to successfully acquire and transmit job-specific cultural knowledge is not confined to the workplace but is also due to broader cultural conditioning acquired in other settings which people live in. This includes participation in various other community organizations/activities and areas such as family and education as well as religious attitudes that shape broader beliefs and attitudes about work and community (Applebaum, 1984: 5-6).

Realizing that people not only learn culturally job-specific knowledge in the workplace but also bring culture to the workplace from other spheres of their lives is helpful in understanding and modeling work as a cultural concept. The reciprocal relationship between individuals at work as well as the relationships between individuals and different societal entities or organizations are important factors in my conceptualization of work. The work environment necessarily demands a contribution from the worker for the common goal and the worker in turn necessarily demands

compensation for their time and effort. The motivating factor, in the case of this research project is not money but appreciation, respect, social status and, for some, anticipation of future employment (in professional fire fighting/EMS units). However, even though volunteers may desire rights and rewards they are not always received from everybody. Some people are not appreciative of the service the VFD provides or may not understand the sacrifice involved in being a volunteer. Accepting and dealing with this fact is also crucial to success as a volunteer fire department.

In sum, Applebaum (1984) states that a job is a social landscape in which individual workers acquire and use cultural as well as technical knowledge. Knowledge and behavior are learned and passed from individual to individual. People's behavior in the work environment is important to continued efficiency and success of work groups. Also, work environments are places which demand certain codes of conduct and responsibilities. In return for abiding by these codes, participants are awarded rights and resources which may or may not be financial. The Leonardville VFD is a cultural setting where labor and information sharing occurs, a certain conduct and amount of commitment is expected, and the motivation and rewards for contributions of time and labor is not monetary (Applebaum, 1984).

The Cultural Approach. Ann Jordan (1989) states that cultural expression in organizational settings is "integrated" and "holistic." By this she means that social processes are caused and perpetuated by individual actions/interactions and political/economic forces both within and outside the organization. Internal forces are, for example, inner-group competition or strife and external forces are broad economic

changes that occur outside the group. The VFD is one work setting in which these forces and culture can be examined and understood. —

Jordan describes what is referred to as the orthodox theory of work. This states that an organization's behavior is "goal-directed" and an individual's behavior is "preference-directed." The concept refers to the fact that an organization's purpose or "goals" overrides or takes precedence over its individual members' behavior or "preferences" as necessary to fulfill the mission of or reason for creating the group. In other words, to be a member of a group (i.e. the job) there are certain requirements met or sacrifices made by individuals. There are norms and mores that must (or should) be observed. These vary in severity and enforcement from group to group but do generally have a controlling effect on "preference-directed" behavior. Furthermore, social stability is subject to constantly changing situations and "predictability" depends upon the "limits" of information acquisition and the ability to use and apply this information (Jordan, 1989: 3, Clark, 1985).

Jordan also discusses what she refers to as the non-orthodox theory or "the cultural approach." In this theory, anthropological methods are stressed such as cross cultural comparison of various work environments. This approach also rejects the notion that culture in the workplace is created and maintained by management or leaders. Organizational culture is instead created and maintained through personal motivations, individual actions, and social relations. For example, human beings are not just motivated by money. Motivation may be the desire for status or prestige. Second, people are social and therefore pass on knowledge and information in various ways such

as deliberate use of technical terms and procedures as well as informal, relaxed conversations (often referred to as “lore”) regarding emergency situations (McCarl, 1985: 13). There is also what is commonly called “on-the-job-training.” For the VFD this includes hands-on, practical training/observation at actual emergencies and is accomplished through repeated emergency response. And third, re-modification and reinterpretation of social information constantly occurs and is expressed in ideas and actions. Individuals' motivations, actions, and social relations are based in, create and maintain culture (Jordan, 1989: 6). Jordan's discussion of non-orthodox culture in organizations is applicable to my research because volunteer fire fighter/EMTs are not motivated by money to contribute their time and labor but instead by the desire to help the community. There is the attitude that if you expect others to help save your property or life then you should be willing to help others do the same. Additionally, the fact that the VFD affects and is affected by social, economic and political forces (both internal and external to Leonardville) is helpful in understanding this group. This is because, in the face of change, maintenance and reproduction of group/community identity occurs in the VFD through social action and information sharing in the form of conventions of workplace and conventions of mutual obligation (Watanabe, 1992: 4, 13).

Social structure includes ascribed value and is framed by human action (Jordan, 1989: 6). This means that *what* people do and *how* they do it has a relative value to a particular group which is inherently linked to what that group collectively deems important, appropriate, good, normal, etc. In other words, people constantly place meanings and values on their actions and peoples' actions (and their meanings) change to

adapt to varying situations and/or pressures. For instance, in an organization such as the VFD, cultural expression occurs through the public display of volunteerism (human action) which is ascribed meaning *by* people and also ascribes meaning *to* people (Radcliffe-Brown, 1965: 179-180). Such meanings may be the notion that an individual participating in a VFD is community oriented or has an exceptionally high regard for human life and property. Additionally, organizations of work do not stand alone but are influenced by experience in and forces exerted from other social circles (Gamst, 1989, Wolf, 1971: 178). For instance, this VFD provides emergency services to people and communities other than Leonardville and volunteers are certainly influenced by the stories of fire fighting they grow up with.

Conventions of Workplace and Mutual Obligation. One of the main resources for my research is Robert McCarl's ethnographic study of professional fire fighters in Washington, D.C. (1985). McCarl states that the primary ingredient needed in an organization of fire fighters is the "development of coordination between thought and action." He refers to this as the "work technique." The ethnographer must adopt a "process-oriented perspective" rather than a "goal-oriented perspective"⁴ when investigating occupational groups and their work techniques (McCarl, 1985: 159-160). By identifying and separating these two perspectives McCarl implies that the process of achieving a goal is much more important than the goal itself. The processes or conventions of workplace are the cultural "core" of the Leonardville VFD's task achievement (McCarl, 1985: 166). Conventions of workplace are job related actions and communicative processes that enable Leonardville Volunteer to successfully interact and

complete fire fighting/medical tasks. Rather than a set process, volunteers adopt and modify techniques that assist in the successful navigation of their work environment. Recognition and understanding of the processes involved in task accomplishment assist in the analysis of information transmission (formal and informal) making up the cultural processes unique to the Leonardville VFD. Utilizing McCarl's process-oriented perspective, I focus on the conventions of workplace and mutual obligation to understand how information and knowledge are relayed from person to person in this VFD and its community in general (Watanabe, 1992).

Social Fields. The Leonardville VFD has ties to and cooperates with small neighboring communities and organizations as well as county/state bureaucracies and private businesses. The Leonardville VFD is responsible for providing emergency fire protection and medical service in a 181 square mile area. Therefore, the relationships between the VFD, Leonardville and its broader social environment are dynamic and inseparable as long as this fire department serves to fill socially and physically pragmatic needs (Perkins, 1987: 342, 1996, Perkins and Metz, 1988: 117). In order to fully understand this group (or any group), its social context must be understood. Eric Wolf states that we should focus "attention on the relationships between different groups operating on different levels of society, rather than on any one of its isolated segments" in order to truly comprehend socio-cultural processes (Wolf, 1956: 1074). Thus, the VFD exists in or is a part of a larger system. It is a group or "local termini of a web of group relations which extend through intermediate levels from the level of the community to that of the nation" (Wolf, 1956: 1065).⁵ In this perspective, the

community is theoretically modeled as existing in "fields." These fields are macro-political and economical processes (governments, markets, education) that consist of microsocal (local individual and/or group) political and economic actors. This model seeks to describe and define social actors and groups, their interpersonal relationships, and their relationships with other social actors and groups. An understanding of action and interaction within and between these entities is necessary to account for socio-cultural processes as well as acquisition of resources and power (Roseberry, 1995: 57). I use the idea of fields of power to model and analyze the VFD as a "local" entity existing in a progressively larger, concentric social fields of community, service area, county and state.

3. Procedure

The research for my thesis project consisted of three phases: library research, fieldwork and analysis. Ethnographic studies of community regarding cultural expression through fire departments and social institutions in general make up the bulk of the literature reviewed. These readings are both theoretical and descriptive in nature. This portion of my research enabled me to construct an anthropological framework in which to place my data and further develop my proposal that the Leonardville VFD is a valid setting for the reproduction of group/community identity and examining the broader sociological milieu of this organization.

I employed standard anthropological methods in my research including participant observation and individual interviews. Participant observation required

personal involvement with the Leonardville VFD. This meant attending and interacting in group meetings, training sessions, and responding to emergency calls. Furthermore, attending social events such as parades and fund raisers was also necessary because these were good opportunities to observe volunteers outside the fire house and context of emergency situations. The purpose of participant observation is to gain a better, more personal, perspective of the feelings and actions of the organization and community.

Personal interviews require asking individuals specific questions regarding their participation in the fire department and their lives in general. Questions cover topics such as what it takes to be a good fire fighter/EMT and types of jobs people hold to make a living. This interview process is designed to provide general information regarding the historical, demographic and socio-economic make-up of Leonardville, Texas and its VFD (see Appendix A for questionnaire).

The people I interviewed were self-selected. What is meant by this is that during informal, relaxed conversations at monthly meetings I mentioned my interest in conducting formal interviews. At the mere suggestion of this many volunteers immediately shied away, avoided eye contact with me and some flatly refused to be interviewed when asked directly. To avoid pressuring, alienating or offending anyone, I was as gracious and undemanding as I could be while still letting the volunteers understand that I was very interested in speaking directly with as many of them as possible and that I was sincerely interested in their work. Therefore, those who expressed interest in talking to me were the volunteers selected for interviews. Furthermore, by allowing or encouraging self-selection I acquired a good mixture of

volunteers, ranging from semi-active and inactive volunteers to fully active volunteers. Semi-active and inactive volunteers are those who do not regularly attend meetings or participate in most emergency cases but assist during the VFD's fund-raiser or respond to extreme emergency situations when fully active volunteers are unable to respond or need unusually large amounts of manpower. In contrast, active volunteers include those who respond on as regular a basis as possible. Included in these categories of volunteers are officers and non-officers of the VFD. I interviewed the president, secretary/treasurer, assistant chief, former officers as well as general members (active and inactive). All together, I conducted 18 interviews with 14 people (active- 5, semi-active- 5; one semi-active volunteer 5 separate times, and inactive- 4;) out of a VFD with a total membership of 49 (active- 13, semi- and inactive- 36).⁶

Overall, my research project provides readers and the field of anthropology with a clearer understanding of the cultural and social processes that take place in Leonardville, Texas and its volunteer fire department. I present a detailed analysis of the Leonardville VFD as a cultural entity and the role of this organization in its community and surrounding area. Conceivably, future researchers can use this ethnographic study as a heuristic guide to similar topics and to demonstrate how rural Texas is maintained and reproduced as a social place in the face of rapid change.

CHAPTER II

SETTING AND HISTORY

1. The Community

In south-eastern Central Texas, in Donnell County, lies the small community of Leonardville (population 489). This predominantly agricultural town lies on the edge of the Arrowhead River Bottom. Hundreds of acres of planted cotton and sorghum thrive in the black, fertile soil of the flood plain. Although considered a rural community, the citizens of Leonardville have access to many of the conveniences of the city without living in an urban or suburban environment. Twelve miles of range and farmland and the Arrowhead River separate the town from the large urban center of Shawnee Prairie in neighboring Ora County.

The Central Texas economy is based primarily on oil and agriculture. Most businesses in Leonardville are related to and/or dependent on agriculture and most people living there are farmers and ranchers or blue collar workers employed in the surrounding area.

Leonardville's population consists of 489 people residing in the city's limits. There are approximately 400 more people living in the surrounding area that consider themselves members of the community. The town has a school system (K-12) complete with gymnasium and baseball field. There are a number of small businesses including a convenience and grocery store, hair salon, and blacksmith shop as well as two

restaurants. Additionally, there is a small courthouse for the Justice of the Peace, city hall, and the VFD and its firehouse.

Leonardville was settled by Czech immigrants who moved to Donnell County in search of good land on which to grow crops and raise their families. Several communities in Donnell County had well-established Czech immigrant populations by the middle part of the 19th century. Large numbers of Czech peasants came to Texas by way of Galveston fleeing the political and social turmoil of their homeland as well as persecution for their religious beliefs (Skrabanek, 1988: 9). These first families arriving in Texas initially established Czech communities approximately 100 miles northwest of Galveston in Austin County. Due to their success, these immigrants moved further inland to what is known today as the Blackland Prairie Soil Region and which runs from Galveston north to Dallas, Texas. This narrow strip of land is considered excellent farmland due to its flat topography and fertile soil. The land was also considered prime by Czech settlers because of its low purchase price at the time. This was due to the fact that Americans living in the region were principally interested in raising cattle (Skrabanek, 1988).

By 1880, there were two main Czech communities in Donnell County; Kaben and Ezra, the latter being the larger of the two. Czechs living throughout Texas maintained close social networks. Word continued to spread among Czech immigrants that good farmland was for sale and reasonably priced in Donnell County. New immigrants quickly purchased additional land and moved into and around the area that is now known as Leonardville. In a few short years, other Czechs followed these first

families, buying more land in the area and formed what Robert Skrabanek (1988) refers to as a "cultural island" where Czech immigrants shared "a common language, beliefs, practices, and customs."⁷ Also, Czechs living in this area "tried to discourage those who were of non-Czech origin" from moving there (11). Czech immigrants stayed together to help each other survive and to make new and better lives for themselves.

By the end of the 1880's this small Czech farming community established a one-room schoolhouse (where lessons were taught in Czech) and a cooperative store. This cooperative store was the only one in Donnell County and was owned by and operated for Czechs. A pattern of locally initiated group cooperation is a recurring theme throughout the history and development of the community. Aside from the practical need for education and manufactured goods, the establishment of the school and store are examples of the construction, maintenance and reproduction of community through shared socio-cultural norms, values and obligations (Skrabanek, 1988: 11-14). The people of Leonardville (originally known as Vyne's Corner)⁸ formed their own educational system as well as a means of acquiring consumer goods residents could not provide for themselves at the time. This demonstrates their willingness and ability to help themselves as well as their desire to collectively improve their lives. Other examples of the construction, maintenance and reproduction of community include the establishment of a local chapter of the Czech Benevolent Society which was formed so local Czech residents could obtain low interest loans. The fraternal organization Lodge Slovan of the Slovanic Benevolent Society of Texas (Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas) or SPJST was also founded complete with its own meeting hall. By 1901, a

third hall was built by the Farmers' Mutual Protective Society or the RVOS (Rolnický Vzájemný Ochranný Spolek) which was a cooperative insurance group for Czechs (Skrabanek, 1988: 11).

The establishment of a United States Post Office was another early institutional addition to Leonardville. It was also key in how this community acquired the name it has today as well as indicative of its interaction with surrounding groups/communities. Through the mid-1890's, Leonardville was referred to as Vyne's Corner. In 1895, members of this community decided they should have a post office in their town. Until this time, residents of Vyne's Corner were on a rural mail route based out of the post office in Ezra. Also at this time, a neighboring "Negro" town, known as Sandy Knoll, had a post office (Skrabanek, 1988: 14). According to the law, the two communities of Vyne's Corner and Sandy Knoll were too close together to both have post offices. Therefore the leaders of Vyne's Corner approached the post master in Ezra and told him if they could have their own post office they would name their community in his honor. The post master's name was Jonathon Leonard. By the end of 1895, Sandy Knoll had lost its post office and Vyne's Corner was renamed Leonardville, Texas complete with a new post office next to the local cooperative store (Skrabanek, 1988: 14).

Although Leonardville's acquisition of a post office was through ethically questionable means, it is a good example of the notion of social fields. Members of Vyne's Corner were willing to cater to the vanity of a government official in order to obtain the limited resource of a post office as well as taking advantage of the citizens of Sandy Knoll who probably did not know they were in danger of losing their post office.

Leonardville's acquisition of this federal outpost was both practical and symbolic. It was practical in the sense that it connected the community with the rest of the country through communication and mail-order purchasing. Acquiring a post office was symbolic in the sense that it was the local establishment of a federal government office for the direct provision of mail service. This means the community was officially recognized as a town at the federal and state levels. Both the practical and symbolic nature of acquiring a post office accentuated the state and national social links and was important to the community's formal recognition and development of local identity.

Through the 1930's, Leonardville remained much like most of the rural United States during the Great Depression. It was small and ethnically homogenous in population and demographic make-up as well as having an agriculturally based economy. But modernization and increasing urbanization had (and have) a major impact on life in rural Texas. Due to the political, social, and technological changes of the early and middle 20th century, plus the growth of many of the surrounding communities (particularly Shawnee Prairie), Leonardville began to change at a faster rate than it had in the past. The community soon lost many of its predominantly Czech features. Some of these changes include an increased use of English, instead of Czech, among younger generations as the primary language, an increase in the use of manufactured goods, specifically farming equipment, and the rise in religious diversity as opposed to the traditional, local dominance of the Czech-Moravian or Brethren Church. However, when faced with these and other changes, this small farming community maintained its integrity and identity by adapting to change and re-defining what it meant to be a citizen

of Leonardville. This meant it was no longer necessary to be Czech or of Czech origin nor was it expected of everyone to be farmers. Instead, being a citizen of Leonardville minimally required living in the community, whether they worked locally or not, shared local values and respected the local heritage and way of life established there (Skrabaneck, 1988: 229).

Beginning in the 1940's, the prevalence of the automobile and paved roads made their way into much of rural America. There was also a dramatic increase in the mechanization of agriculture, which (good or bad) allowed people to farm on a part time basis or seek other forms of employment altogether. People began working in more service and industrial-oriented jobs outside Leonardville. This was especially true in the years during and after World War II. During the war, many young men from Leonardville served in the armed forces and traveled around the world. Some returned home with wives of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, shifts in the educational structure occurred. Leonardville's original community boundaries "more than tripled in size through school consolidation, taking in so many people that Czechs were outnumbered by others [non-Czechs] in the community they had founded"(Skrabaneck, 1988: 225). School consolidation helped change the predominantly homogenous Czech ethnicity in Leonardville to include a heterogeneous mixture of people from the surrounding area which Czechs collectively referred to as "Americans" (Skrabaneck, 1988: 227).

Despite the changes that happened and will no doubt continue to occur in this community, a historical Czech presence and strong sense of local identity is still present.

A majority of the business and community leaders are of Czech ancestry, the Brethren Church still has the largest congregation in town, and one of the two restaurants located there is known as the Czech Inn. Additionally, outsiders moving into the community today and in the recent past state the reason for living there is because it is a small, wholesome community (Skrabanek, 1988: 228-229). All of the citizens of Leonardville I have spoken to say it is a good place to live and raise a family; free from many of the problems that plague urban areas. Leonardville residents, new or historically rooted, want to preserve the way of life established there as much as possible.

2. The Leonardville Volunteer Fire Department (VFD)

One major change in Leonardville's recent history was the formation of a local volunteer fire department (VFD). This organization was established as a result of several serious fires and the installation of a city water system complete with fire hydrants in 1970. Additionally, more homes and businesses were built in and around the community in response to the increasing population, economic development and commerce. This growth required improvements in fire and emergency medical services in the area.

During the late 1950's and 1960's several very serious fires occurred in Leonardville. Two cotton gins were destroyed by fire. This was considered especially disastrous because cotton was the primary cash crop in the area as well as the fact that owners and employees working at these gins were temporarily out of work. If cotton

could not be processed, farmers would lose most of the returns on their investments. In the long run, loss of investments could lead to foreclosure on land or farming equipment.

In the late 1960's, another particularly disastrous fire occurred in the center of Leonardville along a row of houses lining main street. One house in this row caught fire which led to the destruction of two other neighboring houses before the fire was contained and extinguished by the VFD of Waterrock, a neighboring community approximately 20 miles away. I learned of these incidents while speaking with Sam Williams, former president of the Lions Club (1970) and Douglas Rakov, who was the first president and chief of the Leonardville Volunteer Fire Department.

Kash: What are some of the more memorable fires you can remember?

Douglas Rakov: "A line of houses caught on fire on the street running down through Leonardville. One caught on fire and it just caught the rest on fire. This was before we had a fire department and my house was the first one that caught on fire. Me and a friend had went to The University of South Central Texas to watch [a football game] that day and we were standing up on top of the stadium and looked out toward Leonardville and my buddy said, 'Looky there, some poor bastard's house is on fire.' And we laughed. But I wasn't laughing when I got home. They had tried to splash water on it with buckets to stop it and it didn't work. We [Leonardville] didn't have enough water."

Sam Williams: I remember there was a dance going on over at the SPJST Hall that day and a bunch of us run over and got a bunch of stuff out of the houses

trying to save what we could. Waterock VFD finally got here but we lost three houses.

Douglas : The community got together and gave us several hundred dollars worth of clothes and Sears and Roebuck tore up all my bills...probably \$300-\$400 worth.

This excerpted portion of my conversation with these two men indicates the seriousness of not having fire protection service in Leonardville. One person or family losing a home to fire is a terrible tragedy. But in this case the result of one house catching on fire was that two other homes were also destroyed and all of these families were subsequently without shelter during fall and winter (indicated by the reference made to football season). After the fire, the whole community made contributions to the victims of this tragedy. Additionally, Sears and Roebuck canceled the bills of the other families. In response to this fire, the community collectively dealt with the strain of helping neighbors (which lessened individual hardship). However, the situation may have been avoided or made less traumatic had there been a local fire department to contain the fire. Furthermore, Douglas' and Sam's account of the multiple home fires is an example of how local events are not isolated to just the community. This is because Sears and Roebuck, a store serving the whole country, also lost money to these fires. Although it was a kind and reasonable gesture for Sears and Roebuck to cancel the bills of these fire victims, this company could have benefited from the existence of a VFD in

Leonardville. One fire was the cause of a significant ripple through several social and economic environments.

In addition to these structural fires, there were frequent grass fires which destroyed range and farmland, barns and homes. Grass fires were usually caused by farm machinery overheating and setting fire in the fields. According to Rakov and Williams, members of the community had discussed getting a fire engine for almost 20 years. But, they never went ahead with this plan due to a lack of funding and a problem with poor water supply and water pressure in the area that would make it difficult to fill a fire engine or utilize a fire hose in times of emergency. However, in the late 1960's Leonardville constructed a new water system including the installation of fire hydrants throughout the community. With this improvement in the local water supply, the Lions Club decided to sponsor the purchase of Leonardville's first fire engine in 1970. The first fire truck was a 1949 Ford Fire Engine. The same year Sam Williams, president of the Lions Club, nominated Douglas Rakov to be the first fire chief and president of the new local volunteer fire department which had, and still has, more members than its founding organization; the Lion's Club. An overwhelming majority of votes made Rakov's position official. The large number of people who initially volunteered and continue to volunteer as fire fighters strongly indicates both the need and desire for a local VFD in this community. The high turnout of volunteers also lends credence to my hypothesis that the Leonardville VFD provides a way for many local citizens to participate in community affairs through organizations other than the Lions Club or serving as elected officials in the local government. Additionally, the contributions of

time and labor by these volunteers are recognized by other non-VFD participants, thus providing these firemen with a degree of status and prestige.

Another important aspect of the VFD formation is that it is independent of city government. This organization was formed so as to permit minimal government control or influence. The Leonardville VFD is a private organization and receives no government funding with the exception of \$200.00 from Donnell County for fire calls outside the city's limits. The VFD is organized and managed for the benefit of its citizens and the population in the surrounding area which is reminiscent of the establishment of the first cooperative store formed in the 1880s by and for Czechs. The formation and service of this VFD also means the community is less dependent on the fire departments of Ezra, Waterrock, and other neighboring communities for the protection of the lives and property of its local citizenry. A sense of independence and well established notion of mutual obligation, which is expressed in the high number of volunteer fire fighters and solid local moral/financial support, contributes to the maintenance of a strong local identity.

For the first five years of the Leonardville VFD's history, the fire engine was kept at Rakov's Blacksmith Shop in the heart of Leonardville. This made perfect sense due to the fact that Rakov was the fire chief/president as well as the absence of a firehouse. The VFD's first bar-be-que fund-raiser (1971) collected a gross amount of \$5,000 which was considered very successful at the time. After this event, it was felt by most that this organization would receive strong support from the community. Cards and stickers were printed for people in the area giving the phone number of the blacksmith shop as the

number to call in case of fire. During this time, all of Rakov's employee's were fire fighters by default. When a call came in reporting fire, all employees stopped working and went to the fire while Rakov's wife (who worked in the office of the blacksmith shop) called other volunteers from a prepared phone list informing them of the emergency and its location. Additionally, the siren on the truck was loud enough to alert many volunteers living within approximately one mile of the blacksmith shop/firehouse.

The relatively quick response time by this newly formed VFD assisted in its initial success and popular support. Additionally, Rakov and his crew performed most of the maintenance and care of the fire engine. They ensured its dependability by conducting repairs as needed and made sure it was always full of gas and water for the moment they were called.

A new city hall was constructed in Leonardville in 1975. The VFD proposed to the city that if they (the VFD) contributed a sizable donation of \$7,000 to the project a large two bay garage could be added to the side of the new city hall for use as a firehouse. It was voted on and approved by the mayor and city council and by the members of the Leonardville VFD. The city hall/firehouse project was completed within the year. The reason for building the new firehouse was anticipation of and desire for the growth of the fire department by its members and the community. This was evident in the increases in fund raising after only a few short years. Money raised at the annual fund-raiser was increasing every year. There was also an increase in individual private donations. Furthermore, because of the increasing amount of money contributed to and raised by the VFD, equipment began to accumulate and need more storage space.

Included in this new equipment was a second fire truck from the Texas Forestry Service which is still in use today by the VFD. This second truck was a Dodge 4-wheel drive equipped with a water pump and tank. It is primarily designed for grass fires. This was a task the original Ford, which was designed primarily for urban fire fighting, was not well suited for in some of the rougher areas (range and farmland) of the surrounding countryside.

During the 1970's, the Leonardville VFD continued to grow and gain support from the community and surrounding area. Eventually they were raising a net amount of anywhere from \$18,000- \$22,000 (1992-\$28,000) a year from a one day bar-be-que and cake auction held every third Saturday in August. In 1988, it was decided that a new, larger firehouse was needed to compensate for the growth of the VFD. The organization had, by now, gotten rid of the 1949 Ford Fire Engine and replaced it with two newer model Ford 1-ton trucks that had been modified to hold water tanks and pumps. This now gave Leonardville's VFD three trucks, including the Dodge. The amount of fire fighting and medical equipment also continued to increase. The volunteers had no reason to believe the fire department would not continue to grow as it had done over the past 18 years of its existence.

In 1989, the land and materials were purchased for the construction of Leonardville's current fire house. The land purchased is directly adjacent to city hall. Private donations, money raised during the fund raiser, money earned by working a concession stand at The University of South Central Texas' football games as well as money saved from the county compensation of \$200.00/fire call was used to pay for this

new firehouse. This current firehouse is a 60x100 foot, six bay garage. It has three bay doors in front and three in back, so that a total of six trucks can be parked inside back to back, exiting from both front and rear. Aside from the bay area there is a radio room and office, two bathrooms, dining room/kitchen, and a large upstairs storage area. The firehouse is still in use today and the Leonardville VFD now has five trucks. The 4-wheel drive Dodge, two Ford 1-ton trucks, a large 1969 Mack Fire Engine, and a 1997 2,000 gallon GMC tanker truck. This large tanker truck provides all the water needed in most fire scenarios. It allows Leonardville's pumper trucks to remain at fire scenes, pumping water on fires, instead of acting as water transports. Having this truck also reduces the need for neighboring community VFDs to bring additional water to fire scenes.

The growth of the Leonardville VFD has continued through today with the addition of a formalized EMS in 1988. This additional service is a branch of a county-wide organization known as First Responders consisting of local volunteers. These volunteers are trained according to state-wide criteria and are managed by a state medical director to insure a uniform and competent level of medical care given to residents living in outlying rural areas. The First Responders' mission is rapid response in their local service area to provide the sometimes crucial initial care that cannot be given by EMTs traveling further distances from Waterrock, Ezra Medical Clinic or the larger St. Luke's Medical Center in neighboring Shawnee Prairie.

3. Conclusion

I provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of cultural expression in a small, rural Texas community's volunteer fire department and the role this organization and its subsequent tasks play in the organization of its community's citizenry. I discuss how the VFD assists in maintaining and reproducing Leonardville as a social place rather than the community simply being a geographic location. This is accomplished by identifying and elaborating on the conventions of mutual obligation. Conventionalized knowledge regarding mutual obligation denotes the sense of commitment and cooperation volunteers share in order to self-initiate mutual aid in the form of fire protection service and EMS. Furthermore, I focus on the idea of conventions of workplace which are job-specific forms of task accomplishment and communication volunteers share. This is done to gain a better understanding of organizational structure and social dynamics involved in perpetuating the VFD.

Additionally, the actions and interaction of the VFD with other groups within Leonardville as well as outside the local community are analyzed. These outside areas are the larger sociological contexts of service area or the VFD's area of responsibility, Donnell County and the state of Texas. The social field is examined to better understand the broader social processes involved in maintaining the VFD which contribute to the maintenance and well-being of Leonardville.

This study is indicative of many cultural and social norms throughout much of rural Texas and provides insight into volunteer fire departments as social institutions

formed by and for the community as well as lending to local identity. This being said, I hope the reader finds my research informative, entertaining and, above all, useful.

CHAPTER III

THE WORKPLACE

In an anthropological perspective, separation of culture and workplace is just as impracticable as separating culture from religion, kinship or economic systems. Working is how we survive and sustain ourselves through the control, manipulation and exploitation of our particular environments. Through work people are “producing their actual material life” and creating the society in which they live. “As individuals express their life, so they are” (Marx, 1981: 42). The link between natural conditions in which people live and the “practical transformations of those conditions” are labor- “in its broadest sense” (Arthur, 1981: 21). This chapter is a systemic analysis of the Leonardville, Texas VFD and the context of the work volunteer fire fighter/EMTs perform. It examines the organization as a social institution in which cultural expressions occur through work, participation and commitment. The workplace is a setting in which culture both affects and is affected by participants' ideas and deeds in a dynamic, interactive social system. Cultural expressions in the workplace are a means through which common identity is constructed and maintained. In the specific setting of the Leonardville VFD, I examine culture in the anthropological frameworks of conventions of mutual obligation and conventions of workplace (McCarl, 1985: 159, Watanabe, 1992: 4). This information regarding the Leonardville VFD is presented as a model through which we can understand how and why members of this community participate in this organization.

Cultural conventions are the actions and interactions of people who are familiar with each other through frequent contact and association. They are “those regularities in interactions between individuals that give rise to mutual recognition of intent and understanding” (Watanabe, 1992: 13). These acts are understood between members of a group and are a cultural expression of group identity. A nice general example of this occurs during the VFD’s monthly meetings. Monthly meetings are accompanied by meals provided for from departmental funds. Directly after the meal is when the formal discussion of VFD business begins. Everyone understands that the signal for the beginning of the meeting is when the president and the treasurer sit down at a table in front of the dining room and the treasurer opens his notebook and begins writing and leafing through papers. At this point people begin filing into the dining room from the bay area (usually without being told) and someone notifies those who are standing outside the firehouse itself that the meeting is about to start.

Additionally, conventions are used by Leonardville Volunteers in the maintenance of personal and group identity as fire fighters and EMTs during times of duress and/or relative group harmony. These conventions include correct behavior, communication, attitudes, and ideas that friends, relatives, and neighbors understand, both consciously and unconsciously, through frequent personal contact in the Leonardville VFD and community in general. They are shared and understood by volunteers, both consciously and unconsciously, through frequent personal contact in the Leonardville VFD (Watanabe, 13, 1992). Conventions of mutual obligation are the

ideas and attitudes of volunteers regarding fulfillment of responsibility and requirements of time and labor contributions to the organization as well as the community in general.

Conventions of the workplace are job-specific actions and communicative processes between Leonardville's volunteer fire fighter/EMTs. These conventions develop out of a strong sense of mutual obligation. They are established through the repetition and modification of past behavior and communication that aid fire fighters in successfully dealing with emergency calls and the elimination or modification of unsuccessful job related interaction (Applebaum, 1984, Jordan, 1989: 6). Rather than volunteers strictly focusing on end-results of task-accomplishment they learn *how* to work, not just *when* to work. As experience is gained, the volunteer will become a better fire fighter and/or EMT understanding more about what is necessary in various emergency situations. He or she will eventually complete "each segment of behavior in orderly and smoothly rhythmic steps relying on the environment and other workers to dictate [their] actions rather than on sometimes unnecessary and cumbersome verbalization to describe it" (McCarl, 1978: 112).

The combination and practice of these conventions assists in the reproduction of the Leonardville VFD as a social unit. Substantial participation and group cooperation is demanded of individuals wanting to acquire and maintain respect or status as fire fighters/EMTs in the organization (Applebaum, 1984: 18-19). Additionally, through appropriate behavior and the acquisition of rights and rewards, the VFD attracts volunteers, allowing the organization to maintain and reproduce itself as a successful and useful community institution over time (Jordan, 1989: 7).

1. Conventions of Mutual Obligation: The Workplace

Conventions of mutual obligation are used by volunteers in the workplace to denote and define the responsibilities and social/job related commitment of VFD members to each other. A common understanding of commitments maintains group identity as well as the organization's effectiveness. Conventions of mutual obligation include attitudes regarding faithful attendance of meetings and training sessions, prompt response to emergency calls, and the possession of a common understanding of the physical need for fire protection/emergency medical service. These conventions also provide a foundation on which conventions of the workplace are established through the development of efficiency and effectiveness in training and task accomplishment. Detailed examination of various conventions of mutual obligation in the workplace provide insight into the dynamics, social processes and the shared knowledge of members in the Leonardville VFD.

Attendance. Attitudes regarding faithful attendance of meetings, training sessions and emergency calls vary among individuals in the Leonardville VFD. Volunteers at all stages of involvement from rookie to old-timer range from helping out once a year with the bar-bc-que/cake auction fund raiser to responding to every emergency call possible.⁹ However, the degree of involvement does not have a direct impact on the individuals' recognition as a member of the VFD. Instead involvement influences the amount of respect and authority a volunteer commands in the organization. The amount of respect and authority acquired by a volunteer varies according to amounts of time and labor devoted to the organization. Amounts of time

and labor contributed by a volunteer can vary due to schedule conflicts between outside obligations and VFD activities as well as a volunteer's stage of life. Generally, volunteers over 35 or 40 tend to only participate during meetings and the annual fundraiser unless there is an especially serious emergency situation. Furthermore, volunteers sometimes encourage or pressure individuals who are negligent or lax in group participation to mind their attendance or obligations. This conformative pressure is rarely bitter or resentful and is not always successful either. Successful peer pressure depends on:

- who applies the pressure; rookies cannot always effectively influence behavior of old timers but old timers often have a strong impact on the behavior of rookies
- circumstances leading to consistent absence from meetings and/or emergency calls such as volunteers working their full-time jobs (excusable) or simply not showing up because they didn't feel like it or had something better to do (inexcusable; the notable exception to this is the first two weeks of deer season during which time as few as fifteen volunteers come to the meeting.)
- and whether or not absences are from meetings or actual emergency situations; absences from meetings are tolerated more than missing actual emergency calls.

Peer pressure commonly takes the form of verbal teasing which is linked to camaraderie that politely or jokingly relays feelings of dissatisfaction with a particular individual's level of commitment. "While play is taking place" there is a "negotiation" or interaction

between people. Joking allows people to say things they normally would not be able to say in a confrontational manner derived from “accumulated feelings” which are “channeled into contest, drama, or some other form of display” such as joking (Abrahams, 1970: 303). Likewise, this joking or teasing display allows the lax or negligent party to accept or acknowledge criticism in a similarly polite or non-defensive manner (Abrahams, 1970: 318, Radcliffe-Brown, 1965). However, more serious ways of communicating dissatisfaction with member participation exist such as voting an officer out of his/her position during the annual election in December. Although serious, these political maneuverings are not intended to personally offend or upset faltering individuals but instead are practical strategies intended to maintain maximum integrity and efficiency of the organization. Group political statements are used almost exclusively with elected officers instead of the rank and file of the organization.

Blake Hopson failed to make the monthly meetings or training sessions for approximately one year due to the fact he began working second shift (10:00pm-6:00am) as a pipe-fitter in a local foundry in nearby Shawnee Prairie. During this time, Blake was fire chief. At monthly meetings, the president and secretary/treasurer are basically in charge. Unless there is a particular issue to discuss at meetings (which there often is), the chief and assistant chief do not say much in an official capacity. Instead the chief and assistant chief are field oriented, analogous to a foreman on a construction site. They assume responsibility on a fire or medical scene (if present) and are responsible for technical matters such as training and equipment maintenance. Regardless of the fact that Blake's presence was not an absolute necessity for the proper function of VFD

meetings, various volunteers, especially younger individuals, began teasing him about his absence. Fire department members would see him in town and ask him if he was still a member of the VFD or if he was still chief with a knowing, mischievous grin.

Blake Hopson: "When I was still chief, I was working second shift, and I didn't make a meeting for about a year... and some of the younger guys were giving me a hard time about it, but not being mean about it they just razzed me a little about not making any meetings. I said, 'Hey, I got a job to go to.' I wasn't getting paid for the meetings, I was still chief though and I still showed up to the fires I could, but until you've worked nights you don't understand [that] it's a little different critter than working days... I had to work when the rest of the world was sleeping. I'm still involved. I've just got a family to worry about."

In this excerpt of our conversation, Blake states he was "razzed" by fellow volunteers. These individuals were not making a big issue of his absence nor were they angry. There was no loss of respect or status on Blake's part either. "Razzing" was simply a way of letting him know that his absence was noticed. Because he did not lose his position over this issue, it may be perceived as flattering in a way. Furthermore, Blake was not angered by the remarks directed at him. Well-established and strong-working volunteers are safe in the knowledge that jokes are a way of both flattering and criticizing. Joking relationships are shown to be important aspects of socializing in group dynamics in that they are forms of "permitted disrespect." Although there is the

“pretense of hostility” there is actually “a real friendliness.” Through joking or “razzing” “there is provided the social conjunction of friendliness and mutual aid.” They allow people to say things to each other without offense or seeming confrontational (especially between disparate parties such as officer/non-officer, young and old, rookie/old-timer) which maintains group harmony (Radcliffe-Brown, 1965: 91, 95). These kinds of relationships “permit the expression of differences while facilitating cooperation on a continuing basis” (Starr, 1982: 64). Additionally, the “razzing” Blake experienced is typical between members of a group who are familiar with each other through frequent and “mutually beneficial association” (Stevens, 1978: 47).

Similarly, an example relating to the political results of failing to maintain stable individual commitment in the group occurred during the last officer elections in the Leonardville VFD held in December of 1998. Trey Modisette was chief and his brother Edward Modisette was assistant chief for five years prior to this last election. The result of this election, in effect, was that the two brothers switched their positions. Edward was elected as chief and Trey was elected to the position of assistant chief. The reason for this switch is simple. Trey became less active due to increased time spent at his occupation as a professional EMT and other obligations such as taking correspondence courses from The University of South Central Texas. Edward is also a professional EMT but he maintained his attendance and contribution of time and labor to the organization. There were no feelings of resentment or personal conflict in this episode. The organization, as a whole, decided that Edward could act more effectively as chief due to fewer outside obligations. He also deserved the position because of his enduring

and dependable standard of commitment. Overall, there was no loss of respect for Trey because of his experience and training as a fire fighter and EMT as well as his excellent record of service to the VFD. Instead, the result of the election was simply the outcome of the VFD's desire and need to place the most qualified volunteer, who could readily commit to the demands of the position of chief, in office for the benefit of the group. The volunteer acting as assistant chief was contributing more time and labor to the organization as well as being equally qualified. Therefore, a majority of the membership felt Edward deserved the higher (more demanding) position in the organizational hierarchy (Applebaum, 1984: 4).

Conventions of mutual obligation are enforced through a common notion and understanding of individuals' status within the organization and how well individuals conform to the roles and duties expected for maintaining an acquired level of status, respect or authority (Applebaum, 1984, 1992, Jordan, 1989: 3). Means of communicating displeasure over lack of conformity or devotion are varied but range from "razzing" and peer pressure to voting individuals in or out of office based on performance and time/labor contributions.

Response. Prompt response to emergency calls is vital to the success of the Leonardville VFD. Emergency calls occur at all hours of the day or night. Therefore, it is vital for someone to be willing to respond at any time.¹⁰ However, there are isolated occasions when there is not anyone available to respond. This is unfortunate but a fact of life for people living in this rural environment. More often than not, someone is able to respond from the Leonardville VFD but in the event there is not, a neighboring

community VFD will respond; usually a crew from Waterrock or Ezra. But, the amount of time it takes for these VFDs to respond is more than most people can afford during critical medical emergencies or house fires.

Rookies and/or new volunteers usually respond to a majority of emergency calls regardless of the time of day. This is one feature of extreme enthusiasm or what many volunteers commonly refer to as being "gung-ho." Rookies, responding with new volunteers who successfully managed their probationary period (one year) and have some training and experience, are especially vital to emergency response between midnight and 6:00am. These individuals have a strong sense of mutual obligation and create an identity for themselves within the VFD through participation. Their behavior reflects upon them as individuals and the organization as a whole. In the future, these (typically young) individuals will inherit and manage the VFD. Therefore, they want to demonstrate their loyalty and devotion as well as their ability to responsibly function as adults to fellow volunteers and the community as a whole (McCarl, 1981).

Realization of Physical Needs. Possessing a common understanding of the physical need for fire protection/EMS is a vital convention of mutual obligation in the workplace. This is because awareness and understanding of the need for emergency service keeps the organization's mission clear: to provide and continuously strive for improvements in service to the people of Leonardville. An example of this understanding and dedication to service is the addition of EMS to the fire department in 1984. As the VFD grew better at providing services to people in the area volunteers recognized the need for basic medical assistance for fire and accident victims as well as

safety issues concerning fire fighters themselves. During the mid-1980s and before, ambulance service was extremely slow because EMTs had to travel from hospitals in neighboring Ezra (20 miles away) or Shawnee Prairie (20 miles away). It sometimes took 35-40 minutes for medical assistance to arrive on scene in and around the area of Leonardville.

A volunteer by the name of Pat Roman was the first EMT in the Leonardville VFD. Donnell County was in the process of organizing a county-wide EMS known as First Responders. This organization consisted of EMS certified volunteers from VFDs throughout the county and was established for initial response to personally assess emergency situations and stabilize and prepare patients before the arrival of EMTs from neighboring Ezra or Shawnee Prairie. This included duties such as warning and directing on-coming traffic during car accidents, administering mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or simply making a patient comfortable while waiting on medical transport. However, Leonardville volunteers opted to stay out of this organization initially over concerns of losing autonomy to county or state supervisors. A short time later the VFD recognized that additional training in emergency medical procedures was needed to provide residents and fire fighters with medical assistance. Independent of nomination or appointment by VFD members, Pat began attending EMS training classes and became certified as an EMT. After his certification, the Leonardville VFD voted to purchase medical supplies and began the community's first emergency medical service. The following year, two other volunteers became certified ECAs (emergency care attendants) raising the number of EMS volunteers to a total of three.

Today, the number of certified volunteers, in both fire fighting and EMS, continues to rise. One important reason for this rise in certification is volunteers' common understanding of and desire to provide fire fighting/EMS to people living in the surrounding area. The result of this understanding and desire is a strong commitment to each other and a progressive improvement in training and education regarding emergency services which results in the improvement of the VFD's reputation and status in the community and surrounding area (Jacobs, 1976, Perkins, 1988, 1996: 137) This issue ties closely into conventions of mutual obligation in the broader context of community discussed in Chapter III.

2. Conventions of the Workplace

Conventions of the workplace are job-related actions and communicative practices used by volunteers in the establishment of effective routines when working as fire fighters/EMTs. These conventions develop out of a strong sense of mutual obligation. They are established by the repetition and modification of past behavior and communication that aid fire fighters in successfully dealing with emergency calls and the elimination or modification of unsuccessful job related interaction (Applebaum, 1984, Jordan, 1989: 6). Likewise, Robert McCarl's "work technique" conventions of the workplace are critical to the success and identity of any occupational system and

... can be defined as the pattern of manipulations, actions, rhythms and expressions which are the result of the interaction between an individual and his/her work environment. These patterns are essential to the accomplishment of a task, prescribed by the work group and used as a criteria for determination of membership and status within it [McCarl, 1978: 110].

McCarl limits his definition and use of the term *work technique* to the oral traditions or verbal descriptions of the technical aspects of labor in order to better understand what he refers to as "work culture" (McCarl, 1985: 13, 159). The notion of work technique is helpful in understanding culture *in* the workplace, but I am reluctant to use the term "work culture." The term is misleading in that it theoretically restricts and presents a group or population as isolated or having no outside links or influences. Furthermore, work technique is useful in understanding specific technical task-processes but to understand culture in the workplace one must not only focus on technical aspects of tasks but also examine and understand internal motivations/rewards, organizational social structure and inter-organizational or group relations. Technical micro-analysis and information of this sort is useful only to the ethnographer and the referent group. This is why I have combined the notion of John Watanabe's conventions with the idea of work technique from Robert McCarl's research (McCarl, 1978: 110, 1985, Watanabe, 1992: 13, 184). Conventions of the workplace include, but extend beyond, the technical aspects of a job or task and the verbiage associated with work. In regards to the VFD they consist of processes such as social and group dynamics as well as internal

motivations acting in response to personal relations such as kinship/friendship and external pressures such as destruction of property by fire or natural disaster. Conventions of workplace are also strongly rooted in, or based on, mutual social obligation due to the voluntary nature of this organization and the predominantly common local background of its membership. In the Leonardville VFD, conventions of workplace are based on a fundamental sense of dedication to fellow volunteers and to the community in general. The existence and expressions of conventions of mutual obligation in the workplace provide a foundation on which to establish and develop workplace conventions. These conventions are created, maintained, and reproduced in the repetition and modification of past behavior and communication that aid volunteer fire fighter/EMTs in successfully dealing with emergency calls. Likewise, there is the discarding or modification of unsuccessful job-related behavior and action in this group of fire fighters. Conventions of workplace are necessary for effective task accomplishment and survival.

The information regarding conventions of workplace is in no way a complete survey of these conventions in the Leonardville VFD nor are they independent or mutually exclusive of each other or the conventions of mutual obligation. I have presented these conventions in a typologized manner so as to deal with the material more efficiently. Typologized presentation also aids in relating data from interviews and stories conducted and collected during my fieldwork to the conventions of workplace. Additionally, I examine work in a "process-oriented" *and* "goal-directed" framework (Jordan, 1989: 3, McCarl, 1985: 160).¹¹ Process-oriented analysis is focusing on the

manner in which volunteers in the VFD carry-out or perform tasks. Goal-directed analysis illustrates both under-lying reasons for volunteers performing these tasks as well as general VFD participation, the nature of this organization's social structure and its purpose of formation. By approaching the examination of conventions of workplace in this manner, cultural expressions in the Leonardville VFD can be framed anthropologically.

Motivations, Rewards and Camaraderie. The motivations and rewards of Leonardville's volunteer fire fighters are varied. I propose that involvement and participation in Leonardville's VFD provides the local citizenry a stake in community affairs. Additionally, the contributions of time and labor by these individuals are recognized by other volunteers, thus providing them with a degree of status and prestige as well as forming or strengthening friendships and maintaining social ties in the organization (Perkins, 1996: 21). By volunteering for the local VFD, these people express their status as citizens of Leonardville and are as socially connected as people are in churches, schools or political organizations, if not more so, due to strong bonds formed during difficult and sometimes dangerous work (Haas, 1977, Simpson, 1996: 21). Reasons for becoming a volunteer fire fighter/EMT include:

- the satisfaction of helping someone in a time of distress and need
- the prestige that follows stories of excellent performance at a fire or medical scene
- rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood (I discuss this issue in greater detail in Chapter IV)

- civic duty and reciprocity; helping others and being helped
- as jumping-off point for a professional career
- and the camaraderie among volunteers established by undertaking difficult, stressful, and sometimes dangerous work together (Coleman, 1994: S99, Perkins, 1996: 21).

Satisfaction. The feeling of satisfaction derived from helping others in distress can be a motivation to join the VFD as well as a rewarding experience. This issue brings to mind a particular excerpt from an interview I had with a volunteer named James Herrington. James is an EMS certified volunteer who assisted professional EMTs from Shawnee Prairie with a young woman hurt in a car accident in 1987. In James' own words, this passage sums up the feelings sometimes associated with doing this kind of work.

James: "There was a wreck out on Farm Road 2427. A young girl run up under a tractor trailer. Her face was all disfigured and her eyes were swollen shut. It was pretty messed up because we couldn't get her out of the car so I crawled into the other side and told her I was gonna have to bandage her face. Then the ambulance got there and we were gonna have to cut her out of the car. So, anyway, we got out a bunch heavy tarps we call coats and covered her up to protect her from the sparks and anything that might hurt her when we started cuttin' on metal and glass. Well, she was pretty scared so I got up under the tarp with her and I had started an IV in her arm. I even rode into the hospital with

her. I just talked her through the whole thing and told her what they were gonna do step by step.”

“So about 3 months later that little girl came back and tracked me down; found out who and where I was and thanked me. She said that my voice was very calming and soothing when; ‘I hurt and knew that I looked horrible. You really helped me.’ I gotta tell ya’. That one really stands out because she came back and thanked me. And it made me feel good.”

Prestige. Prestige gained through positive association with the VFD in the organization itself as well as the community is also a strong motivating factor for participation and continued service in the VFD. One story from a young, female volunteer named Amy Havard is indicative of this. Amy was still a rookie at the time of this interview.

Amy: “I’ve hollered at people before. We had a big grass fire here before and I was the first one to show up and some man jumped on the back of my truck and started hollerin’ at me to get the pump turned on before I could even get the truck stopped. Well, I told him if he didn’t get the hell off my truck I was gonna run over him. And he moved. A few minutes later I got my pump started. And later everybody told me I did real good at that fire and for handling myself the way I did. If you’re there you don’t need someone hollering at you to do this or that. I mean, there’s enough pressure on me anyway trying to keep the

fire from spreading across the road to another pasture and that man was sitting there yelling at me.”

“I like being a volunteer. At first I thought all these men were gonna think I was crazy but when you get out there and your partner is one of the older men and you’re going through burning trees to put the fire out and they compliment you saying that ‘you ain’t scared to get hurt, dirty, cut, or burned and we need more people like you.’ To be complimented by an older person like that makes you feel good. It makes you feel like you’re doing something right and kind have a good position in the department.”

Rite of Passage. Roger Doss is a 23 year active volunteer certified in both fire fighting and EMS. During a conversation with him, I asked why he joined the Leonardville VFD. His response sums up nicely many reasons besides rite of passage as a reason for joining such as civic duty and the fact that volunteering seemed like it would be interesting work.

Kash: "Why did you join the VFD here in town?"

Roger Doss: "A lot of guys asked me to join and I knew them through my wife. I was 21 when I joined. It was a way to meet people in town since I was new here. We lived across the street from the VFD and I thought it might be interesting to do. My wife was from here and it helped me get to know some of the older people in town. And I had helped put out grass fires and stuff before

but was never a member of any fire department."

"It's a civic duty. I can't expect people to come out and put my house fire out for free if I'm not willing to help them do the same thing. It's a civic duty or community awareness."

In this short passage, Roger indicates that he joined the VFD for several reasons. First of all people knew him through his wife and felt he was a member of the community, at least through marriage, and should become involved in local business. Secondly, he states that he is young (21 years old) and joining provided him an opportunity to socialize and get to know members of the community; especially some of the older, more established members of the community. Volunteering service to the VFD is an opportunity to participate in a local adult function. This motivation is indicative of how VFD membership is a rite of passage for many and is a common response among the younger members of Leonardville's VFD when asked why they joined (McCarl, 1981, Wooley, 1985). In Roger's case, he demonstrated through continued devotion to the organization and his ability to learn and perform as a fire fighter/EMS that he was a responsible adult. This is a rite of passage that many young people need to assist them in becoming accepted as responsible adults in this "unique" and "cohesive" organization as well as the community in general (Arthur, 1997, McCarl, 1981).

Roger also mentions that he thought the work would be "interesting" to do. This is another common response from the younger individuals in the VFD when asked why they joined. Elegantly stated by one young volunteer:

"It's something to do in Leonardville! All the fires are fun because we actually get to fight a fire and we don't really get to fight that many. One time we were fighting a fire and we showed up and the people that owned the land said they didn't have the key to the gate. It was a big grass fire. So the guy driving got a big wrench out and beat the crap out of the lock until it popped open and he said, 'That's OK, I got the master key right here.' and we got in there and took care of that fire."

Among young and old alike, there is definitely a rush of adrenaline when a volunteer is "toned-out" or paged to an emergency call; especially fire calls. There is a lot of excitement as well as anxiety in mentally preparing oneself to deal with various emergency scenarios (Perkins, 1996, Simpson, 1996). Usually, information given by the dispatcher is either minimal in detail (house fire, grass fire, heart attack, car accident) or wrong. Therefore, volunteers are often times unsure of what to expect at an emergency scene.

Civic Duty and Reciprocity. There is also the issue of civic duty Roger Doss briefly mentioned in his passage. Being a volunteer fire fighter/EMT is not something people *have* to do nor is it a job of simply putting out fires. Volunteer fire fighting/EMS is a job that men and women usually state they either really want to do and have always wanted to do or they feel it is their civic duty. In either case, there is always someone in the VFD willing to respond to emergency calls that occur without warning and at all

hours of the night in Leonardville, Texas. Additionally, this organization is a means through which local citizens, sharing a common goal, come together in social cooperation to contribute time and labor for the benefit of the organization and ultimately the community.

A big motivation to join the VFD is “to give something to the community.” This is the most prevalent answer given by members of the Leonardville VFD when asked why they joined. Volunteers commonly state they cannot expect someone to come help them if their home catches on fire or provide medical assistance if they do not help others in similar situations. This is a common sentiment among fire fighter/EMTs in general.

For instance, when asked why they volunteer as fire fighters 335 surveyed New Zealanders gave the same response as Leonardville volunteers; to give to the community. According to the study in New Zealand, this finding is indicative of many small communities' desire and ability to help themselves. Also, people are attracted to volunteer as fire fighters/EMTs as a practical way to give back to the community through service instead of organizations like the Kiwanas Club that help the community through financial donations (Woolley, 1985).

Additionally, the primary motivating factor may be to contribute to the community, in the form of a volunteer fire fighter/EMT, but an important reward is the reciprocal action of having others help extinguish your house fire or provide emergency medical care to you or a family member. The motivations and rewards of becoming a volunteer fire fighter/EMT are basically the cultural expressions of a reciprocal

relationship between individuals and the community; a social contract (derived from conventions of mutual obligation) that guides and directs behavior and defines action and reaction within a given system. Volunteering service to the VFD (and ultimately to the community) “incorporates men [and women] into public life through acts of participation” (Watanabe, 1992: 129).

Jumping-off Point. Working in a VFD provides an opportunity to gain experience in the professional field of fire fighting and/or EMS. By volunteering time and labor, members gain practical experience and, once established as devoted members of the organization, may request to attend fire fighting and EMS training schools. The VFD will pay for all job-related training and educational programs its members attend. Fire Fighter Training School is sponsored by Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas and the Leonardville VFD sponsors five volunteers to attend every year. Also, EMS training is available at Womack Junior College in nearby Shawnee Prairic. However, volunteers attending medical training courses must pay for them initially and pass the course before the VFD reimburses them. It is agreed upon at the beginning of a volunteer’s formal training that once an individual reaches any level of certification in fire fighting or emergency medical service paid for by the Leonardville VFD that they will continue contributing time and labor to the organization. This is because once certified, a person can work for professional fire departments and ambulance services anywhere in Texas and the Leonardville VFD wants to retain as many trained individuals as possible because they can assist in training other volunteers that have not been to formal educational and training programs thus benefiting the organization as a

whole. Formal training is a strong motivating factor in volunteering for those wanting to continue as fire fighters and EMTs at the professional level. For example, there are currently three Leonardville Volunteers who serve as fire fighters and paramedics in the Fire Department and St. Luke's Medical Center in nearby Shawnee Prairie. They received their initial training and education through the Leonardville VFD. These individuals now serve as officers and trainers for the VFD sharing experience and knowledge acquired as professional fire fighter/EMTs with other volunteers.

The main point here is that the Leonardville VFD can be a "jumping-off point." Individuals can exchange time and labor for both practical experience and formal training/education (often times worth several thousand dollars) which is then used to progress to professional levels of fire fighting and EMS in surrounding cities. Likewise, the Leonardville VFD can invest in individuals who want this training while benefiting from their experience and knowledge overall. This is not a new approach for individuals seeking on-the-job-training or for organizations wanting qualified workers willing to work for low wages or for free. For example, Huntington, Texas hires non-local individuals as local police officers who are young, inexperienced and recently out of a police academy for relatively low wages. These police officers primarily monitor traffic and issue tickets to speed limit violators (regardless of whether violators are local residents or travelers passing through.) In exchange for this service, rookie police officers acquire practical experience and a letter of recommendation from their supervisor. The primary differences between these two examples of "jumping-off points" is that Huntington does not hire local residents to work for the police department

and the police officer eventually moves to a larger police force. This is so the police officers maintain a sense of personal detachment from the local population and it enables them to effectively issue citations to people regardless of their local or non-local standing. Also, Huntington does not reimburse rookies for the cost of their education. Leonardville, on the other hand, wants to retain their volunteers because of the money invested in trained individuals and the sharing of knowledge and training that occurs between the formally trained and other volunteers. Additionally, members of the VFD are local citizens who share a sense of community and dedication. However, there are isolated instances of individuals receiving education/training and leaving the Leonardville VFD for professional fire departments. These individuals no longer live in the area. No one receiving any education or training and leaving the VFD still lives in Leonardville except those who are now inactive volunteers (usually due to old age). However, inactive members still assist in the Annual VFD Fund-Raiser.

Camaraderie. One last reason for joining the VFD I discovered during my fieldwork is camaraderie. The Leonardville VFD is an organization where friends, neighbors and family members come together to discuss matters of the community or visit and socialize. There is always food served at the monthly meetings. VFD members are divided into groups; one group for every month. Each group is responsible for providing the meal at the meeting during their assigned month. The food is paid for by charging the meal's ingredients to the VFD at the local grocery store (whose owner is a VFD member) or paying for it personally. In either case, a collection of no more than \$2-3 a person is collected from the group in order to put the meal money back into VFD

funds or to compensate the cooks. Enough money is usually collected to at least break even. Good food is part of the motivation to continue attending meetings and maintain membership. I know these meals were always something I looked forward to when going to meetings. The meals range from bar-be-qued pork chops, homemade tamales to rib-eye steak dinners. The steak dinner was at Christmas time and free of charge. At the ends of these meetings, a card game always begins in the dining room accompanied by the free-flow of beer and/or whiskey which usually begins before the meal is served and continues throughout the evening. However, not all volunteers drink at meetings, and I never saw anyone at these meetings getting drunk or acting belligerent.

The actual meeting regarding fire department business is usually the shortest event of the evening. It begins with a reading of the minutes from the last meeting, a treasurers report, and a fire and accident report. Following this, the president brings to the attention of the group any news or business developing in the past month and asks if anyone has anything to add (which does not happen very often).

The formal portion of the meetings are administrative discussions of VFD business on every third Wednesday of the month. These meetings are also opportunities for gathering and socializing. They are conducted in a fairly civil manner with most people adhering to the established protocol of the organization. Before and after the administrative portion of the meeting, there is often heated conversation about local politics, a not-so-heated conversation or joke about Bill Clinton (because the general consensus is that "they should kick his ass out of office"), local high school basketball

or baseball, college football, fishing, deer hunting or the effects of the drought that destroyed range land and crop production in the summer of 1998.

It is not my goal to present this organization as a social club or "good ol' boy society" because of the socializing that goes on in it. Quite to the contrary, the amount of socializing in the form of "horseplay, joking and banter" going on in this organization is *at least* as much as that which is found in other organizations whose members share experiences which create social ties; especially sometimes dangerous experiences (Haas, 1977: 162,167-68, Perkins, 1996: 21, Simpson, 1996: 21). Plus, if the *only* motivation for joining the Leonardville VFD was getting together and playing cards or socializing it would not be as successful as it is. Instead, this organization would be considered a "vicious", as opposed to a "virtuous", VFD (Perkins, 1996: 63). A vicious VFD is one that is either stagnant or declining in growth, only focuses on fire containment and suppression, has little or no training, and is comprised of white, middle-aged men only. In contrast, the Leonardville VFD is an excellent example of a virtuous VFD. Virtuous VFDs continue to grow with the acquisition of better equipment and training as well as more volunteers, they focus on saving homes and property from fire instead of only keeping fire from spreading, have at least one training session a month, and consists of young, middle-aged, and elderly members including minorities and women.¹²

Volunteers have all, at one time or another, been called in the middle of night to respond to a fire or medical call. They do so without financial compensation. Additionally, equipment and vehicles constantly need mechanical maintenance or repair. Some individuals contribute as many as 40 hours a month in time and labor to the VFD

in one capacity or another. This is effectively one extra work-week a month added to the already usual 160+ hours a month individuals work at regular jobs. There are various reasons for being a volunteer fire fighter/EMT ranging from the most usual answer of civic duty and giving back to the community to the excitement of fighting a fire or the social capital gained by belonging to a fire department.

All of the cited reasons are valid for joining and this particular organization has been together, operating effectively and growing for almost 30 years. The continuation and viability of the entire Leonardville VFD depends upon the actions of its individual volunteers. For most, there is usually a combination of reasons for joining and staying a member. For some, there may only be one reason for initially joining. However, if a person continues to participate in this organization, the reason or reasons for maintaining a membership will multiply with time.

Technical Terms and Procedures. The language and procedures used in fire fighting and EMS are complex and varied. Technical terms and procedures are a large part of the conventions of the workplace and to a large degree, once understood, help make cultural expression in the volunteer fire fighters' environment tangible to new volunteers or rookies as well as participant observers. These terms and procedures are explicit codes of work behavior in form and function (Applebaum, 1984). By explicit codes I simply mean they are words, terms, and procedures that are learned and relayed through verbal description, training, use and memorization. A mastery of this type of information is one distinguishing feature of an experienced member of the Leonardville VFD. Additionally, equipment, technical terms and procedures used by the Leonardville

VFD are generally kept as fundamental and basic as possible without these tools, terms or procedures losing meaning or effectiveness. Examples of these terms and procedures are:

- SCBA; (self-contained breathing apparatus), air-pack
- attack or angle of attack; exterior and interior
- hose team
- full-fog
- positive ventilation
- re-flash; a re-ignition of a fire after it *seems* to be extinguished

SCBA. SCBA is the acronym for *self-contained breathing apparatus* which is commonly referred to as an air-pack by volunteer fire fighters. These devices consist of an oxygen tank and rubber sealed face mask which allow individuals to enter a smoke or toxic gas filled space or environment for periods of no more than 30 minutes depending on how effectively a fire fighter controls his or her breathing. Air-packs are primarily used for interior fire fighting but are also used for approaching particularly smokey or noxious fires during exterior attacks.

Attack or Angle of Attack. The approach a hose team uses in fighting fires is referred to as *attack* or *angle of attack*. When dealing with structure fires, if the structure is not near complete destruction from or completely destroyed by fire, there is usually an exterior and interior attack. An exterior attack consists of spraying water on

the outside of the structure to extinguish any external fire as well as keeping the temperature of the structure as low as possible to prevent ignition or further ignition. This is often referred to as “surround and drown.” Additionally, there is a simultaneous interior attack which consists of extinguishing fire on the inside of the structure. However, one or the other angle of attack may be used depending on the size and/or severity of the fire.

With grass fires, the angle of attack is naturally external. But the fire may be battled from several points. For instance, roads are strategic points fire fighters approach grass fires from. This is because roads can be natural barriers that keep fires from spreading. However, fires can “jump” roads, especially in windy conditions. So if a fire is near a road, one team monitors that area while other teams fight the fire from other positions or areas such as tree lines, nearby structures and/or oil wells to prevent the fire from spreading and destroying property.

Grass fires in rural areas can also be dangerous to fire fighters in ways not commonly experienced by urban fire fighters. Roger Doss explains.

“I chipped a tooth one time. I was fixin’ to get in a truck and pull it up when we were at a grass fire. I opened up the door and looked down between my legs and there was a rattlesnake. Man! As I was opening the door I jumped up and caught the door with my mouth and chipped my tooth. Well, the snake just kept going and I kept going to. I ain’t got much use for snakes. But at least I got a good story when people ask me about my chipped tooth.”

Hose Teams. Volunteers who operate the water hoses during fires are hose teams. A team consists of two to three individuals; one operating the nozzle to determine the amount of water administered to a fire and one or two individuals for back up and assistance in maneuvering the hose to strategic positions. Additionally, members of a hose team rotate as nozzle man if engaged with a fire that is too hot for one person to endure for an extended amount of time.

Full-fog. A very effective water application technique is full-fog. This limits the amount and velocity of water exiting the nozzle of a water hose. The spray pattern of full-fog is a wide circle of water mist. If the fire is engaged by fire fighters before it gets into a ceiling or wall the steam generated from a short, upwardly directed blast of full-fog blankets and extinguishes the bulk of the flames allowing fire fighters to locate and extinguish the source of the fire. Full-fog is also used for protecting the first and second nozzle men operating the hose in particularly hot fires. The wide circular pattern of water mist acts as a shield reducing the high air temperature due to the fire. This technique is effective in open areas during external attacks as well as for short periods in interior spaces. The main drawback of full-fog is the possibility of fire fighters being burned by steam in closed spaces. If the temperature is particularly high in a closed or small burning space the water vapor converts to steam and can burn fire fighters as severely as flames. Therefore, intense training and education as well as the constant monitoring of safety is an absolute necessity when using the full-fog water application technique. Blake Hopson talks briefly with me about this during one interview.

Kash: “What is the advantage of using full-fog instead of just shooting water on a fire?”

Blake Hopson: “Using full fog is real effective. You may have fire rolling all over the ceiling and smoke just boiling out of there and it just looks terrible when all that’s really on fire is a couch. But fire will do funny things. Well, you get in there and it has to be really hot but you just point your nozzle up at the ceiling and release water for about 3-4 seconds and it will convert into steam and just blanket the fire and smoke and you can look over and see you have a couch fire that isn’t that bad and just go dribble some water on it. Real simple. I learned that at the Texas A&M Fire Fighting School. They preached it. And your ears will let you know when its hot enough because they’ll start burning. This is smart fire fighting and cuts down on water damage.”

Positive Ventilation. Positive ventilation is a relatively new technique in the United States. Only in the past 15-20 years has this method become widely used with U.S. fire departments, both professional and volunteer. This fire fighting technique contrasts with negative ventilation which is the use of strong portable fans (gas or battery operated) to draw smoke out of an interior space. Positive ventilation, on the other hand, uses strong portable fans to push air into a room forcing the smoke and heat out through a vent-space. By using positive ventilation two things are accomplished: smoke is pushed out of the space, allowing fire fighters to locate the direct fire source

and heat is pushed out of the space which lowers the flash point (point of ignition) of everything in the room. Vent-spaces are created either by simply opening a door and/or window or, if necessary, creating a vent space by breaking holes in the wall or roof (which is usually a last resort). Experienced volunteers stress to rookies and less active volunteers in the Leonardville VFD that tearing doors off the hinges and breaking windows is not the correct procedure for ventilating a space. This is because once the door or window is destroyed the element of control over a particular vent is lost. If the fire re-flashes (re-ignites), needing to be deprived of oxygen and the window or door is broken this task cannot be accomplished and may actually do more harm than good by feeding the fire. Control is maintained by turning the fan on or off and opening or closing doors and windows. As one volunteer by the name of Todd Ricks told me:

Todd Ricks: "A good example of a important procedures and stuff is how we started using our ventilation fans. We got a big fan that runs off gas. It's a fan we use blow fresh air into the house. Fifteen years ago everybody said that was a big no-no but now they say its OK. It's more efficient. But you have to be ready when you get all the smoke out because you're gonna see what's on fire and you have to be ready with a hose to hit it. And you have to ventilate. Either you bust a hole, open a window or open a door. Whatever has to be done. But be careful with busting out windows and holes because you lose control of air then. You can open a window and shut a window if necessary. If you bust the window out you can't close it if you need to. This is a planned

attack; positive ventilation is a lot more efficient than trying to suck heat and smoke out of the place; just blow it through. The fan we have is on a dolly and we roll it around. It's a 5-6 horse power Honda motor, 24 in. fan; usually works best in a doorway. It's the biggest they make."

Additionally, in the Leonardville VFD, technical terms and procedures are usually referred to in laymen's terms. Also, the types of equipment purchased are the most basic available while maintaining effectiveness for the tasks these volunteers must perform.

Todd: "They're always coming out with something bigger, better and faster but we usually need a little more expertise or training when they do. What happens is you gotta find stuff that people can use and is simple enough for that guy that comes in once or twice a year to help out with the big stuff. And havin' uniform equipment is real helpful; like air packs and radios. Like the time when we got radios. We could have gotten real nice ones but we decided to just get basic ones where you push a button and talk. We replaced one radio that broke with one that had an 80 channel capability and will switch channels automatically when someone calls you. But if you don't know its switching channels automatically then it can be confusing because if someone else doesn't call you on your original channel, it will stay on the switched channel. And if you try to talk to the first person again [on your original channel], it won't switch back to their channel automatically. It can really mess with a person. We just

gotta keep it simple. Modern stuff is really great, especially if a man uses the stuff everyday but we don't use this stuff everyday so it can get confusing.

“We need basic, uniform equipment. A lot of men don't use the equipment everyday and may not be familiar with it. We need to keep it simple and the same. This can save lives and property in the short and long run.”

Volunteers in this fire department do not utilize training and information on a daily basis like professional fire fighters. Therefore, on fire scenes when many of the rookies or less active volunteers are instructed to ventilate a space, for example, the chief or person in charge of the fire scene may simply instruct them to *open* a door or window.

Similarly, types of fire fighting and medical equipment are purchased with minimal use experience and training in mind. Many volunteers actually respond to only a small percentage of fire or medical calls in a given time period. This reduces familiarity with and confidence in using some pieces of equipment. For instance, if a particular volunteer only responds to 5 out of 25 fire calls in a year, that volunteer's familiarity with SCBAs and their use is less than those who respond to 20 out of 25 fire calls. Lack of familiarity and experience causes difficulties. This is especially true if different types of air packs are purchased since the last time a volunteer used one and can result in injury or loss of life and property. It is much easier and more efficient to train and operate a VFD if equipment and materials are kept basic and similar in design.

In sum, terminology and procedures used in the fields of fire fighting and EMS are complex and varied. However, by keeping training and equipment basic and

uniform this aspect of the volunteers' work environment is kept manageable without losing effectiveness as a fire fighting/EMS organization. Understanding cultural expression in the volunteer fire fighters' environment is largely through the explicit use of technical terms and explanations of fire fighting processes. Volunteers acquire a more thorough understanding and competent use of this information through experience and training over time. Additionally, volunteers who are active in the organization acquire the benefits of experience and training faster than less active members and are relegated to the status of rookie for less time.

Experience and Task Assignments. Experience is a quality volunteer fire fighter/EMTs acquire with time. The longer an individual is involved in work of this nature the more knowledgeable he or she becomes about various emergency situations and approaches to dealing with these situations. Along with experience comes responsibility. One major responsibility is directing on-the-job-training of rookies and inexperienced volunteers. On-the-job-training is accomplished through the monitoring of safety and appropriate task assignments for rookies and new volunteers by experienced volunteers.

Most rookies and new volunteers are very enthusiastic or "gung-ho" about fire fighting and/or EMS. According to many old-timers this enthusiasm sometimes borders on obsession. For instance, many young and active volunteers have flashing lights on the tops or in the grilles of their private trucks to signify they are active members of the fire department. Lights are used when traveling to the firehouse during emergencies, especially when coming from Shawnee Prairie. Lights are also used when a volunteer is

closer to an emergency scene in their private vehicle than they are to the fire house in Leonardville. In these instances, volunteers can save time by responding in their own vehicles. Emergency lights alert and request of surrounding traffic to yield to vehicles en-route to emergencies. One old-timer told me that he wished he would have had emergency lights on his vehicle when he was a young man just starting out in the VFD. "Flashing lights on my truck would have been fun as hell!"

The enthusiasm of the newer volunteers is needed to maintain the VFD as a viable institution in the community. According to Allen Gillespie, "Yeah, I started out as a young gung-ho fire fighter and I learned from a lot of the older ones that were more experienced than I was. I learned from older guys and now the guys I helped train are training. We always need fresh meat. It keeps the cycle going; its a process." Many of the old-timers have lamented on several occasions the rookies' enthusiasm or "gung-ho-ness" is necessary and must be harnessed so as to mold them into effective fire fighter/EMTs. Over time, rookies and new volunteers gain experience and develop a relationship based on trust and respect with experienced members thus becoming better volunteers. On the same note, new volunteers (typically young people) eventually get married, have kids, and begin to develop more complex lives with responsibilities other than spending time at the fire house with their peers or responding to every emergency call possible. Gradually, more time is spent away from the fire house and less time is spent responding to emergency calls. There is a common understanding that newer volunteers and designated leaders will respond to the average pager-call or "tone" that is not as labor intensive as large house or grass fires. The VFD is a system with

individuals constantly rotating to various levels of experience and competence with the more experienced volunteers instructing and monitoring the safety of rookies. Further, by allowing rookies and new volunteers to respond and manage less serious and labor intensive emergency calls they gain confidence in their abilities to handle themselves on emergency scenes.

However, this latter aspect does not work with "fresh meat" or extremely new and inexperienced rookies. The Leonardville Volunteers state that these new members go through an initial one year probationary period in which they are instructed in fundamental fire fighting and safety issues and are not allowed to respond to calls by themselves unless there are extenuating circumstances such as failure of other volunteers to respond (after waiting at least 10 minutes). There was one reported incident where a well-meaning, but untrained, rookie arrived first at the fire house after the report of a grass fire. Without waiting to see if anyone else would respond, this individual immediately took a truck to the fire scene. Upon arrival, the rookie realized he did not know how to start or operate the water pump. The owner of the land was extremely upset about this turn of events and proceeded to let the young volunteer know exactly what he thought of him which was very negative and highly unflattering. The fire was eventually extinguished but only after additional, more experienced volunteers arrived on scene. This situation could have been much worse had there been lives at stake. Aside from being potentially dangerous, it was also an embarrassing episode for the Leonardville VFD. As a result, the formerly implied policy of not driving a truck unless knowing how to operate the water pump became an explicit policy. This is a good

example the transition between implicit to explicit job-specific knowledge (Applebaum, 1984: 18-19). One of the few official task assignments of Leonardville Volunteers is that drivers of trucks are designated pump operators. Before, this role was always tacitly understood, but because of this incident, it became an explicit standard operating procedure. A later reinforcement of this formal adoption of procedure was this VFD's insurance company suggesting that volunteers under the age of 21 not drive the emergency vehicles. This reduced the possibility of rookie volunteers committing procedural errors similar to the one mentioned above as well as reducing the risk of less experienced drivers' involvement in accidents. However, this procedure is only enforced when volunteers over 21 actually respond. Younger volunteers may often be the only ones who respond to a call and are therefore allowed to drive. I will address the relationship between insurance companies and the VFD further in Chapter III.

Craig Hudnall, a former chief and president of the Leonardville VFD summarized the sentiment of managing the enthusiasm of rookies during one conversation.

Craig Hudnall: "I used to be kind of gung-ho about fire fighting , more so than I am now, after a while you just kind of step to the side and let the younger ones do their thing; let them take over.

"My wife and I joke about it. You can drive by at 11:00 at night and they're all out here and they're not doing anything. I guess this is just their outlet to socialize. But we joke that they don't have a life. After you get married and have kids you kind of have other things to worry about. You have other things

going on. You're not obsessed about it. Sometimes, with a lot of them, and [myself] start out [that way], it gets to be an obsession. Always ready to go...spending all their free time up here.

"But its good in a way; the gung-ho-ness is needed, they want to learn but you need your older ones to point them in the right direction. You have to build up an element of trust. A kind of buddy system. You watch each other's back and watch your own. Some of the younger guys and inexperienced guys don't really have the sense to watch their own back just because they get excited and don't know what to watch for."

In sum, knowledge of fire fighting and EMS is gained over time. The more time and labor contributed to the VFD the more a volunteer becomes competent and effective in rendering assistance to those in need. In review, here is a brief, generalized break down of volunteer stages I have designated:¹³

- rookie; a first-time joiner, has a one year probationary period in which he/she learns basic protocol of the VFD and its services; respond to all emergency calls possible
- new volunteer; completed one year probationary period, no longer *officially* a rookie but still considered inexperienced, may often still be referred to as a rookie by experienced volunteers; also responds to all emergency calls possible
- experienced volunteer; has reached a point of experience where he is no longer considered a novice, at this point a volunteer could hold an officer's position such as

chief or assistant chief, generally requires at least five years of regular and dependable service

- and old-timer; volunteers who have been members of the VFD for at least 10-15 years, may still be actively involved but usually responds to only the most extreme emergency situations, many are now officers or ex-officers and assist in training or supervision of less experienced volunteers when needed.

As experience is gained, a volunteer's contribution of time and labor may decrease but responsibilities increase. One important capacity experienced volunteers serve is assigning rookies and inexperienced volunteers appropriate jobs on emergency scenes and in the firehouse as well as watching out for the safety and well-being of the less experienced and each other. This aspect is considered on-the-job-training which is accomplished over time and through the accumulation of training and actual emergency call response.

Another responsibility of experienced volunteers is the assumption of leadership in the absence of the designated/elected chief and/or assistant chief. Seniority and experience is recognized and respected by the members of this VFD for the greater good and efficiency of the organization. This workplace convention leads to issues of adaptability which are important to task accomplishment of the Leonardville VFD. The topics of leadership and adaptability are addressed in the following section.

Recognition of Leadership and Adaptability. "We're all volunteers! He's not any higher than I am." This is the first phrase heard from members of the Leonardville

VFD when I began talking to them (both as individuals and as a group) about the hierarchy and leadership of this organization. In the firehouse, there is a strong democratic or egalitarian atmosphere among these volunteers, at least as VFD members. However, there are some volunteers who are more experienced and have contributed more time and labor than others. All members of this VFD are aware of who is more experienced and to what degree. Also, some of Leonardville's volunteers are fire fighter certified, some are EMS certified, and some are both. This common understanding and recognition of seniority and/or training is vital to the success of this organization as an effective fire fighting/EMS organization.

The element of leadership recognition is closely related to teamwork. As stated earlier, these conventions of the workplace are not mutually exclusive. They are closely related and interdependent. The combination of the conventions of the workplace is one aspect of the maintenance and reproduction of the Leonardville VFD as a working social system.

Fire fighting/EMS is a team effort and teams need leaders. However, the volunteers of the Leonardville VFD may respond in different numbers with varying degrees of individual and collective experience to every call.

It was commonly stated during formal interviews and informal time spent at the fire house that "nobody wants to be chief, everybody wants to be an Indian." This means that no one wants to be in charge at an emergency scene. Instead, volunteers want to be on the end of a hose actually fighting the fire. No one wants to be the coordinator and decision-maker. This is the most difficult job to perform at a fire scene and why the

group elects a chief and assistant chief. However, there are occasions when neither the chief or assistance chief are present at fires. In this case the most senior volunteer takes charge.

During a house fire, whoever is in charge initially checks for hidden dangers such as downed power lines or the potential for power lines to fall as well as cutting off the electrical supply to a house. Additionally, they must check for the presence of butane or propane tanks and shut valves off supplying gas to a structure. If a gas tank is too close to a burning structure there may be the danger of it exploding. In this situation, the leader instructs one hose team to keep a stream of water on the tank to prevent it from overheating and possibly exploding.

Leaders must also coordinate fire attacks. Rarely are fires effectively extinguished with a single hose or angle of attack. It usually takes two or more different hose teams from different angles to extinguish a fire. Additionally, the correct nozzle adjustment is needed to effectively combat fire and is important to insure that water is not wasted. The first reaction of an inexperienced volunteer fire fighter is to adjust the hose nozzle to straight stream and simply shoot water onto a fire. This is usually the least effective method of attack. Straight stream is used for pumping massive amounts of water onto a fire or for knocking things out of the way. Semi- and full fog are usually the most effective nozzle adjustments due to the wide pattern in which they distribute water onto the fire. It is the job of the leader to watch for correct water application and correct for mistakes when needed.

The popularly elected officers of the Leonardville VFD consist of president, vice-president, chief, assistant chief, secretary/treasurer and reporter. All but the chief's and assistant chief's positions are administrative. Often times, fires will occur when the chief, assistant chief or both cannot respond. During these fire calls, the most senior volunteer assumes responsibility for organizing and coordinating others assisting in fighting a fire. The first people arriving on scene are responsible for ascertaining the situation such as how much damage has occurred or if nearby structures or property are in danger of burning. Also, someone may arrive later who is more senior than initial fire fighter(s) and assume responsibility. This is a welcomed occurrence by most volunteers. However, the common attitude among Leonardville Volunteers is that if they follow and listen to anyone assuming responsibility for organizing a fire fighting approach, it is out of respect, not because they *have* to.

Volunteers listen to and obey a chief and assistant chief who are commonly recognized as experienced and competent leaders for fire fighting/EMS by a majority of the organization's membership (Jacobs, 1976: 250). This is why they are elected to officers' positions. However, in the absence of these officers at an emergency scene the most senior/experienced volunteer assumes control of the group. This is unlike professional fire departments where all members of a fire fighting team are always present and assigned a certain task with officers such as captains and lieutenants directing the actions of the team. Additionally, professional fire departments have back-up units near and standing-by. Water is also easily accessible through additional tanker trucks and an extensive hydrant system in cities. In Leonardville, there may be 1 or 20

volunteers who respond to an emergency call. Everyone in this VFD has other jobs, most of which are out of town. This is not a professional fire department with members on constant stand-by for emergencies. Leonardville's volunteer fire fighters must be adaptive.

Adaptability is also closely linked to the aspect of teamwork. Just as every team needs a leader, a team must also have the ability to effectively deal with adversity. All fire scenes are different. Rigid chains-of-command, as found in professional fire departments, are not effective in this VFD. Whoever assumes control of the group, no matter what size, must work with variables such as type of fire, number of volunteers who respond, amount of water at the scene, distance to nearest water supply, types of equipment available and the amount of air (SCBAs) available. Additionally, unlike professional fire departments, the VFD's elected chief, assistant chief or the most senior volunteer in charge of the fire fighting group must actively contribute to accomplishing a particular task. It is not practical for leaders to *only* direct and give orders. They must actively fight fires.

Craig Hudnall illustrates leadership recognition as well as the need for adaptability and flexibility as he recounts the story of when he was the senior volunteer at a house fire.

Kash Krinhop: "Do y'all have a systematic fire fighting technique or is it more of a "homemade" fire fighting?"

Craig Hudnall: "When we see who shows up, *then* we decide who is going to go

in the fire. Like at one fire we had. A house was burning and only three guys including myself showed up. Well, they had SCBAs and bunker gear [protective coveralls] and I didn't so I told them what to do on the inside and how to attack from one side and I worked on the outside and finally got a room cleared by positive ventilation to where I could get in there and fight the fire myself without bunker gear and an air pack. But it was just 3 of us on a house fire on a weekday morning. If 8 people had showed up it would have been different; more resources to fight with. You have to be flexible and adaptable. The number of people and equipment will determine how you fight a particular fire. Work with what you got!"

Issues of leadership are different on EMS calls. Most often, EMS calls require no more than two Leonardville volunteers to respond. Often times there is only one volunteer that responds to EMS calls. If EMS is going to be administered by a Leonardville Volunteer they need to be state certified. Volunteers who are not EMS certified are instructed *not* to respond unless they are with a volunteer who is. This is because actions they take as untrained EMS volunteers may harm a victim as well as possibly exposing the VFD to lawsuits or "tort litigation" (Perkins, 1996: 76-79). Tort litigation involves legal action and demands for compensation by an injured party due to acts such as trespassing, libel/slander and negligence. This last issue of negligence is the issue a VFD wants to avoid by restricting untrained volunteers from attempting to render medical assistance when they do not know what they are doing or are not officially

documented as having received training and education for EMS. However, uncertified volunteers may respond to EMS calls in their own vehicles and offer any assistance they are able to but cannot act on behalf of the Leonardville VFD as an EMT. These individuals generally understand (through training and verbal warnings) that trying to help (medically) combined with their lack of training could be harmful to an ill or injured person(s) and expose the VFD to lawsuits.

Only EMS certified volunteers assume control of medical situations and assign non-certified volunteers tasks. Volunteers not certified in EMS may act as runners (retrieving equipment and supplies from the ambulance), filling out paper work, traffic control (at automobile accidents), and possibly helping load a stretcher into or out of an ambulance. This is to prevent the VFD from being sued for possibly making medical mistakes such as moving an injured accident victim without a C-collar (protective cervical spine brace) and causing more damage to a victim's damaged neck or back.

In either fire fighting or EMS scenarios, leadership is recognized through both implicit notions such as respect for volunteers with extended periods of service and high degrees of experience/training or explicit instructions such as not acting without certified volunteers' supervision. Regardless, there is a sense of equality among Leonardville Volunteers as members of this VFD but there is a conventional understanding that particular volunteers' instructions should be followed during emergency calls in the absence of elected officers. Recognition of experienced and trained individuals as well as following instructions and remaining flexible in procedural approaches to task

accomplishment is vital to the success of this organization as an effective fire fighting/EMS organization.

Teamwork. Working as a team is very important in fighting fires and responding to EMS calls. However, the number and collective experience of volunteers responding varies with each emergency call depending on the time of day or night and whether it is a weekend or weekday. During a weekday the turnout of volunteers is lowest because most people are working. Furthermore, a majority of volunteers work in nearby Shawnee Prairie. The time it takes getting from Shawnee Prairie to Leonardville, once receiving permission to leave work (if at all) is 20-30 minutes depending on traffic and where in Shawnee Prairie a volunteer works. Plus, there is the time it takes getting from the fire house to an emergency scene which also varies depending on the emergency scene location. Early evenings and weekends are the times of highest volunteer turnout for emergency calls due to the fact that most volunteers do not work (at their regular jobs) during these times.

Additionally, early evening and weekends are when most fires occur. This is because most people are off work during these times. According to the volunteers of this VFD, fires are usually started by people in and around their homes and most accidents occur at home as well. In the winter, fires usually occur in homes due to negligent or improper use of heating and cooking appliances and with fireplaces or wood burning stoves. For instance, several years ago the Leonardville VFD responded to a house fire in which an elderly man was killed. He was using his cooking stove and oven as a heater. As a result, his house burned down with him in it. During the summer,

(especially on weekends) people work in their yards and burn leaves or dump and burn trash. This causes a large part of summer fires (mostly grassfires) that the Leonardville VFD responds to.

Teamwork is vital to the success of the group. The presence of common goals in the organization assists individuals in cooperating both socially and practically as a VFD. The ultimate goal as stated by every member of this VFD is to "Get the job done!" These jobs range from fires and medical calls to the annual fund-raiser bar-be-que and cake auction. Processes involved in achieving goals, such as planning ahead and cooperation, are crucial to the success of a fire department.

The following examples of teamwork are considered implicit, as opposed to explicit, codes of work behavior (Applebaum, 1984: 4). This is because these routines are never specifically stated (explicit) as standard operating procedures nor trained for. Instead they become established procedures over time (implicit) because they are (and were) the most effective and efficient practices available for this VFD. These processes rely heavily upon teamwork and are only replaced when more effective or technologically advanced procedures and tools are adopted.

Before the development and acquisition of pagers, which now notify all active volunteers simultaneously of an emergency call, everyone was called by telephone. A prepared phone number list was distributed to all volunteers. The Donnell County Sheriff's Office is who people would call in case of emergency.¹⁴ If the emergency situation occurred in the VFD's service area the dispatcher at the Sheriff's Office had a list of phone numbers beginning with the chief down to regular fire fighters. The first

person the dispatcher reached and notified of the situation and location would then call the next person on the list until he or she reached someone and so on. Therefore time and notification were obstacles to overcome for the Leonardville VFD. Volunteers state that, once notified, whoever arrived first at the fire house would crank one truck, turning the lights and siren on in it and leave in another truck which was another form of emergency notification for those who lived nearby. Also, in the past, they wrote directions to the emergency scene for others on a chalkboard in the firehouse before leaving. An excerpt from a conversation with Roger Doss describes this aspect of teamwork.

Roger Doss: "We used to have to call through a list and would leave a message on a chalkboard with directions to the fire. We didn't have radios, then we got CBs and that helped response time and efficiency, then we got pagers and that reduced our time through the dispatcher with 911 calls."

"I would come up at night and crank one truck and turn the lights and siren on and go get in another one and take off. Somebody would be up here wondering what the hell was going on and it was sort of an alarm."

"Also, whoever got the first truck would pull out and circle through [Leonardville] and a lot of us lived on the main street over there and we'd hear the sirens going and I'd be dressed by the time it got to my house and it would slow down enough to where people could jump on it and go with them to the fire. That's what I used to do."

"At least it would let people know there was a fire. It was a primitive system but it was our only system. Now they call 911 and 20 people know right away, at the same time. Its a lot better."

Teamwork accomplishes three things in this example. First, individuals notify other volunteers in the immediate vicinity of the fire house of a fire or medical emergency. Secondly, directions are left so later arriving volunteers can respond and assist. And finally, one aspect of teamwork not directly mentioned in this excerpt is the fact that cranking two trucks and leaving one (at least) allows the remaining truck an opportunity to warm-up. Operating a vehicle without allowing time for oil to adequately circulate through the motor can cause serious damage over time, especially a VFD vehicle which may not be used for weeks at a time. In an indirect, perhaps even unintentional way, volunteers were maintaining their trucks, keeping as many of them as they could in the best condition possible for future use. Dependable vehicles are a vital tool in any fire department. This is especially true in a rural fire department where there are, for example, no other fire houses on the other side of town to call for backup if mechanical difficulties prevent emergency call response.

In sum, the conventions discussed above are work, process-oriented actions, relations and attitudes of the Leonardville Volunteers. Socially defined behavior is expressed through conventions of workplace and develop from a strong sense of group and community dedication or "locally initiated mutual aid" (Simpson, 1996, 18). These conventions are both learned and inherently understood between members of a group or

community and are necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of individual, group and community identity as well as the practical aspects of fire fighting/EMS (Applebaum, 1984, McCarl, 1978, 1985). These conventions include expected and acceptable behavior, communication, attitudes, and ideas that friends, relatives, and neighbors understand, both consciously and unconsciously, through frequent personal contact in the Leonardville VFD (Watanabe, 1992). Simply stated, conventions of the workplace are job-related actions and social processes of VFD members in the establishment, maintenance and reproduction of effective routines when working as fire fighter/EMTs.

Conventions of the workplace are not independent or mutually exclusive. Instead they are combined in complex and varying manners and assist in the operation and maintenance of the work environment. Additionally, I examined work and workplace from a "process-oriented" *and* "goal-directed" perspective (Jordan, 1989: 3, McCarl, 1985: 160). In doing so, this examination of the VFD demonstrates the fact that there is a pragmatically adaptive and dynamic social manner in which volunteers in the VFD perform tasks stemming from the motivating factor of mutual obligation. Further, task accomplishment (whether physical or social) is expressed in and through this organization as a whole. By focusing on conventions of workplace, I hope to have added to anthropological knowledge regarding our understanding of the systemic context of cultural expression in the work environment as it pertains not only to the function of labor as a technical exercise but as a channel of broader social and cultural aspects of life in rural Texas.

3. Conclusion

The maintenance and reproduction of the Leonardville VFD as a social place is primarily accomplished through the conventions of mutual obligation and conventions of workplace. A strong sense of mutual obligation and dedication provide the social ingredients for the establishment and maintenance of a volunteer fire department in Leonardville, Texas. Developing from the conventions of mutual obligation are the conventions of workplace. These are efforts and actions of VFD members to fulfill particular roles in specified manners in the organization. The combination of both conventions of mutual obligation and the workplace are required of volunteer fire fighter/EMTs who successfully navigate and perpetuate their work environment and organization. Responsibly and effectively taking part in the organization's activities often times requires sacrifice and is expected and required of members to remain in "good standing" (Simpson, 1987, 1996: 18, 20). Involvement and participation in the VFD is cultural expression of individual and group identity through volunteerism. Like other community, political or religious functions and rituals, the actions of the VFD create and maintain a public image and identity for volunteers. Participation also creates a sense of belonging while it establishes the parameters of correct behavior (Geertz, 1973, Ortner, 1984).

Volunteerism allows for and perpetuates the continuance of the local VFD as a viable entity within and for the community. Successful individual participation and acquisition of social capital, status or prestige within the VFD demonstrates to other volunteers that this organization provides a setting of opportunity for gaining social

resources, thus keeping the VFD viable as an effective fire fighting/EMS organization through its continued attractiveness to potential and current volunteers (Bordieu, 1986, Coleman, 1989: 105). Thus, VFD volunteerism is encouraged and enforced through conventions of the workplace and mutual obligation. Likewise, the success of this VFD perpetuates and reproduces both individual and organizational identity. When analyzed, conventions pertaining to group commitment and conduct set the standard for expected and acceptable behavior, duties and rights (Ghani, 1995: 38).

CHAPTER IV

MUTUAL OBLIGATION AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

Modernization and increasing urbanization have a major impact on life in rural Texas. Maintenance and reproduction of the rural community as a social place, in an environment of social, political, and economic change, is the primary topic of this chapter. The VFD plays an important role in the maintenance and recreation of community identity in Leonardville, Texas. Involvement and participation in the VFD is one characteristic that assists in the social definition of the community (Perkins, 1990, Simpson, 1996: 18, 23-24). I propose that participation in the VFD provides the local citizenry a stake in community affairs. Additionally, the contributions of time and labor by these individuals are recognized by the community, thus providing volunteer fire fighters with a degree of locally defined status and prestige.

In relation to maintenance and reproduction of community, I will examine the Leonardville VFD in its broader social contexts of community, service area, county and state. The VFD is an institution that serves to maintain Leonardville's identity and promotes social stability when forces, such as economic cooperation, competition and change between organizations, population issues (local vs. non-local as well as life-cycle changes) and government bureaucracy (such as county-level medical associations) cause or enable change. In this chapter, I provide specific examples of how volunteers use conventions of mutual obligation in the maintenance and reproduction of community in the face of these issues/forces of change.

1. The Community: Mutual Obligation and the Social Environment

Conventions of Mutual Obligation. Conventions of mutual obligation denote the responsibilities and commitments of VFD members to Leonardville as a whole just as they denote the responsibilities and commitments of the organization's membership to each other. Conventions of mutual obligation at the community level are established through trust, offering and accepting opportunities to demonstrate devotion to the community as well as sharing responsibilities and the burdens of sometimes traumatic emergency situations. Communal understanding and demonstration of mutual obligation expressed through membership and action in the VFD assist in continuous construction and maintenance of local identity and stability. Through frequent personal contact over time, citizens gain knowledge regarding personal behavior that enables them to actively engage each other and their world in a uniquely "local" manner. "That is, intimate familiarity with a local place and with the particular individuals who [live] there [engender] abiding personal attachments directly associated with compelling presuppositions about how properly to live in [a] place" (Watanabe, 1992: 11-12). Understanding conventions of mutual obligation provides insight into community dynamics and characteristics, social processes and the shared, tacit knowledge of the members of this community.

Community is maintained and reproduced through the efforts of citizens to fulfill particular roles in specific manners. Community members expect each other to be aware of and participate in local social life and events if they wish to be regarded as stakeholders and/or good citizens (Cohen, 1999: 9-10). Many individuals participate in

the Leonardville VFD as a means of community involvement. In this sense, the VFD parallels membership in other organizations such as the Lion's Club or 4-H Club.

Volunteering as a fire fighter/EMT is one way for people to gain a stake in the affairs of Leonardville, to make a contribution, while at the same time acquiring social capital and promoting their general welfare as well as that of the VFD's service area and even providing assistance to neighboring communities with Donnell County (Bordieu, 1986, Coleman, 1989: S119). Involvement and participation in the VFD is a cultural expression of communal identity through volunteerism. Furthermore, this volunteerism is public (Putnam, 1993: 87-89). Community involvement through the VFD is observable during parades, community service, and fund raising events (Simpson, 1996: 17). It is for all in the community to see. Like other community, political or religious functions and rituals, the actions of the VFD create and maintain a public image and identity for the volunteers. Public participation also creates a conventional or shared sense of physical control and social belonging while it establishes the parameters of correct behavior (Geertz, 1973: 112-113, Ghani, 1995: 38, Ortner, 1984).

Control and Stability. The following is a passage from a conversation with Chuck Rheay who is a long-standing volunteer of the Leonardville VFD. In this passage, I initially ask Chuck if he believes the VFD will continue to successfully function, get better or decline in efficiency in the future. In the course of our conversation Chuck states that he believes the VFD will get better. Following the question I asked him why the Leonardville VFD has such strong community support at

their annual fund-raiser. His reply is indicative of why he believes the community supports the VFD and how the VFD exercises some control over forces of change.

Kash: "Do you think the VFD will continue to function on the level it does today or will it get better or worse?"

Chuck Rheay: "Better, because we get great support from the community. Good [community] response.

Kash: "Why do y'all have such a good turnout and good support?"

Chuck: "They've seen how this department has grown; where we started and where we are now. We do good or we wouldn't have new equipment."

"My uncle died Monday. My aunt had to call 911 Saturday at 3:00 in the morning, she just didn't know what to expect when the trucks pulled up. But when they got there it was a big burden lifted off of her because she knew these people; saw their faces and that had a lot to do with [her] feeling better because it's good to share the burden with friends, relatives, and neighbors.

"I never really realized it before until it was my family that needed help, there's an element of trust and stability when you see someone you know. The first person through the door was Rhett Clark, who's our cousin, and then Waylon Bryan and Jerod Parker, and it really helped my aunt and I never realized it before but I think that's why we get so much support; [the] community helping itself...ourselves.

"I like [Leonardville] because of the tightness. I can't walk into a store

without somebody saying 'Hey Mark' or I can go into the auto shop down here and I ain't got my checkbook with me, they'll let me have the part so I can go on to work and I'll pay them later."

Chuck's mention of community "tightness" in this passage is an important concept in the construction and maintenance of community. In the social context of Leonardville, tightness is the shared sense of closeness between people which allows not only for familiarity but also provides a foundation for common identity and mutual obligation. In this sense, tightness is similar to John Watanabe's discussion on the importance of "naab'l" (literally meaning "soul" or "way of being") in the social construction of community in rural Guatemala (1992: 81). This tightness or "way of being" among residents of Leonardville establishes

... a connectedness to others that they construe as essential to their well-being. In other words, the conventional associations of naab'l equate human awareness with belonging to a community, expressed through an individual recognition of-and ongoing commitments to - the others who make up this community [Watanabe, 1992: 86].

Furthermore, throughout the course of life and repeated contact/interaction between community members that assists in the establishment of trust and/or local identity, tightness may be presumed to be an inherent quality of local life but "*is actually*

invented in the course [Original emphasis] ” of action and interaction (Wagner, 1975: 94). Being “tight” with other community members is achieved through active engagement in the community; establishing and maintaining trust by participation in and dedication to other community members (Keil, 1986, Watanabe, 1992: 90-91). Tightness is accomplished by a range of actions including, in this case, paying for something “later” if it is given on faith and credit or volunteering service to the community through the VFD thus sharing in responsibilities associated with providing Leonardville with fire protection and emergency medical service.

Aside from revealing notions of “tightness” in Leonardville which allow for effective community construction, this excerpt covers two additional themes. First, is the manner in which the Leonardville VFD assists in community maintenance and reproduction through mutual obligation. Second, Chuck’s statements illustrate the VFD’s assistance in mediating forces of life-cycle changes; namely, in this instance, how a family deals with the death of one of its members.

Chuck talks about the direct observation of growth and development of the VFD and the strong popular and financial support which contributes to the reciprocal cycle that perpetuates both this organization and Leonardville. Continued participation in and support for expanding the VFD is the “formal expression of inclusion in the local community” and is indicative of the local population’s awareness that this organization has practical as well as “social value” (Watanabe, 1992: 125). In return for local support, the VFD continues to grow and obtain better material (and training) thus allowing it to better provide protection of life and property of the community. That is,

volunteers donate time and labor and non-volunteers provide financial resources. Simply stated, Leonardville forms and supports its own emergency service, the emergency service performs to a relative high standard of service (set by the community and VFD members) and the community continues to support the fire department both in volunteers and money. The VFD assists in the protection of life and property and the community continues to support the VFD; thus Leonardville and its VFD are maintained and reproduced.

The VFD also acts as a mediator or stabilizing factor in contrast to change. Death is, without a doubt, a major element of change in any community and is ultimately out of anyone's control. The death of a community member is very traumatic; especially to the immediate family. Left to deal with death and subsequent changes are the surviving relatives, friends and neighbors. Chuck states that his aunt was extremely relieved and comforted when volunteers *she knew* arrived on the scene to aid his uncle. Chuck's aunt felt that she was not alone in dealing with events; she could "share the burden." The Leonardville VFD's mission is to "protect life and property" and "empower residents to overcome natural adversity" (Simpson, 1997: 18, Watanabe, 1992: 125). Trusting and knowing that Leonardville Volunteers have a personal stake in rendering assistance is reassuring to this "tight" community. By sharing the burden with non-strangers, an individual does not have to deal with the sad and stressful events surrounding sickness and death alone.

The primary task of the Leonardville VFD is to fight fires and save lives; to provide some semblance or degree of control over sickness, injury or fire when out of

control or threatening the well-being of people (Harvey, 1997: 719, McCarl, 1981: 12). The shared, communal act of combating death and other tragic events such as a home fire provides an element of security and stability for members of a community. The VFD response "brackets the disaster symbolically. In invoking collective concern, it begins a ritual repair of the emotional damage which disaster brings and reestablishes the moral assumptions behind everyday life in community" (Simpson, 1996: 24). In Chuck's story, the stroke eventually took the life of his uncle but the initial trauma to surviving family members was reduced by the support of community volunteers who combat and share the burden of dealing with sickness and death as well as promoting the communal knowledge that this service is provided to everyone (Harvey, 1985: 233). In dealing with this particular emergency situation, control was lost in the sense that the victim's life could not be saved. But stability was provided and maintained for the family members who were present at the initial emergency scene through the comfort of familiarity and personal support provided by volunteers who respond to emergency situations.

Mutual Obligation as Rite of Passage. As discussed in Chapter II, many individuals regard membership and participation in the Leonardville VFD as an opportunity to demonstrate to volunteers and non-volunteers alike that they are adults and full members of the community and should be treated as such. The minimum age requirement for joining the VFD is 18 years. At this age, passage into adulthood is marked by the successful management of increased responsibility and one way to achieve this is contributing to the VFD and the community (Arthur, 1997: 364, McCarl,

1981, Simpson, 1996: 22). Arnold van Gennep defines rites of passage as “all the ceremonial patterns which accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another” (1960: 10). Volunteering as a local fire fighter/EMT is one way in which young people can demonstrate both their desire and ability to assume responsibility and their commitment to fellow citizens as well as “passing” from the “social world” of adolescence into adulthood.

Although the desire to acquire status and remain in good standing in the community is true of people born and raised in Leonardville, it is also true of people who move or marry into the community. New or non-"intergenerational" residents of Leonardville may or may not be so young as to feel they have to prove their status as adults (Simpson, 1996: 17, Perkins, 1996: 133). In this sense, joining the VFD is a rite of passage for individuals with full-time jobs, families and homes who desire and/or feel a requirement to demonstrate their obligation to the community. For example, Roger Doss married into the community at the age of 21 in 1976. In this case, Roger was someone who demonstrated to established community members his maturity as an adult resident of Leonardville, choosing to become involved in local affairs. Over the years Roger also demonstrated his loyalty and concern for the well being of the community's citizenry. Both of these public displays of social concern and conscious were initially accomplished by volunteering as a fire fighter and later as an EMT for Leonardville.

Roger Doss is currently a twenty-three year active volunteer certified in both fire fighting and EMS. Throughout his involvement with the Leonardville VFD, he has served as the organization's secretary, assistant chief and vice president. As a twenty-

three- year resident of Leonardville, Roger has also served and/or serves as a city alderman, treasurer of the local Brethren Church, 4-H Club Youth Administrator, member of the Leonardville Rodeo Organizing Committee and Lion's Club and is a Donnell County Constable. During a conversation with him, I asked about his initial involvement with the Leonardville VFD. His response sums up nicely the notion of mutual obligation in the community.

Kash: "Why did you join the VFD here in town?"

Roger Doss: "A lot of guys asked me to join and I knew them through my wife. I was 21 when I joined. It was a way to meet people in town since I was new here. We lived across the street from the VFD and I thought it might be interesting to do. My wife was from here and it helped me get to know some of the older people in town. And I had helped put out grass fires and stuff before but was never a member of any fire department."

"It's a civic duty. I can't expect people to come out and put my house fire out for free if I'm not willing to help them do the same thing. It's a civic duty or community awareness."

In this short passage Roger indicates he joined the VFD for several reasons. First of all, people knew him through his wife and felt he was a member of the community, at least through marriage, and *should* become involved in local affairs. This is a very important point. Simply marrying into the community was not enough to allot

Roger full status as a citizen in Leonardville. Trust was not established. He had not demonstrated his interest, concern or willingness to accept responsibility as an adult citizen in Leonardville. Most likely, because he was a new resident, he could not have immediately run for a local government position or joined organizations such as the Lion's Club without respective popular support or sponsorship. Therefore, the VFD provided an opportunity for Roger to, at least initially, become a stakeholder in the community.

Secondly, Roger states that he was young (21 years old) and joining the VFD provided him an opportunity to socialize and create social ties with members of the community, especially some of the older, more established members of the community. In Roger's case, he demonstrated through continued devotion to the organization and his ability to learn and perform as a fire fighter/EMT that he was a responsible adult. This is a rite of passage that many young people need to assist them in becoming accepted as responsible adults in this organization and community in general.

To elaborate, volunteering service to the VFD as a means of progressing into or partially accomplishing full status as a citizen of Leonardville is a rite of passage or "ritual symbol." This rite is a "dynamic entity, at least within its appropriate context of action." Volunteerism as a rite of passage both "indicate[s] and constitute[s] transitions between states" and is a phase or process "whereby groups become adjusted to internal changes and adapted to their external environment. From this standpoint the ritual symbol becomes a factor in social action, a positive force in an activity field" (Turner, 1967: 93, 1996: 442). In other words, volunteering is a rite of passage for those who

want status as full citizens including those who have turned eighteen (age typically symbolic of the passage from adolescence into adulthood) as well as adults who move into the community from elsewhere. It is the passage from non-citizen or partial citizen to full citizen that participation in the VFD can signify as well as help accomplish.¹⁵ Membership and participation in the Leonardville VFD is an opportunity to demonstrate to volunteers and non-volunteers alike that they are members of the community and should be treated as such. Acquisition of status as a fire fighter/EMT leads to acceptance as an adult and/or good citizen. This process is marked by degrees of successful management of increased responsibility and interest in/devotion to the community. Volunteering as a local fire fighter/EMT is a way in which people living in the community, young and new alike, demonstrate their desire for and willingness to accept responsibility as well as concern for Leonardville. Involvement is required of people who want to acquire and remain in "good standing" in the community.

Parades, Community Service, and Bar-Be-Que. The following passage is a short segment of an interview I had with Blake Hopson regarding the VFD's role as a supporter of the community in non-emergency situations.

Blake Hopson: "We do parades, community service, LeonardFestiVille, help direct traffic and stuff. We'd park cars at the county fair. I mean, we do other things besides fires. We thought about 'Adopt-a-Highway Program' but decided not to.

But the Lion's club does that and most of them are in the VFD and they don't want to do it twice. Plus, we thrive off contributions from the community. If people give us money for support then we have to be careful about giving to other charities because a lot of people may think 'Well why should I give you money if you're just gonna turn around and give to these people over here. If I wanted to support them, I would have given them the money.'"

"I wish we would do more stuff like that but you have to be careful about the fact that we operate on contributions. But if it involves stuff other than monetary support, like time and labor, we usually donate if we can or want to."

Being in the Leonardville VFD is not *just* about putting out fires or responding to medical emergencies but also about covering the costs of operating the VFD and participating in public events. The three most common examples of alternative roles of volunteer fire fighter/EMTs and conventions of mutual obligation in Leonardville are parades, community service, and the annual fund-raising bar-be-que/cake auction (Simpson, 1996: 17). Parades and community service are direct contributions and assistance to the well-being and morale of Leonardville.

The bar-be-que/cake auction is a fund-raiser and primary source of income for the VFD. This event raises money for the VFD so that it can continue to function, buying and upgrading equipment and facilities as well as paying for education and training. The only other sources of income for the VFD is a \$200.00 payment from Donnell County for fire calls outside Leonardville's city limits and providing volunteers

for the operation of a concession stand during football games at The University of South Central Texas.

Parades. Participating in public rituals such as parades is a common function of the Leonardville VFD. Parades are public rituals which serve to strengthen community bonds and promote local identity. Geertz states: "In a ritual, the world as lived and world as imagined, fused under the agency of ... symbolic forms, turn out to be the same world..." Rituals are "consecrated behavior" that are demonstrative or "symbolic" of the actual world and the way in which people view and engage the world they live in through cultural expressions (Geertz, 1973: 112). Furthermore, parades are rituals which "symbolically integrate" and "shape the... consciousness of a people" or assist in creating and reaffirming local identity by the display of community members primarily associated through locally significant groups/organizations such as the VFD, businesses, school clubs and bands or local 4-H Clubs (Geertz, 1973: 113). Specifically, the VFD's participation in parades demonstrates to and reminds citizens of their ability to organize and "initiate action at the local level for the benefit of their communities" (Simpson, 1996: 17-18). In addition to local holidays and events, other communities in the area also ask the Leonardville VFD to sometimes participate in their parades, thus strengthening inter-community bonds.

For parades, the volunteers will wash and shine the fire trucks which indicates pride in the organization and pride in the community event. As stated by one fire fighter "A good reflection on the VFD is a good reflection on the community." They then line the trucks up and slowly drive along the main road which runs through Leonardville

along with other participatory people/groups either walking, on horseback or riding on floats and vehicles decorated for whatever occasion or event demands the parade such as Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, and LeonardFestiVille (celebration of Leonardville's founding). Parades are processual displays of local identity and symbolically allow the VFD to present itself as "the objectification of the community's commitment to egalitarian sociability and mutual responsibility (Simpson, 1996: 24). Additionally, the VFD has some advantages over other local parade participants. For one, they have very large, bright red trucks equipped with the brightest lights and loudest horns and sirens. At Christmas time, the VFD has another advantage over other parade participants; Santa Claus! The biggest, brightest fire truck acts as the Texas version of Santa's sleigh, parading him down the street so he can wave and throw candy to all the boys and girls waiting excitedly for a glimpse at the plump, patron saint of children who has the power to make their dreams reality during this magical time of year. The Leonardville VFD enjoys taking part in these special events because they not only contribute to the happiness and general quality of life of Leonardville but because parades also provide volunteers an opportunity to show-off their equipment (specifically the trucks) and demonstrate pride in their work and organization. Furthermore, parades offer these volunteers a brief moment in the spotlight not associated with emergency situations but instead with positive organizational affiliation and pride in their community (Case, 1988).

Community Service. Contributing to the morale and general welfare of this community is a major role of the VFD. Assisting in events besides parades is something

volunteers are often asked to do by the community. During the summer, there are two main local events besides the VFD fund-raiser; the Leonardville Rodeo and LeonardFestiVille. Both require people to direct and assist in parking cars for the general public and volunteers help with this task. There are very few paved lots available in the area and parking can become disorderly without directions; this is especially true if the ground is wet and people's vehicles get stuck in the mud. Volunteers also park and retrieve cars for elderly people so they do not have to walk as far in the Texas summer sun, perhaps preventing potential medical emergencies.¹⁶

At these events, there is at least one fire truck loaded with medical supplies and equipment standing by in case medical assistance is needed at the scene. This is especially true at the Rodeo due to the possibility of serious injuries occurring during rough cowboy athletics such as bull riding and bull dogging. However, during my research in this community, no one recalls there ever being an emergency situation at any of these events more serious than heat exhaustion, minor cuts/abrasions or slight cases of alcohol poisoning. Regardless, the presence and preparedness of volunteer fire fighter/EMTs is a service to the community.

Another big event in Leonardville during the summer is the Annual Leonardville Volunteer Fire Department's Bar-Bc-Que Fund-Raiser. On the third Sunday of every August the VFD provides "all you can eat" dinners of bar-be-que, beans, coleslaw, potatoes, bread and tea for a cost of \$5.00 a plate. Additionally, there is a raffle of donated items from local and surrounding businesses and people and an auction of donated cakes, hamburger and chili meat after the majority of people are finished eating.

All of this is accompanied by a live band and a dance later in the evening at the SPJST Hall.

Bar-be-que. All fire departments require fire fighting equipment and storage facilities for that equipment. However, the fundamental components of a fire department, voluntary or otherwise, are fire fighters. The Leonardville VFD relies almost solely upon its local citizens for support, both for its volunteers and its financial resources. To supplement the budget, volunteers operate a concession stand during The University of South Central Texas' football games for ten percent of the stand's gross income. The VFD also receives \$200 from Donnell County for every fire call outside the city's limits. This fire department receives no direct assistance from the government (local or state). The Leonardville volunteers maintain their independence from government bureaucracy and funding. If the fire department were partially or wholly funded by local taxes this would allow for outside interference in inner-organizational matters while simultaneously reducing the status and subsequent authority of the officers and members in the very organization they comprise possibly resulting in prolonged inter-organizational conflict between the VFD and the municipality (Perkins, 1996: 45-46). Instead, this organization was founded and continues to function as a strictly voluntary and autonomous organization maintained by a membership consisting of local citizens who prefer the VFD remain un-funded by local tax increases and unmanaged (even partially) by government politicians and/or bureaucrats (Perkins, 1987). According to Blake Hopson:

Blake: "Leonardville runs the show; no government bullshit. We're our own entity. Don't need the city to do anything; just the approval of our members and what the community wants. We get \$200 from the county for outside fire calls but they [the county] have no control over what we do. There's no strings attached to that money, they just give it to us to show a little appreciation for us doing the job. Same with the city. They have no control over us. Don't get me wrong though. We get along fine with the city, there's no big conflict. But we can do whatever we want, if we need to, even though they [the city] likes to raise a little hell about it sometimes. They got no control over the situation."

The Leonardville VFD's support and authority to act is primarily a result of the good will and self-organization of the local citizenry. In turn, VFD participation allows a portion of local citizens to come together in a formalized setting to organize fire protection service and discuss matters of the community as well as providing an opportunity to publicly demonstrate their citizenship to fellow volunteer fire fighters and non-volunteers alike.

Volunteerism and effective "human service" allows for and perpetuates the continuance of the VFD as a fire fighting/EMS and social institution in the community. The success of this VFD perpetuates and reproduces community identity when the local citizenry is confronted, both internally and externally, with change (Perkins, 1996: 126, 135, Simpson, 1996: 18, 29-31). The actions of people in this organization and community might seem trivial and mundane. However, when examined in an

anthropological context; codes of commitment, conduct and community set the standard for expected and acceptable behavior, duties and rights (Cohen, 1999: 9-10, 13-14, Ghani, 1995: 38). That is, people ascribe value to social processes of the community which frame human action such as volunteering as a fire fighter/EMT or non-volunteers faithfully attending and assisting during the VFD's fund-raiser (Jordan, 1989: 6). Values placed on participation include notions such as volunteers being community-oriented or possessing exceptionally high regards for human life and property while non-volunteers' faithful attendance to the fund-raiser may be due to the fact the event itself is an enjoyable sociable event. Further, fund-raiser attendance can "reinforce the existing social structure" of Leonardville through the expression of gratitude and appreciation for the service volunteers provide the community (Abrahams, 1970: 304). This discussion of the bar-be-que/cake auction covers both the notion of conventions of mutual obligation at the community level and also leads into the next section of this chapter regarding social fields.

The Annual Leonardville VFD Bar-Be-Que is the primary source of income for this organization and requires much preparation and planning. All available volunteers, active and inactive, participate in the event.¹⁷ Members purchase and prepare food, purchase paper plates, utensils, and advertisement, and hire a band as well as ask for any donations of food items and raffle items people or businesses are willing to contribute. They are also in charge of cleaning the fair grounds when the event is over. The Saturday before the fund-raiser volunteers arrive at the fair grounds by 7:00a.m. They begin the process of trimming trees and shrubs, setting out extra trash cans, cutting,

hauling and stacking wood near the bar-be-que pits, cleaning the pits, lighting the fire, peeling and cooking potatoes, preparing and seasoning meat, making tea, making sauce, setting up tables and chairs, and a host of other tasks that must be accomplished for this fund-raiser's success. Saturday nights are usually more relaxed with most of the preparations taking place during the day but cooking doesn't stop until Sunday usually around 1:00 p.m.. Additionally, there is a very informal and party-like atmosphere the night before the bar-be-que which is conducive to quite a bit of beer drinking by volunteers while keeping the fires going and starting the meat-cooking. But the majority of this occurs after primary tasks are accomplished.

Cake Auction. On Sunday, around 9:00 a.m., people begin to arrive for the event. By 1:30 p.m. the cake auction begins. The cake auction is phenomenal because of the amount some of the cakes will sell for as well as its overall success as a fund-raiser. In particular, one German Chocolate cake, referred to as the "community cake" will sell from anywhere between \$1,000 and \$2,000. This cake's recipe calls for 50 eggs to give the reader an idea of how large it is (a normal size cake requires 2-3 eggs). It also takes two individuals to hold this cake. However, the fact that this cake brings in thousands of dollars is not strictly due to its size or the bakers exceptional cooking skills. The reason the "community cake" brings in so much money is because several people pool their resources to buy it. People attending the fund-raiser usually already know beforehand how much they are going to bid on a cake or contribute to the VFD. Since the bidding on cakes usually starts at \$100 (this is more than some can afford), many people donate lesser amounts of money toward purchasing the "community cake." The

amount of money raised to buy the "community cake" varies but ranges between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

Additionally, there are other "high-bidders" who will either independently or collectively run-up the bid to elevate the selling price on various cakes. Low cake sales usually range from \$150-\$325, average cake sales range from \$325-\$600 and of course there is the "community cake" which has brought in as much as \$2,000 in the past. The "high-bidders" begin bidding on a cake and bidding against each other, running up the price to relatively exorbitant amounts of money, sometimes above the average-high \$600 mark but usually not more than \$1,000. Volunteers hope that this auctioning/bidding process will excite the crowd and possibly lead to other high bids on additional cakes while offering a bit of entertainment and novelty to onlookers who witness the purchasing of such "expensive" cakes through competitive bidding.

For individuals who do not or cannot bid on cakes (due to late arrival, preference for meat or shortage of funds) but want to participate in the auction there is also a chili meat and hamburger auction after the cakes are gone. Auctioned off are five pound packages of meat that usually sell for approximately \$50 each. The bottom line in all of this is that money is being donated for a good cause and done so in a fun way while maximizing the amount of money brought in through the bidding process of an auction (Abrahams, 1970: 317-319). The following passage is part of an interview with a volunteer by the name of Chris Etharedge. In it, he discusses the cake auction and community support.

Kash: "Why is there such a good turnout at the cake auction?"

Chris Etharedge: "[By] Drumming up business from local merchants, farm equipment dealers and stuff. Go out and ask people to bid and in return the auctioneer 'plugs' the business. It's advertisement. If there's 700 people at a bar-be-que, that's a pretty good audience to hear something about how good your business is! In return, the merchants from all over, Ezra, Shawnee Prairie, come out and bid on cakes and buy raffle tickets.

Kash: "What did you do personally during the fund-raiser?"

Chris: "Acknowledging bidders. Everybody that bids gets recognition personally or business-wise. If its a businessman we'll plug his business a little bit or just let people know that so-and-so is bidding and willing to help out with the fund raising by bidding on a cake... and that encourages people to help out to."

In addition to providing a bit of entertainment to on-lookers, those who bid on cakes, low or high, gain public recognition for their support of the VFD. During the bidding process, volunteers act as "spotters" and monitor those who bid. Bidders are publicly acknowledged for their support with a public announcement of thanks and gratitude from the auctioneer or spotters. This is good for local and area business owners (primarily agricultural supplies and equipment businesses) who come out to support the VFD. Bidding provides "free" advertisement when businesses are recognized as supporters of this farming community's VFD. This is also true in the

raffle. Businesses and people are publicly recognized for donating particular prizes for the raffle. Public acknowledgment lets community members know who supports Leonardville and its VFD as well as providing a bit of advertisement/recognition for businesses and people.

The money raised in the 1998 fund-raiser is an example of how successful the cake auction is for the VFD. Out of \$18,236.28 profit (gross- \$23,344.28) raised at last years fund-raiser \$12,250.00 was generated from the cake auction alone. This is almost 2/3s of total profit generated from this single fund-raiser! Overall, \$5,108.42 was invested by the VFD to raise \$18,236.28 and 1998 was considered an average year for fund-raising by the VFD. The fund-raiser held in 1992 raised \$29,000 for the group. Of course there are also donations of raffle prizes, cakes, time and labor but in quantitative terms, due to reciprocal exchanges of commitment and mutual obligation the VFD experienced a 357% increase in an initial investment of \$5,108.42.

There is always a large turnout of people from the community and surrounding area to the Leonardville VFD's fund-raiser. This is due to several reasons such as large amounts of excellent food, live music, the raffle and the cake auction. Most importantly though showing up and participating in the day's events are for the good cause of supporting the Leonardville Volunteer Fire Department and the community in general. By attending and participating in the fund-raiser people, in effect, are supporting the mutual service to and protection of themselves and other community members as well as residents in surrounding areas. By taking part in this fund-raiser, people demonstrate their mutual obligation through sharing the responsibility of raising money for the

betterment of the VFD which is a strong element of community support or "locally initiated mutual aid" (Simpson, 1996: 18).

2. Social Fields

Separation of the Leonardville VFD from its context of community, service area, county or state is just as impracticable as the separation of culture and workplace. Just as community members act and interact in the fire department so does the VFD in its broader environment. This organization has ties to and cooperates with small neighboring communities, as well as county/state organizations, bureaucracies and private industry. The Leonardville VFD is responsible for providing emergency fire protection and medical service in a 181 square mile area or approximately twenty-five percent of Donnell County. Therefore, the relationships between this VFD, Leonardville and the surrounding area are dynamic and inseparable as long as this fire department serves to fill socially and physically pragmatic needs (Perkins, 1987: 342, 1996, Roseberry, 1995). In order to fully understand this group, its context must be understood. The specific settings in which I will examine the Leonardville VFD are those of its community, service area, county and the state. The community exists in broader sociological settings or "fields of power" (Roseberry, 1995: 56-57, Wolf, 1969: 290). I extend this idea of "fields of power" or a "social matrix" to include the VFD as a non-isolated group within broader social settings which are "parameters of interaction" (Horowitz, 1971: 179, Wolf, 1971: 176). The VFD simultaneously exists, acts and interacts in Leonardville as well as other social settings. Further, it is both "generalized"

and “specialized.” The VFD is “plastic” or versatile so that it may function in both local and non-local social fields (Wolf, 1971: 170-171, 173). In the “generalized” sense the VFD is adaptable to changes, interacts with other groups and performs alternative tasks and roles besides *just* fire protection and emergency medical services. At the same time, however, the VFD is “specialized” in that it functions in established, particular ways maintaining group integrity while lending itself to the construction of group and community identity. In other words, the VFD operates in both set and flexible manners. The organization itself has established implicit/explicit rules, manners and routines but it must “diversify” or change approaches over time to adapt to internal and external pressures of change such as increasing costs of equipment and insurance or improved EMS. The VFD is an actor in concentrically larger environments. It must act in as well as interact with various other groups in these larger “fields” such as state bureaucracies and other fire departments (see Wolf, 1971: 171-173, 178).

This model seeks to describe and define social actors and groups, their interpersonal relationships, and their relationships with other social actors and groups. An understanding of connections within and between these entities is necessary to account for socio-cultural processes and action as well as the acquisition of resources (Roseberry, 1995: 57). I use these ideas as a way to analyze the Leonardville VFD as a “local” entity which exists within its progressively larger social fields of community, service area, county and state.

Community. Analysis of the Leonardville VFD’s social context of community is necessary in understanding its particular role and how it successfully fulfills its

obligations. Cooperation between the VFD and other organizations in Leonardville lends to both this organization's and Leonardville's continued success and perpetuation. Cooperation assists in the reproduction of community as a social place. It creates and strengthens bonds between people and groups in Leonardville through the positive exchange of cooperation, assistance and the sharing of real and potential resources. Just as there are individual aspects of cooperation expressed through conventions of mutual obligation there is also cooperation between local level (and broader level) organizations. The VFD regularly serves and cooperates with other people and groups in the community by not only formally providing fire protection service and EMS but also by participating in and hosting events. These include affairs such as the 4th of July Parades, the fund-raiser and provision of the fire house as a voting center on election days. The VFD also regularly shares fund-raising opportunities and resources with other groups such as concession stand operation during football games. This is not to oversimplify relationships or state that there is no personal or organizational self-interest. Various organizations (Lion's Club, VFD, SPJST, Daughters of Confederate Homemakers, etc.) do perform their "necessary tasks" and compete for both human and economic resources but they do so through established notions of sharing and cooperating which benefits all concerned parties within the community (Kuper, 1992: 3).

For instance, due to the relatively small population in Leonardville and the surrounding area fewer people are available to contribute money to organizations or causes. Additionally, many people belong to more than one organization resulting in

less time and labor any one organization can demand and receive from particular members. An example of this is that many volunteer fire fighters also belong to the Lion's Club or are local government representatives. Additionally, various other organizations are almost constantly trying to raise money such as local Little League Baseball Clubs that sell candy bars to raise funds for equipment and uniforms. Related to this issue is of limited resources, the Leonardville VFD (as a group) does not give money to charitable causes, sponsor baseball teams, participate in the "Adopt-a-Highway" Program or other such causes or projects because they themselves are financially dependent on charitable donations. Many people may be offended and stop or reduce contributions to the VFD if they see this organization contributing money elsewhere. The general consensus among Leonardville Volunteers is that "If they [contributors to the VFD] wanted to sponsor a baseball team or 'Adopt-a-Highway' they would give money to those organizations instead of the VFD. We don't really have the *right* to give that money to other organizations!" Instead of money, volunteers donate time and labor to organizations and events. These donations are primarily, but not exclusively, fire or medical service related.

Also, effectively cooperating is important in Leonardville because if the Lion's Club, for instance, and the VFD simultaneously schedule fund-raisers, they not only reduce the number of people they have working during a fund-raiser due to some simultaneous mutual membership but also reduce the amount of money both groups can raise due to the simultaneous sharing of mutual target audiences or donors. Coinciding fund-raisers hurt both groups thus reducing their viability which hurts the overall

community. There is also the idea that some people will contribute to both groups if the fund-raiser/event is held separately, allowing the strain of donating to be distributed over time. Because of the primarily civic/service oriented nature of the organizations I am discussing here as well as the limited number of contributors and members available in the community and surrounding area for fund-raising, cooperation is more advantageous than competition. Cooperation is also effective in helping keep Leonardville's organizations viable which assists in the perpetuation of the community itself through the creation of social bonds and reciprocity (Kuper, 1992: 3, 6 Roseberry, 1995: 65). Together, organizations, members of organizations and potential supporters/contributors are affected by wider overlapping "social processes" as well as the "relationships between different groups operating on different levels of the society, rather than any one of its isolated segments" (Wolf, 1956: 1074). Further, this idea is true in the inter-community context as well. Other towns and cities in the county are careful not to schedule fund-raisers and events simultaneously with other communities' events so as to avoid unproductive competition or "self-defeating opportunism," thus maximizing membership and patron turnout to each event/fund-raiser while reducing the strain on individuals, organizations, and communities as well as increasing money raised and circulated (Putnam, 1993: 167).

An example of community cooperation between the VFD and other organizations in Leonardville is the volunteer work done during football games at The University of South Central Texas. This local, inter-organizational cooperation actually occurs outside Leonardville in the neighboring city of Shawnee Prairie. The work is

performed for Concessions, Incorporated which is a national company contracting food and beverage concessions in many Texas cities. Working for this company during USCT football games provides the VFD an excellent opportunity for fund-raising which it shares with other local organizations.

Concessions, Inc. operates its concession stands during USCT football games with volunteer organizations from throughout the Arrowhead River Valley. During the games Leonardville Volunteers work a concession stand to raise money. They receive 10% of gross income generated in their particular booth. On average, the VFD earns \$700 per football game for six (home) games a season for a total of \$4200 a year.

Operating the concession stand properly requires sixteen people. For the past two years the VFD has extended invitations to four members of the Leonardville Lion's Club for twenty-five percent of total earnings. This reduces the number of volunteer fire fighters required to participate and provides the Lion's Club an opportunity to raise money for themselves. This arrangement has worked so well that next football season the VFD is offering the same "4 for 25%" deal to The Leonardville Daughters of Confederate Homemakers. In a sense, the VFD is contributing to the community beyond its traditionally ascribed role by sharing this money-earning resource. This organization does not *have* to share this opportunity to earn money but it does because it not only reduces the strain on volunteers fire fighters/EMTs manning a concession stand all day but it provides an opportunity for other organizations to partake in fund-raising for themselves. It is historically considerate of the VFD to extend the opportunity to the Lion's Club since this was the organization that originated the fire department.

The VFD held local bingo tournaments to raise money during the first two years of its existence. In response to competition *and* consideration the VFD decided to have bar-be-ques and later a cake auction to raise money instead of bingo matches. In a competitive sense, the VFD decided that because the Lion's Club was already well-established in bingo fund-raisers more money could be raised utilizing another approach. There was also the fact that there was a limited amount of money that could be generated from bingo games in a town of 489 people. Cooperatively, the VFD opted to use the bar-be-que/cake auction as a fund-raiser because the Lion's Club had been holding bingo tournaments for ten years and the VFD did not want to detract from the Lion's Club's well-established earnings potential. Unfortunately, due to strict regulations and laws such as expensive licenses and permits imposed on organized bingo by the state of Texas many organizations no longer operate bingo games as fund-raisers, including the Leonardville Lion's Club.

The following is an excerpt from an interview with Edward Modisette, the assistant chief of the VFD. While discussing inter-organizational relationships in Leonardville and the surrounding area he briefly mentions concepts of cooperation and competition.

Kash: "How do you and other groups get along here in town and the area in general?"

Edward: "Good. Like in fund-raising and stuff like that we try not to compete with each other. There's only so much money to go around and so many people

that live around here. If the Lion's Club or whoever is having an event then we just put our event off to another time. If everybody starts having all their stuff at the same time it'll cut all our fund-raising down because people will go to this or that and sort of split up. All the groups around here are like that. We all kinda keep up with who's doin' what so we don't schedule our stuff together. Plus, half our guys [volunteers] belong to something else. They can't work both events at the same time, it ain't fair to them or us. If we're the only show in town that Saturday or Sunday or whenever then we get the most people we can expect at our deal. You just have to be considerate so you can have a good crowd at your event; so everybody can have a good crowd.

"Plus we always try to go out to other events, as fire fighters, and show a little support and then they come back over and do the same with us."

Conventions of mutual obligation and social fields extending from the group are exemplified by the ways that the Leonardville VFD shares, rather than hoards, fund-raising opportunities and potential as well as schedules its primary fund-raiser at a non-conflicting time. In return, other organizations and communities refrain from monopolizing financial resources but rather share through "generalized reciprocity." Generalized reciprocity is "a continuing relationship of exchange that is at any given time unrequited or imbalanced, but that involves mutual expectations that a benefit granted now should be repaid in the future" (Putnam, 1993: 172). Although local organizations compete with each other in obtaining funding and membership they do not

try to *out-compet*e each other. In other words, the VFD especially, does not engage in "self-defeating opportunism" (Putnam, 1993: 167). Instead these organizations assist one another, and are as accommodating as is rationally feasible without jeopardizing group integrity, interests or existence while avoiding infringement on other coexisting, if not somewhat codependent, groups (Putnam, 1993: 8, Wolf, 1956: 1066-1067). There are limited economic and human resources so there is an element of self-interest which is evident in the existence and continued occurrence of fund-raisers and events. On the other hand, there is communal interest in cooperating and sharing limited resources which enables Leonardville to maintain and reproduce itself. In other words, cooperation and accommodation are in *everyone's* best interest rather than attempting to out-compet>e each other which eventually reduces the viability of all organizations. Balancing competition and cooperation is key to survival for rural communities where individual self-help and communal reliance coexist and overlap. The VFD continually demonstrates the effectiveness of this balance through selfless acts of altruism, commitment and cooperation which assist in the survival and success of Leonardville as well as the "wider locality" of this organization (Simpson, 1996: 17).

Inter-Community Context: Service Area and County. The Leonardville VFD's inter-community context and relationships require assisting residents and communities in a 181 square mile service area as well as other communities in Donnell County outside its area of responsibility. How the VFD relates and works with other people, organizations and communities is key in understanding the social processes of this organization and how the VFD effects and is affected by its social environment.

Service Area. The following passage is a brief account of the Leonardville VFD's role in a major flood in 1991. It provides insight into personal, organizational and community relations as well as the difficult jobs volunteers are asked and sometimes cajoled into performing. I refer to this story primarily as an example of social relations in the VFD's service area between the VFD and the general population but it provides information regarding social links outside the service area as well.

Craig Hudnall: "Back in the '91 flood we got commandeered into the job by the sheriffs and there was major work involved in that. We manned the roadblocks, but if they [residents and travelers] want to go through you can't really stop them. A lot of citizens barked at us. In particular there was one guy in the community whose land was pretty much under water, and water was up to Leonardville. About a half-mile to the river was where his land was. He kept running through roadblocks and ignoring the firemen and finally a deputy had to give him some written warnings and calm him down. Also, we had everyday traffic trying to get to Shawnee Prairie and Waterrock plus oil field traffic. We had hell getting them turned around all the while this one asshole was pesterin' the shit out of us.

"During that flood, between Highway 19 to the other side of the river, it was just an ocean. And we even had one little car run the barricade and actually made it through. He didn't even slow down and just kept going. Technically we didn't have any authority to stop anybody even though it's for safety reasons. After that, we all talked about it and decided if they needed the roads blocked

they needed guys with guns out there to enforce it. We had to argue with so many of these people to get them not to go through.

"I supervised the roadblocks and made sure everyone was rotating fairly. It was cold and wet and we had three crews that took turns. One rested while two were working.

"Sunday night the river come out. But we started warning people before that because they [The Texas Weather Service] were predicting that it would. Had a few rescues during this also. They [some residents] had ignored the evacuation order and they had to be rescued. They didn't think the river was gonna come up as far as it did. Camel Hump Ranch had a two story house. They said 'if water comes up then we will go to the next story.' You can't force them off their land. If they want to stay they can. Later that evening they [Camel Hump Ranch owners] were calling for us to come get them and Keith Denman took the old 4-wheel drive Dodge and the headlights kept going under water but we got them out. They started loading down a few of their 4-wheel drive tractors with stuff to try and save it.

"It was Christmas weekend. The whole community pitched in that weekend, one lady brought hot food out every 2-3 hours for everyone to eat. People brought cots and blankets up to the station for people that had to stay the night. It was sort of a disaster shelter in the firehouse. People stayed up here at the fire house until they could get back home if they didn't have anywhere else to stay.

"A lot of people didn't take it serious and thought they [the government] could control all of that stuff [flood waters] with dams."

The Arrowhead River over-flowed its banks and flooded the entire river bottom and surrounding low-lying areas Christmas weekend of 1991. Much of the area hard-hit by floodwaters was in the Leonardville VFD's service area which is Precinct 3 of Donnell County. The flood was not a surprise to volunteers and many residents due to the Texas Weather Service's repeated predictions and warnings. Several days before the actual flood, volunteers called and went to area residents' homes and told them to seek shelter elsewhere, preferably on higher ground. But many residents in the danger area did not heed the warnings of the impending flood. Most of these people eventually left after the waters began to approach their homes but many still refused to leave and were eventually rescued by volunteers in boats and 4-wheel drive trucks.

In addition to rescue operations, volunteers were asked by the Donnell County Sheriff's office to assist in manning roadblocks erected to warn and deter travelers from continuing to drive on flooded roads. Warning people not to continue traveling through the area was a large public safety issue and the volunteers agreed to provide assistance. This public service is indicative of the kinds of responsibility and provision of emergency services Leonardville Volunteers provide to Leonardville and non-Leonardville residents alike. This organization assumes responsibility for a much larger area than the immediate confines of Leonardville proper.

However, many residents and travelers were not cooperative with, nor appreciative of, the volunteers' work during the flood in 1991. Similarly, many volunteers were frustrated by dealing with a larger proportion of the general public than usual. Many people assisted and encountered were not residents of Leonardville or within the VFD's service area. Some were strangers who lived in surrounding areas and communities in and outside of Donnell County proper. Broader public interaction *sometimes* leads to tension or resentment between volunteers and non-Leonardville citizens. This is due to a lack of familiarity or bonds of community cooperation between volunteers and those who do not contribute to the maintenance of the VFD through contributions of time, labor or money but still require or demand emergency services. This feeling of resentment is compounded when non-residents are rude, ignore warnings, or otherwise treat volunteers poorly. But overall, this tension is both expected and dealt with rationally by the VFD as an organization. The main reason for this rationality is the volunteers' awareness that, while acting in the capacity of emergency service workers, they rarely, if ever, deal with people who are in a reasonable or calm state of mind. Most of the time, volunteers deal with fire, accident or disaster victims, the sick or dying and the sick or dying's relatives and friends. These are not ideal situations for the average person to demonstrate rationality or cordiality although many people do sometimes later return and thank volunteers for their services (see Chapter III). Therefore sympathy, patience and grace is required of volunteers. It is evident from Craig's story there is a high degree of all of these qualities in this particular VFD. The best indicator being that there were no fatalities in the area due to flooding because

of early warnings and rescues performed by the VFD as well as the fact that some property was even saved with the assistance of volunteers *after* repeated evacuation warnings. Also, volunteers lacking official authority to stop traffic or remove people from their land was not used as an excuse to quit working or shirk the responsibility of helping and warning people. Regardless of their frustrations, volunteers still performed the tasks requested of them by the Donnell County Sheriff's Office such as manning roadblocks. Furthermore, they continued assisting and rescuing many residents in the surrounding area, some of whom had flatly rejected evacuation warnings even after realizing flood waters would eventually reach their homes.

In addition to volunteers manning roadblocks and rescuing flood victims, the fire house was used as a shelter for flood victims and those who had nowhere to go while separated from their families, homes or communities. Leonardville pooled resources to assist those in need, both resident and non-resident alike, thus lessening the burdens on individuals or families who were temporarily isolated from their usual social groups. By sharing resources such as food and shelter flood victims and stranded travelers bore less strain and burden individually. In this sense, the Leonardville VFD and its community acted in an exemplary as well as traditional fashion. By traditional fashion, I mean that since the formation of the first VFD in America in 1735, volunteer fire departments have been strong agencies of public welfare and social cohesion.¹⁸ Through community support, VFDs provide food, clothing, and shelter to people during times of disaster (Jacobs, 1976: 196). The Leonardville VFD provided the same services to people, regardless of their local standing, that VFDs all over the country and throughout history

have provided to those in need (Jacobs, 1976, Perkins, 1996: 8). Additionally, the Leonardville VFD provided help although it was met with some public resistance and resentment.

County. Inter-organizational and inter-community cooperation is not unusual between Leonardville and its surrounding communities. The communities in this county regularly participate in each others' event and fund-raisers (Kuper, 1992: 3, 6-7). They schedule around each others' events and fund-raisers so there is no conflict of interests among people who may want to attend two or more events. Also true is the fact that Donnell County's VFDs frequently work together providing back-up and assistance to each other when needed. Back-up and assistance consists of providing extra water, equipment, and manpower to especially hazardous or disastrous emergency situations. In addition to providing technical and logistical support to each other, the communities' VFDs (as well as other organizations) provide reciprocal assistance by participating and bidding in each others' fund-raisers and auctions, purchasing raffle tickets or donating prizes for raffles (Lozier, 1976: 345, Simpson, 1996: 17). County-wide social processes are parallel to local-level social processes in that the entire county maintains and reproduces itself through mutual obligation by organizational interaction and cooperation just as the local community reproduces itself through mutual obligation and cooperation of individuals and organizations.

An example of reciprocal exchanges between organizations and communities is the manner in which the Leonardville VFD has recently begun supplying beer at its fund-raiser. Until a few years ago the SPJST always sold the beer at the Leonardville

VFD's Annual Fund-Raiser. Due to problems with taxes and distributors they stopped selling beer at this event. The SPJST Hall is always rented during the fund-raiser by the VFD for the cake auction and evening dance. However, in the past, money from beer-sales by the SPJST always subsidized a small discount for the VFD on the rental charges of the hall. It is my understanding that the rent on the hall has not increased due to the SPJST's lost beer-sales which is indicative of inner-community and inner-organizational cooperation and obligation. Regardless, there was still the problem of providing the VFD fund-raiser patrons with beer.

The Leonardville VFD invited the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) from the neighboring community of Ezra, Texas to sell beer at their fund-raiser instead of the local SPJST. Ezra's VFW accepted the invitation because it was a good opportunity to make several hundred dollars for their own organization. Although there is not a written contract between the two organizations, there is an implied or tacit agreement that a "small donation" is made to the VFD from the Ezra VFW in return for the invitation and opportunity to sell beer and generate money for their own organization at the VFD's fund-raiser. This is a basic reciprocal, economic relationship developing out of the desire and need for the provision of beer to fund-raiser attendees and the desire and need for money by the VFW of Ezra, Texas and has so far been successful. The VFD actually continues to profit two ways from this relationship. Providing beer does not cost the VFD. They do not have to set up for or operate beer sales. Simply by extending an invitation to the Ezra VFW to sell beer, the VFD is providing beer *and* receiving a financial contribution without the problems of provision, transport, or taxes

related to operating a "beer booth." However, this arrangement must be profitable for both organizations because the VFW continues to participate in the VFD's annual fundraiser.

This kind of inter-organizational and inter-community cooperation is indicative of usual social processes occurring in Donnell County. Towns and cities in this county regularly participate in each others' event and fund-raisers and form "a web of group relationships" (Wolf, 1956: 1066). Additionally, events and fund-raisers are scheduled non-simultaneously so as to maximize attendance from county residents and volunteer fire fighter/EMTs who wish to attend events throughout the county. Social processes among organizations and communities of Donnell County are similar to community-level social processes such as local residential and organizational interaction and cooperation. However, one difference between local-level and county-level social processes is the broader scale area in which social interactions occur at the county-level. Another difference is that people in Leonardville are more familiar with each other and therefore interact on a more direct basis regardless of organizational affiliation. This face-to-face interaction occurs less (but does occur) at the county-level where individuals are more apt to be associated with or representative of their groups which assume the role of social actors in broad social relationships (Gamst, 1995: 149). This does not imply that individuals are not important. Organizations are, in fact, comprised of individuals who actively participate in achieving their group's collective goals (Putnam, 1993: 87). However, as social fields broaden from community to county, individual interaction lessens, thus maintenance and reproduction of county (and state) is

contributed to and accomplished through institutional, rather than individual, relationships. As Wolf summarizes: "...institutions are ultimately but cultural patterns for group relationships. Their complex forms allow groups to relate themselves to each other in the multiple processes of conflict and accommodation which must characterize any complex society." Institutions "furnish the forms through which" people act and interact in their broad social environments (Wolf, 1956: 1066). Group action and interaction outside the local social arena becomes clearer in my discussion of the Leonardville VFD's state-wide social context in the next section.

State. I was surprised to find that state-level governmental programs and bureaucratic forces have little influence in Leonardville's VFD. I expected to find much state control and regulation. Instead, the presence of such outside forces is minimal. The outside control or influences I did discover or recognize are primarily related to training/certification and a private-sector insurance organization.

There are two main links between the Leonardville VFD and the state of Texas. One is its relationship with the First Responder Organization of Donnell County and second is its business contract with Texas Firemens' Insurance Company (TFIC).

The relationship between the VFD and First Responders is primarily county-level with one major exception: the First Responder Organization is managed by a Texas state medical director. Due to the growth experienced by the VFD through the 1980's, the Leonardville VFD added a formal EMS in 1988. Shortly after the formation of this EMS it fell under the management of the First Responder Organization. This organization is devoted to initial emergency medical response in primarily rural areas of

Donnell County and is comprised of volunteers throughout the county's volunteer fire departments. The First Responders' primary mission is rapid medical response in local service areas to provide the sometimes crucial initial care that cannot immediately be given by professional EMTs traveling further distances from Waterrock, Ezra Medical Clinic or the larger St. Luke's Medical Center in neighboring Shawnee Prairie.¹⁹

Volunteers certified as EMTs are trained according to state-wide criteria and are managed by a state medical director to insure a uniform and competent level of medical care given to residents living in outlying rural areas. In other words, *if* emergency medical care is provided by volunteers *then* the state of Texas insures that proper and competent training is provided to these volunteers. There was some resistance to involvement in this organization initially by Leonardville Volunteers because of apprehension regarding state interference in organizational affairs. However, this initial apprehension gave way once it was realized the state had no desire to interfere with local or organizational affairs and business. Instead, the state simply wants assurance (established through education, training and certification) that EMS is provided by individuals familiar with and competent in emergency medical techniques and procedures. Further, EMT certification contributes to the maintenance of the VFD in that it helps protect against litigation or claims of negligence and/or malpractice that can result in cash payments or settlements threatening the well-being or existence of the VFD (Perkins, 1996: 75-79). In essence, state management, through county bureaucratic hierarchy, accomplishes two things: 1) Texas residents are provided with prompt and better quality emergency medical care through better organization and training and 2)

Texas VFDs are less likely to open themselves to litigation and lawsuits by obtaining better education and training regarding EMS procedures and protocol. State monitoring of volunteer training standards is for both the benefit of state residents *and* their local emergency service institutions which saves the county and state governments billions of dollars in fire fighting and EMS provisions (Perkins, 1996: 7, 10-11). Additionally, the goal of state monitored training proficiency and its relation to litigation prevention is closely linked to insurance companies in that less litigation and lawsuits reduce the amount of claims filed either for settlements or provisions of legal support to VFDs. This lowers insurance payment rates and keeps VFDs out of financial insolvency or bankruptcy, thus maintaining or improving their ability to function with relative competence, confidence and efficiency. The preservation of the VFD system reduces political and economic pressures on county and state government as well as the Leonardville VFD itself (Perkins, 1996).

The Texas Firemens' Insurance Company (TFIC) insures many volunteer and professional fire departments in Texas. In a conversation with a TFIC sales representative I learned there are, in fact, very few rules, regulations, and restrictions placed on the Leonardville VFD and VFD's in general. This was more surprising than learning of the limited role state government has in this VFD's affairs and business because of the fact insurance companies are unsubsidized, private businesses that attempt to keep the numbers of claims filed to a minimum so as to maximize profits.

Volunteer fire fighter/EMTs are at risk in many ways. For instance, Texas law does not require VFDs to pay worker's compensation insurance. This means that if a

volunteer is injured due to VFD-related work and cannot work at his/her regular, paying job or has hospital bills, there is no *official* recourse or "safety net" provided for taking care of his or her family, paying bills or drawing any sort of income during a time of recovery or lost hours on the job. However, the Leonardville VFD *does* provide insurance for its membership but there are many VFDs that do not or cannot. This is not to say that the VFD and/or community of an injured volunteer would not assist or help out in some way, but it is wise to have some sort of official coverage to protect against possible individual insolvency due to VFD related work injuries.

Also, TFIC states that over half of the insurance claims filed by VFDs are the direct result of automobile accidents which occur while responding to emergency calls. Although only suggested, the most recommended regulation for VFDs is that drivers of emergency vehicles under the age of 21 be certified in emergency service driving. This suggestion is based on the desire that if drivers do not have a minimum of five years driving experience they receive certification in emergency vehicle operation. However, this is only a precautionary measure. There is no real exclusion for drivers. The reason this standard operating procedure is only suggested is due to the fact that volunteers between 18-21 are sometimes the only people who respond to emergency calls. But, certification protects under-age drivers of a VFD's vehicles and the VFD itself against *possible* litigation and lawsuits, related to negligence, filed against a VFD due to injuries incurred in an accident in the course of emergency response. For instance, there was recently an accident between a woman motorist and a nineteen year old volunteer fire fighter in a small suburb of Dallas, Texas. Although the volunteer was using emergency

sirens and lights, the use of sirens and lights on an emergency vehicle merely *requests* that surrounding traffic yield, it does not *require* traffic to yield. Regardless, the young driver of the emergency vehicle felt confident he had the *right-of-way at an intersection* and proceeded through a red light. In doing so, he hit the vehicle of a woman who was seven months pregnant; she survived but lost her baby. She and her husband filed a negligence lawsuit against the VFD but settled out of court for \$500,000 which came from the TFIC policy which covered this particular VFD. If the young driver had not been certified in emergency vehicle driving and his training record had become an issue the case would have gone to court and the VFD would have probably lost the case; paying several million dollars in damages. The VFD would have lost its insurance coverage by FIC after payment. Cancellation of insurance would have severely affected this particular VFD as well as the community it served. Also, it would have been difficult for the VFD to afford the rates of new insurance (if insurance could even be obtained after such a huge lawsuit). Currently, the Leonardville VFD *does not* require emergency driving courses and training of its members who are 18-21.

According to TFIC, certification in emergency driving and documented, regular maintenance on emergency vehicles is the ultimate protection from litigation. Regular vehicle maintenance is also only a *suggested* practice for VFDs. TFIC provides insurance coverage even when vehicles are not well maintained and poor maintenance results in an accident. Furthermore, some VFDs' vehicles are simply old but cannot be replaced due to funding problems. This is what insurance is for; to pay in case of accidents or litigation against the VFD. However, repeated accidents or negligence is

rarely, if ever, tolerated for very long. As of yet there have been no lawsuits or claims filed against the Leonardville VFD. And with the exception of lawsuits resulting from a lack of emergency vehicle driver training, this organization is covered for all contingencies such as accident/sickness, auto accidents, equipment damage, medical, life, and malpractice.

3. Conclusion

In sum, Leonardville's VFD plays an important role in the construction of community as a social place. Through conventions of mutual obligation in the VFD volunteers assist in defining Leonardville and its citizenry with local identity (Watanabe, 1992: 125). Provided in this chapter are specific examples and accounts demonstrating that participation in the VFD provides the local citizenry a stake in community affairs and assists in lending meaning to citizenship in this community. Additionally, the contributions of time and labor by these individuals are recognized by community members and provide volunteer fire fighter/EMTs with a degree of status and prestige.

Also, analysis of the conventions of mutual obligation in Leonardville and the role of the VFD in these conventions is presented. The conventions of mutual obligation denote the responsibilities and commitment of VFD members to the community and how the community continues to support the VFD in return. At the local level, these conventions consist of establishing trust, sharing the responsibilities and burdens of sometimes traumatic emergency situations (such as death) and offering as well as accepting opportunities to demonstrate devotion to the community. Common

understanding and actions based on mutual obligation maintains local identity and stability as well as assisting in individual validation of citizenship in Leonardville. Analysis and understanding of these conventions provides insight into community dynamics and characteristics, social processes and the shared, tacit knowledge of the members of this community.

The maintenance and reproduction of Leonardville comes from the efforts of citizens to fulfill particular roles in specific manners. Awareness of and participation in local business and events is both expected and required of community members who desire consideration as good citizens. Volunteering service to the VFD is one way for people to gain a stake in the affairs of Leonardville; to make a contribution, while at the same time acquiring a degree of social capital and promoting the general welfare (Bourdieu, 1986, Coleman, 1989: S119). Furthermore, VFD service is public. Community involvement through the VFD is observable during parades, LeonardFestiVille, rodeos, and the annual bar-be-que (Simpson 1996: 17). The actions of the VFD create and maintain a public image and identity for the volunteers as well as the community in general. Public participation and involvement is a means through which physical control and social belonging are produced while providing an established framework for behavior (Geertz, 1973: 112-13, Ghani, 1995: 38, Ortner, 1984).

Finally, I examined the Leonardville VFD in its social context or "social fields" (Roseberry, 1995: 57). These fields are community, service area, county and state. This organization contributes to Leonardville's identity when forces, such as state bureaucracy, economic change or competition, and population issues affect social

stability. The VFD also has ties to and cooperates with small neighboring communities, as well as county/state organizations, private organizations and private businesses. In the context of its broader fields, the VFD is a venue for examining "cultural patterns for group relationships" (Wolf, 1956: 1066, 1971: 172) Cooperation with non-local organizations and communities is dynamic, reciprocal exchange that contributes to the maintenance and reproduction of broader social fields such service area, county, and state as well as the VFD and Leonardville itself.

In all, as the social web expands or broadens (micro-to-macro), a particular social field is more and more reliant on organizational and institutional interaction rather than individual interaction to reproduce and maintain itself (Gamst, 1995). I discovered there was not as much macrosocial influence or interference in the Leonardville VFD as I had originally expected. Simply, I originally suspected that the county and/or state would have more control and influence in the VFD but this was not the case. In fact, as I focused on specific fields moving away from the Leonardville VFD, I found there was less and less direct contact or interaction. However, the relationships between the VFD and its social fields of Leonardville, Donnell County and Texas are important. They become more and more related to money and economics through the sharing of markets and resources at the county level, the preservation of a localized system of fire and emergency medical service (so as to reduce the financial strain at the county and state government level) or contracting-out or purchasing financial security from private insurance groups.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

I began this project with one idea in mind: participation in the VFD provides an opportunity for citizens to publicly demonstrate their citizenship in the community. Being a volunteer fire fighter/EMT is not just about putting out fires or responding to medical calls. Volunteering service to the VFD is a demonstration of community involvement as well as reminding others that the local population is capable of providing mutual assistance and aid to each other and the surrounding area. However, as I began attending meetings and talking with the members of the Leonardville VFD, I realized that fully understanding this organization and the services it provides would require examining not only the inner-organizational dynamics and communication involved with job-specific and locally oriented actions but the organization's broader relationships and social fields as well.

Therefore, I focused on two main themes throughout this research project. Primarily, I examined the Leonardville VFD as a social institution where cultural expression occurs through work. Volunteers and the work they perform contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of the rural community as a social place, in an environment of social, political, and economical change. Involvement and participation in the VFD are actions that help define Leonardville as a community. The group and community involvement is also observable during parades, community service, and fund-raising events which further leads to the volunteers' acquisition of social capital.

Furthermore, like other community, political or religious functions and rituals, the actions of the VFD create and maintain a public image and identity for the volunteers while enabling them and the community to engage their environment. In sum, the main point of my research is that participation in the VFD allows volunteers to become stakeholders in their community. Additionally, the contributions of time and labor by volunteer fire fighter/EMTs are recognized by other non-VFD participants, thus providing these individuals with a degree of status and prestige (Simpson, 1996).

The main focus of my work presents the reader with an ethnographic analysis of the Leonardville VFD as a social institution in which cultural expression occurs through work and community participation. The workplace is a setting in which culture both affects and is affected by participants' ideas and deeds in a dynamic, interactive social system. Simply stated, culture and the workplace cannot be viewed as mutually exclusive entities anymore than culture can be separated from religion or political systems (Applebaum, 1984: 2-5, 18-19). Cultural expressions in the workplace are a means through which a common identity is constructed and maintained by sharing and perpetuating knowledge about what it means to be a volunteer fire fighter/EMT as well as a citizen of Leonardville. The Leonardville VFD's support is primarily from the good will and self-organization of the local citizenry. In turn, VFD participation allows a portion of local citizens to come together in a formalized setting to organize fire protection service and discuss matters of the community as well as providing a venue for publicly demonstrating their citizenship to fellow volunteer fire fighters and non-volunteers alike. I have attempted to present this analysis of the Leonardville VFD as a

model through which we can understand how and why members of this community participate in this organization. Focal points of this study have been inner group behavior, group communication and work as an expression of culture. The workplace is part of the social system in which people live and act (Applebaum, 1984, McCarl, 1985: 24). I emphasize that being a local volunteer fire fighter is not simply putting out fires or a job that someone *has* to do. Instead, it is a means through which local citizens, sharing a common goal, cooperate and contribute time and labor for the benefit of Leonardville (saving lives and property as well as participating in community functions or representing Leonardville in other communities' functions). In this organization, inter-friend/inter-family relations are acted out. These include social processes such as camaraderie developing from frequent personal contact in unique and sometimes dangerous work situations and recruitment of volunteers by word-of-mouth among friends and relatives (Haas, 1977: 168, Perkins, 1996: 21, 23). Further, prestige or status is sought and achieved by providing unique community services or individuals seeking nomination and/or being elected as officers in the VFD for example. Participation in the VFD also serves as a rite of passage or a means of gaining local acceptance as an adult and/or common recognition as a citizen of the community.

The identity of volunteers, their behavior and communicative acts are embodied in "conventions" of mutual obligation and workplace. Conventions are "acts of communication through the use of symbols that entail both the context of articulation [social and geographic setting]. . . and those doing the articulating, the interlocutors." These conventions define patterns of social action and relations, whose meanings are

commonly understood among community or group members and are an expression of group or "local solidarity" (Watanabe, 1992: 13, 184). In other words, these conventions help volunteer fire fighters maintain individual, group and community identity whether the workplace or community is in a state of stability or change. Conventions include behavior, communication, attitudes, and ideas that friends, relatives, and neighbors understand, both consciously and unconsciously, through frequent personal contact in the Leonardville VFD as well as community in general.

The conventions of mutual obligation are present in both the VFD and the community. Social commitment and cooperation maintain group identity and the organization's success as well as assisting in individual validation of citizenship in Leonardville because they provide people with a meaningful basis for cultural expressions/actions through which community is created (Cohen, 1999: 9-10, 14). Mutual obligation in the workplace includes attitudes regarding faithful attendance of meetings and training sessions, prompt response to emergency calls and the possession of a common understanding of the physical need for fire protection/EMS. Mutual obligation pertaining to VFD-specific actions consists of establishing trust, offering and accepting opportunities to demonstrate devotion to the community as well as sharing the responsibilities and the burdens of dealing with emergency situations. Communal understanding and demonstration of mutual obligation is "part of a set of relationships that [citizens of Leonardville] use to interact and understand themselves and the world" (Cohen, 1999: 160).

Conventions of workplace include the job-related actions and communicative practices of VFD members. These are established through repetition and modification of past behavior and communication that aid fire fighters in successfully dealing with emergency calls and the elimination or modification of unsuccessful job-related interaction. These conventions include motivations/rewards, camaraderie, technical terms and procedures regarding fire fighting /EMS and teamwork as well as experience, task assignments, and individual/group recognition of leadership during administrative meetings, training sessions and actual emergency responses.

The conventions of workplace and mutual obligation are part of a common network of relations (verbal and non-verbal) that are shared ideas, acts and communication among the group and are inherently necessary in the social processes of this organization and community. These commonly understood practices and behavior entail what it actually means to be a member of the VFD which contributes to the broader meaning of being a citizen of Leonardville. In effect, being a volunteer is being an individual who contributes time and labor to the VFD (often as many as 40 hours a month) which is an institution primarily formed and designed to provide emergency services first to the community and then the service area and neighboring communities. Contributions of time and labor are expressed in the forms of conventions of workplace and are based on a foundation of mutual obligation both in the community and workplace. Community-level conventions of mutual obligation are what the VFD, as an institution, is founded on. It is this notion of helping each other or *self-help* that sets the stage for conventions of mutual obligation and workplace inside the fire department.

These conventions are necessary in maintaining the VFD as both a social and emergency service organization. Furthermore, the VFD is an institution that helps integrate or draw citizens together to deal with issues and/or challenges individuals cannot deal with alone such as fire and emergency medical service. The VFD is also a symbol of community; an icon of solidarity or local ability to cooperate for the greater good (Putnam, 1993: 167). This ability is a source of pride for many citizens of Leonardville. It is often expressed by volunteers in public rituals such as parades and supported by non-volunteers through generous financial support (Simpson, 1996: 17).

The secondary focus of my work examined the Leonardville VFD in its social context. The VFD is an institution assisting in the maintenance of community identity when outside forces, such as governmental bureaucracy (state medical directors and county medical associations), economics (competition for/sharing of fund-raising opportunities), and population issues (local vs. non-local) effect or promote social stability and change.

Leonardville's VFD exists and acts in progressively larger settings. These settings consist of the community itself, Donnell County which is divided into service area/non-service area (for the VFD) and the state of Texas. This group exists, acts and interacts in its social context. Understanding this group as well as other groups at varying social levels requires viewing the VFD not as an isolate but as a socially connected entity; acting and interacting with others.

This organization assists and cooperates with small neighboring community VFDs and other organizations as well as county/state bureaucracies and private

businesses. It provides people with emergency fire protection and medical service in a 181 square mile area. Just as there are actors and actions in the local community so to are there actors and actions in broader social contexts. The primary difference is that when moving away from the local arena the individual begins losing significance as an actor and the organization or group begins functioning as a social agent (Gamst, 1995: 149). Examining and understanding relationships between the VFD and neighboring people/groups is necessary to account for socio-cultural processes and actions as well as the VFD's acquisition of resources (Wolf, 1956: 1066). Additionally, there is the issue of cooperation or avoidance of "self-defeating opportunism." Self-defeating opportunism is simply a group(s) engaging in unproductive competition with another group(s) over limited resources. Cooperation in conjunction with healthy competition (as opposed to opportunism) is necessary for the accomplishment of the collective good (Putnam, 1993: 166-167, 172).

For example, in Leonardville and the outlying area, primarily within Donnell County, there is a shared attitude that there are limited resources (in the form of contributions) due to a small, rural population. In densely populated areas there is simply more fund-raising potential or a broader resource base. Therefore, there has to be some accommodation for other groups in and around Leonardville. Simultaneous scheduling of organizational events is avoided because groups not only want to maximize turnout and profit at their own fund-raisers but many groups share members as well. Concurrent organizational events in the community and/or county do one of two things. They increase workloads on individuals belonging to both parties who attempt to

work both events on the same day. Or, they force people belonging to multiple groups to choose one group/event over another which requires remaining members to assume extra workloads due to absentee members. Additionally, it places a strain on attendees of events by requesting money for more than one cause at a time. By scheduling events non-simultaneously it reduces the financial strain on individuals or families allowing them to contribute money to several organizations over time rather than all at once or dividing a single donation between groups; reducing everyone's portion of contributions.

The future of the Leonardville VFD is positive for several reasons. First, the members of this community continue to live and thrive in Leonardville, pursuing their lives, sharing local concerns and solving problems in relatively consensual manners. This collective approach led to the formation of the volunteer fire department as well as other local institutions such as the school and local churches. Just as Czech immigrants founded Leonardville in the late 19th century with its cooperative store and mutual loan/insurance organizations, the residents of Leonardville today continue to successfully engage a changing world by effectively constructing community as a social place (Putnam, 1993: 173, Skrabanck, 1988: 11). This group of people, confronted with similar challenges in a similar environment, develop ways of dealing with day-to-day as well as uncommon problems together. Secondly, the VFD continues to grow and develop while it retains organizational integrity and established practices. However, it also maintains structural flexibility which allows for group adaptability (Wolf, 1971: 170-171, 173). This is evident in the VFD's fire fighting approach which compensates for the lack of a rigid chain-of-command by inner-group recognition and respect of

seniority accomplished by the gaining of experience over time. Further, the VFD continues acquiring better facilities and equipment as well as the addition of formalized emergency medical service which is managed internally but is ultimately responsible to the state through county-level bureaucracy. This adaptation to outside influence (although minimal and relatively benign) is indicative of the willingness and desire of the Leonardville VFD to continue to provide the best service possible to the citizenry and surrounding population of the community. And finally, as the first president of the Leonardville VFD, Douglas Rakov, so eloquently stated:

"The die's been cast. We've got guys that know what they're supposed to do now because they've got experience and some of them even went to school for it. Now they teach all of us. It's kinda like a cycle. Ever year we get a little better and know more about how to help ourselves because we've got some really good men in the department now plus good kids comin' in too. And the community knows it 'cause we don't just show up to help them save furniture anymore when their house is on fire or call the Justice of the Peace when somebody's died. We actually show up and save people's lives and their property!"

These last points are crucial to understanding how and why the VFD functions as an integral tool for community maintenance and reproduction. The volunteer fire department helps enable the citizens of Leonardville to collectively deal with their environment. "Townspople conventionalize their identity in terms of how they make

their world work given where they live, what they must do to survive there, and who they must enlist to do so" (Watanabe, 1992: 217). The VFD is an institution formed by and for the people so they can exercise some control over their lives in a changing and unpredictable world. In doing so, volunteers assist in the social construction of the community by perpetuating the VFD as a defining factor or "pillar" of the community (Simpson, 1996: 18).

Without doubt the community of Leonardville will pass well into the 21st century as a thriving agricultural community in the Arrowhead River Bottom because of the vast expanse of fertile range and cropland it is situated in. And assisting with this passage into the next millennium will be Leonardville's volunteers. They will continue to provide services to people who have, in turn, supported them in kind through good years and bad over the past thirty years.

ENDNOTES

1. Names of communities, organizations and people have been changed to maintain anonymity.
2. Commonly referred to by the public as ambulance drivers. Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) are trained and state certified individuals in Emergency Medical Service (EMS) or mobilized health care. These individuals respond to patients and/or victims providing initial medical attention as well as transport to the hospital.
3. Conventions of morality also include social notions of "soul." Soul is the shared "way of being" among a group (Watanabe, 1992: 90). I will address this issue in Chapter IV when I discuss the local idea of "tightness."
4. A process-oriented perspective focuses on the actions needed and performed to accomplish as well as evaluate a goal. A goal-oriented perspective focuses on end results of actions. McCarl states that the process-oriented perspective provides more information regarding culture in the workplace. "The successfully extinguished fire or rescued child are certainly important results of work technique [goal-oriented], but to members of the culture, the meaning of these achievements lies in the complexity of their execution. The importance of any expressive behavior lies in the group's mechanisms for recognizing and evaluating these activities..." Furthermore, if we understand "the basic skills needed to accomplish a particular goal...we can ascertain the fire fighter's criteria of a good performance" (McCarl, 1985: 160)

5. My analysis of the VFD ends at the state (Texas) rather than continuing through to the nation.

6. This total number of members and the division between active, semi-active and inactive are merely averages based on information obtained during interviews.

There are probably more total members in this VFD, however I was not allowed to view the private records of this organization. Therefore, I simply asked interviewees how many members were in the VFD and calculated a mean average of 49.

Membership numbers given ranged from a total of 30 members to "every adult man in town and some of the women." I do not believe anyone truly knows the number of members simply because no one has bothered to keep a count. Regardless, the number of volunteers present at any meeting varies from month-to-month depending on time of year making it difficult for any one person to keep a tally. I personally witnessed at the meeting before the fund-raiser at least 80 individuals in attendance. At the meeting during the opening days of deer season there were less than 15 members present.

7. Skrabanck's use of the term "island" is too strong to describe this, or any, community. Many groups live together to preserve their cultural ideals and heritage but no person or group is an island. Leonardville is no exception. Although non-Czech settlers were discouraged from moving into this area, the deliberate exclusion of non-Czechs from this community implies there was a non-Czech population already living in or moving into the area. Also, the fact cannot be ignored that the land these Czechs lived on was purchased from non-Czechs. So, there was *at least*

contact and interaction in the form of business relations between Czechs and non-Czechs no matter how unwelcome or unpleasant it possibly was.

8. The community of Leonardville was originally named Vyne's Corner after one of the first families that moved into the area.

9. "Rookies" and "old-timers" are not necessarily defined by age nor is it my intention to set up a dichotomy between young and old. Instead, volunteers have varying degrees of experience ranging from rookies to old-timers. There are new members who have successfully made it through the rookies' one year probationary period and been involved for varying numbers of years with different degrees of training and experience. There are also experienced members who are not considered old-timers but maintain a high degree of respect and status in the organization because of high degrees of training, certification, and experience. For the most part rookies are younger. But there are middle-aged members who have less (or no more) experience than volunteers who are younger than them. Degrees of experience and the respect associated with experience varies among individuals depending upon how involved he or she is in the VFD.

10. The number of emergency calls is relatively low for this VFD (compared to the daily calls in professional fire departments) which is one enabling factor helping this group to continue meeting the demands and pressures of emergency situations in the service area.

11. Perhaps this is a bit confusing since I mentioned McCarl's "*goal-oriented* perspective" in Chapter I which is focusing on end results of actions as an approach to understanding what he calls "work culture."

The "*goal-directed* perspective" refers to Ann Jordan's concept of organizational culture and that an organization is "goal-directed" and an individual's behavior is "preference-directed." An organization's purpose or "goals" overrides or takes precedence over its individual members' behavior or "preferences" to the degree necessary to fulfill the mission of or reason for creating the group. In order to belong to a group, of any kind, there are certain norms and mores to be observed.

12. Currently, there are no minorities in the Leonardville VFD. There are, however, three women and women have been members consistently since the mid-1980's. In the late 1970's, there were two Hispanic men in the department but have since "retired" due to age.

13. The term rookie and old-timer are used by volunteers. I have added the terms new volunteer and experienced volunteer for clarity in the descriptions of varying stages of volunteers' acquisition of experience and standing with the VFD.

14. This was after the VFD had moved out of Rakov's Blacksmith Shop into the garage attached to city hall in 1975. Before this, people could also call the Blacksmith Shop during the day.

15. Additionally, a majority of the community is represented in the VFD regardless of their class/status in the community.

16. I do not mean to imply that old people are weak. Volunteers are simply being courteous and cautious regarding the effects of extreme heat on some elderly people.

17. I mention this because this is the only time some volunteers actually participate in the organization. "Once a member, always a member" is the attitude of the VFD, especially in regards to the annual fund-raiser. Some no longer attend meetings because they have reached "retirement." But helping out during the fund-raiser is still considered important because it is the primary source of income for the VFD and it is such a large undertaking. The organization needs all the help that is available.

18. Benjamin Franklin started the first volunteer fire department in 1735, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Soon after that, VFDs were formed throughout Colonial America. George Washington, John Hancock, Paul Revere, Sam Adams and Alexander Hamilton all participated in their local VFDs. From the beginning VFDs were natural community centers and meeting halls where raffles, dances, dinners, games, contests, parades, auctions, etc. were held to raise money for fire protection which brought the whole community together in fellowship. Also, great pride was taken in a local firehouse's cleanliness and appearance because it was a collective reflection of the community.

Since their formation, VFDs have been voluntary associations formed for social welfare. This is especially true during the early history of this nation when government did not provide even a fraction of the public services it does today. It was out of necessity that VFDs were formed; self-help. However, the growth of paid and

mechanized departments followed increased urbanization. But VFDs retained their value in small towns and rural areas. Also, VFDs played an important role in the South following the Civil War. VFDs were essential to the South during Reconstruction due to the destruction of economic and political infrastructure needed for the funding and formation of full-time professional fire fighters in Southern urban centers (Jacobs, 1976: 196-198).

19. Many first responders are also professional EMTs working full-time for private ambulance services or cities such as Shawnee Prairie but also volunteer services to their respective communities. However, all First Responders, voluntary or professional, must be EMT certified by the state.

REFERENCES CITED

Abrahams, Roger D.

1970. Shouting Match at the Border: The Folklore of Display Events. *Man* 5 (2): 290-301.

Applebaum, Herbert.

1984. *Work in Market and Industrial Societies*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

1992. *The Concept of Work: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Arthur, C. J., ed.

1981. Editors Introduction. *In The German Ideology: Part One with Selections from Parts Two and Three and Supplementary Texts*. Pp. 4-34. New York: International Publishers.

Arthur, Linda Boynton.

1997. Role Saliency, Role Embracement, and the Symbolic Self-Completion of Sorority Pledges. *Sociological Inquiry* 67 (3): 364-379

Bourdieu, Pierre.

1986. The Forms of Capital. *In Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. John G. Richardson, ed. Pp. 241-258. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, Inc.

Case, Carol.

1988. Integrative Ritual in an Occupational Community. Paper Presented at American Sociological Association.

Clark, David L.

1985. Emerging Paradigms in Organizational Theory and Research. *In* Organizational Theory and Inquiry. Yvonna S. Lincoln, ed. Pp. 431-678. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Cohen, Jeffrey Harris.

1999. Cooperation and Community. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Coleman, James S.

1989. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital. *American Journal of Sociology* (supplement) 94: S95-S120.

Gamst, Frederick C.

1989. The Concept of Organizational and Corporate Culture: An Ethnological View. *Anthropology of Work Review*. Special Edition. *Anthropological Approaches to Organizational Culture* 10, (3): 12-16.

1995. The Web of Rules in Comparative Work Relations Systems. *In* Meaning of Work: Considerations for the Twenty-First Century. Frederick C. Gamst, ed. Pp. 147-188. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Geertz, Clifford.

1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Ghani, Ashraf.

1995. Writing a History of Power: An Examination of Eric R. Wolf's Anthropological Quest. *In* *Articulating Hidden Histories: Exploring the Influence of Eric R. Wolf*. Jane Schneider and Rayna Rapp, ed. Pp. 31-50. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goreham, Gary A., Richard W. Rathge, Larry Leistritz.

1988. The Role of Voluntary Association Membership on Rural Community Residents' Awareness of Community Issues. *The Great Plains Sociologist* 1, (1): 89-103.

Haas, Jack.

1977. Learning Real Feelings: A Study of High Steel Ironworkers' Reactions to Fear and Danger. *Sociology of Work and Occupations* 4, (2): 147-170.

Harvey, Janet.

1985. Living Between Life and Death. *New Society* 74 (1193): 233-236.

1997. The Technological Regulation of Death: With Reference to the Technological Regulation of Birth. *Sociology* 31 (4): 719-735.

Horowitz, Michael, M., ed.

1971. A Typology of Rural Community Forms in the Caribbean. *In* *Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean*. Pp. 163-178. Garden City, NY: Natural History Press.

Jacobs, Alan H.

1976. *Volunteer Fireman: Altruism in Action*. In *The American Dimension: Cultural Myths and Social Realities*. W. Arens and Susan P. Montague, eds. Pp. 194-205. Port Washington, NY: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc.

Jordan, Ann T.

1989. *Organizational Culture: It's Here, But Is It Anthropology?* *Anthropology of Work Review*. Special Edition; *Anthropological Approaches to Organizational Culture* 10 (3): 2-7.

Keil, Charles.

1966. *Urban Blues*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kuper, Adam, ed.

1992. Introduction. In *Conceptualizing Society*. Pp. 1-17. New York: Routledge.

Lozier, John.

1976. *Volunteer Fire Departments and Community Mobilization*. *Human Organization* 35 (4): 345-354.

Lynd, Robert and Helen Lynd.

1930. *Middletown: A Contemporary Study of American Culture*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

Marx, Karl and Frederick Engels.

1981. *The German Ideology: Part One with Selections from Parts Two and Three and Supplementary Texts*. C. J. Arthur, ed. New York: International Publishers.

McCarl, Robert.

1978. *The Communication of Work Technique: A Newfoundland Example*.

Culture and Tradition 3: 108-117.

1981. *The Meal's on Me: Moving Into, Up and Out of Fire Fighting Culture*.

Southern Folklore Magazine 4: 12.

1985. *The District of Columbia Fire Fighters' Project: A Case Study in*

Occupational Folklife. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Ortner, Sherry.

1984. *Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties*. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1): 126-166.

Perkins, Kenneth B.

1987. *Volunteer Fire Departments: Community Integration, Autonomy and Survival*. *Human Organization* 46 (4): 342-348.

Perkins, Kenneth B and Carole W. Metz.

1988. *Note on Commitment and Community Among Volunteer Firefighters*.

Sociological Inquiry 58 (1): 117-121.

Perkins, Kenneth B.

1990. Volunteer Fire and Rescue Corporations: Structure, Process, and Survival.

Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly 19 (4): 359-370.

1996. The Future of Volunteer Fire and Rescue Services: Taming the Dragons of

Change. Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University Press: Fire Protection

Publications.

Putnam, Robert.

1993. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton, NJ:

Princeton University Press.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. R.

1965. Structure and Function in Primitive Society. New York: Macmillan

Publishing Co., Inc.

Roseberry, William.

1995. The Cultural History of Peasantries. *In* Articulating Hidden Histories:

Exploring the Influence of Eric R. Wolf. Jane Schneider and Rayna Rapp, ed. Pp.

51-66. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Sachs, Patricia.

1989. Editorial. *Anthropology of Work Review*. Special Edition. *Anthropological*

Approaches to Organizational Culture 10 (3): 1.

Simpson, Charles R. and Dorothy M. Smith.

1987. The Volunteer Rural Fire Company: Community, Male Culture and

Modernization. Paper presented at Society for the Study of Social Problems.

Simpson, Charles R.

1996. A Fraternity of Danger: Volunteer Fire Companies and the Contradiction of Modernization. *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 55 (1): 17-34.

Skrabaneck, Robert, L.

1988. *We're Czechs*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press.

Starr, Paul D.

1982. Military Socialization in the University: The Role of Subcultures in Navy-Marine ROTC. *Human Organization* 41 (1): Spring, 64-69.

Stevens, Phillips, Jr.

1978. Bachama Joking Categories: Toward New Perspectives in the Study of Joking Relationships. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 34 (1): Spring, 47-71.

Turner, Victor.

1967. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

1996. Symbols of Ndembu Ritual. *In Anthropological Theory: An Introductory History*. R. Jon McGee and Richard L. Warms, eds. Pp. 441-458. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Van Gennep, Arnold.

1960 [1908]. *Rites of Passage*. M. Vizedom and M. Caffee, trans. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Wagner, Roy.

1975. *The Invention of Culture*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Watanabe, John.

1992. *Maya Saints and Souls in a Changing World*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Wolf, Eric R.

1956. Aspects of Group Relations in a Complex Society: Mexico. *American Anthropologist* 58: 1065-1078.

1969. *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Harper and Row.

1971. Specific Aspects of Plantation Systems in the New World: Community Subcultures and Social Class. *In Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean*. M. Horowitz, ed. Pp. 163-178. Garden City, NY: Natural History Press.

Wooley, J.W.

1985. Why Do Volunteers Join the Fire Service? *Fire Engineers Journal*. 45 (137):15-17.

APPENDIX A**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Married/Single/Divorced:
4. Do you have any children? If so, how many?
5. Type of job you work:
6. What is annual income?
7. Extent of education? (non-graduate, high school or GED, trade school, college, etc.
8. Have you ever served in the US military? What branch?
9. What is your religion? How often do you go to church?
10. How long have you lived in Leonardville? If not all your life, where are you
from originally?
11. How long has your family lived here? Where are they originally from
(Czechoslovakia, Germany, etc.)?

12. Do you own land in the community or anywhere else? If so, how much?
13. Is any of it used for agriculture?
14. Do you own a home or do you rent?
15. How long have you been a volunteer in the Leonardville VFD?
16. What is your main job within the VFD?
17. Are you involved in any other organized community activity or organization?
(school
board, city council, rodeo, etc.)
18. Have you ever attended the Fire Fighting School at Texas A&M? If so, when?
If not, would you want to?
19. How old is Leonardville? Who settled it originally?
20. What is the population of Leonardville approximately?
21. Is Leonardville a good place to live? Why?
22. How is the local government made up? (various positions...mayor, aldermen, school
board members, city sponsors or clubs, etc...)

23. Where and when was the first VFD here in town?
24. When did EMS Service begin? How has it changed the department?
25. Who started it up?
26. How long has this firehouse been here?
27. How much did it cost and how did you pay for it?
28. How many trucks does the VFD have and how are they paid for?
29. How many members (active and inactive) in this VFD?
30. How many women?
31. Is that good or bad?
32. What kind of people, would you say volunteer for the VFD? (men, women, white, black, Hispanic, old, young, poor, mid-class, rich, etc)
33. Why did you join the VFD?
34. Did you join the VFD on your own or did someone get you to join?
35. Would you consider this a good VFD or does it need a lot of work?
36. If so, what kind of work does it need? (administrative, training, organization, etc)

37. Does this VFD participate in things other than emergency calls? (parades, community service, baseball teams, etc.)
38. Are there more grass or tree fires, home fires, or EMT calls?
39. How do you get called about a fire? (siren, pager, phone calls)
40. What if your at work, can you take off to come to a fire or EMT call? Is working out of town a problem with responding?
41. What happens more? Emergency calls at night or during the day? workday or weekend? Is there a difference in the turnout of volunteers during the different periods? (less at night or weekend).
42. What if someone has been drinking, are they advised to just stay home or not respond? Do people take turns being more prepared for emergencies?
43. How many volunteers are certified?
44. Are you fire fighter/EMT certified?
45. Who normally does what during emergency calls? (specific job assignments, if any)

46. What are some of the more technical terms for equipment and techniques you use?
47. Do you do things systematically or is it a sort of “homemade” fire fighting style or technique? Is there a “standard operating system”? If so, what are the basic guidelines?
48. Who does what within the organization, administrative, mechanical, technical, fund-raising, etc.?
49. How many hours a month do you contribute to the VFD?
50. What are some of the more memorable emergency calls you can remember, both fire and EMS, that you have been involved in?
51. What was your role in this fire or EMT call?
52. Was anyone hurt? (victims or fire fighters)
53. Can and have you been sued? How and why? (not necessarily just in emergency service but maybe from other areas... any areas???)
54. Can the city, county, or state be sued because of something you do or don't do?
- How if you are independent?

56. You get \$200 from county for fire calls out of city limits, but not EMS. Are you required by law to arrive at wrecks and such or could you just not do it? If not required, why do you do it? Ethical, humanitarian, etc...?
57. What areas in the region are you responsible for?
58. How often do you work with other VFD's or professional FD's?
59. Are these other VFD's or FD's good or bad to work with?
60. How often do you work with other organizations such as police, hospital, government? And do these organizations put any pressure (direct or indirect) on you to change? Any pressure from the state to improve standards, equipment, training, personnel, etc...
61. Do the leaders of this VFD do a good job? (president, chief, treasurer, etc.)
62. How are these leaders appointed? (votes, most qualified, etc.)
63. Have any new "recruits" or other members been asked to leave or put on probation for something? How are people disciplined? (formal-probation, informal-people tease or don't talk to them, etc...)

62. What makes a good firefighter or EMS tech?
63. What did you do (personally) during the fund-raiser?
64. How was this year's income from the fund-raiser in relation to previous years?
65. How are your fund raisers compared to other VFD's in the area?
66. Did the drought affect it in any way?
67. How did the drought affect Leonardville?
68. Were there more fires due to the drought?
69. Do you think the VFD will continue to function on the level it does today or will it get better or worse and why?

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

9/20/93

TAMU #E99-020

Texas A&M University

Form 1

Summary Cover Sheet

Protocol for Human Subjects in Research

Please check off or provide details on the following (enter N/A if not applicable):

Exemption Requested
See Page 2

Principal Investigator Name KATH KRINHOP Faculty Graduate Student*
College/Dept LEONARDVILLE / PSYCHOLOGY Mail Stop 4353 Phone 345-7257

Project Title LEONARDVILLE CULTURAL EXPRESSION IN A RURAL CENTRAL

TEXAS VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Subjective Estimate of Risk to Subject: Low Moderate High None

Gender of subjects: Male Female Both Age(s): $(\text{Total} \times \text{Total} \div \text{Subjects (est.)}) = 50$

Source of Subjects: Psychology Subject Pool Subject Recruitment
 Other TAMU Students Direct Personal Contact
 Community Telephone
 Posted Notices** High School
 Prisons Other (Please describe)
 Other (Please specify)

Compensation*** Yes No

Deception† Yes No

Location of Experiment: LEONARDVILLE, TEXAS

Invasive or Sensitive Procedures: Yes No
 Blood Samples Urine Samples
 Physical Measurements (electrodes, etc.) Stress Exercise
 Psychological Inventory Review of Medical Records
 rDNA Other (Specify)

Sensitive Subject Matters: Yes No
 Alcohol, Drugs, Sex
 Depression/Suicide
 Learning Disability
 Other (Specify)

Use of Video or Audio Tapes 0 (please indicate)

Provisions for Confidentiality/Anonymity

Retained Yes No

Retained/Length of Time 3 years

Destroy/Erase Yes No

Other (explain)

Use specified in consent form? Yes No

Use/Access to tapes:

Replies Coded
 Secure Storage
 Anonymous Response
 Confidential Response

Exact Location Where Signed Consent Forms Will be Filed: ANTHONY D. P. / TAMU
(Must be kept on file for 3 years after the completion of the project.)

* Must include signature of committee chair on protocol

** Please attach

*** Please attach conditions, schedule of payment.

† If yes, attach a debriefing form

VITA

Kash Krinhop

**Department of Anthropology, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas
77843-4352, 409-845-5242, kashkr@yahoo.com**

Education: **TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY**
Master of Arts: Anthropology. 08/99
Bachelor of Arts: Anthropology. 12/96

Honors: Academic Excellence Award (Scholarship), All-American Scholar
 Dean's List, Distinguished Student, Summer 1999 GANT (Graduate
 Assistantship; non-Teaching), Golden Key National Honor Society,
 President's Scholar

Research and Field Work:

**"Leonardville: Cultural Expression in a Rural Central Texas Community's
 Volunteer Fire Department"**

Master's Level Thesis Project

Research Assistant, Texas A&M University, Department of
 Anthropology, College Station, Texas. **09/96-11/96**

Provided research assistance to Dr. Norbert Dannhaeuser pertaining
 to both his teaching obligations and on-going research of market/labor systems in
 the Philippines. Duties included organization of lecture and testing materials,
 archival research and data analysis/entry.

Proyecto de Arqueología de Solola, San Jose Cakquea, Guatemala.

06/95-08/95

Field surveying, mapping, archaeological excavation, ethnographic
 interviewing and participant observation.

Publication:

Master's thesis submitted to publisher: **08/99**