



The New Coldspring Longhouse near Steamburg, 1968.

ladies would appreciate a basement kitchen, but they had insisted on a separate cookhouse—equipped with gas. At an outdoor fire where the kettles hung on wooden poles, I heard Alta Cloud complain that she missed the crane in Jake Logan's brick fireplace at the old cookhouse. Inside fluorescent lighting from a false ceiling contrasted favorably with the bare bulbs or kerosene lamps I had known. The room was paneled with birch plywood in which electrical outlets were spaced at regular intervals. I thought these would be ideal for tape recorders now owned by several singers; but Dorothy Jimerson told me that the outlets were for the old ladies to plug in hotplates for warming corn soup at socials. The final touch was a fresh set of corn pestles which the Uncles carry, made as replacements for the old pestles, which were given to a museum. Besides having unfamiliar, new equipment, the Uncles did not know their lines and mumbled the chants.

Presently Ed Coury stood, removed his hat, spat in the nearest can, and commenced the thanksgiving address which greets and thanks the Creator for all of the things that he has left on earth for man's use and enjoyment. Then he announced the opening of the Midwinter Festival and the dressing of the Uncles. Although Ed has more white genes than red, he had mastered the speaking style of Seneca preachers just as earlier he had learned the ritual songs. As I closed my eyes to concentrate on the old words, for a moment there was the illusion of the old longhouse and Henry Redeye speaking.

The midwinter ceremony deals with both halves of the subsistence cycle: