

Collection Summary

ID Number: CS 626

Title: Wheeler Ranch

Extent: 1 Folder(s)

Span Dates: 1970-2017

Language: English

Geographic Location: Sonoma County, California

Abstract: This collection consists of an article and a clipping about the community.

Historical Notes: As pressures mounted on the residents of Morning Star Ranch in Sonoma County, California, where public officials made many arrests and had the property bulldozed four times for alleged violations of zoning and sanitation codes, Bill Wheeler provided a safety valve. Like Lou Gottlieb of Morning Star before him, he declared his own 360-acre property open land on which anyone could settle. In 1968, Morning Star refugees began to settle at Wheeler's, building their own simple shelters. Eventually the population exceeded 200. Although the ranch had no formal structure, members shared Sunday meals and other social activities, gardened together, and milked community cows. Although Wheeler's was larger and more remote than Morning Star, officials again brought pressure on Wheeler and his compatriots. Wheeler fought back in court at length, but in 1973 the bulldozers appeared. Wheeler intervened by torching the 50 or so dwellings that had been erected on the land. With his comrades gone, Wheeler continued to live on the land and pursue his work as an artist. **Sources:** Miller, Timothy. *The encyclopedic guide to American intentional communities*. 2nd ed. Clinton, New York: Richard W. Couper Press, 2015. pg. 474.

Selected Search Terms

Subjects: Communal living; Collective settlements; Housing, Cooperative; Collective farms; Commune; Morning Star Ranch (Calif.); Hippies; Bohemianism; Counterculture

Administrative Information

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Contents	Date	Container	Folder	Location
Davidson, Sara. "Open Land: Getting Back to the Communal Garden." Harper's Magazine. Vol. 240, no. 1441 (June 1970): pgs. 91-102	1970	Filing Cabinet	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 17-B
"Rancher-Dropout Runs Commune." Evansville Courier and Press	n.d.	Filing Cabinet	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 17-B
Lipsin, Jonathon. "Hippie Days and Wheelers Ranch Commune." Blog.	2017	Filing Cabinet	Folder 1	Filing Cabinet 17-B