Interview with Marty Jerome
Interviewer: Deborah Altus
September 8, 1996

Q: So this is September 8, I think, and an interview with Marty Jerome, and I'd love to hear about how you and your husband got involved in community living.
A: Well, actually it started because we had a handicapped daughter, and we put her into a magnificent place in Pennsylvania which is run communally, and it's called Camp Hill Special Schools, they have several adult villages in the states, and they have this one children's village, and it's, we were driving back from having delivered her at a young age, she was the youngest student they ever had, she wasn't quite seven, and we just got to talking about how well, wouldn't it be great to live communally, those people have it all together. Anyway, Judd was a poet, primarily, and so we got back, and he wrote this poem called "The Village", and that just sort of cemented it for us, we decided that, yeah, that's the way to live, we were with Antioch College at the time, and had left the Ohio Antioch, and we were part of the opening of Antioch Columbia in Maryland, and so he was teaching there, and we were living in Columbia Maryland, and it was at the time quite a new city, it wasn't finished at that time, and we just thought, no, this isn't for us. And so we just hunted around, what we did was we got Jennifer's school and did two hundred miles, and drew a circle, and said okay, we have to be able to drive there and back in one day, because it was not possible to spend the night with her. And so we did, and then we decided well, we obviously can't go this direction, it's to expensive, we didn't want to go South, and North was too expensive, so we went West, and the place we bought, and we also wanted to be really isolated, so we found it, it's on the back side of Sidling Mountain, and it was exactly 200 hundred miles to Jenifer's school, it might have 5/10 of a mile less, and Judd had by that time received the grant from the 20th Century, and so he hired a bunch of people to do interviewing, we did interviewing, ours was mostly New England, we had five kids, so you know, traveling around with five kids is not easy. Especially with one being handicapped, but we did, and that's how we met Lucy, she was with Frog Run Farm, and they sort of became our Sister Commune, so our first year on the commune was basically people who were involved with the book, and Judd was writing it, and so our support came basically from the 20th Century fund, you know, the money that we had from that. Judd retired from teaching, we took a massive cut in living, and for the next umpteen years, we lived on ten percent of what our income was. We lacked for nothing, it was wonderful, and the city slickers we were, I'd never grown anything in my life, and we put in gardens, and refurbished the soil which was terrible, and we started out. That first summer, I don't know how people found us, but we had more people drifting down the driveway.

Q: What year was that?
A: '72.

Q: Were these mainly kids, like teenagers?
A: All hippies. All hippies. We called ourselves middle aged hippies, eventually. We felt like grandparents, you know, but most of them were the age of our older kids, yeah.

Q: So tell me a little bit, it was called Downhill Farm, right? And, where did that name come from?
A: Well, you had to see the sight, you came in on a road, and it just went down, and it wound around, and there was the farm.

Q: And how many people lived there?
A: At any given time, it was hard to predict. For summer it was massive, it was nothing to have fifty for dinner, but they drift in and out. But, I guess for awhile, for a number of years, we must have been fifteen to twenty adults, and we established our own businesses. Have you seen a copy of Judd's book?

Q: I know that Tim, the guy I'm working for, has a copy of it, but no, I have not read it.
A: A lot of information is in there.

Q: About Downhill Farm?
A: Oh yeah, and not well disguised, you'll easily be able to pick it up.

Q: He uses a different name for it?
A: Oh yeah. I mean, nobody in those years wanted to be identified. And so then we had various enterprises too, so we could work at the farm, very, very few people worked off the farm. Once we were into it about six years or so, a few people had jobs off, maybe two, but for the most part, we spurred ourselves. We gardened, we made hollow log flower planters, which we basically made out of red oak, and we would cross cut logs to various sizes, according to the diameter of the wood, and we brought this absolutely antique band saw, and the blade on the band saw was 16 1/2 ft, you know, it was a humongous thing, and you put the log in, and run the band saw around, and take out the core, leaving the bark like this, and then you cross cut the core, and then we'd nail it in, so there was drainage for the flower pot, and so forth. We did that for a couple of years, I guess, and it kept us going nicely. But, then the area was infested with powder post beetle, which put us out of business. Then we went to manufacturing metal sculptured wind chimes, which are hanging all over the house, and wholesaling those for an artist that lived in Washington D.C., and we did that for, well, I have done it until five years ago, and then stopped doing it.

Q: Wow, you continued doing it?
A: Yeah, and even after the break up, after we finally sold the farm and moved back to Ohio, I just took the business with me, I was the only one doing it at the time, but for awhile, before things got so depressed, it was a huge business, and we had a studio in Maryland, we had one in California, and Frog Run, all sub contracted, they'd come up to the farm, and we'd train them. But, then the recession hit, and so we just slowly dissipated, but there was enough interest and business, that I just kept doing it until Judd died, and then I thought, I'm not doing this any more.

Q: Did you guys build any buildings, or did you guys all live in the farm house, or how did that work?
A: We had a 200 foot chicken coop, and we adapted upstairs there, oh, how many rooms...a lot of rooms, one, three, four, I can't even count, but it must have been 8 to 10 rooms, we're talking a huge building. A couple on the farm built a log cabin, which eventually Judd and I took over after they left, and we did it all out of lumber on our own place, and everybody pitched in, and fantastic cabin, 40 x 20, and seventeen foot ceilings, and when we took it over, we hauled the trailer down, by that time, we had a mess of kids, not our own, who were staying with us, and they stayed with us for eight years, I guess. So, we just turned a 56 foot trailer, which we connected to the back side of the log cabin, and we added

a room on to pass through, from the log cabin, into the trailer, plus another bedroom for another adult, and put all the kids in the trailer, which was nice for sanity.

Q: Did you guys operate a school for the kids?
A: Yes, we did our own school.

Q: And would the adults take turns with teaching responsibilities?
A: Yeah. We just had classes in whatever the kids were interested in, it went everywhere from the elementary stuff to Latin, and Spanish, and History, whatever, you know. Lots of fights with the state.

Q: Oh really, over the school?
A: Oh yeah, we battled hard, in fact we had one battle just before the battle to have our own school was the battle to have our handicapped daughter's education, which was by Title IV in the state of Pennsylvania, her education should have been paid for, but, because she went to a school that was not, I've forgotten the terms, it was certified, but not licensed, the difference being, the teachers' had not had Pennsylvania State History, most of them were from Europe, you know, so we fought that battle and ended up with a file like this thick, and after we won it, the school called and so and so has problems, and so and so has problems, so we just turned all the files right over to the school, they still have them, I stopped there last fall, I took a long trip, and the school still has the files, and still uses, you know, whenever there's a problem. So, we got her in school, and it took, we never did get certified, but I think what they did, when they saw the name Jerome, they said just put it in the back of a file, and hope the problem would go away, people would come down occasionally to inspect, and we'd usually get a warning from another commune, because we were hard to find, and they'd find them, and say, now, can you give us directions to...and we'd get a phone call. So, quickly, we'd set up a classroom. So, we did that until we were down to one last child, not ours, and that's when we moved to Ohio, by this time, the commune had pretty well dissipated, a good portion of them went to California, can't remember what year. Maybe 1980, or something like that. And, of course by that time, a lot of the youngsters had decided that maybe they better go back to school, the flow of the hippies stopped after about, I would say that we had two intense years of kids just wandering in, and then, people got more serious about it, and a number of people went from our place to more religious communes. I think some are still there.

Q: Did they feel like they needed more structure or something?
A: Yeah, it's a little hard to, I think for younger people, to be essentially, totally anarchist, and manage, and be capable of managing their lives, but, so I guess we bought it in '72, and I think we left in '84.

Q: So, about 12 years, you were on the land. Now, did you and your husband buy the farm?
A: Yeah.

Q: So, you were the owners, then did you...
A: And we spent years trying to put it into land trust, trying to...you know, and Judd would write up all these proposal things, you know, isn't this what you want? Oh yes, this is what we want, but they never were able to make commitments, which was unfortunate.

Q: Now the people that lived there, did they pay you rent?
A: No.

Q: So they just lived there for free basically. And was it an income sharing type of commune? Did everybody put all their money in the pot?
A: Well the businesses we had, all the money went into the pot, I mean, some people lived there who couldn't afford anything, and then I think we went through a period where there was so much of an assessment made for each person, and I've forgotten what it was, maybe $100 a month, or something, I don't remember the particulars. Most of which could be earned out of the business, some people had savings, and used that, of course, Judd had his writing, but he really got into band sawing.

Q: He made a lot of those planters?
A: Yeah, he really enjoyed that, but then he would stick with his writing, and I'd work with wind chimes, so we always managed, all our kids worked in the business as soon as they were able, as soon as they wanted spending money, they worked.

Q: Now did the commune have any sort of ideology, or philosophy?
A: Not really, no. Just live together, and get along, or try to.

Q: Were you kind of purposefully trying to simplify your lifestyle?
A: Absolutely.

Q: Sort of live closer to the land?
A: Yeah, and be as self sufficient as possible, I mean we knew we never....we had to earn some money, but, for the most part and we really did simplify our lives. Our grocery bills were nothing.

Q: Did you grow a lot of your own food?
A: Almost all of it.

Q: Did you have a particular way of eating, like were you all vegetarians?
A: Some, well, we went through every phase in the book, and some of us die hards never became vegetarian, I speak for myself. But, we'd have one communal meal a day, and alternate who was cooking, who was cleaning up, and who was what, and that meal, I would say was 95% of the time vegetarian, but it's always vegetarian food present, but for the carnivores, you know, meat was expensive, and we raised pigs for awhile, and slaughtered them, and had pork, we had goats, we didn't eat those, but did use the goat milk, and of course chickens. So we always had eggs, but we had some whose diets wouldn't include eggs, you know, you ran the gamut, and you felt like asking people as they came down the driveway, well, what is your food preference? Never asked about anything philosophical.

Q: How did you handle chores and house work?
A: We just took turns.

Q: You didn't have any a particular scheduling process or anything like that?
A: Not really, schedules just didn't really work out, but it's amazing when you have a group of people, like we had a couple of people who really loved to cook, well, wasn't that nice, because, I detested cooking, and I never minded cleaning up, heaven forbid, if somebody will cook, I'll do dishes, I'll do the floors, I don't care, as long as I don't have to think about preparing it, and so some grew it, and grew the food, and we just would all take turns. Very seldom do I remember squabbles about cleaning up or anything like that.

Q: So people did a pretty good job of doing their fair share of the work?
A: Yeah, I mean, always there's some that you'd think, well, I wish that they'd get in gear, and you know, but, there were enough that everything got done.

Q: Did you have regular meetings?
A: Yes.

Q: Weekly...
A: I don't remember, I don't think they were weekly, every couple of weeks.

Q: Did you follow any certain decision making process, like consensus?
A: It had to be consensus.

Q: And did anybody play a leadership role in the group?
A: Well, unfortunately, I think Judd was forced into the position of, you know, which he kept trying to get rid of, but also, he was an extremely articulate individual, and I mean, he could be pretty persuasive, when something was really very important to him, and persuasive to the point of being unpleasant, but for the most part, we could hop on him, and say well, isn't that cool. And, generally as I remember, I mean, people would have things that they would want to bring up, and we'd talk about them, but none of that is just really terribly clear in my memory, that was a long time ago.

Q: Did you have any sort of membership policy, or could people just show up and live there?
A: No, they had to request to become members, and be there a month, and then by consensus, it was decided whether they would stay or not. And there were a number that did not, you know, we reached no consensus, and they left.

Q: Regarding child rearing, did you have any rules or procedures that you followed?
A: Well, Judd and I were the only ones with children for years, until we imported some, and then our kids were, well one lived there a few months, one lived there maybe a year to two, and then we dropped down to one who was young, thirteen, and went to Frog Run to help them out with mapling, and she just fell in love with it, and she stayed until Frog Run dissolved, and she's still in that area, so she essentially grew up there, and of course, we had our handicapped daughter, in the summers, and all the vacations, and then our son, who was five when we went there.

Q: And was the commune a good place to have kids, do you think?
A: No, simply because there weren't enough kids, which was why we sort of imported three, it was, you know, our son was very lonely, and that worked out fine.

Q: Did you guys have any rules about behavior, anything things like you know, drugs, alcohol, smoking, anything like that?
A: I don't thing we did.

Q: People could pretty much do what they wanted?
A: Yeah, I don't think so, there was a lot of pot, but I was never aware of hard drugs, but that was, hard drugs were not much in evidence then, but pot sure was, you know.

Q: That was part of the times.
A: Sure. There wasn't much problem with things like drinking, because of the expense, you know, that gets costly, but some drank, Judd being one of them, I drank some, but there wasn't, that was all done sort of, fairly privately, occasionally we'd have big parties with other communes in the area, and we'd have beer. But, not all the time, because we simply couldn't afford it.

Q: What were your relationships like with your neighbors, and the surrounding community.
A: Terrible.

Q: Terrible? Why is that?
A: Well, because of the area, and the farm, very, very, very red-neck, and you know, there would be nails put in our driveway, a few scary times, but you know, then they just learned to leave us alone, and we left them alone, but, never became friends with any of them. One became tolerant enough that he would call, and he would usually ask for me, and he would say Marty, I've got some deer up here in my field, two of them have beards, which was the call for everyone to go and round up the goats. One of them, had a man who lived on their place was burning leaves and so forth, and he caught on fire, and of course, we went and put out the fire, and got the emergency care for the guy, and got him shipped off, and that endeared us, he was the same man that would call about the goats, but that was the only moment it was friendly. But it was a fairly isolated place.

Q: Was it? What was the nearest town?
A: Well, ten miles to Hancock Maryland, but we were in Pennsylvania, the nearest Pennsylvania town was probably eight miles, and it was Warfresburg, which was a Post Office, so everybody did their shopping in Hancock Maryland. Which again, is a very closed society, although, we did make a few friends in the town. But, there were a number of communes around this area, and we were, I guess ten minutes or so to Hancock, which is in Maryland, and there, you cross the bridge, and you're in West Virginia, we're in the very narrowest part, and there are a lot of communes over in West Virginia, Berkeley Springs, and around, and so those were the people that we basically had contacts with.

Q: Do you remember the names of any of them?
A: Well they're all defunct, were defunct before we were, there was one called Red Barn, and God, can't remember the names, they were smallish places, and all good people, we did a lot of trading, something happened to somebody's bean crop, and we'd say, well, come over and pick ours, just a wonderful group of people.

Q: Was there a certain type of person that was attracted to Downhill Farm?
A: I think people that really had no direction, they were young, and you know, between high school and college, or disenchanted with college, I would say the ages ran from 19 to middle 20's and so forth, getting older, we had older people in their thirties and so forth, at various intervals, but were disenchanted with their jobs, oh my goodness, we had a lot of those riffs here, and a lot of people came, and could whether it for six months or so, and be on their way.

Q: So you had big turnover?
A: Yeah, because they weren't into communalism out of any sense of ideology, they were into communalism, because it was an easy escape.

Q: Was that discouraging for you, to have people around like that? I mean, do you wish that they had been more committed?
A: Oh yeah, always, always, but always disappointed, but then, I think my own expectations were always too high. I expected, you know, that inside, people would just get a hold of themselves and do it. That's what I'd always done, so "Come on, wake up, grow up, do it." But, no, I was...I never remember voting against anybody trying it, but you know, in my heart, I knew that they wouldn't be here long, but if you don't give somebody an opportunity, how are you going to know, how are they going to know? We did have to ask a couple of people to leave.

Q: Because they weren't doing their fair share of the work?
A: Yeah, and being difficult, and one was psychologically disturbed, two were psychologically disturbed, and that was very difficult, did not have the means with which to help them, but both, we got to medical care, and so we didn't just stick them out in the highway, but those were very, very difficult times. And very apprehensive for the entire group, is when you have somebody who is not mentally sane, it's scary. You don't know what they're going to do to themselves, or if they might do something to somebody else, nobody ever did hurt anybody, except themselves, but still, it's not a comfortable way to live, because essentially, you are living with strangers, even if you've been living together for a couple of years, your still not that knowledgeable, and not that intimately involved, your layers of intimacy are so different, there's family, there's really close, and so you work up this stepladder with some people you just don't ever get past the initial pleasantries, as it were. You're into trouble, if you've got somebody who is just really...and we did, we had a couple of those who were very bad, and everybody sighed in relief when it was over.

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Q: Why did the commune kind of, I don't know if fall apart is the right word?
A: Yeah, that's a good word, well, I think a lot of it had to do with Judd, because he became more and more opinionated, and more ideological, and I think had more should in his head, and you can't have should when you're dealing with a lot of people, and so a number of people became quite angry, and disillusioned with Judd, and he wasn't about to change. And he was as stubborn as anybody else, and it came down to his beliefs, and you're not going to, we'd have some disagreeable arguments, and so forth, and so one group left, because there was sort of a young man in that group,a nd for some reason, Judd took a real dislike to this young man, which was not like Judd. But, the support group that had brought this young man here, I think there were four people that had known him outside and essentially brought him in, and they all became very, very tense, and so they moved out, and went about fifty miles away, you know town, and that lasted about two months, and then they all broke up. Then, the next time, it was a couple years later, and again, a lot of it was ideological, and I was trying to get the groups straight, and they went, they felt, and a I felt, too, that Judd was being too controlling during that phase, and so they grew apart and they all went to California, which they all sort of wanted to do anyway, but it was interesting, because another woman and I essentially ran the business at the farm, of the wind chimes, and so, they became a studio out in the west coast, because they had been working with wind chimes on the farm, and it seemed a natural, and they stayed together, I guess there were four of them, and they stayed together a couple of years, and then they went their separate ways,a nd the studio closed, and what have you. But, mostly, I think the reasons for the break downs were ideological, and stubborn.

Q: Was it disappointing for you and Judd?
A: I think it was much more disappointing for Judd than it was for me, and I just really thought well, it was time, you know. And so then we boiled down to just another woman and her three children, and Judd and me, there. And we did that for about a year, and we just realized that living that rurally, we heated with wood, and that's a lot of wood chopping, and this driveway was incredible, we could be iced in for six or eight weeks, and Judd was at an age, well, he got them young, but he got cataracts, and that was scary, and that was enough, and he said, "Okay, I've had it." And I thought...good.

Q: Wa that the end of communal living for you guys, or did you try it again.
A: No, we left the farm, and moved to Ohio, and took the woman and her three kids, we went together, and we bought a big house, and then, my son and her two oldest daughters, one was my son's age, and one was a little older, by this time had all left,a nd we just had her thirteen year old, and she was an extremely difficult child.

Q: Was she the one that went to Frog Run Farm?
A: Oh no, no, no, no, that was my daughter, and that was years earlier, but this was in the 80's, and this kids got into drugs and liquor, and one thing and another, and began beating up on her Mother, and her Mother was a big woman, and when, I think Judd and I were, at least I was always a strict parent. And I was strict with kids on a , when I said something, they knew that I meant it. And we don't' horse around, I don't make unreasonable requests, but when I say, this needs to be done, I expect it to be done. [side ends]. I've forgotten, she wanted something that was totally outrageous, and I remember she came in,

and she asked me, and I said, well, I don't think that's reasonable, because we had just done it with her the year before, I think it was a permanent, she would another permanent, and I mean, she cried, and wailed, and screamed for three moths, till it grew out, and well, she had to have another, and I said "well, fine, earn the money for it." My kids always earned money for the things that they wanted, that were not necessarily in the family budget, well, she wasn't about to do that, and so she went to Judd, and Judd hit the roof, and he said "You heard Marty, you earn it, fine, and there's lots of things you can do." So, she just absolutely blew up, and in about two days, her Mother came, and we were a triad, I mean, we were sexually intimate, and what have you, and had been for years, and then, just out of the blue, she said, she was going to move, and we said okay, what can we do to help? And so, we helped get her set up in an apartment there in town, and she and I still worked together, we were still doing wind chimes, and I guess she was there for, not quite a year, and then moved back to her hometown in Pennsylvania, where the daughter's Father was, and also where two of her daughters were, and so, they're all still in that area, except for the difficult child, who is in California, and on drugs, and just really having a hard time, the last I hears, but, that's been a number of years.

Q: Was open marriage a part of Downhill Farm?
A: Well, just essentially, just Judd and me, we had two other married couples there, one was totally monogamous, and the other, she was not, but neither of those marriages lasted, and during that period of time, in the early 70's, there were a lot of couples coming, and I think their general belief was, if we change our lifestyle, our marriage will be alright, well, you bring your problems with you, you know, and I think, in fact, that they are intensified. So, for the most part, Judd and I were the only married couple that stayed, and the married couples didn't last, I think the one lasted maybe, two, three years there. But then, they dissolved, but it's not an answer, and I think so many people were looking for answers, and then they find, "ooh, this is not an answer, okay, go on to something else."

Q: What was the best part about living at Downhill Farm for you?
A: Oh well, for me it was living rurally, I'd never, I mean, I grew up in the city of Chicago, I mean, the most country I ever got was moving to Ohio to a small village, which I just thought was spectacular, and learning, and getting involved with nature, for me it's just still a huge thing for me. I mean, this whole program that I'm working on here is all master gardener's, and I just love it, but I've also several other interests, one of which started at the farm. It was hospice, I've done hospice for over, a lot of years, fifteen, sixteen, or more. But, I'd leave the farm and go and do my hospice and come back, you know, it takes four to six hours once a week, and I've done that for years, I'm certified in four states, anywhere I'd go, I'd say "Ooh, well, where's the nearest hospice certification?"

Q: That's great.
A: So, I've always done hospice, and been this master gardening has been all recently, and I work with literacy, I worked for awhile with peer counseling for mental health, but I got disenchanted. But, all of those things sort of stem from that period, and I think it's having the freedom to try new things, and the sense that you're not going to be hurt by the judgement of others if you fail. And I think that, you know, that, to me, is one of the most exciting things about communalism, and people living together as if they can totally accept the faults and the goods in other people, what fun, because it's so liberating, you can

try anything. So, we did, we tried various businesses, we tried, there weren't very many gardeners amongst us, but we sure turned out some good gardens, and all learned how to can, and produce food, and it was wonderful taking care of yourself.

Q: What about the flipside, what was the worst part about living at Downhill Farm?
A: The hassles with people, when things got disagreeable, just make you, well, my escape was go to the garden, I'd put a salt shaker in my pocket and go for the day, but, I never really was good at confrontation, and I didn't like confrontation, and some people thrived on it, well, fine, that's their bit, but I don't have to be there, so, you know.

Q: Do you consider Downhill Farm a success or a failure?
A: It depends for whom, and what have you, you know. So, that's almost an impossible one to answer, it's in some areas it was very successful, in other areas, I think it was terrible, would I do it again? No. But, of course, my circumstances are totally different. You know, I have been alone now for five years, I just don't think that, in fact, I was asked if I would join a group last year, if I would come and work with them, and I said "No way." I like doing what I'm doing very much.

Q: You like your privacy, your independence.
A: Yeah, and I am a very private person, and somebody asked me a few weeks ago if they could move in with me, I said "No way." At least I've learned to say no, and not feel guilty about it, and no, I just need my privacy, I need, I'm involved in a lot of things, that I want to be involved in, and if I can give people time, like this sort of thing, great, but, every once in awhile, I get an itch, and when I can afford it, I save my pennies, and last year, I took a trip for two months, I just got into my little red car and drove from here to Maine, and then I drove back down through Texas, and New Mexico, and Arizona, and came on back, and went where I wanted to, when I wanted to, saw all the places that I wanted to see for years, and I happened to have a husband who could not be separated first from his typewriter, then his computer, for three days without going bonkers, he was absolutely, he was at work at 8 in the morning on his computer he worked until 12, he had lunch until 12:30, he wrote until 4:30, he closed down the computer, took all the stack of mail that he did everyday, walked it down to the Post Office to get his exercise, and walked back, have his bourbon, take a nap, take a shower, and then read after dinner. I mean, and when he couldn't do that, he was not a happy camper. So then he got a laptop, and so then he's hauling around this laptop wherever we go, and I said look, it's just not worth traveling with you, you're no fun, and what does he do in the car? Read. How can you pass up all of this? How can you sit there and read, so I decided, I'm not planning anymore trips, except to go see the kids, and so we, well, we did do China, and you know, have done some, which he could part, if you get enough thousand miles away from it, you know. But, I wouldn't, you know, I don't want to live with anybody, be responsible for anybody but myself at this point in my life, but, you know, I'm closer 70 than I am anything else so, why not? I live on a very limited income, I don't need anything, as long as I can put gas in the car and have my few cigarettes, I'm happy as a clam.

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September 8, 1996

Q: Do you think that there are key ingredients that make a commune work?
A: I think there has to be a central focus, be it like Twin Oaks, which you know, is running a big business, and you go into that community knowing that you are going to be involved in this business in some respect, but that's the paramount thing, or be it a group that is growing food commercially, essentially, for sale, be it religious, or whatever, that, and I think they're successful because people know what to expect, and know the rules as they were, they can even be unspoken rules, but they are there. And people need that security, there are not many people in this world that are happy just aimlessly buffeting about, they need direction, and they need people to share things with, you know, other human beings, and it's, I found it at Downhill, it was very interesting because there were a lot of people who could not make emotional commitments to a single person, but could make it to several, you know. And, I'm not talking about sex, but there was just comfort in numbers because they didn't have to be totally honest about themselves to one person, a one on one relationship is as naked as you can get, you know, but if you're relating to several people, you can stay pretty hidden, but still benefit from having a relationship, and I think that was particularly truly of the 70's. I think now, people are much more into being monogamous, I mean, just look at the divorce rate, people just unwilling to, you know, share. But, there are groups going, still functioning, and so forth, a group up near Bellingham, it's very into farming and produce and so forth, but...

Q: Is that Cascadian farms, is that what you're talking about, or...
A: I can't even remember the name of it, I think it's got River in the name, but anyway, I had a young man here, he was living in his truck and going to college, and when I went east, I happened to meet his Mother who was a friend of my daughter who still lives there, and saying, well she was a little concerned about him, could she give him my number. And I said sure, and he called, and he came and camped out in my little middle room for a month or two last fall, he was going to leave and go on a long trip to South America. but, in talking to him about the group up there, it's like the Twin Oaks pattern, in my mind, they are there because of the commercial enterprise, they are doing those things, they are living together, eating together, but that's it. They're not intimately sharing, and that's pretty safe, you know, you're very vulnerable when you start, and I think it's the vulnerability that does people in, you have to pull out. I mean, I talked to one fellow that was leaving Downhill and he said "I can't get any closer to people than I am now, and it frightens me, and I have to leave." And I said, "Go ahead, my blessing." And he's still an uncommitted person, but has been living in the same place for a lot of years, and quite happy with what he is doing, but he is not involved in a lot of relationships, it takes all kinds, and you can't mix them up. Some soups don't taste good with broccoli in it, you know.

Q: Do you have any documents from Downhill Farm?
A: No, they're all at Boston University library.

Q: There in their archives?
A: Yeah, Juddson Jerome Memorial Fund, and you can write them and then, I mean, I have a letter from Lucy because she wants in, but then I have to sign for them, that gives permission, and that's fine. I'm very open to that. But, all the Downhill papers are there.

Q: Okay, it would be fun to look at them. Well, I think that's all that I have to ask, thank you very much.