

Interview with Doug Stevenson

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

October 18, 1995

**Q:** Your name is Stevenson? Is that right?

**A:** Right.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** S-t-e-v-e-n-s-o-n.

**Q:** Okay. And can you tell me something about your background and the events that led up to you being part of the Farm?

**A:** I was born in Louisville, Kentucky, part of the baby boomers' generation, so to speak. So, I was a Beatles fan and played in, you know, in rock bands in high school and had a certain amount of political awareness because of the Vietnam War and civil rights movement and considered myself a hippie radical, I guess. Towards the late sixties, the political side of the movement started to fade and wane and, you know, through things like LSD, marijuana, started exploring consciousness and learning about kind of the translation of teachings like Buddhism and Yoga into the U.S. western civilization Alan Watts, Ram Das(?) or Richard Alpert, you know. The book Be Here Now had a real impact on me and, at the same time, I was realizing that I wanted to explore a more natural lifestyle. My wife, that I met at that time, we were in high school. We both became vegetarians and were interested in moving back to the land to do some type of homestead lifestyle. We went on a trip out west and ran into a yoga ashram, which we stayed at for a couple of months. So, we kind of got exposed to experimentation with spiritual lifestyles and, while we were living there, Richard Alpert, Alpert Ram Das (?), came and stayed for about a week and we got to see what that was like, meeting someone like that first hand and, at the same time, we were avid readers of Mother Earth News and we saw the first Farm report in the Mother Earth News and we thought that looks interesting.

**Q:** Do you know about when this was?

**A:** This was '71 or '71-'72, right in there. And I left high school. I had left high school a year early and my wife did, too. I was a grade above her and we both skipped our senior year and I was supposed to go to college but I didn't. I ended up working at a library. So . . .

**Q:** Were you drafted?

**A:** No. I got a high number. I got lucky. I was, you know I was young enough that it was starting to trail off and, so, kind of after we saw Richard Alpert, that disillusioned us on just the yoga. This particular yoga ashram, it was a Yogi Bajan (?). He was a guru at that time and we weren't necessarily seeking him but we definitely saw we weren't interested in that much structure, you know, and coveting someone like that and the way the disciples are, you know, the people in that ashram were and, so, we were just trying to find our own way.

**Q:** Where was the ashram?

**A:** It was in Phoenix.

**Q:** Is that where you went to high school?

**A:** No, I was from Louisville. Grew up in Louisville.

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**Q:** Louisville. That's right. That's right. Okay.

**A:** And . . .

**Q:** So, you went out to Phoenix to join the ashram?

**A:** No, we bought a VW van. After we got married, we bought ten-speed bicycles and we spent the entire summer camping and riding bicycles. Then, it was getting towards winter. So, we were looking for our next thing to do. We kind of did that for our extended honeymoon. She was 17. I was 18. And, so, we bought a VW van. Headed west. And we went through, you know, we camped in Colorado. We camped in the Black Hills. We camped in the Grand Canyon. We pulled in Phoenix and went looking for the hippie side of town and somebody says there's this ashram that has a free vegetarian dinner and we said that sounds interesting. So, we went over there, ate the dinner and they had a free yoga class and we got high from it and it was like, oh, this is interesting, you know, getting this exalted, warm feeling and, so, we stuck around to check it out and kind of got to see past the initial flowery view and see how the personalities were together and it was just, you know, everything has its own Peyton Place or soap opera and, you know, we decided that wasn't for us. About that time, we met some people that had been to the Farm and we said, yeah, we've heard about that, you know, and, then, we got hold of one of the books on Monday night class and we tried to read that but it was too esoteric, a lot of jargon. Didn't quite relate to it. Then, we decided we'd had enough of Phoenix. We had to get out of the city. It was too crazy and we headed back to Kentucky and we thought we gotta get back to the land. That's the only thing that makes any sense and, so, on the way back home, we stopped in Memphis and bought in a health food store and bought a copy of the Caravan Book and, so, then, we got back home, started doing a little work, went out camping and, while we were camping, I read the Caravan Book and found it a lot more accessible and, about the next day or two after I finished it, we saw that Stephen and the Band were going to be in town. So, we said, oh, let's go check that out and it was kind of interesting. We had been to some gigs that [unintelligible] Ram Das did, you know, some meetings and he had this altar with flowers and he would do a bunch of chanting and it was all very nice, you know. So, we picked a bunch of flowers to take, thinking Stephen was going to be that kind of guru and we got there and they kind of took the flowers and said, "Oh, what do we do with this," you know, and they stuck it on a corner of the stage. So, then, the Band played. They were okay. Stephen came out and started talking. We were watching the slide show. We were really interested and interested in some of the things that he had to say. Like, he was pointing out to somebody that had a, you know why have a spiritual teacher. That was the question, you know. How can you take me as your spiritual teacher and he was saying, well, if you buy all Mick Jagger's albums and you're wearing a Mick Jagger t-shirt with the big tongue sticking out, then, Mick Jagger is your teacher and there was somebody wearing one of those t-shirts, you know, kind of going, yeah, that makes sense, you know, and I used to do this crazy thing where I would go stand in the front of the crowd and dance like I was having an epileptic fit and be, what we would call, into the juice or draw attention, you know, to myself and somebody kind of tapped me on the shoulder and said, "hey, there's something else happening here, you know. You're not the center of the show. You should go in the back and do that." And I was like, whoa, you know, what, somebody's talking and what is this, you know, and it kind of got my attention a little bit and, you know, I guess I'm about 19, right in there, and we decided to go visit the Farm and, as soon as we got here, we said this is it. This is what we want to do, you know. Everybody was vegetarian. In Kentucky, there's still not many

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vegetarians. It just wasn't like the West Coast or something. So, we were kind of loners in our way of thinking and wanting to move back to the land. So, this combined moving back to the land but still a commitment to the revolution which was about changing society, not isolating yourself to where you'd have no effect on society because we visited a few friends that were doing the homestead trip and it was just so isolated and just didn't quite have what we were looking for. So, we came here and, of course, there was about five, six hundred people at that time and that was the Farm had been going about two years and we were fascinated by, you know, what was going on and we came back again a month later to visit again and we said we want to live here and we went and found Stephen and he said, "well, do you have all your stuff with you" and we said, "no," and he said, "well, then, you're not really ready to live here, you know. You come back when you got all your loose ends tied up and we'll talk about it then." So, we came back a month later. It took us a month to tie work and that kind of things and just settled right in, although it wasn't necessarily that easy to get accepted. We went around to all these different places where we thought, well, we can start a little campsite here with our VW bus and a pup tent. Everywhere we went people said, "Well, that's too close. We can see you or that's where our house is going to be when we build a house and you can't move here." So, we ended up back in what we call head of the roads, which is just at the end of the paved road. We ended up camping right there because everywhere we went no one would let us pull our bus and we thought, if we didn't really want to be here, we would think this place was really weird, you know. People are not real friendly and, so, after living there for about a week or so, the first people that we met when we came to visit the first time, they said, "well, look, you can pull over next to us. There's no need for you guys to be in the fish bowl here." And, so, we moved over next to them and, then, ended up moving next door to them and we lived in what's called a metro van like a bread truck or, you know. That was the first thing we lived in and it was attached to a school bus. So, there was a school bus and at the back door of the school bus there was a little wooden hallway about three feet long and that led into the bread truck or metro van that was our bedroom and we were living with another couple and, since we were all kind of young and inexperienced, it didn't take long before we got on each other's nerves and didn't want to live with each other anymore.

**Q:** Were you living as a four marriage?

**A:** No, just as two couples, you know. There was a little fantasy but that was fairly short-lived and, of course, you know, what we went on to learn later that it's the hardest combination is two couples. It was easier to live with three couples or four couples because it just dilutes the energy, you know. There's always a third opinion or somebody'd break up the, you know things just don't get as locked up and, so, that's some of how, you know, the Farm started. The houses just kept getting bigger and bigger, partially because it was easier, in a sense, on your psyche and, you know, if you lived in a house with 25, 40 people, it was like having a party every night, you know, and maybe you didn't get along perfectly with everybody but you maybe had two or three couples or something that you were really good friends with.

**Q:** Were a lot of the households that large?

**A:** It kind of grew, you know. We started out in the buses and we were busting out of the buses, you know. Some people couldn't stand up, you know, the tall guys and stuff. So, we started getting army

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tents and, you know, one of the first crews I got on was the salvage crew where we would go out and tear down houses and things to get materials so that we could put a floor under the tent and, then, maybe you'd put a real door on one side of the tent and, eventually, then, we took we figured out somebody figured out if you took the walls of the tent and stood them up, kind of pulled them out, they could make your roof longer and, so, then, you could have a bigger space and, then, you'd build your own walls and, then, eventually, you could take the canvas down and put in rafters and put tin there and it would become a house and there actually are some places, you know, Stephen's being one of the them. Stephen's house was a tent at one time. The house next door to mine, here, was a tent and you look at them today they look like pretty substantial houses but it was many years in the tents, you know, and they're not very thick. It got real cold and, fortunately, we were young and our kids were so young that they didn't think too much about it, you know. You put them to bed at night with lots of layers of pajamas and hats and mittens and the Tennessee climate is mild enough that in February you get weeks where it's 60 degrees and you maybe only have like a week or two at a time where it just gets down bitter cold and we just kind of hunkered through it and waited it out.

**Q:** Now, did you have I suppose you had outhouses and things like that and no indoor plumbing?

**A:** Oh, yeah. That was up until the mid-80s.

**Q:** Oh, really?

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** And what about things like showers or laundry or cooking?

**A:** You know, there was a community shower house and the community kitchen.

**Q:** Was there one for the whole Farm?

**A:** Usually, you had a kitchen in your home as well. You, pretty much, always had that but you had the option of going to the community kitchen for three meals and, say, a lot of times you'd use breakfast because you want to get out and go to work, say for the, you know, the men would go out and hit the early breakfast and, then, maybe the women, especially if they had young children or something, baby, they'd stay home and have their own breakfast. You'd maybe meet for lunch with your spouse and, so, lunch was a very big meal. Sometimes you'd be standing in a line with, you know, a few hundred for lunch and it ended up, you know it was this whole social scene. You're talking and carrying on and lunch would take several hours, you know.

**Q:** So, did you have to have shifts to feed that many people?

**A:** It was just a one long line.

**Q:** One long line. Okay. When did you have kids? Was it before you came here or after you got here?

**A:** No. My wife had just had a miscarriage before we came and, so, very shortly we came in August and, in November, she got . . .

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**Q:** August of '73?

**A:** I think it's August of '73 and, in November, she got pregnant. I think that's about right 'cause we had our first child in June the following year, a son. His name's Jody and not too long after having him I'd been on the salvage crew. I'd kind of worked my way up to being one of the two guys that ran the salvage crew and we tore down a three-story brick factory. This is when I'd first joined the crew. We were tearing down this factory and not too long after that the guys that were in charge of it got fired for internal political reasons, so to speak. He was a single guy. Head of the crew. Couldn't have that much power as a single guy. You weren't grounded enough.

**Q:** So, only married guys got to be head of things?

**A:** Yeah, for a while.

**Q:** Well, that's interesting. Was that one of Stephen's ideas?

**A:** Not necessarily. Although, you know, it kind of filtered down that, if you were a single guy, you weren't balanced. You weren't grounded, you know, and there was a certain amount of truth to that but, in this case, the guy was doing a good job but he was what we called an independent operator, which was that he didn't connect enough with the whole flow of the organization and wanted to kind of run his own movie and, you know, because he was like selling off some of the materials and created this money flow and, so, he would go to Shoneys with his buddy and they'd have, you know could eat out some and it was just a little too independent for the betterment of the community, so to speak. So, he got fired and, shortly afterward, his friend left and, so, I kind of ended up moving up.

**Q:** Heading the salvage crew?

**A:** Mmm-hmm. Me and this other guy. He was a few years older than me but we landed a contract to tear down this building. It was an old warehouse and it had big, steel trusses and those were the trusses that we used to create the meeting hall. I don't know if you saw the meeting hall structure.

**Q:** No, I haven't seen it.

**A:** But it's a large thing kind of roughly based on the dome principle but that was kind of a big project.

**Q:** Was the salvage crew doing just outside work? Was that what it was?

**A:** The primary goal was to get materials to build things with.

**Q:** Oh, okay. So, you went outside into the community and tried to find things to bring back.

**A:** Outside in the local towns. Mmm-hmm. We got a reputation. People would call us.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** We'd find out about things. Kind of being the contractors, our job was to keep looking for things, lining up new things to tear down, you know, as we finished up the old jobs, you know. We had flatbed trucks. We had our own metro van that was our tool van. We'd take out, you know, maybe 6, 8 regular guys and, then, certain times we'd bring out 20 or 30 people to help do cleanup or load trucks or that kind of thing and, at the time, you know, I really liked the job because I was recycling, you know. It was

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the ultimate of recycling and, then, winter came and we ran out of the things to tear down and I felt like I didn't really have a skill. All I knew how to do was do this kind of a real labor intensive, you know, but it wasn't like I knew how to be a carpenter or things like that. I wanted to learn a skill. So, I tried to get on a carpentry crew and that didn't really work out. I got put on a roofing crew and, then, after I'd done that a few weeks, the guy decided, well, it was too cold and too wet and you didn't roof until next spring. So, I was left hanging again and we decided to go live on a smaller farm because we thought I'd be more in control of my own destiny and greater access to the material plane trucks, money, sugar, whatever and we went to check out there was one in Kentucky.

**Q:** This is a satellite farm?

**A:** A satellite farm.

**Q:** Okay. So, you weren't actually leaving the community.

**A:** No.

**Q:** You just wanted to find a slightly smaller place to do your thing.

**A:** Right. Right.

**Q:** Okay. So, you weren't disillusioned with anything.

**A:** No.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** We were still into it.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** We just thought, you know and they were kind of asking people to go out and help start these new farms.

**Q:** Oh, okay.

**A:** And we went and checked out one and it was mostly single people and there was two couples that had left this farm to go live on that farm and they were both kind of independent operators again, you know, and part of the reason they left was because they were they got uptight or they could get away with more of their ego in these smaller places. Instead of being challenged on the big Farm, they became the big fish at the new farm, you know. So, we like said, no, this place . . .

**Q:** Not for us.

**A:** Not for us. Plus, it was way out in the boonies and it didn't have any farmland. It just didn't look like a good place. We met another couple who said, "well, we want to be affiliated with the Farm but it's just us" and they had 60 acres of bottomland and, so, we went to go check out their farm. Actually, they came to our house to have a baby while were living on the Farm and that's how we got to know them and they were just coming for the prenatal visits. So, we actually surprised them and said, guess what, we're here to move on your farm with you. They didn't even know we were coming but we knew they

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wanted to have a farm and we heard 60 acres of bottomland. That sounded right. It was closer to where our folks lived and, so, they were living in an old schoolhouse a one-room schoolhouse that was near the land. They didn't have any houses on their land or any water. It was within walking distance to their land. So, we ended up moving in this old schoolhouse in one room about the size of this room here, a little bit bigger than that maybe but it seemed it was about this size, maybe a little wider and it's about, oh, maybe 15, 20 feet wide by about 25 feet long. We had a wood stove that we cooked on and two beds divided by a curtain that we slept in. We stayed there for two years. We I used my salvage skills. I started getting places to tear down, getting materials and, then, building our houses. I didn't know how to build but I just kind of learned by hammering nails and he knew a little more than I did and taught me some and we attracted another couple from Tennessee and, then, the Tennessee farm would periodically close its gates and not take on new members for a while. So, the people who were coming and say, well, go check out these farms and, us being one of the closer ones to Tennessee, people would come to check us out and we grew up to we usually had around 15 people. We grew up to about 25 over one summer and, then, shrank back down and, at the end of the second year, we were all pretty tired of it. There was no jobs and we did hot tar roofing for a while. There was a gate welding factory you could work in. We sold firewood. I was the main support of the community because my folks were about three hours away and they had a company that I had worked for before I came to the Farm and, so, I could go up there and operate as a subcontractor doing these cleaning jobs for office buildings and I'd take somebody from the community with me and we'd spend maybe 3 or 4 days and make better money than we could you know, at that time, the minimum wage had gone up to maybe \$2.50 an hour and I could go up there and make \$5.00 an hour and, so, I would do that usually once a month or every couple of months I'd go up and do that. We were trying to be farmers. We grew sweet potatoes, sweet corn. We did apples with some local farmers and everything came back around to you plant it, you weed it, you fertilize it, you harvest it and, then, as you're selling it you make \$5.00 an hour, you know. All the rest of the time is just wasted and that just seemed to be the way farming was, you know. We'd grow good stuff and you just couldn't make any money at it and, interestingly enough, the couple that we live with now we lived with on that farm.

**Q:** Really?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Wow.

**A:** They she was they were both living on the other farm that we decided not to move to. We met the woman and she had another husband at that time. They came and lived with us on the Tennessee farm, coming to visit and we liked her. He was a little of a macho kind of a guy but they were all living on that other farm and there was an accident. They had been doing some wrecking and there was an accident where all the wood fell off the truck that they were driving. He was sitting on the back of this truckload of wood and it wasn't chained down and a freak accident a car passed the truck and created an air suction and all the wood was pulled off the truck and landed on him and killed him.

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**Q:** Oh, wow.

**A:** Yeah. And, so, we were living on the other farm at that time. We went all of us went over for the funeral and a little while later this lady her name is Susan Skinner and her current husband, Stephen Skinner, were working at this mental hospital together and they got to be friends and fell in love and got married. Right about the time they were deciding to get married that farm decided to fold and they were going to move onto our farm. Well, as it turned out, the only ones that moved over to our farm were Stephen and Susan and some people came back to Tennessee, some people moved off into the area, some people went their different ways and Stephen and Susan came and lived on our farm and that was kind of significant for me and them in that, at that point, the farms there were several satellite farms we were communicating by ham radio on a daily or weekly basis. Our farm didn't have anyone that had a radio license. So, Stephen, Susan and I all started studying to get our radio license and that began our path of electronics and which is how I support myself today and they both run an electronics company today. So, you know, it kind of reaches back a ways there. So, you know, we did that farm for 2 years and we thought about we were ready to move back to Tennessee or do something with greater impact. We felt like we were just too isolated, too small. We in fact, we made the decision to sell the farm the day we got our licenses and got on the radio and got hooked into the Farm network better and, at that point, we said Stephen had come up and looked at our farm and he kind of said, "well, this is quaint. I suppose you could do something out here but . . ."

**Q:** Was that hard to take?

**A:** A little bit. We were, you know, enough caught up in the whole thing of him being the know-all person there. You know, when we first came, you know, there was a place where, you know, I thought he was Jesus, that he was a channel for God's energy and, you know, he was a man. He was trying to do a good thing and do the right thing and by, you know, trying to do as pure a path as he could would be a channel for God's energy and, you know, when we would have our services and everyone gave them all their attention there'd be several hundred people there and he's trying to be the channel and transcend his own humanness and talk about things at a higher consciousness level and, so, there was just a lot of times where he was on the mark or on the money or was able to express a greater telepathy of the group in such a way that made us all smarter and appreciate what we had or what we were trying to do and do it better and, you know, was real instrumental in the focus of what we were trying to do and, you know, he was also older. So, he could look on certain things with a level of maturity that, even though we were adults, we were still in our early 20s and, you know, gave us good information. So, kind of similar to Stephen and Susan moving to our farm, we said we're all going to go move to the New York farm. So, we went on this big caravan to the New York farm. We loaded all our stuff in a big flatbed truck and pickup truck and a car and we caravanned up to New York and, as soon as we got there, we realized we really wanted to be back on the Tennessee Farm and Stephen and Susan wanted to be back on the Tennessee Farm and Clyde and Christine, who were the original people who were on this farm in Kentucky, they wanted to stay on the New York farm because they were actually friends with all those people beforehand and they ended up staying up there for a while. We came back to Tennessee after living up there for a couple of months. It was just too darn cold for me and came back to the Farm and, now, the construction crew that I had been trying to get on before I left, they were like, "oh, Doug, great, we could use you on the construction crew," and I'm like, too late. I'm into electronics, now, and I

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went and joined the small electronics crew, which had a CB store in town. One of the fellows on the radio crew had just written this book called the Big Dummies Guide to CB Radio and we caught the crest of the wave and it became a very hot seller. It was selling hundreds of thousands of copies and, so, they let him start the CB store as a way to make money for the Farm and I went to work installing CBs and I was still studying for my license. Stephen Skinner was the first one to get the license. Susan and I were still studying and I thought this would be a great way for me to get more experience. I was installing antennas on vehicles, radios. I was learning all the fundamentals and I did that for a while and, then, we weren't really making that good of money and the shop eventually closed down and the Florida farm needed a radio operator. It was getting winter and we thought, oh, that sounds kind of fun. Like, in Tennessee, they only gave the test for your license like every 6 months. In Florida, it was given every week. So, I thought, as soon as I'm ready, I'll go take my you know, I can go take my test. I had passed some of the tests. There are several levels and I went down there and passed the level that I needed to be able to get on the air and started getting on the radio and became their radio man but we didn't really like Florida that much. For one thing, the water tasted terrible and it was a real city trip. It was right outside of Miami in Homestead (?), Florida and just didn't like it. There was no grass. We had been teased with the fact that there was going to there was great grass down there because there was all kinds of Columbian coming through Florida but, when we got down there, the connection guy, whoever that was, was busted and things were real tight and there was hardly any pot and I wasn't real happy about that, either and, so, we got to come back up to Tennessee pretty soon after that. We found somebody else who wanted to come down to Florida for the warmth of the winter. We went back up and I went back on the radio crew and started, you know, learning more about repair and actual technical skills and we had radio times where you had to talk on the radio to the other farms. We rotated that around so that there was one main guy but different people would have schedules and, about that time, our friends, the Skinners, he got selected to go be on the Rainbow Warrior with Greenpeace and go on the campaigns. He was their radio man and, so, he left and, about that time, the Farm started getting involved in Guatemala with Plenty, you know, the earthquake. I suppose you heard that story and, when I went to the Kentucky farm, I said the whole reason I'm doing this is to prepare myself for going to the third world. I'm going to learn how to run smaller systems or manifest things outside of the big Tennessee Farm, you know. I wanted to learn some of those kinds of organizational skills and the Guatemala thing was starting and that looked really you know, of course, that was the cream thing to go do, right, and the radio license was a real ticket to go do exciting things. So, I got to go I started going on some cruiser runs as the radio man. Different little things would come up and, then, this we were the Farm was getting hooked up with the Native Americans, particularly up at Okwasasni(?) up in the northeast and a couple of their people came down to learn from our ambulance crew so they could have their own ambulance. Well, I was my job at that time was working for the medical crew. I repaired the CB radios that the midwives used. I had another fellow that was training me. We repaired medical equipment like the sterilization machines or simple things like microscope lights or the siren ambulance, inverters, which changed DC to regular AC electricity. We maintained the ambulance and all of its systems and I was learning a little EMT stuff at the same time because that was where we were based, out of the EMT shed. We had a 24-hour ambulance crew at the Farm and I was working out of there, so I started doing shifts. So, this opportunity came up. We sent an ambulance to a thing called the Longest Walk, which the Native Americans walked from California to Washington, D.C. in a form of

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protest and, as they came across the country, representatives from all the different tribes would join in. We went up in Pennsylvania, took an ambulance up. We brought up the two Native Americans that we had been training, plus we had one Native American that lived on the Farm who was an EMT and he went up and I went up as the only white guy from the Farm to help staff the ambulance, help them with radios. We got walkie-talkies set up for their organization and we had a scanner so we could listen to the police as they were monitoring us, flying helicopters over the Native American group. There got to be about 4,000 Native Americans and it was a, you know, fascinating experience.

**Q:** Now, where was this?

**A:** It was they left from California, going to D.C. We went up to Pennsylvania and met the group where they were encamped up there.

**Q:** Okay, so it was in that [unintelligible]?

**A:** And, so, there was like 6 weeks that I was with the walk, the Longest Walk, and, when we got to D.C., Stephen and a few more people came up and we were part of the main camp and there was demonstrations at the Washington Monument, the FBI building. We were setting up the PA so that they would have something, you know, to speak out of and that kind of thing and it was just a wonderful experience, met a lot of elders and, after we came back from that it was not very long after that that the radio man in Guatemala was starting a relationship with a woman down there and they decided it would be best for them to come back to Tennessee and decided if this relationship was going to go anywhere, rather than you know how emotional figuring out a new relationship can be well, we tried not to have that kind of thing happening in the middle of a project. So, they came back up and I got to go back down. My wife was a lab technician, which she learned here and, so, that was two skills that were very useful down there. A lab technician, which she checked all of our shit and made tried to keep us free of parasites, basically, as well as blood tests, hep tests and shots and that type of thing. There was another clinic lady down there that she worked with. I became the radio man.

**Q:** Did your kids go, too?

**A:** Yeah. They were 2 and 4 when we went down and we were fairly fortunate down there in that the group had just moved from this very poor, desolate town to a new village, which was vibrant and colorful and strong and we got to be a part of we stayed down there 2 years and we were with the crew that came back. We it just got too dangerous. People started coming to our house looking for sanctuary. The killings were just going up incredibly all over the place. They were just finding, you know, dozens of bodies where they would massacre villages or take people out in the night and, of course, you know, we were still ourselves, so we were smoking pot and doing mushrooms and it got increasingly dangerous to score and, of course, we didn't some of the there was a few farmers that had been growing for us and they got busted and it just started getting very paranoid. You were having bad dreams. We were going in government buildings constantly, which were the targets for bombs and attacks. There were road blocks everywhere and we just kind of all decided on this big mushroom trip that it was time to go home and, you know, it wasn't that bad that you couldn't you were afraid to walk to town or that you, you know, there were helicopters flying over the house every day. They were the gorillas were about 30 miles as the crow flies in the mountains from where we lived and there was quite

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a bit of army activity but we never, for the most part, felt personally threatened. We just felt like we were endangering people that worked for us or we didn't want to be in the wrong place at the wrong time and that it was just time to go. So, we came back to the Farm. This is in 1980 and I knew that it seemed like what the Farm needed was to make money because we were big on service industries and low on income. Our budget was about \$10,000 a week. At the best, we were bringing in four or \$6,000 a week. I went to work for back at the electronics crew. They had just started a company making Geiger counters. The fuzz buster had just come out, you know, that detects police radar. So, we were just forming in the beginning stages of the anti-nuclear movement. We made a couple of our engineer guys were, you know, some genius types came up with a thing called the Nuke Buster, which was a Geiger ... After I came back from Guatemala, I knew the Farm needed to make money and I'd always thought that my electronic skills were a path to the future as opposed to, say, carpentry or, you know, which was more labor intensive, you know, and some people on the electronics crew had designed a Geiger counter, which was we were thinking the anti-nuclear movement was going to be real strong and there would be a big market for this and we redesigned it, made it smaller, more streamlined, more attractive but found that there was no market in the anti-nuclear movement because people either didn't have money or the number of people who were paranoid enough about nuclear energy to go out and buy something that'd cost a couple hundred dollars were few. The people who needed it the labs, the nuclear industry weren't paranoid enough to realize that they needed it. So, the company was struggling. I was getting disillusioned with the company I was head of production at that time and the fellow who wrote the CB book, the book company said, "Look, find us another one of those. What's next?" So, he did some research and said satellite TV is next. They said, "Okay, here's some money." They took out a loan. "Write us a satellite TV book." So, he came back with a satellite dish and we were all going, "wow, this is neat. What's this," you know. So, we were out helping him tune it, you know, tune in the first satellites, and there on the TV, suddenly, is HBO and MTV and CNN and I was like, whoa, this is really neat, you know, 'cause we, you know, we start out there was no TVs. Then, we had a TV in the community kitchen and we'd watch Kung Fu because there was Lao-Tzu (?) and Buddhism translated into the western culture made platinal with judo and karate, right. So, we kind of got a kick. We'd all the whole Farm would go into the community kitchen or the canning tent and watch Kung Fu. So, then, we started getting into DC electricity. Instead of having kerosene lights, you would get a car battery and through one way or another you would charge this car battery and take it home or we had some systems where we'd have some wires run through the woods and you could charge a car battery at home and you'd use little car light bulbs for your lights in your house and it got you out of kerosene. It was brighter, safer. We'd already had some kerosene fires and, then, the second plus was, then, you could start to have little DC appliances and, so, I went home one time, worked for my folks and got enough money to buy a little black and white TV and, of course, that made us popular as a couple and we all started watching Saturday Night Live and Fridays and Roots came through, you know, and it became kind of one of the things for the households, you know. We'd clean up the kitchen after dinner and get the kids to bed and, then, we'd all gather together and watch Saturday Night Live or Hill Street Blues or some of the shows around that time. So, then, the Farm, at that time, installed its own cable system and we . . .

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**Q:** Was this after the changeover?

**A:** No. This was all before the changeover. And the cable system was mainly used to for Stephen to talk on Sundays and, then, we got into having a few of our own little shows. The teenagers would do little TV shows. I think they put the Super Bowl on at one time and, in between the Super Bowl, they'd have, you know, little skits and stuff or a newscast and, then, we got a VCR and we started scamming movies from here or there and playing movies on the system and, I don't know, I just I liked it [unintelligible] but the house that I was in was too far out in the woods and we didn't have cable and, so, I moved to a house that was further in on the Farm so I could have access to the Farm cable system so I could see movies and things 'cause, usually we got into trying to do it every weekend and, so, then, when we got the satellite dish, we hooked that up to the cable system and it just flashed me. I said people will buy this and, so, I said, how about I take the satellite dish and put it on a trailer and take it to the county fair and see if I can start selling these systems and I got the go ahead. The company said, "Yeah, go ahead and try it out," and went to the first county fair and there was a lot of interest. Didn't make any sales. Went to the next county fair it was about 2 weeks later and the fellow that had the local radio station was one of the DJs there and came up and said, "you know, we want a satellite dish to get these newscasts but there's a couple of other satellite dealers around but they don't know how to do it. Do you guys know how to do it?" We said, "Oh, yeah, sure, we can do that." Of course, we didn't have any idea really what he was talking about but we knew we could find out and we got on the phone and we started we got the 800 numbers to supply houses and said, "Tell us how to do this." And the guys, basically, said, "Here's what you need to do it." And we went back and said, "Here's what we need and it'll be \$6,000." And they said, "Okay, let's do it." And that was our first job and, then, right after that, we heard about this other guy who owned an auto parts store and we went over and we sold him a system for his home and, then, we said, "well, you know, motels that's one of the big things is having a satellite dish at your motel. So, let's call a Holiday Inn." And they said, "Yeah, we're very interested. Come talk to us." And, so, we went and they put the squeeze on us as far as how much money we wanted to make and how much they let us make but we knew that it'd be worth it for the prestige and the resumé and, so, that was basically, me and this other fellow who had been he'd been the head of the Geiger counter company it was called Solar Electronics at that time and he was being disillusioned, too, because it was he was the head salesman and it was a real hard sale all the time. So, he said, "I'm going to join the satellite company, you know. This looks like something that could be sold and I'll go sell it." We became partners with these three jobs and the satellite business just was at the beginning of the fad. It caught on like wildfire. We ended up having six guys working for us and we bought a van. We had two vans. We bought two new pickup trucks. We bought 2 new cars and it was just going hot and heavy but we were both still kind of young, inexperienced about business. He was a good salesman, not a real good money manager. We did \$500,000 gross our second year of business. At the end of that year, they had started to scramble the satellite signals and, suddenly, the industry was nose diving out from under us. We found that we sold to a higher in-clientele, you know, a higher priced system than we were able to get in our local area, so a lot of work was in Nashville. We were commuting to Nashville everyday. Our whole crew, our secretary, everybody was commuting. So, we were putting on thousands of miles, you know, and, at the end of that second year, even though we grossed \$500,000, we paid \$200,000 in salaries, we were \$70,000 in debt and with our income drastically going down and \$10,000 in immediate payables due and we were freaking out. We were going through different emotional

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things. We were getting tired of each other, getting on each other's nerves and he announced one day he was leaving and I said, "Wait a minute, wait a minute." We all sat down. We drew up a contract and, fortunately for me, a couple of the vehicles were in his name, some of the debt that we had was in credit card loans, a bank loan that was in his name and we were able to divide up the actual monetary debt fairly evenly. You know, the \$70,000 wasn't that bad because a lot of it was car payments, you know, we owed on all these cars and just starting the business, we weren't in really that bad of shape but it was still more than either one of us wanted to face and one of the kids that we trained up as our first trainees was in Florida making like \$50,000 a year working for somebody else. Meanwhile, the guys that trained him up are, you know, \$70,000 in debt and barely making \$20,000 a year. So, that kid was going to quit his job and he went to go take it. So, you know, for me, it was probably one of the best things that happened because, then, that put it all on my shoulders and I had to become more assertive and take responsibility more for the company and it was, you know, a hard several years and that was when the changeover happened was just before he left and when we, you know the year we'd ran the company one year before the changeover and we were paying money into the foundation or into the Farm for all the people that we had hired. Then, the changeover happened. So, fortunately, for me, I was already running a business in a cash flow situation. You know, I'd seen it coming enough that I had already set myself up like that, somewhat, as opposed to people who were still doing service industries and had nowhere to go and no idea what they were going to do. So, at the end of the second year, he left. I got lucky. I'd kept there was some inventory that I got to keep as well as taking on the debt and I was able to sell off some of the inventory and get the ten grand in debt paid off right away and, you know, it was a hard couple of years pulling myself back up. Basically, it was a one-man show. Sometimes, I'd have a helper and I started writing as a way to supplement my income. The fellow that wrote the CB book and the satellite book went on to become a writer for several magazines and he had a very lucrative contract for one magazine. So, at one of the trade shows, he introduced me to his editor and I said, "Look, this guy writes about it from theory. I'm the one in the field doing all the hands-on stuff. I can really write about it, you know." So, they tried me out and my first article they sent it back like 4 or 5 times and, then, after that, I started they never sent another back and I just started writing one article a month and it was an extra \$300 a month coming in and, then, it got to be 2 a month, then 3 a month and, then, I went to the trade show and I went to the other magazines to some of the other trade journals and said, "hey, I've been doing this writing. Would you be interested in a writer?" And they said, "Yes." And I started writing for more magazines as well as doing my satellite business. After doing that a couple of years and the satellite industry still kept going down and down as far as advertising revenues and that type thing, and one of the magazines said, "you know, we're going to change our focus to more of a video focus." And I said, "hey, no problem. I can write about video. Satellite is just video coming out of a certain box, you know." So, I went out and bought a camcorder and started writing about things that I was learning to do with the camcorder. I got lucky. One of the contractors on the Farm, a building contractor, had this contract to rebuild a log cabin for TBA and part of the contract stipulated that the whole project be documented in video as well as photos and I had learned some photography in taking pictures for my magazine articles. So, I got that subcontract and that helped me launch me in my video business. In the meantime, I started writing two articles a month for the video magazine and I got up to three articles a month for the video magazine. I started learning that you could make money in video and trying to do it more seriously. I would take the profits that I

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would make doing my satellite business and invest it in video equipment and, fortunately, I would get some rather large contracts sometimes and would make really good money and, then, I would just put it all back into this video business or buying, you know, computers and things like that. People used to make fun of me on the Farm because I had a computer a couple of years before I had a flush toilet.

**Q:** That is kind of funny.

**A:** I said that flush toilet is not going to make me a dime. So, anyway, I still write three articles a month for the video magazine. I do 2 to 3 articles a month for a satellite magazine. We do a couple of years ago, I stopped doing the satellite business altogether. I passed it on to another fellow here on the Farm who does it on the side, takes care of a few of my old clients. They still call me when they want service but we got lucky. We hooked up with one of the local towns. We now produce all the commercials for three of the local towns.

**Q:** Wow.

**A:** And, you know, one thing leads to another. You meet people. You make contacts. We make videos for other companies, industries. We have our own catalog videos that we market, some of which we produce, some of which are by other producers. About 2 years ago, I took on another fellow. We wanted to see if it was kind of a major hurdle to grow past supporting yourself and to be responsible for a whole nother person's income and it's worked and the company grew and, so, a couple of months ago we just took on a third person.

**Q:** Wow. Are these people that live at the Farm?

**A:** These were two guys that had moved back to the Farm. They had lived on the Farm in the old days and one fellow had been on a smaller city center when the Farm changeover happened and, so, he just stayed there and went through a divorce and decided to move back to the Farm. He had already been planning to move back to the Farm before the divorce and, then, that kind of kicked it into the next gear. The other fellow, his wife had got real sick on the Farm and felt like they needed a better environment a healthier environment so, they moved back in the late '70s. They left the Farm and, after being, basically alone out there for years and years, this looked very attractive and they just moved back a couple of months ago.

**Q:** Are you and your wife still together?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Wow. 'Cause you've been through a lot, haven't you?

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** A lot of moving around.

**A:** You know, we had two kids and both born here on the Farm. She got pregnant with the second kid while we were living on the Kentucky farm called the Green River farm.

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**Q:** Did you do home births both times?

**A:** We came back to Tennessee to have our second kid and . . .

**Q:** What was that experience like?

**A:** Oh, it was wonderful. It was truly a holy miracle and, you know, a spiritual, you know, touchstone in life. The first birthing we, basically, made love for 4 or 5 hours, you know, not with intercourse but making out and truly making love and, then, it was time for the baby to come out and, you know, it took, you know, an hour or so. I can't quite remember, you know. I'm sure she has a little better memory of how long it took. To me, it was just, you know, I was just gassed, totally gassed and, then, the second one, we made love the night before and, then, the next morning she woke up and had the baby about 2 hours later and the midwives told her what a great baby-haver she was and my son's 21, now. He's going to MTSU, Murphysboro State. He's majoring in audio recording engineering and, when he was 16, I got him a mixing board. When he was 15, we started a rock-n-roll band with him and some of his friends and he took to music and, so, I got him the mixing his own little four-track where he could do his own audio recording. In his senior year, he mostly did home schooling and worked with his fourtrack a lot and, then, went to college to major in that. Our daughter's 19. She's done some college. She's living in Nashville. She's been working in a day care center. She still can't decide what she really wants to do. She's interested in physical therapy, alternative healings. She worked in a health food store for a few months and everybody loved her and she said, "well, but I'm tired of this. I want to take care of kids." So, she went to work in a day care center for a few months and she just quit that. She just gave them her notice and they said, "Anytime you want to come back. If you want to come back part-time, anything you want to do, come back." She's just one of those kind of people.

**Q:** Would kids who grew up on the Farm tend to have more skills than kids who grow up outside the Farm because they've had so many different things to dabble in here?

**A:** Some do. What they have is a broader consciousness. They have a more world view. They're more politically aware. They're more spiritually aware. They're more culturally aware, you know, from a you know, they have just more of an understanding of native cultures, a real respect for the earth. When they were 16 and 18, we went back to Guatemala for 2 weeks so could go back and see our house and kind of to imprint a little deeper the experience, you know, instead of it being this real distant memory. It kind of just helped solidify their memories and, you know, we climbed a volcano together while we were down there and they got to see the native people and what real poverty is and, you know, how poverty and consciousness aren't necessarily separate. I mean, you know, here you're meeting regal people that have an energy that goes back, you know, thousands of years and, you know, some of the people that we made friends with were almost like kings and queens because they, you know, just stood so tall and erect and pure and they were able to spend some time and see what life looks like outside of the United States. I've been real fortunate because of the work that I do. My wife and I went to Nigeria for 3 months and I installed some satellite dishes over there and got to live with a Muslim family over there. Two years ago, I went to Russia to Belarus(?) and did I was the first person to video inside one of the former electronic it was a the main electronics manufacturing facility of the country of Belarus, which was completely owned by the Russian military and, now, what with Glasnost, they have to find

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new ways of generating an income. So, a fellow that I made videos for hired me to go over and document the manufacturing of integrated circuits over there. That was real interesting.

**Q:** Yeah, I bet. It seems like there's been a tremendous amount of creative energy at the Farm. There have been so many books and products and projects and you've been involved in a lot of that. Where did that creative energy come from?

**A:** Well, we were, in a sense, the cream of the '60s baby boom, you know. We were a lot of us were college educated, you know. I wasn't but I was still a product of, you know, a very good educational system. So, there was a real magnet of people that were drawn to, you know, to California and the Haight and, then, you transplanted that here. We were, you know, we were the white, educated, middle class kids and, so, we had a lot of opportunities, a lot of smart people and, then, just by being the kind of people that would take a chance, would drop out of society, would start this new thing. We tended to be free thinkers, self-motivators that translates into the '90s terms as entrepreneurs artists.

**Q:** Has life changed a lot for you since the changeover?

**A:** It was a very emotional time. It was a real hard thing, you know. I could still go into tears just thinking about it.

**Q:** Wow.

**A:** Because, you know, we just believed so strong and wanted it to work so much and there was no question that it wasn't working. People weren't getting operations they needed. You couldn't get shoes when you needed them for you or your kids. You weren't eating like you knew you should and there wasn't anyone who wasn't eating better 2 weeks after the changeover because you could go out and buy juice or fruit or vegetables. So, of course, life has changed, you know, immensely. We were living the year before the changeover when I was running my satellite business, we were living in a school bus. We had been living in one of the 40 person households and felt like we just needed something quieter so that we could focus on our family more. So, we moved into a 15 person household which, at that time, was a real relief and, then, we went the next step of living in a school bus outside of the house. It was like we didn't have our kitchen in the bus anymore but we just had our bedroom out there and it enabled us to go have quiet time with our family and things like that and we, eventually, as the changeover happened and people left, we moved into the house and, eventually, ended up living in the house as a single family but it, you know, it had been a tent and was fairly, fairly rough but, you know, we stayed warm and we ate well. We were happy. Our friends, the Skinners, were living in this house with another family. It had, at that point, been divided into 2 separate houses and one of the other families left and they invited us to move into the other side and it seemed like a way to get into a solid house. I'd had some plans to finish this other house that had been started and, then, when my partner left, I could no longer do that and, you know, right now, we shared a bathroom with the other family up until just a year ago. Actually, you know, a number of months less than a year ago. So, it's still been, you know, somewhat of a communal house. We have separate kitchens and separate living rooms. As I said, we shared the bathroom. We still share the dishwasher, I mean, the washer and the dryer. For a while, I had the microwave and they'd come over into our side of the house to use the microwave and, you know, we just have one set of stairs that goes up through the center of the house and their

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bedrooms are at one end of the hall and ours are at the other end of the hall and we're kind of godparents to each other's children. You know, being somewhat communal has had its advantages for us, you know. We fixed up the house very nice, put a new roof on it. We put siding on it, new windows, the driveway. We hauled in had 10 loads of topsoil hauled in and, you know, created a yard and all these costs are all split between the two families. We have one electric meter on the house and one propane tank that, you know, he keeps track of that and just tells us how much we owe and the kids kind of just you know, our kids are grown up, now, but they kind of just go back and forth their kids go back and forth. It's now that our kids are gone, they don't come over to our side quite as much as far as just . . .

**Q:** They have younger kids?

**A:** Yeah, their kids are really younger than ours and, you know, it depends on whether we're home or not.

**Q:** Yeah. Right.

**A:** When we're not home, you know, they come over and I have the satellite dish so they come over and watch TV on our side.

**Q:** You know, a lot of other hippies started communes in the late '60s, early '70s, and they didn't last but the Farm has lasted a tremendously long time. What has held it together?

**A:** Well, the land for one thing, you know. This is a major piece of land. It's 1,700 acres and we would go out and do all Farm days where everyone would have to go out and work for 1 or 2 days to make the land payment, you know, or maybe it would be a week to get the land payment together and got the first thousand acres paid off back in the '70s and, then, we had bought an additional 750 acres and we pretty much had it paid off but we had this \$400,000 debt at the time of the changeover and the reason the changeover happened was because we were afraid that one of those creditors was going to take us to court and attach the land and one of them being Vanderbilt Hospital. We didn't have insurance in the early days, you know, at all on the old Farm and we were living on about \$500 a year per person and, when somebody got hurt and, if you went to the hospital and you had that type of income, then, technically speaking, you were a welfare case or the government was supposed to cover somebody with that low of an income. Vanderbilt didn't give us the proper paperwork. They just charged us full retail because we were this big organization and we had somebody that fell out of a tree that was like thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars. People would come here to have their babies and, then, if there was a complication, we'd take them to the hospital. We got the bill and that added up to, you know, just one of the major bills and we were really concerned that they were going to take us to court. So, the changeover happened and, so, then, there was a real dedicated effort to pay off that debt. We paid it off in a couple of years and that set our land free and clear and, you know, there's kind of been a real vow to never encumber the land. You know, we've taken out small loans to do a road and things like that but, basically, we, you know, want to keep the land and that tie to the land goes through the people who are all over the country that no longer live here but feel part of this. So, that's one thing. The living experience of living with large groups of people. We were amateur psychologists all trying to analyze each other and do little, you know, chip away at the ego and that gave you a real

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bonding with a lot of people because, if you went through some type of heavy change, either yourself changing or somebody being real sick and someone taking care of them, there's just all you know, when you go through heavy things with people you become bonded with them and that really penetrates deep into, you know, our community and our extended community around the country and the world. The place, itself, is a very good place for children and there was a lot of people who stayed because they wanted to have a rural lifestyle and a safe place for their kids and, you know, the kids they grew up they weren't you know, I had seen a few places where you're the only person like you and, you know, it's hard to keep the kids vegetarian or for them to value our values because they're so immersed in the other culture, whereas here everyone they knew was a vegetarian, all their friends were vegetarian. Things like being a pacifist or not believing in going and being in the army, that was just a given and, so, it was a real reinforcement for values and, so, then, having a large enough group to where it was a town more than a commune also helped it survive because, just like I was talking about earlier where it's harder to live with 2 people, it's also harder to live with a small group of 15 or 30 people than it is with 100 people because you may not get along with all 100 people but you'll have 5 or 10 that are your best buddies. You'll have 20, 30, 50 that are your real that are, you know, friendly acquaintances that, if you were going to have a party, they're who you'd call up and, then, the rest are you'll still party with them and have a good time, you know, but you're just maybe you have some they don't see eye to eye on everything or something. You know, over the years, we've got our clicks and our personal problems or internal politics that fester in different ways, you know, but still, you know, you can have a pretty good size party with a couple hundred people.

**Q:** How do you feel about your life looking back over the past twenty-some years that you've been involved with the Farm?

**A:** I really wouldn't do anything different for the most part, you know. I certainly wouldn't not do the Farm again. I don't miss not having gone to college, you know, certain level proud of not having gone to college. We used to say that college was like a playpen, extended adolescence because, you know, you're really you're 20 years old and you're still going to school and you're parents are supporting you, you know. It's unfortunate, in a sense, that the society is so based on that you have to have those licenses and tickets and, you know, I wouldn't discourage my children or someone from going to college to get those in order to be able to do what you want to do. You know, I'm heavily involved in a lot of different things on the Farm, now. I'm on the Board of Directors. I just got re-elected for a second term. I organize the annual family reunion, called Ragweed Day or 7-11.

**Q:** What does 7-11 mean?

**A:** 7-11 is the 11th day of July when the police raided us back in 1980.

**Q:** Yeah, I'd heard the name Ragweed Day. I just hadn't heard 7-11.

**A:** 7-11 is just a more non-descript way of describing it. I don't know, what else you got?

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**Q:** Well, just as a final question, I guess, do you see yourself growing old here?

**A:** I'd like to travel. It's a little bit more difficult now that I own a business. It's not like I can just leave it and come back, necessarily, and it'll all be here waiting for me. So, that's made things difficult. If my wife and I could do what we'd really like to do, we'd like to go back and live in the third world.

**Q:** Really?

**A:** We're just, you know America is, basically, pretty spoiled, pretty gross. It thinks it's the center of the universe and, you know, I don't really care about O.J. and Michael Jackson and all that stuff and it's so refreshing to get out of that once in a while. You know, we'd like to be able to help other people. The people are just so much more real. At the same time, you know, we're used to a certain level of lifestyle and technology and, you know, video, computers. It might be difficult to do that type of work elsewhere. We'll just kind of see what happens, you know. We're definitely setting it up as a retirement, you know, where we plan to live out our lives as far as we have our house, we have our land, we have our garden. Those are the kind of things that, you know, rather we don't have a lot of money set aside for retirement but we have our rototiller and we have our garden and we're trying to have our health and that type of thing. That's the kind of ways we're planning for retirement right now. You know, we hope to put some money away. She just graduated as an RN and works in one of the local hospitals in a birthing center right now, part-time.

**Q:** So, has she done midwifery all along?

**A:** She's one of the midwives.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** She after we came back from Guatemala, she began training. The baby boom was over on the Farm so she didn't get to go through the hundreds of babies. So, it's been kind of a slower learning process for her but she's a good midwife. A lot of the ladies ask for her. She's a real healing type person. I've probably talked a lot about myself and not enough about . . .

**Q:** That's okay. Does getting her RN, does that help her in her midwifery, not abilities, but legally, I guess?

**A:** No, not yet.

**Q:** No. Okay.

**A:** You know, if she decides to become a certified nurse midwife, it will help, then, in that she'll have some of that stuff out of the way. Actually, once you get under the confines of the AMA, it limits you, as opposed to being a lay midwife.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** And, you know, of course, the hospitals are still missing the point on, you know, they're not they're only scratching the surface as far as what a true spiritual birth is all about and respecting, you know, the birth energy but, you know, you have to start somewhere and she got the you know, we got the RN

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Interviewer: Deborah Altus

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license so that we could help put our kids through school. She'd have access to a job if anything ever happened to me. She'd have a good income, you know, that type thing.

**Q:** Yeah, real practical reasons, yeah, yeah. Well, thank you very much.

**A:** Sure.

**Q:** This has been great.