

Interview with Lucy Horton

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

June 25, 1996

**Q:** Today's Tuesday, June 25th, right? Lucy Horton is giving me a slide show of Frog Run.

**A:** This is, the house is at, the first summer when we bought it, the people who lived there were actually my cousin, and her then husband. But, it added a nice romantic touch to the picture, and our land did extend to this beautiful, beautiful river, the Clyde River, which runs North. But, what you can't really see is that there's a highway that went right, we were on a public highway, it was right along there. There's a wall below the house and that's right where the highway went. But, this picture cleverly removed that as all good tourist brochure photos should. And then that magnificent, but extremely ramshackled barn over there eventually was taken down, it's taken down in stages. But, that's the barn that Howard lived in, and that's the barn that McDonald lived in.

**Q:** It's a beautiful barn.

**A:** Yeah, it was a beautiful barn, it was just basically [unintelligible], and very slowly in stages it got torn down, and replaced, and that's our funky little house. We were happy.

**Q:** How many of you were living there?

**A:** Well, there was maybe 11 or 10 at the absolute tops.

**Q:** That's a lot for that little house.

**A:** Yeah, well it was bigger than it looked, it had basically four bedrooms on the second floor, a little room, that at one point was used as a bedroom on the first floor, though it had many other uses, and then the third floor got, in about '75, the third floor, the attic got turned into, the front part got fixed up and insulated, and turned into a very nice room. Then the back eventually also got more or less renovated a little, it was never as nice. But, there was room, what with couples and so forth, there was room. When I say 11, that's just a guess, but, the most we ever had living at the farm was 16, about some of them did live in the barn. This is a scene from nearby East Charleston. But, the thing that really held us all there was the magnificent beauty of the area. It was very special, it was deep, it was a very, very spiritual place. That little boy in the blue jeans, that's David, Robert and Mary Hurried's son. Who was the child that did live at Frog Run for his whole childhood. That little boy with him, I can't even remember who that is. There you can see the house in winter. As you can see, it really was a humble house, that woodshed had been added by Frogs, I'm not sure what year this is from, the house didn't go through a lot of changes, not like the barn.

**Q:** How did the community get the name "Frog Run"?

**A:** Well, the Frog Run is the last run of sap in the spring, where maple syrup comes from in the spring when you start to get thaws during the day, but it's still freezing at night, a sap rises in the maple trees and that's when trees are tapped. When they give forth their sap, and their will be a series of runs, depending on the weather. The first run, you get a very clear sap, and a very light clear syrup that's highly prized, although to the connoisseur, it's not as flavorful as darker syrup that comes later, but it's of the most commercial value, it's the great fancy. Then, with subsequent runs, the syrup gets darker, and the last run is the Frog Run, when the frogs are peeping, and the syrup you get from that run is very dark, almost like molasses, it doesn't get sold, but the farmer keeps it for his or her own family, and that's what we were named after. Although, most Vermonters didn't even know the phrase, it was a

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really old phrase, and they thought that we might have something to do with the French, because we were right near Canada, very near Quebec. Here's another picture of the barn when it was intact. It was such a beautiful setting, that majestic valley. Here's a scene looking across the valley at the hillside on the other side of the river. We just were so acquainted with that view, and saw it change every year, got through so many changes year after year. It was like a dear, dear friend. This is Robert Hurried, and here, I do have to raise this. We always laughed at his resemblance to Abraham Lincoln. Here he is with his daughter Susan, now this photo was recently run in the Washington Post, well a couple of years ago, they did an article about children who had grown up in communes, and where they were now, and they interviewed Susan Hurried. Did you see that article?

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

**A:** Where is that? I must have a copy of that somewhere, I'm trying to think where.

**Q:** What did she say?

**A:** Well, she said things that were very true, there were a lot of things that she didn't like about it, and found scary, she did feel her parents were being selfish, and they were, but that's another long story. Susan was never really comfortable, many children were, many children just loved it, but Susan wasn't one of them.

**Q:** But her brother was [unintelligible].

**A:** He was a lot younger and more adaptable. Susan had developed a very deep bond with her Grandmother, and David's deep bond was with Mary, so it was easier for Susan to leave. And, it had to do with the schools too, her Grandmother lived in a much better school district. That's a long complicated story though, I shouldn't, I don't know if we'd have time to really get into it. Anyway, here's a picture of Robert. This is another woman, and this woman, Chris Kerrington, was with us, she lived with us off and on for a long time, at the time this picture was taken, she's in the sugar house with the evaporator, skimming the boiling syrup. I don't think she even lived with us at that time, she lived nearby, and later she did live with us, and one comical thing that happened, it didn't really seem so comical at the time, but she picked some wild mushrooms, and a number of people looked at the mushrooms, and looked at the mushroom book, and they positively identified these as an edible species, but unfortunately, they were actually poisonous, and she cooked them, and a lot of us ate them. At the time, I was in the band actually, I was in the band for about a year, and we were rehearsing, and I came into the house, I was very preoccupied, and I saw these, I came into the house and I saw her with these mushrooms, and I saw them pouring over the book. Then, I came back in, and there were these fried mushrooms, so I ate some, and everybody that ate them got violently sick, but, luckily it wasn't a nerve poison, it was just the kind where you puke your guts out, I didn't feel right for about three days. But, what's so funny is that she's now the restaurant inspector for the whole three county area up there.

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**Q:** That is funny. Well, she knows what can go wrong.

**A:** That's right, she knows what can go wrong. She's a very smart, together person, it's just funny that the restaurant inspector almost poisoned us. Here's a picture, in the early days, it's true, cutting wood with a cross cut saw instead of a chainsaw.

**Q:** That was a lot of work.

**A:** Yeah, really there always was a chainsaw there, but of course, it's a lot of work to keep a chainsaw going, they break down, they have to be tinkered with, they have to be oiled, taken apart, put back together, people at Frog Run tended to not be very technological, not to be real whizzos with equipment or machinery. There's Johnny, there always were horses at Frog Run...

**Q:** Did you always farm with horses, or did you use a tractor.

**A:** Yeah, then we didn't have a tractor, and the horses got more or less phased out, but they were used. We started off, I guess it's kind of typical, trying to do everything the old way. Here's Martha, that you met, here she is, holding an old piece of farming equipment. I should know what this is. I'm not sure if that's a rake or a harrow. It's something that tosses the hay around. I guess that's a rake. One of our lovely Frogs who was a musician. The picture is slightly out of focus. I took it indoors at a slow speed, using natural light. My photographic skills were not honed in those days. He's making pottys. He had many things that he really wanted, he cared about, he had a real vision of growing strawberries, but his primary calling, was to be a musician. And there's me in my youth, I gave them a good laugh at my college reunion. Now, here's a group, this would be from '75. This was not everyone that lived there, out of these people, of the people in this picture, I'm in touch by e-mail with three of them on a regular basis. In touch by letter with two of them, and really totally out of touch with four of them, but that's pretty good odds. Now here's Steve our great character who later conducted numerous peace walks across the country, and he's crocheting a hat, and that cat is the mother of Brooks that still lives with us. These are two of our musicians, with David, the man on the left, Tom Ross, came to the farm to join the band, he was recruited by the band, he did enjoy living there, he was almost totally blind, it was a very interesting, different sort of person to live at the farm. He did do his day in the house, he was very good about it, he would do dishes, and he'd even cook a little, I think. He really took to the gregariousness, he's a gregarious person. He really took to having all that company around all the time. The woman on the right, Jill Wensor, it's a very interesting person, she went to college after she lived with us, during the time that she lived with us, she put herself through college at the University of Vermont, and became a music teacher, and later came back and lived at the farm, and worked as a teacher in the public schools, and now she's the South Carolina Arts Coordinator, she lives in Columbia, South Carolina, and I'm in touch with her by e-mail.

**Q:** Now, do you know what year the farm was bought?

**A:** Yeah, I do, it was bought in '72. This is Alexia, our beautiful Alexia who is now the graduate student in Anthropology here at Pittsburgh, and she did her graduate work on, it was Siberia, she went to live in Siberia, she spent a lot of time in Siberia studying women. I think it's funny that this kid who grew up in Vermont, thinks nothing of...

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**Q:** Going to Siberia.

**A:** Right. She's a tough kid. That's Sue, her Mother, is still one of our dearest and closest friends, it's been just so wonderful having Alexia here, she is leaving at the end of the summer, she and her boyfriend are off, on with the rest of their lives. They're going to go live in Cambridge, and she has a teaching job in the spring in Washington D.C., we just hope and pray that we can still be close, you know, that she'll live close enough that we can still see here. She's been such a, it's made this year in Pittsburgh really special, having Alexie in here, with that Frog spirit. Here's her Mom, Sue, modeling one of my earlier crochet designs. Although, I didn't stay with that design, although it did look good on her. Those sleeves were so awkward though, those big bell-shaped sleeves, but they do, they are a real nice 70's look. She had a beautiful figure. And this is Howard, when he was [unintelligible]. He joined the band, he had just graduated from Brookwood College of Jazz in Boston, and this is Mary and Polly, Polly Jerone. Judd Jerone's daughter, who lived with us from the age of thirteen on, and then Mary was one of the original founders of the farm. She was then Mary Hurried, and has now taken her maiden name back Mary [unintelligible].

**Q:** And, which one is Mary?

**A:** The one standing. Okay we have Paul Keffner who lived with us for a couple of years, feeding the cats, I'm not sure what, it looks like kibble, or a cookie maybe. There's just another scenic picture of the horses grazing on the hillside.

**Q:** So, did you have a lot of animals?

**A:** Not too many, there was a whole herd of cows, and there were chickens.

**Q:** And they were dairy cows?

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** So, gosh, you guys had to get up early in the morning then.

**A:** Not me.

**Q:** No, but somebody did.

**A:** Yeah, somebody did, I never got involved with the cows, they were sort of a business enterprise, and there was a group of dairy farmers, they built the cows from, they started with little calves, so it was a couple of years before the cows producing milk.

**Q:** That's a lot of work. You guys worked hard.

**A:** Yeah. That was, as I was saying before, we never had any rules, we never had any by-laws, we had no procedure to make people members, but it was a self-selecting process, because people that didn't want to work hard, weren't comfortable there. People that didn't share our basic values weren't comfortable there, so people that just didn't want to live there, that didn't fit in, there were very few exceptions.

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**Q:** And, what were your basic values?

**A:** Well, basic kind of environmental consciousness, and a basic non-authoritarian approach, and basically not religion, no religious doctrine. There were people there that were Christian, but they were very quiet about it, they were very, not, no one was proselytizing, not even, most people there didn't attend church at all, but there was definitely a deep spiritual connection to Vermont, to the land. That was the thing that really held people together.

**Q:** Was feminist consciousness a part of it?

**A:** I would say so. There always were women at Frog Run, unconventional women who wanted to do unconventional sort of work. That was very Frog Run. Although, I myself, wasn't really like that, although I really did enjoy the hitchhiking, I loved the mobility, but the kinds of work I liked to do, I always enjoyed cooking, and putting up food. I was kind of a specialist at canning and freezing, because, those were things that other people weren't so interested in, by in large. They did really interest me.

**Q:** Did you have to teach yourself, or did you already know how to can?

**A:** No, I had to learn everything. I learned from other people, I learned from books, I didn't know any of it. I had to learn it all. But, no one ever made me do the kinds of work I didn't want to do, but a lot of the women there, like Polly, that's Polly there with, I guess the other person is a blacksmith that used to come around to the farm and shoe the horses, but Polly loved to do all the farm work, and there were always women there that really enjoyed that. Now this is a funny story, this was one of our other cats, Fluff, and she had innumerable kittens, and I know we should have gotten her spayed, but people loved her kittens, and there was always a waiting list for them, we had not trouble finding homes for her kittens, so we really let her have all the kittens that she wanted to. And, she would usually go off, and find some out of the way spot to have her kittens, but one time, Polly's sister, Michelle, was visiting us, and she was just getting ready to leave, and Fluff jumped up on her lap, and started to have her kittens in Michelle's lap, so they went and got a towel, and Michelle just sat there, and let her have her kittens on her lap. It really was odd. She'd never done that before or after. Everyone just loved it, and here she is with her kittens. It's a great picture, really. Here's a group shot, we had just cleaned house, we had a big house cleaning, Mary, Lydia, Polly, and Me, [unintelligible]. Here's another picture from that similar period, the young woman on the left lived with us for one summer, we often did have summer visitors we actually advertised in community magazines, on several occasions, to find young people that wanted to spend the summer with us, and we did have quite a few who did. The others, the women on the right, Laurie, lived with us for a couple of years, although I think she might have come just as a summer...this picture's taken in early spring up in the woods, those beautiful green colors and the leaves are so small, and it's so sunny, it's so sunny in the woods, and later on, parts of the leaves get big. This is the new barn being built, whereas, part of the old barn still behind it, there was, the new barn was built before the old barn was completely taken down.

**Q:** And you guys did all that?

**A:** Yeah. It was amazing. Alexie, our dear Alexia is in this picture, she's wearing that red baseball cap. The woman on the far right, she was just there for the summer. The woman next to her never lived with us, but was a frequent visitor, the woman in the middle, that marvelous profile, lived with us for a

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couple of years, then later went back to college, went to Wellsley, and now she lives over in Washington State, somewhere in the San Juan Islands, I think. She's married, and her husband makes violin bows. They're about to take a sailboat to somewhere exotic, a friend just called me and told me that. This is Brooks the cat, she still lives with us, and she's going on 19. Oh, one thing about Frog Run is that we always had cats, but we never had dogs, the cat was a rule of Robert's, and we kept that rule, one of our few rules, because dogs can be a tremendous source of problems on the commune, and I think we really spared ourselves a lot of aggravation by not having dogs. But, what would happen, is people with dogs would come, and you'd get, and maybe you'd have one initial dog, and then people would come and they'd bring their dogs, and you'd end up with a dog pack. In the country, a dog pack is tremendously destructive, I mean a guaranteed way to alienate your neighbors.

**Q:** Farmers would shoot them.

**A:** Yeah, that did happen, dogs from Mad Brook were shot, and very hard feelings about it. Yeah, so we opted out of all that by not having dogs.

**Q:** Now, Mad Brook was a commune nearby?

**A:** Yeah, it was a community really, people there pretty much lived separately, although they had a bond with each other, which no one really ever understood except them, a lot of them went way way back, they'd grown up together in Connecticut, but they were just complex, interesting people, a lot of them had substance abuse problems, more alcohol, more than anything else, not really illicit drugs. But, they were very bright, talented people, and we're gone and they're still there, it's ironic. They were very loose, a very loose association, very eccentric people, and had their own little houses, and it was a much easier arrangement. but, we were like, health freaks, compared to them. We were these hard working, clean living, you know, healthy types, so they were much more, they would have big parties, arrested for driving drunk, they were much more dissolute than us. Very bright, interesting people. Artists, a lot of them are artists, we did not attract the artist type so much, and this is Lydia who just got married, and we're in touch by e-mail. She lives in Ohio, now, and she had a wonderful greenhouse, wonderful plant person, she had these starter plants, and then a lot of geraniums, those were things she liked to grow, she liked to grow starter tomatoes, and geraniums, and she had a greenhouse in the top of the new barn. Here's some more of her plants. Horse, Mother and child, here. One of our wonderful German visitors, cuddling a cow, and he arranged a Frog Run reunion in Germany, this is one of the high points in my life, we had a book, the Frog Book, and people would sign it when they would visit. And, he went through this book, and got the names of all the Germans who had visited, and contacted them all, and invited them to a reunion at his parents' house in Germany, his parents were away, and he arranged this get together, and I went. And he got about seven people that came, it was a fabulous experience, they spoke English for my benefit, quite a bit, but then when they'd speak to each other, they'd speak in German, and we just had a wonderful, wonderful time, it was a great experience. None of them had known each other, they'd all come at different times, and they met at his house in Germany. And, here's Mary and the skill saw, involved in some project there, and Mary's many things, but now she's, after we sold the farm, she got back the most money, because she had put in the most money, and she went back to school and got a masters degree in social work, an MSW, and is now working as a counselor, she works primarily for the Southeast Asians, she works with victims [unintelligible]. And now she's started

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going to Croatia, on her job, they send her, she's going in July, she went in the spring to teach workshops to health professionals on how to work with victims of [portry?]. At the time this picture was taken, she was a dairy farmer, and she was volunteering with an agency in Newport that helped battered women. And here's just some spring flowers, and that wonderful light. And, here's Howard again.

**Q:** He looks different this time.

**A:** Yes, he does, this is after he had left the farm, but he would come and visit on a regular basis, and, always have a wonderful time there. Here's the milk house, on the right you can see a little sign that says "Habit Farmers Coop." That's because we were shipping milk, and we had a commercial dairy in Vermont that would pick up the milk, in this shed, that's the milk house. It's all, by law, things have to be done a certain way, and kept at certain temperatures, and they had a big steel tank in there in the sink, it was all kept sparkling clean, and that's Mary on the left holding Brooks, our cat. Here's a little herd of Jerseys, these are just little heifers, no they're not, I'm wrong, when I look at them, they look so young, they're a petite kind of cow, but they have those big udders, so those are actually milking cows. There am I, with my new car, my first car, a Reno Alliance, that was great, I didn't get my driver's license until I was 38. My parents gave me the money for the car, they just got sick of it.

**Q:** So this was long after your commune tour, then?

**A:** Yes, many years, this was, my commune tour was in 1971, this was 1983. This is another scene from nearby, East Charleston, we were very near a lake, a beautiful lake, we were near a number of lakes, but this is one of the more famous lakes, Willabee, just to get more of a feel of what really is ultra special about the area is it's [unintelligible] really.

**Q:** What was the nearest town to you?

**A:** Well, there was a tiny little village called East Charleston, that was just half a mile away, there was a store there, and a post office, and a gas pump, then the nearest town going east was Island Pond, it was about another six miles, to the West, there was a slightly bigger village of West Charleston, with about two stores in it, and then beyond that another five miles, Derby, and then, South of Derby four miles, was Newport, which was the city, and it had about 5,000 people.

**Q:** Now is this the part that they call the North...

**A:** The Northeast Kingdom. Here's Polly pushing a lawnmower, there was a manure spreader behind her. There's Mary. There's a hog being butchered, grisly work. Polly, Skye, and Mary in that picture. Here's a group shot, some interesting people in it. David, that grew up on the farm, he's on the left, he's gotten really tall, as you can see, towering over his Mother, and then another young man, Topher, that's Polly's younger brother, he's a very unusual person who never went to school, he'd always been home schooled, I don't even know if they had a formal curriculum for him, he was so brilliant, he just learned things without formal construction, I mean many things he knew nothing about. Like, I was shocked to find out he knew nothing about history, nothing. But, he knew all about lots of other.

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**Q:** Now this is Mardi and Judd Jerone's kid.

**A:** Yeah, they were just very unusual people, Topher lived with us for several years. I don't think he was really a good influence on David though, he kind of influenced David to drop out of school. But, he was such a sweet gentle person. Totally cooperative, loving cooperative person, very mature, in a lot of ways he was a good influence on David, in that way. He just didn't see the need for being in school, he had never been in school, but he had a tremendous capacity for self-discipline. It was just different with David.

**Q:** Do you know what's happened to him, to Topher?

**A:** Yeah, he lives in Washington state. He's in touch with a lot of people, he and I don't correspond, but he and Mary do. I'm not sure what kind of work he's doing, he did go to school, actually. He's had several jobs, I forget what Mary told me he's doing, it's something nice. It's something totally different from anything that he was involved in at the farm. That's Skye there, who was with Polly for years, but he and Polly are both with different mates now, and Skye actually has two children, and Polly children, by other people. Then there's a woman whose name I forget, who spent a summer with us, she was a graduate student in zoology, a very unusual person named Steve McCayrk, off and on for several years, very gentle person, very depressed person, he was so unhappy in the 20th century, he was really kind of like a reincarnated American Indian, and had a deep, deep feeling for their culture and their craft, but he used to, he would spend all winter making a pair of snowshoes, just doing it all by hand, every single net. You know, he trapped and fished, and I didn't really care for some of the things that he served, you know wildlife, but, he never slept in the house, he slept in a tepee, even in the summer. Oh, and then the woman on the far right, it was Jill, the one whose the Art Coordinator in South Carolina now, he slept in the tepee in the winter, all winter long, even when it was thirty below, he said he was allergic to houses.

**Q:** Did he have a woodstove in the tepee?

**A:** No, I don't think so, I think he had just a little fire. He would stay in the house during the day, and work on his crafts, and then in the summer he would go up and earn money, he worked at planting trees for a couple of years, but he was a very gently person, was just sort of sad all the time. But, we would all have fun, we'd all listen to Prairie Home Companion, he was a homebody, and I was a homebody, so I really appreciated him. There's Mary in the golden light of late afternoon, summer, watering plants. I got some money. My parents gave me some money, I didn't take much money from them for years, but they gave me the money to buy the car, and then they sold their house. They had a house that turned out to be worth a great deal. It had really appreciated, and they gave me some money, and I poured money into the farm. I just really thought, at the point when I got the money, was '85, '86, and it was really becoming a little shaky at the farm, people were starting to move away, and I just really didn't want to face reality, so I thought well, if I really fix up the house and make it really nice, maybe people won't leave, and so I put this money I inherited, I put \$12,000 into having a solarium built, a beautiful Lord and Birnum solarium on this funky old house, but this is a picture of the foundation of the solarium being poured. Here's the solarium.

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**Q:** Oh, it's beautiful.

**A:** Yeah, it was beautiful. This funky old house, this was absurd, but it was really special, it just made the house so much nicer. That's my knitting machine, see, I continued with the crochet business and added knitting to it, had a knitting machine, we used to dye the yarns, it was a lot of work. There was someone there, I think that was probably my friend Evelyn, and this would have been shortly before, this picture was taken after the farm was sold, in that last fall, and Evelyn came over, and helped me for days, she helped me organize my yarns, in preparation for moving. Here's a picture of the solarium when it was brand new, showing the snow piling up against it. This is a picture of the moon rising on a winter's evening.

**Q:** Why did things start to get shaky?

**A:** Because people were really moving on in their lives, heading into new relationships, wanting to do different things, it was just evolution, and the numbers had gradually declined, going from a peak of 16 in '74, down to just a handful in the mid 80's. But, here's a picture of the thermometer, it was 25 below. But that's not why people left, it was not because of the weather. Oh, and that's a cat door down below. Mary, this picture's badly out of focus, but this was taken from my window, in my room, there was an emergency where the chimney had to be cleaned, and it was probably thirty below, and Mary's out there on the roof. And this is a little girl on the left is Martha's daughter, Cory. They came to visit, they only came back a couple of times, but this would have been in '86, I think. No, maybe it was, yeah, I guess it was '86. That was the year the solarium was built. There's Howard, the last summer of '87. The last summer we lived at the farm, he came and spent the summer at the farm, part of the summer. He was going to enter Med School in the fall, and that's when we decided that it just made sense for me to have the [unintelligible]. That's when I told him I'd come cook for him. Here he is with a friend of ours who spent time in the area, never lived with us, but spent many nights with us, though. They were playing music, making music on the porch next to the solarium, and then this is what happens when your place is on the market, we'd come home, and there'd be this Cadillac in the driveway, and it was the realtor, and his license plate says "Sells". Here's the movers taking my things away, to go down to Virginia.

**Q:** So, did you lose a lot of money that you put into it?

**A:** No, I broke even. I just broke even, no one made it out, we had trouble selling the place. We didn't get a very good price for it. It took a long time to sell it, and finally someone made an offer, we kind of had to accept it. This is the last days, the last beautiful days at Frog Run. The cows had been sold, the farm was discontinued, the field was starting to grow up, because the cows grazing in it had kept it down.

**Q:** This is '87?

**A:** Yes, these were taken in the fall of '87, shortly before I left. There's such a bittersweet quality to them, the land, the valley, it still hadn't changed, and none of this meant anything to Ed, but it's so majestic, it's majestic and timeless. These are the last glimpses. And there's Brooks, and little did she know that a new life awaited her, and here she is at the apartment in Norfolk, where we first moved, and it was a very small apartment, but it was Howard's bachelor apartment, then we moved to a bigger

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place, but she just took right to it. And right behind her is this magnificent scratching post that I paid a guy \$50 to make. Cause you know, she always had all these places that she could scratch, and I just couldn't imagine bringing her to an apartment, so I brought this enormous scratch post for her. I finally got rid of that thing. That's the story. Thousands more slides, but these were just a small selection.

**Q:** Well, I'd love to hear some more about your commune cooking tour.

**A:** It was Robert's suggestion. But, I was just this little girl from New York City, and my experience of country living really consisted of the....I lived with them for the fall and winter, in their little, very primitive cabin in Vermont, which I was just crazy about.

**Q:** And this was when?

**A:** This was in 1970. I went up there in September of 1970, and I ended up staying and helping Robert with his book. Just, I just loved being there, I loved being there in Vermont, and I was really ready for a change, and I was young, you know, hardship meant nothing to me. So, Robert was the one that suggested that I write the commune cookbook, I told him I was writing a cookbook, and he said well, why don't you write a commune cookbook? At first the idea didn't appeal to me, but he said, well, I really felt when I was at these places, that they were really doing very interesting cooking, and you could really collect some great recipes. And I said, but how would I travel? I didn't drive, and driving was just not in my personal vision for myself, you know, I'd grown up in New York City, and I'd had, really just no, very little contact with cars, and never had driver's ed, the didn't offer it at my school, it was a private school, and I had no money. So, I just didn't even know now how I would travel, and he said, well, you hitchhike. And I said what?? I couldn't hitchhike. He said, well I did it. And here he is this big guy over 6 ft. tall. But, he said I did it, well you could do it. So I began to think about it, and the more I thought about it, the more I just got excited by the idea, and then the idea just became kind of an obsession, and I began to have a real vision for how I would do this. But, I didn't know, it was unclear to me, what steps I would actually take to make this happen, and I went back to New York City when we ran out of money in Vermont, and I did manage to, I stayed with my parents, I did manage to find a job working for, I just lucked into a job working for a woman who needed a maid for two months, a cook. She was a marvelous woman, she was an old New York aristocracy, but very down to earth in a lot of ways, she had just gone to, as women in her era did, she hadn't gone to college, she'd gone to a finishing school, and she would say this is my maid Lucy, she went to Brimmore. It was great, she'd introduce me to all her friends, and I had a little maid's uniform. I really enjoyed that job, it was a great job, and so I went out of town on a couple of weekends, I went sort of on a couple of trial runs to communes, I did go to a place in Woodstock, just for the day, I don't think I stayed over there, but they really didn't like me at all. I was, I remember I started telling some story, and I got carried away and I just went on and on about it. It involved a big drug bust in Vermont that I knew about, and finally one of them said to me, you talk more than any chick I ever met. Which, was not a compliment. Once I got really immersed in the experience, my whole response to things toned down and I became much more of a listener than, I didn't try to hold everyone spellbound with my tales. Initially my first attempts to go and collect recipes in communes were a little awkward, it was just really strange, I think I took a bus to Woodstock, I don't even remember, and sort of intruded on these people, but they were nice, and they gave me some recipes, actually a very good recipe that's in the cookbook for eggs. But, I still had no sense of what it would be

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like, to be on the road, and I just, I was young, I just had set it as a goal, and I just felt I was going to do it, and I did it. I actually got the money together. The job was just for two months and I saved almost all the money I made, and I got a neighbor of my parents offered to give me a ride to Vermont, they had a second home there, to spend the night with them, and then I would start hitchhiking from there, I wanted to go up and see Robert and Mary before I left. [side ends] I got a ride with the neighbor, we went up to Vermont, and I stayed overnight near Bradleboro, and the next day, they took me out to the road, and I started hitchhiking, and that was really the first time I'd ever hitchhiked, I think I'd hitchhiked once or twice very briefly, but this was the first time that I'd every really gone out there with a backpack. I got up to Derby in something like three rides. I had a wonderful time. I just knew that it was all going to work out. I spent the weekend with Robert and Mary and they took me up to the highway, and I hitchhiked to Montreal, and again, it just went great, I got great rides, and I think I flew to Chicago, and my brother lived there, and I was going to try to get a ride west from Chicago, but my brother was living with a woman, and I disliked her so much, I disliked the feeling in the household so much, that I couldn't stand being there, and I took another \$60 out of my precious store of money, and for \$60 I was able to buy a plane ticket to fly to Denver from Chicago. It seems amazing. I had met someone just before I left New York who lived in Boulder, and I called him from Chicago and asked him if I could spend the night at his apartment, and he said sure. I got out to Denver, and I said, well, how will I get out to Boulder from the airport. And he said just look for someone that looks like a real outdoorsman and ask them if they're going to Boulder. So, that's what I did, when I was at the baggage claim. I saw some big husky guy who was picking up a backpack, and I said excuse me, do you know how I would get to Boulder, and he said Oh, I'm driving there, I'll give you a ride. And it just went like that, the whole, for months it went like that, consistently. So, the next day, I stayed overnight in boulder, and the next day, I went down to a place where they said you could get a ride, and I got a ride all the way to California. It was with a really odd group of people and we didn't get along very well, and I really wasn't very compatible with them, and I didn't really thoroughly enjoy the ride, but it was a free ride, and it was all the way to California, about three days. Then, in California, I did have a place, I had an Uncle who was a doctor, and I did not, he was not my favorite relative, he was not a family favorite, he was a sort of narrow minded person in a lot of ways, but he had a family feeling, and he certainly allowed me to stay there, I also had some cousins that I hadn't met before, there was a daughter who was about my age, and she was great, I really enjoyed her, and so that was, and my Aunt I was more fond of than my Uncle, but they did provide a home base for me out there, which was nice, I stayed with them off and on a number of times, and was, and would write up my notes, and when I think about it, being so young and all, and having so little money, I never paid for accommodation anywhere, it was just not in my budget to even stay in a motel once. So, having that resource was really helpful, and I don't know if they ever really knew how grateful I was, probably not. And, they're both dead now, both my Aunt and my Uncle. But, they didn't, I don't know if they really liked my being there, but they sort of felt it was their duty, but my cousin and I, we really hit it off, although I haven't seen her in years, and then, but most of that time I was on the road, in California, I sort of made short trips in California, I made weekend trips, gathered a lot of material, names, places, and then, I just set out on a long, probably a month of traveling, where I went up to Oregon, I went to something like eleven communes in Oregon. Oregon was full of communes, then I had to, as I explained, there were very strict laws against hitchhiking in Washington State, so you kind of had to go, right across the state, you stand at the entrance, and get a ride all the way up to British

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Columbia, which I did, it really wasn't hard. I went, I know I was in Vancouver, and then went to Vancouver Island, and so many things happened, I couldn't even begin to describe them all. Howard and I were just back on Vancouver Island recently, and I was trying to remember some of the places that I went, and I really couldn't. But, it's probably in all those notes, in those notebooks. Yeah, there'd be directions to the places where I went.

**Q:** Did you have a favorite, or a place where you went where you would have like to stayed?

**A:** Yes, I had two favorites. One was a place in Oregon that Robert had stayed, spent a month at, called Magic Forest Farm, and I forget, what I can't remember is if that was really what it was called or if that was the name that Robert made up for it, and that I used in my cookbook. It could be that it's name is something totally different, because I just forget, I made up names for the places, and a lot of times, I have forgotten what the real name was. But, this place in Oregon, the Magic Forest Farm, they had made Robert really welcome there, and they had made me welcome. there were people there that I felt really close to, and that's where I met the woman who illustrated the cookbook, a very, very, beautiful, beautiful, woman, who I would love to be in touch with now, it would be funny if that was the artist that...I kind of think that her name was Judith Cullin, just sort of an ordinary name like that, although she made up a wonderful name for the book, Judith's Scents-o-Lay. Then there was another place, and that was in New Mexico, New Buffalo, it was the most beautiful building, it's still there, it's run as a bed and breakfast now, it was a beautiful pueblo, I really didn't know its history, I read something about it recently, it was built by sort of artists, and dreamers, it was just architecturally so beautiful, this beautiful pueblo built by hippies, and the people, it was kind of depopulated at that time, there'd been a whole commune there, but people had left, and there was lots of visitors there, but I don't know if there was anyone there at that time that really lived there, so it was kind of like a new wave coming in, and it was so tempting to think of living there, but I didn't know what I would do for a living, I don't know, it just couldn't have worked. But, it was beautiful there like it was beautiful in Vermont, there was a grandeur to the landscape that just grabbed you.

**Q:** The light is really interesting there too, isn't it? Yeah, a very beautiful quality to the light.

**A:** Yeah, I did take some photographs there, no, that's not true, my camera had been stolen, the one bad thing that happened on that trip, it was really a downer, is that my camera got stolen, it was out, in an unlocked vehicle, and we'd gone into some place where there was music and we came back out and the camera was gone. So, I wasn't able to take photographs there, that was so beautiful, I had to just accept it. Then when I got the advance for the book, the first thing I did was buy a new camera.

**Q:** How did you go about getting an advance? Did you just contact a lot of publishers?

**A:** No, no what had happened was, this wonderful thing that, with Raymond Succoloff, of the New York Times, who was at that time the food editor of the New York Times, he had replaced Craig Clairborne, although Craig Clairborne later came back, and Succoloff, actually I think he was fired, he was kind of an odd guy, but he's quite a well known writer, in fact, he's still writing cookbooks. And, he had been interviewed the talk of the town in the New Yorker and my Mother, while I was traveling, saw an article, in which he said that he wanted to write an article in The Times about commune cooking, cause he said, this is this whole new way of life, which is really based around food. Which is very true, it's a really

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accurate observation. So, my Mother wrote him, and told him, that her daughter was traveling and researching this very issue, but he did not respond to her letter, and when I got back, I mentioned this to Robert, he said you've got to get in touch with him right away, that could be your lucky break, this could be fantastic. So I did, I wrote him from Vermont, and he responded right away, he invited me down to New York, he was right on it, I got down there, and he had a photographer, and he had it all, you know, lined up, a serious interview, you know, I had sent him some recipes, and I had collected so many good recipes, and he could see that these were really good recipes, so he ran an article in The Times about me and what I'd done, with some of the recipes, and he said that I was currently looking for a publisher, and I did receive several offers on the basis of that, and Robert's agent agreed to be my agent, which was great, getting an agent. So, the advance I got was from Coward, McKan, and Gohegan, which had been Robert's publisher, and they had a whole, they worked d up a whole little, let's see, I used the advance to live on that winter back in Vermont with Robert and Mary and the kids, and I did all the cooking, and testing recipes all winter, and writing the book on an old, I rented a typewriter, from an office store, and then, it was published I guess it came out in the summer, or maybe the early fall, and they did, they arranged a whole little publicity tour for me, I didn't really go anywhere, just New York, and then a couple of things in Boston, but I was on some TV shows, I was with, I appeared on a show that was hosted by Joyce Brothers, actually, very briefly, she had a show of her own. I really didn't like her at all, she was so tense, just a tense person. It was probably, I think that it was she just wasn't comfortable on television, I'm sure that she couldn't have been that tense in private life. It just made her so nervous to be doing this TV thing, just you know, that people could actually be watching, I don't know if anyone was. But, yeah, I did occasionally, I ran into people various points, who had actually seen that show, but I don't know why anyone would want to. But, then most of the shows were much more local than that, and some radio. But, it was a very short little tour. Maybe a week, and then they didn't promote the book and it kind of died. At the same time, what they call The List, each, the publisher will have its list, and for each season, and that very same season, another book came out, which is still in print, the Vegetarian Epicure, so that kind of blew my book out of the water, I mean, every publisher wanted a vegetarian or a natural foods cookbook, so mine from Coward McCann, that was there offering, and then the Vegetarian Epicure, there were several others, I mean every publisher had a natural foods cookbook, and that was the one that really succeeded, mine was not.

**Q:** What I thought you were going to say is that Crescent Dragonwagon's came out at the same time...

**A:** Yeah, that came out just one season earlier, called Commune cooking, or The Commune Cookbook. That's why my book was called Country Commune Cooking, is because they didn't want cookbook in the title because there had just been a commune cookbook. And the editor kept pushing me to put in more text and fewer recipes, which broke my heart, because I had to eliminate so many recipes. Just broke my heart to do that, but she felt that would sell better, and it didn't sell, so it doesn't really matter. But, if I had a chance to do it again, I would just rewrite all the recipes, I would just really redo those recipes they're not the way, especially the way I cook any more, although, natural foods cooking was really new to me, I had to just learn it.

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**Q:** Because they focused on a lot of whole grains and whole wheat flour, and things like that.

**A:** Well, that part was good but it's that, there's, a lot of dairy, I would have less, some of them, they just don't have a subtle touch, I have more sophisticated you know, there are some awkward things. Well, with the cookbook, I didn't feel that I owned those recipes, those recipes had all been given to me and they were given to me by a wide variety of people, and I felt that each person that gave me a recipe, they were really trusting me, that I would not, that I would write a book that would not betray their ideals, and a lot of these people really took food seriously, and there were a number of people that really thought baking powder was bad for you, or baking soda that both baking powder and baking soda were bad for you. And, although not all the people that gave me recipes felt that way, enough of them did that I felt that I shouldn't use any in my cookbook, so all the baking recipes that were leavened, they were all leavened with yeast, and that was kind of awkward, things like carrot cake leaven with yeast, that's not the way I would do it now.

**Q:** No, I can't even imagine that.

**A:** Sweetened with honey, I mean these were people that really didn't use sugar, so there was no sugar in the book, either. So, the baked things kind of tended to be heavy. Although there are some that were awful good recipes too, there's one for a cheese pie that's an excellent recipe. I still make that one. But, yeah, I would redo those baking recipes. But, I mean, if I did it now, it would just be so different, I mean, I love to cook, it's sort of a hobby, and so if I redid the recipes now, it would be just to make them better recipes. But, in those days, really, that wasn't the point, the point was there was sort of, there was something spiritual involved, that really wasn't, I mean, I really tested almost all the recipes, there were a couple that I didn't test, like stir fry radish tops, which probably weren't very good, and goat, I didn't test the goat recipe, but, I did explain this in the description of the recipe, that this hadn't been tested, but..

**Q:** Were most of the recipes vegetarian?

**A:** Most were, not all, there was one little meat section, but I did test the recipes, but I'm so detached from it now, I wouldn't even remember who gave me those recipes, or why, but at the time, it was very special. That was the thing, it was so remarkable to me, about the whole trip, was that nobody ever said, well, why should I give you a recipe, what's in it for me, are you going to make any money on this? You know, they just said cool, that's a great idea, spread the word.

**Q:** Now, would you write before you went to these places, or would you just show up?

**A:** I don't think I wrote, I think I did initially, but then I quickly realized that you didn't have to. Then people kept telling me about places, when I was on the road, people would tell me about places. In communes, people would tell me about other communes, and also, even hitchhiking, I would get rides from people that would tell me about places, and it was just interesting looking at those notebooks, which I haven't looked at in years and years, I haven't looked at those notebooks since I wrote the book, but I just never felt I could throw anything away, that related to that experience.

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**Q:** I'm glad you didn't.

**A:** But, looking through it, I realized that there was just dozens of leads that I wasn't able to follow. People and places, there was states that I never even went to, but I have names written down, places written down, but obviously it was limited what I could do, I went up to Vancouver Island, and just little islands off the little strait, the Georgia Strait between Vancouver Island, and British Columbia. Some beautiful little islands there I stayed on, and then, came back down through Oregon, back down some fabulous places in far Northern California. Then back to the bay area, where I again stayed with my relatives I guess, for a little while, and my Uncle, then I was going to New Mexico, and then my Uncle, who was a doctor, insisted, paid for me to get gamma globulin shots.

**Q:** Why?

**A:** As a preventive against hepatitis. This was very wise, because actually, I was exposed to hepatitis, probably. I went to one commune, the Hog Farm, where they'd had hepatitis, because they didn't have good hygiene, and they had, they got their water from a irrigation ditch, and they were the last house on the ditch, and it was polluted water, and they didn't do things like, boil it. They had actually had an outbreak of hepatitis there. So, I could have potentially been exposed to it, so that was very wise of him, when I think about it, I really did appreciate it. I wish I could tell him that, but, being that he's dead, he got so right wing in his old age. Anyway...

**Q:** Was there a community that you particularly disliked? Or, had a bad experience at?

**A:** Well, yeah, there must have been. I'm sure there were, I'm sure there were places that I wasn't comfortable. But, it doesn't spring to mind.

**Q:** What ones, were...where you wouldn't want to live?

**A:** Oh, well, most of them I wouldn't have wanted to live. Even I, yeah, there definitely were places that I wouldn't have wanted to have lived. Well, the Hog Farm was awful. I stayed in a school bus there, one of their famous school buses, and it was really beyond funky. I had my sleeping bag, I always felt so safe because I had my sleeping bag, and no matter what, I could crawl inside it. Maybe it was a little smelly, but it was my smelly. I just, it was always warm. I just basically always felt secure because I had my sleeping bag, my down sleeping bag, although, it was not an expensive down sleeping bag, I've gotten better ones since then, but it was just my house.

**Q:** Now, you did this in the warm weather months?

**A:** Yeah, but still, it would be cold at night.

**Q:** Oh, yeah sure, especially at high elevation at Taos.

**A:** But, yeah, places where I wasn't...I don't...you know, I'm sure there were bad experiences, but I've blocked them out, because I don't remember them. I remember being, I'm thinking there must have been situations where it felt like I was intruding, I know, for example, well, one funny experience, sort of toward the end of the trip when I was heading back to Vermont, I was in, a van stopped for me, this was in New Mexico, heading toward Colorado, and the guy was picking up lots of hitchhikers, he had already picked up some, and then he picked up me, he was picking up every hitchhiker he saw, just loading them

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in. There was a young man, he was going to go into the army, and he just wanted to explore the army first, before he went into the army, and he kind of latched on to me, it was not sexual at all, he was more like a kid brother, and at first, I just really didn't want him doing this, I had just really been enjoying traveling solo, and he wanted to go East, he was a little nervous, he wasn't very experienced in life, he was a totally good sort of person, but, he had a really bad complexion, terrible acne, and I think he was shy. So, he just really attached himself to me, and said that he wanted to go East, maybe he just asked me if he could go East with me, I don't know, but, at any rate, I realize that I wasn't going to get rid of him. So, I just kind of relaxed about it, and then we ended up having wonderful adventures. We got picked up by some people that lived in a commune in Iowa, just heading East, probably somewhere in Nebraska, and they said we could stay with them, it was just a little farm house out in the middle of the corn in Iowa. I was really surprised, and I did get a nice recipe, and just some very nice people, I think we just stayed one night, and where I was headed to was a place I'd been told about, way at the beginning of the trip, someone had told me about a place way up in Northern Minnesota, so we headed up there, we ended up, we stayed in Minneapolis, someone gave us a ride, who let us stay at his house, and he gave us his waterbed to sleep on, you know, Walter and I, we were just buddies, sex was never thought of, so we just both slept on this waterbed, in our sleeping bags, and then, we hitchhiked on up to Northern Minnesota, it was really remote up there, and the one story that I remember from that, I just told Howard the story recently. I arrived with a woman, a really straight seeming woman, but you would get the most interesting rides, the rides were fabulous. She told me two stories that I've never forgotten, and one was how she quit smoking, she said because she'd been in a situation where they were snowed in, you know in Northern Minnesota, they were snowed in for several days, and they couldn't get out to the store to buy cigarettes, and she found herself down on her hands and knees, looking in the fireplace for butts, and that's when she realized that she had to quit, so that was her quitting smoking story, and I just, that one really stayed with me. Then the other one was that she'd gone to high school with Bob Dylan.

**Q:** Oh, that's right, he's from [unintelligible].

**A:** And I said, Oh what was he like? And she said, oh, we thought he was really weird.

**Q:** Somehow that's not surprising.

**A:** Somehow, it isn't, no. But, I was really impressed, someone that had gone to high school with Bob Dylan. Anyway, she gave us a ride, and we got some rides, but it was getting real sparse up there, we finally got to this place, and it was way out in some god forsaken place where there were just Pete farms, and all the names were Finnish. Have you been up in that area?

**Q:** Yeah, I have friends that live in the North Woods. It's real remote.

**A:** Real remote. We found this place, and there were people there, but they were about to leave, they were leaving in a few days, the place had been sold, they were moving to a British Honduras.

**Q:** A little warmer.

**A:** Yeah, a little warmer, they were counting the days. So, we spent the night, I don't know if I collected any recipes there, they were just mind blown that we had even made our way there. We went out the

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next morning and started hitchhiking, and nobody was on the road, and finally after an hour, along comes a car, and it was someone from the community. And, they just felt so sorry for us, and they said well, we're going to take you to Duluth, which was sixty miles, and we're going to go out and have pancakes, or something, you know, they made up some excuse.

**Q:** That was nice of them.

**A:** It was really nice. That was such a nice thing to do. We went up around into Canada. And of course, what's so funny, is that there's a huge Canadian city, just North of the border that I had never heard of, Thunder Bay, big city. It's just right up there, I mean, it's pretty big, it's got over 100,000, population, yeah and it's amazing, because I didn't know that it was there. But, that's what Canada is like, most of what there is to know about Canada, I don't know. So, we hitchhiked back around Canada, and down through Vermont.

**Q:** Did you stop at any communes in Canada?

**A:** Yes. Yes we did, I'd forgotten about that. We did stop at communes in Canada. There was one, maybe just one. A place called Killalou, which was North of Toronto, and that was beautiful, that was amazingly beautiful, it was sort of like Vermont. We were getting the fall coloring there. I remember very little about it, just that it was so beautiful. But, most of the communes, I didn't stay, I only stayed one night, there were some where I didn't, though, there were some where I stayed much longer, in California, and Oregon, and New Mexico, there were some where I stayed a good long time. But, a lot of them, I just stayed one night, and I would do some dishes. I would help cook and do dishes. Usually, I would bring some contribution, often I would bring cheese, I would buy cheese somewhere, then I would bring it as a gift. That was my standard gift, was cheese. I mean, I tried not to be just a taker. I've never really enjoyed gardening, which is odd, because, you know, I lived on the Farm for all those years, I always loved working with the food, but I never wanted to actually...weeding to me was a real chore. So, whereas people that visited us at Frog Run, a lot of them loved to garden, and for them it was just a real treat to be out there. I just didn't, I didn't want to get involved doing the kind of scut work around their places, and the only way to avoid it is to not stay. That's how I would feel sorry for visitors at our place, they just got worked to death, but they seemed to like it, there were some communes that I visited, where they just didn't have that work ethic, they said, you know, relax, lay back, take a sun bath, you don't have to work all the time. I did visit places, especially on the West Coast, where they were like that, but, anyway, the place at Killalou, I probably only stayed one night, maybe two. But, Walter was a real worker, he turned out to be a real asset, this guy that was traveling with me. Then, we went down to Vermont, we got down there late at night, just quite late at night, Mary and Robert were living in a tent, and the kids, the situation was really kind of desperate, but Mary said, she knew, it was the last night of September, I said that I would be back in September, and she just knew that I was going to make it. When she went to bed that night, she just knew that I would be there. It was great that Walter was there, really she couldn't keep up with the garden, the house was in a situation, it was just in a shambles, Robert was sick. So, the first thing that needed to be done was harvest the potatoes, so Walter and I did that, but they later froze that winter, it was too bad, and Robert had been trying to get rid of me, really. He was tired of me being around so much. Cause Mary and I were real buddy-buddy, and he was feeling...

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**Q:** A little left out?

**A:** Yeah, we were sort of forming an Anti-Robert, there was something to it. I think that's one reason that he suggested the commune cookbook, it was a good way to get rid of me. He even wrote me at one point, when I was in New Mexico, and said that I wouldn't be able to live there that winter, but when I got there, it was so obvious that they needed me, so I just stayed and helped, pitched in.

**Q:** And you lived in the tent that winter.

**A:** No, he did manage to finish the house. No, we couldn't have really lived in a tent. I mean, it was a desperate situation.

**Q:** Now, was this a different plot of land than Frog Run?

**A:** Yeah, it was land that they owned, had owned for many years, and then, the Frog Run land, they were already starting to look for it, Robert had gotten this idea, it was really Robert's idea to have a commune, and Mary would never have done anything that ambitious, she would have been really content to stay on their land and improve the house, but as it turned out, Mary was the one that really thrived in the commune setting, and Robert didn't, because he really wanted to be the boss, and do things his way. But, really the reason that he left was the marriage broke up, it was more of that than any other reason. But, it just was ironic that Mary was the one that thrived, and it just, through the years, she just grew so tremendously, spiritually, in terms of the skills, and the things that she learned, the ways that she opened up to people, she just grew tremendously from it. It was ironic, because it was all Robert's idea, and something Mary, she would never have promoted it, she just sort of went along with it, and it just turned out to be a really great learning path for her.

**Q:** Now, after your commune tour, I'm curious, did you develop any sort of theories about communes, or any particular strong views, after visiting so many of them?

**A:** No, not really, I just, I was not looking at it analytically.

**Q:** But, you were obviously not turned off, because you were willing to live at Frog Run.

**A:** Oh no, I wasn't turned off at all, I thought it was great. I mean, the things, you know, I was young, when you're young it doesn't bother you to live in squalor. It would bother me now. I was not, there certainly were tremendous conflicts, there were all sorts of conflicts, and I was no exception, I got in trouble with lots of people lots of times, I was not effortless to live with. There were all sorts of conflicts. I had to face things about myself. I had many painful lessons that I had to learn. But, I loved being, well, one thing, when I was quite young, when I was in high school, I fell in love with the books, The Alexandria Quartet, by Lawrence Durrell, they were a big best seller back in the early 60's. It was a quartet of books that he wrote. The first two were the best, Justine and Balthazar, and Justine in particular, I was just intoxicated with this book, and it described, well, it had a lot of sex and things in it, but what enchanted me about it, was that it was about a group of people, multi-national group of people, some British, some Egyptian, some Greek, some other nationalities, that all lived in Alexandria, and they all were involved with each other, in all sorts of ways, some sexual, some spiritual, there were plots and sub plots, but these people were all involved with each other, and the author just had this kind of grandiose vision of how they were all linked together in this cosmic way. That just fascinated me, the

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idea of people that weren't related by blood, and not married, but just linked, you know, with these connections, and these different patterns, these changing patterns, that within this circle of people, some would become lovers, and then they'd become lovers with others, and they'd, the relationships would evolve and change, but they'd just be linked. And, I just wanted to live that way, you know, I just wanted to live with people that I felt linked to. My own family, I mean, my brother and I didn't get along very well, my parents and I, we had tremendous conflicts, I was no attraction to my nuclear family at all. They were certainly a presence in my life, but I didn't want to live near them, but I wanted to live further, I wanted to get out of the nest big time. But, the idea of creating this new family, I never pictured marriage in my new future, I never pictured myself in an exclusive relationship like that. Just really didn't picture it at all, in fact it's been a huge surprise to me that I ever did get married, but I just wanted to live with people where we had deep relationships that were based on the comradeship of living in a shared place, and sharing, just sharing things, I didn't even know what those things would be, but it turned out a lot of it was sharing the Vermont experience, so once this commune started to evolve, I really felt comfortable there. I felt spiritually comfortable.

**Q:** If people hadn't started to leave in the 80's, do you think that you'd still be there?

**A:** Probably, rotting away, so I'm really glad that things worked out the way they did, but it was very painful and terrifying at first.

**Q:** To think of leaving?

**A:** Yeah, well, I didn't really, I hadn't worked out a real way to support myself. I was, my whole life was adapted to living in this situation where I had to put in very little money, and other people did lots of the work, so I was kind of sheltered and pampered in that life.

**Q:** It sounds like you did work pretty hard to though.

**A:** Oh, I did work hard. I did work hard, definitely. But, I didn't have a broad range of skills, I certainly couldn't have maintained a whole house by myself, although someone like Martha could have. I really had no, the way I made money was ridiculous. I crocheted and knitted clothing, dyeing the yarns myself, and I didn't just dye them. I didn't spin from fleece, but I had a spinning wheel I used daily, I would ply together different strands of yarn. I would dye yarns that were weaving yarns, fairly lightweight yarns, it was a tremendous amount of work, because first you have to make it into a skein, and then you dye it, and then you have to wind it up again into a ball, and then I would ply these together. Three, sometimes even four ply yarns, you know, that were dyed different colors, or slightly different shades. I would get some wonderful effects this way, but it was tremendously labor intensive. Before I got the car, going to craft fairs, I would hitchhike to craft fairs. I had a booth that I would ship it, then I would stay with people. I worked out a whole circle of friends that lived in the Washington D.C. area, that were basically hippies at heart, and I would stay with them, when I would do the shows. The craft fairs were great, I made, I had wonderful times doing the craft fairs. That was tremendous, I loved it, I met marvelous people that way. And, there were a lot of hippies doing the shows.

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**Q:** Would you make any money off of that?

**A:** Well, I would make hundreds of dollars, I probably made about \$6,000 a year. But, the thing is, I didn't pay taxes, I had no car, I didn't have any credit cards, my expenses were so minimal. I just put in \$35 a week at the farm, and that covered basic expenses, and then a lot of, a tremendous amount of what I made went back into the business, buying materials, and the booth fees, of course, were not inconsiderable. But, I never made enough to get ahead, I never really got a good set of slides done of my work, to get into better shows, I never really upgraded my booth. Then, once I got the car, then, that really made it inevitable that my whole lifestyle had to change, because my parents gave me the car, and they gave me some money to go with the car, but, it was not enough. It kicked my life into such a more expensive gear, that there was no way that I could have just, it kept going forever, just the way I was going. The car made me have to face reality. But, I gradually started to face reality a little better. But, before I had the car, I traveled so much. All through the 70's, I still hitchhiked a lot. I went out to California numerous times. I went to Alaska at one point.

**Q:** Wow, hitchhiking?

**A:** Yep. Well, we had friends. There was someone who lived at the farm right at the beginning, she didn't stay, but she had fallen in love with someone that she had met in Vermont, and they ended up moving to Alaska, and having kids, and they lived in Haines. I had very close friends that lived in San Francisco, the ones that I had been going to go live with them, but I went up to Vermont instead. I spent much time, a lot of time with them during the 70's. Months, I'd spend months with them, and then from there place, I went up to Alaska. I hitchhiked across Canada several times, there were many places that I didn't go, I never went back to New Mexico, but, I didn't stay home that much. I really was on the road every year, for part of the time. I just loved it. I went down to Tennessee, you know, to the Farm, although I didn't really like it very well there, then I started doing the craft fairs also, and as I say, I used to hitchhike to them, it was really nuts. I did get robbed on the way to a craft fair one time, it really was awful. I got a ride from the creepiest person, when I finally got out of the car, I was just so glad to get out, and he drove away with my pack, and a duffle bag that had my clothing, and also my inventory for the show. I had some inventory that I had shipped, so I did have about half my inventory, and I was able to do the show. Then a policeman actually got my stuff back for me. He tracked them down, a state trooper, tracked the guy down, it took them a month because I didn't get the license number quite right. I think I might have been one digit off on the license number, but from that information, he managed to track the guy down, the guy was driving a car registered to his Father-in-law, he turned out he was, I think he'd gotten the daughter pregnant, and they'd had a baby, and so he lived with the girl's parents, and they were sort of forced to put with him, and he was a complete, shiftless, ne'er-do-well, I mean he was just a complete parasite, and they hated having them there, but they didn't know what to do about it, because he was married to their daughter, this all came out, the policeman told me this whole story, you know, so the Father-in-law, you know, it was his car, and his son-in-law had robbed a hitchhiker. And, I didn't press charges, but my only gratification was thinking that, he must have really...

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**Q:** Gotten it at home.

**A:** Lost his meal ticket, I hope. I mean, the guy was just humiliated, the guy was a very respectable, he was a contractor or something, and here's the police, the police calling that his car has been used in the commission of a crime. Yeah, that was awful.

**Q:** It had a happy ending at least.

**A:** It did have a happy ending, it was a month later that the policeman called me in Vermont.

**Q:** Well, after that, were you scared to hitchhike?

**A:** No, I never was scared to hitchhike, I never was scared. I mean, I knew something bad could happen, but I did, I just basically, most people don't scare me. I'm not scared of people. But, the odds will catch up with you, I guess. Living in New York City was so scary to me, that nothing since then has really scared me.

**Q:** So, you were scared growing up in the city?

**A:** Well, yeah, well, so many awful things happened. We moved there when I was thirteen, and you know, men exposing themselves when you're fourteen, it's a really horrible experience. Even just the Puerto Rican men just standing around making kissy noises as you walked by, it was horrible for a young girl. Just, things that made me feel so awful in New York, and then I did get attacked once by some sort of sex pervert in New York. He followed me into my building. So, yeah, and just unpleasant experiences with people, that just seemed really disaffected, don't seem to really care, you know, hardened people in New York. The experiences that I had there were so unpleasant, that nothing has ever seemed so bad to me since. But, then, in the early 80's I started going to England. I went to England four times. I hitchhiked, and traveled by train, I would get rail passes. I stayed in some communes in England. They were really different. They were highly educated people who were very serious about it. They mostly had big old country manor houses that were all kind of run down.

**Q:** And freezing cold?

**A:** Freezing cold, yeah right.

**Q:** Did you go up into Scotland, too?

**A:** No, I did go to Edinburgh once, but just for the day. I didn't travel in Scotland. I was never there late enough. The only time I could really get away, well, I could have gotten away in the winter, but you know, you really wouldn't want to go to England in the winter, because they do have winter there. But, the time I could get away was spring, before my shows started. Because my shows started in late May. And then I would do shows in the summer and fall, and then I would be filling orders right up until Christmas, and I would always have some orders to fill in the winter, and then I would have to start preparing my inventory for the next year, so the only time I could get away was April, so that's when I would always go. But, on what little money I earned, I was able to do that.

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**Q:** And, you would just go by yourself?

**A:** Yeah, but I did know people in England, I had friends there, and then I got to know a lot of people there, people in England are just as friendly as here. So, that was great. But, as soon as I got the car, I was no longer able to go, I just couldn't run the car, and go take trips. It was a good trade off, I was ready for a change. It was a huge thrill to learn to drive. That was a thrill.

**Q:** You said you were 38, or something, when you got your driver's license?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Well, now do you miss communal living?

**A:** No, but I certainly do miss having close friends. Whenever we spend time with Alexia and her boyfriend, I get a little sense of that, because it's almost communal the way they live, with other graduate students. They're so relaxed, they're so unmaterialistic, they've got such a great outlook, and it's just so nice that they have friends, and we find it so difficult, establishing relationships with people, the older you get. It just really doesn't happen that much. We had some good friends in Rochester that we left, and then in Norfolk we had some very close friends, we had people we got to know when we were there, but we left there. And now, we really are planning to stay in Pittsburgh for at least a few years [tape ends]. Well one thing that I think is funny though, is our parents, one thing that's kind of unique about Howard and me, is we both have intact parents, two sets, and they're all in their 80's. This is really unusual, because at this point, most people, if you have a couple, you've lost at least one parent out of the four, and a lot of divorces, also. And they both live in very similar retirement communities, in fact, this is all coincidence, in fact, the retirement communities actually are related, they're both Quaker communities, one is in Baltimore, and one is in New Jersey, they are so happy, all four of them are so happy, oh my God, it's wonderful. They're very comfortable in this place, but they're not lonely. There's so many other people there, and they're all so friendly to each other, of course, they have their boundaries. But, my Mother is just thriving, she's almost lost her eyesight completely, and she's got very bad osteoporosis, and she's just this little things, but there are a lot of other little old ladies like this there too, so they don't really think anything about appearance, and she just is constantly meeting new people, and making new friends, and I just think it's so funny, because I'm not. I don't meet new people, and make new friends. I'm just so happy for them, but it's funny, because it's sort of like they're having an experience there, that feels to them like our experience at Frog Run felt to us, you know. So, it's maybe the best that lies ahead. Because, I think that is funny about Steven Gaskin planning a retirement community. Because we've thought about that, we only need to find the hippies retirement community. Because, it's a great way to live when you're that age, it's fantastic. Especially because Howard and I aren't going to have any kids to take care of us, you know, but, not that kids take care of you.

**Q:** Right, no guarantee, yeah.

**A:** No guarantee whatsoever, anyone who has kids for that reason...

**Q:** So, you'd consider doing it again when you're older?

**A:** Some form of it, but not, but then, we do like our creature comforts, and also, you do get kind of hooked on privacy, one thing that's funny, I find that I spend lots of time alone, and I've always been

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considered, I think, a very gregarious person, but I actually to enjoy, have come to enjoy spending long periods alone. When Howard and I are together, we don't talk, we read, or I watch T.V. with headphones on, and he listens to music with headphones on, and you know, and when I was at Frog Run, we were always interacting, which was great. But, I always had my own room, we always had our own rooms, but it was just funny, in one way it was funny to live in a place where right in your house, there was a public room, because this is our house, and every part of this house, is our house, I mean, so we can go to any room, and it's our house, but, at Frog Run, there was your own room, and then there were public rooms, it was almost like dormitory living in that way, of course, I had been very happy living in a dorm, so that, I mean, none of it bothered, I loved it, but now, the very idea that there'd be a public room, is too weird.

**Q:** Even though you did it for what...fifteen years?

**A:** Yeah, right, but now, a person does change. And then being in this couple is different, it really does change things, the whole time I lived at Frog Run, I was never in a couple relationship.

**Q:** Do you think it's hard to be in a couple in a community?

**A:** I think so, I did see people struggle with that, although, we had some very successful couples at Frog Run. There weren't that many, there were some very classic couples at Frog Run, Polly and Skye were a classic couple, Marry and Lydia were a classic couple, well, other couples, well, Martha and MacDonald left shortly after they became a couple, it really was incompatible with their goals. The classic couples didn't have children, they didn't, that wasn't their aim in being a couple. Yeah, there were some heartbreaks. The time that there was any friction at Frog Run, or terrible scenes, it was always because of a love triangle, although, it didn't happen very much, really, but I may be forgetting things. And the other thing is that a lot of things went on their that I didn't even know about, things I wasn't even involved in, although I was there all the time, except, I did travel a lot, but when I was there, I was really there, I was always around the house. I would either work in the house, or I would be doing my work around the house, the crochet and all the different things that had to do with that.

**Q:** Now, fifteen years is really a long time for a commune from that era, any idea what kept it going for so long when so many others kind of crashed and burned?

**A:** No, I'm not really sure, except that marvelous people lived there, people with real staying power lived there. It's true though, I don't really know, I don't really know why. I think, I was one factor in it, definitely one of the, and Mary was, there were enough of us there that were really comfortable and happy with the situation, to me, it was great, it really met my needs, I really didn't want to be, I didn't really want anything else. Well, I loved living with Mary, she always was and always will be just my absolute favorite most dearest, dearest friend, and to live with her all those years, that was just great, I just loved that. So, to me, that was a really special thing, and I just wouldn't have considered leaving.

**Q:** So, would you say that the best part were the friendships?

**A:** Yeah, I think so, although hey weren't without, oh God, Mary and I had some awful fights, I learned a lot from that, how you can love someone and fight with them, and still love them. And then raising kids

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there, having raised David, that was an amazing experience, but, I don't know why we were so lucky to last that long, except that there were just some really first rate people there.

**Q:** Would everybody take part, would all the adults take part in child rearing?

**A:** Not really, no. There were people that never really got involved with David at all. But, most people had some involvement with him, but we all really, you know, felt, well it was kind of a sensitive area Mary, especially cause her daughter had left, but she was very much, people didn't really discipline David, of course, he didn't really need disciplining either, he was a very reasonable child, very rarely did he actually ever need disciplining, if he did, Mary really was the one to discipline them. Other people, well, no one would really hesitate to correct him, but no one ever struck him, there were never really any heavy scenes involving David. But, David was like that, he was a very easy going child, he would not have provoked a scene. He was not a defiant, or disruptive, or rebellious child, he was sort of passively rebellious. His rebellion was of a passive form. But, I do now wish, very much, that I had been more participatory in a lot of things with him growing up. The one thing, when I finally did get the car, and I was able to take him places, I was able to participate a little more, having the car, but I just, you know, it just didn't happen. There are many things about David that I do regret, I wish I had worked harder to try and inspire him to stay in school, but I don't think it would have been, I don't think I would have had any real effect, but he was such a sweet nice person, we all feel good about that.

**Q:** What was the downside, or the hardest part about living communally, for you?

**A:** Well, the downside...well, there were times when there were people there that I just couldn't stand, never a majority, but there certainly were conflicts, not a lot, I got along with most people, but there were some intense conflict sometimes. I did learn a lot about myself, I really wasn't crazy about everything that I learned. I did sense, well okay, the worst part for me, was that as the years went by, I really got tired of living at such a low standard of living, and I wanted to upgrade it, and it was really hard. When I got that money, I really, as I say, I really poured a lot of it into the farm, I actually got paid for some major overhauls, like a flush toilet, I mean, it was clear we could never sell the farm with just an outhouse. Of course, I didn't want to sell the farm, but I found that maddening that people would oppose having a flush toilet, and yet also be thinking about selling the farm. It was hard struggling with other people attitudes, where I felt they were holding me back. I did feel that the house was neglected, and I wish people had made it more of a priority, making the house nicer, and not be so fixated on the farm. But, we were never cold, there was always a lot of effort put into the wood supply, and the stoves, that was good. I was never forced to live like Robert. I mean, who wants to live with Robert, he's always been that way, he's just always lived in the worst squalor that you can imagine.

**Q:** I could not believe how cold his house was, I mean, I went to bed under all these blankets, and I think I even put my clothes on, and I was still freezing.

**A:** Yeah, you need a hot water bottle, that's the only way. I used to use a hot water bottle. He's just like that. I had the funniest experience with Robert once, where at the time the farm, it really took more than a year for the farm to break up, and before Howard and I got together, Robert was just a real old friend of mine, but he cast his eye upon me, and he was between women at this time, and the thought went through his brain, well, there's Lucy, never really thought of her in that light, but she'd make a

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good woman. So, I was going to go over to his house, to talk about, he was going to help me figure out, I didn't think that I was going to get enough money out of the sale of the farm, because I had just poured all this money into it, and we did not agree, there was no agreement, we had some serious conflicts, there was no agreement that I deserved to get that money back. The general thinking was that was just tough, you know, there were five people that were the obvious people that were still around, that had put the most money into the farm, and that would be the ones to divide the proceeds, they're thinking was tough, if I was that stupid, I wasn't going to get extra money back for it. You know, there was two ways to look at it, and they were right in some ways, I didn't really give them the due credit for what they put into building barn, and for improvements on the land, and so we did have a lot of conflict, what happened eventually, is that I really backed down, and I'm really glad I did, because we parted extremely amicably, and we're still friends, and if I'd really held out, I could have gotten more money, but it would have been at the price of those friendships, and they're priceless really. So, anyway, Robert was going to advise me, and I went over to his house, and he said that he would give me dinner, and so I brought some chips and dip you know, and I got to his house, and there was no food in sight, and I put out the chips and the salsa, and we drank some whiskey, and we ate the chips and the salsa, and then they were all gone, and I said well, Robert, what about dinner. And he said, well, I've got some meat in the freezer.

**Q:** He expected you to cook it?

**A:** Yeah, and it was frozen solid. I said, that's okay Robert, why don't you just go tot bed, and I'm going to go home now, and I thought, well, that was it, he wanted a cook. He invites me to come for dinner, and he wants me to cook it, and he doesn't have any ingredients. So forget that. But, I always have been fond of Robert. He always does find women, too, I don't know how he does it, I don't know if he's still got he girlfriend he had, but there was a woman, Susan got married a few years ago, and she had a big fancy wedding.

**Q:** That's his daughter.

**A:** Yeah, and we all stayed in an inn in Connecticut, and Robert was there, and he had this new girlfriend that doesn't live with him, but I think she has a nice house, I think she lives in Plainfield.

**Q:** I think he mentioned that when I was there.

**A:** She was a perfectly nice woman, I just can't imagine what he was doing with him, but the thing is, he didn't try to live with him. But people at Frog Run weren't like that, it was always warm. It was cold, it was a cold house, but we always had warm fires, and I don't remember being cold, although, I know I was at times, but my memory is warm, and being cozy, and always being able to get up close to the stove, and wood heat is such a great kind of heat. And then I would sleep with a hot water bottle.

**Q:** Well, he just had a wood burning furnace in the basement, so I don't even think there was a wood stove.

**A:** So there was no way to get warm.

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**Q:** Yeah, it's not like you could stand next to the stove and heat up.

**A:** Yeah, that's awful. He's like that, and I don't know why he's like that. He seems relaxed, but in fact, he's a very driven person, he's a very complex person. But, I'm glad you had the experience of meeting him, he's very brilliant. He has a brilliant mind.

**Q:** Yeah, I was kind of intimidated during our interview. I don't know, I did feel a little bit that way, but he was very nice to me, made me feel right at home.

**A:** He's got beautiful eyes, but he's not living in the same plane of reality as the rest of us, that's a fact.

**Q:** Man, trying to farm up there in that land.

**A:** He's done it for so many years, too.

**Q:** And to making a living off that...

**A:** Mary's really angry at him, he just really has not contributed financially to the kids, not ever, never has. Always done this bogus stuff where he never made any money, which would be okay if you didn't have two kids, and now David has two kids, and now the pattern's repeating. He was actually married when they had the kids, they married very young, and had these two kids, and then split up. Isn't that awful? We were just shocked, he was 19, he's very involved with the kids, but he's following Robert's pattern, he's not really financially going anywhere. But he's just a sweet loving person.

**Q:** Are there things from your commune days that you bring forward in your life today, any routines, or patterns, or even just things you've learned, the skills you've learned?

**A:** That's a great question. Well, being of course oriented toward cooking natural foods is something that dates back to those days, although now it's very, the thinking of the time has caught up with that, you know, and replacing the four food groups with the pyramid, and that's really most like the way we ate, was based on grains and vegetables. So, that's been amusing to watch that become mainstream, and of course, once you've had those kind of experiences that really open you up, you could never really become too rigid, you could never engage in Rush Limbaugh type thinking, we'll always care about the environment, when you've lived in a beautiful place like Vermont, you will always care, because you just don't feel the world could afford to lose all that nature has to teach. It's really heartbreaking to think of the environment getting trashed, you could never really abandon those principles, I don't see how anyone could. Although, I think MacDonald has done so, according to Martha's sister he's kind of extremely right wing thinking. But, the times I've seen him, I've really steered away from discussing it, so I don't know, I don't really care to know. But, there is sort of a yearning there, sort of an unfulfilled yearning to have, to feel really close to a group of people, Howard and I both feel it, the way we live now is not our ideal way to live. It's very nice to be able to live at a higher standard living, and I do like having a nice house, and keeping it fairly decent, and not have other people come tramping into it, and mess it up. But, still, it's not our ideal. Our ideal would be to have more vital involvements with other people. Hopefully we'll find a balance.

**Q:** Have you ever heard of co housing?

**A:** No.

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**Q:** It's something from the Netherlands, started in the 1970's, I think in Denmark, and then it came to this country pretty recently, like within the last decade, but the whole idea, is that people have their own private space, like their own little house, or townhouse, but then there is a common, like a common house, where you have common meals, maybe like common daycare, something like that, it's supposed to be basically, a socialized neighborhood.

**A:** Oh, I'd love that, I'd really enjoy that.

**Q:** It just seems like it would suit your needs to have the community and then have the privacy, and keep your own dwelling as nice as you want to.

**A:** We don't even know our neighbors in this townhouse development. We know the people next door, a little, but it would be wonderful to have something like that transpire. When we go back to Vermont, which we try to do every summer, it is just wonderful to see our friends there. Not just ones that lived at Frog Run, but others that lived in the area.

**Q:** As a kind of final wrap-up question, this is kind of something that we ask everybody, and it's sort of a simplistic question, but I'll ask it anyway. Would you consider Frog Run a success or a failure?

**A:** Oh, a success, a tremendous success.

**Q:** So even though it did end...

**A:** Well, it evolved, it evolved out of existence, it was really time, I was sort of the last one to let go, but I did consider it a success. We went to a psychic, we had a wonderful reading with a psychic, in the last few months before it was, just as it was in the wrap-up phase, and she just put it into some kind of mystical perspective, about the paths we were going on, and she just predicted great things for each of us, and it was just all really reassuring, and she even said something so funny, because we had several cats, and I asked her, what about the cats? That was the part, the worst part about the farm breaking up was you know, the cats. Not that they minded being parted, I mean actually, Brooks actually loved being parted from the other cats, she's just thrived on being the only cat, but that was there home, and cats don't like to lose their home, I took Brooks, and Lydia took Fluff, and there were a couple sort of wilder outdoor cats, and Mary did take them to the next place they lived in the area, but they did end up having to leave them there when they moved to Boston. Mary's lover is named Mary also, but Mary I., she stayed at the farm, but never really lived there, but anyway, they ended up basically leaving those cats, and the people that moved in with kids, they ended up inheriting those cats, but apparently, it's worked out quite well, to everyone's relief, but this woman, Judith said the funniest thing, when I asked her about the cats, she said, in ancient Egypt, when the temple was dissolved, each priestess took a cat with her to her own home. It made me feel so much better. But, I always thought of Brooks as more of the magical spirit of Frog Run, continuing, so when she goes, that's going to be really the end for me, actually I can barely think about it, cause, I do feel that she carries a little bit of that Frog Run spirit in her, even though she detested the other cats, but she has a wonderful open attitude, she just always had lots of people, and lots of places to go to, and she never was weird. Yeah, so I'm really cherishing, and just trying to extend her life as much as I can, but you know, when it's time for her to go, that will just be sort of the end of the last little vestige of Frog Run, the people are, but not really, because people change, and cats don't really change that much. And that's really the difference, so she really is,

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in a lot of ways, the cat that lived at Frog Run, we're different people, we've changed so much, but she's still the same.

**Q:** Does she miss farm life? Being outdoors.

**A:** She loves being outdoors, so I let her go out. Everywhere we've lived, I've let her go out. She actually got into a little bit of trouble. She got into a fight, and I had to take her to the vet for treatment a couple of years ago, and she said, at her age? She was really surprised.

**Q:** I would think a country cat would have a hard time adapting to city life.

**A:** She's proved very adaptable, and we've moved so many times, and she just adapts.

**Q:** It sounds like you've adapted well too, cause I think it would be hard to be pretty isolated like you guys were up there, on the farm, and then come down to a place like Pittsburgh.

**A:** But, I was really ready for a change, and then, starting the photography business that I did in Virginia, and that was the hardest thing that I've tried to do. So, it just made everything that happened at the farm just pale by comparison. It was a tremendously hard thing to do.

**Q:** Just to learn how to start a business?

**A:** Well, to learn to be a good photographer. And, it's an extremely difficult kind of business to run, very difficult, very competitive, people treat you like absolute dirt, my crochet customers never treated me the way that my photography customers do. I dealt with a very high class of customer with the crochet, but with the photography, not.

**Q:** So you're glad to be out of it?

**A:** Yeah, sort of, if I had a little more drive to make it be more of what I envision, and people that are successful do, I mean, if I really had a vision in my mind, and I really only wanted to have customers that wanted sensitive portraits, say, and I could really experiment with lighting, and create really wonderful pictures. But, I really don't have the vision of myself as someone who could really make that happen, that could really attract those kind of customers, and have a clientele of those kind of customers, and get those customers to pay me actual money, I don't have a vision of that, I just have a vision of myself as someone that could just take any job that I'm offered, and do a passable, acceptable work. That's more of how I picture myself, just as someone who would take any job whatsoever, and just try to do an acceptable job, and every once in awhile, if I'm really lucky, I get to do something that I really like, and that's more my pictures, that other people drive the situations I don't really create it. That's just the way I am. I don't have a really powerful personality, where I feel like I can control, I don't have an overwhelming artist ego, you know, it's a strength and a weakness, I mean, if I did, I would have been much less likely to live successfully communally for all those years, and still feel close to the people I lived with, but I'd also be much more successful probably.

**Q:** Business-wise.

**A:** I'd make more money...

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**Q:** You might not be happier.

**A:** Maybe not, but I would be more self-actualized, I suppose. I've never really felt good about not being self supported, on the other hand, I was someone who could fit in, and live with other people, so that was my support. It was a trade-off. And you always see it, that whatever someone's greatest strength, is, it's also their greatest weakness. There's always that dualism in everyone.

**Q:** Well, should we call it a night?