Interview with Albert Bates
Interviewer: Geoph Kozeny
March 18, 1991

Q: It's Tuesday, March 18, 1991. This is Geoph Kozeny of the Community Catalyst Project cutting a tape with Albert Bates. He is a resident here at The Farm. He has collected a slide show that he has going in the background. This will be the narration. It is on the history of The Farm. Take it away, Albert.
A: Do we need to do a sound check or anything like that just to see if you're recording. I already did. Okay. This is actually from a slide show that I put together for the first time around 1987 for a class I was doing at the University of Southern Indiana on the history of The Farm. I called it "The Lost Kingdom of the Hippies." It was kind of a romantic view of The Farm. There's a certain amount of discussion just as a preface to all this. It is how do you look back at your history? There's a percentage of people who look back at the years spent on The Farm much the way many yuppies today look back at their youth in long hair and bell-bottoms in the Sixties, taking drugs and things. They do this with a certain amount of chagrin and remorse. There are people who dwell on the negative. They're almost embarrassed to admit that they were even part of all that. You have to recognize it for its positive strengths and what can be learned from it. Certainly, you can learn something from bad trips, but you can learn a lot more from the things that went well. What I would like to do is focus on the positive. I would like to say sure we were young, sure we had our foibles, sure we made mistakes, but all in all this was a heroic effort. It was a measure of heroism for all these kids to drop out of a system which had raised them through Sunday School, grade school, high school, college, the Army, business, and matriculation into various forms of Twentieth Century American culture. Suddenly they broke with that to launch out in this great adventure into the uncharted universe into the void not knowing how they would wind up. They didn't know if they were throwing away promising careers, all of their education, everything they had been trained to do. They were launching out into who knew where. It's also a measure of heroism if you look at Stephen Gaskin and the small crew who put the original thing together, the original crystal around which everything else grew. It was the seed around which everything else grew. That group was even more heroic because not only were they running against the tide of the times and the culture, they were also taking flak from within the counter-culture for having been organized. In an anarchic subculture they were organizers. They took flak for that. It would have been enormously easy for them to just throw up their hands and say, "Wow, man, you do your own thing and we'll do our own thing. We've had fun. Let's go on to the next thing.'' Instead, to hang in there and try to hold together something took an enormous amount of perseverance, strength, virtue, and a sense of where you stand in relationship to your life's destiny. I want to say from the outset that this is a talk about the lost kingdom of the hippies, which was something that was really great. Hopefully, it's something that can be recaptured and regained by every succeeding generation. I break it down into basically four different kinds of historical looks. There is the 1965 to 1970 period, the caravan period, and The Farm period on a broad base look at the counterculture. The 1965-1970 period was divided into outer influences and inner influences by way of bringing together the philosophy. What was the basis for this? The inner influences are anti-materialism, right livelihood, closeness to nature, unabashed openness, and mutual support. Those five elements I put as the credos of the hippies. What were the hippies? Originally the term was coined by columnist Herb Caan in San Francisco. It was a derogatory term. Herb Caan was using it as a derogatory term for young kids who hung out with the old hipsters. The old jazz beatniks who were the Bohemians of the San Francisco scene who Herb Caan was kind of saying were part of the folk history. The hippies were kind of like these young kids who actually were quite a bit different from but emulated the beatniks. These kids were interested in psychedelics, marijuana, and rock music whereas the

beatniks were interested in amphetamines, tobacco, alcohol, uppers and downers, jazz, and folk music. There was a very distinct difference there. It did come out of this basic sense of antiestablishment, anti-materialism and a willingness to experiment not only with your job, education, and your relations with other people but at the very inner levels of how you consider yourself in relationship to nature and the universe. That period was marked by wild art and wild music. This is a poster from the period. It's kind of a gnostic mysticism, psychedelic era. Another poster from the Fillmore showing that hippies developed their own language, their own art, their own music, and dance. It was an expression of all of these other values. The outer influences which gave rise to a lot of these inner influences included the Vietnam war. We were in an era of intense conflict. It was breaking the country apart. It was time for re-examination. People talk about the war in the Middle East and compare that to the Vietnam War. The comparison would be there if the United States had come in on the side of Saddam Hussein and had been beaten by a tiny army of Kuwaities. That would be the comparison to the Vietnam War. It was tearing the U. S. apart to be in this odd moral position in Vietnam. Other outer influences would include music, drugs, and media. The popular media of the time were the major networks and goody goody movies, propaganda films and the ethical sub-culture, which included a lot of religious groups, protests against the war, civil rights groups, and other elements which were striving to raise the level of awareness and discussion in America. This slide shows a number of individuals who were spiritual teachers of the particular period in California that we're talking about. The fertile soil of this torment within America was attractive to religious leaders from around the world. So, pouring in from all corners of the globe were swamis, yogis, and Zen masters, and people who sensed the flowering of spiritual awareness in this young generation of Americans.

Q: Who was that?
A: I don't know all the names in the group. This is Stephen Gaskin on the far left--a young Stephen Gaskin. Swami Satchenanda, and Hiroshi. I'm not sure who. Yogi Bashan, Stephen Gaskin is the focus of the early part of this talk. He is the person around whom the early elements and creation of The Farm evolve. He was a professor at San Francisco State College teaching English under S.I. Hiakawa, the semanticist. He was interested in a variety of literary things. He came from a background of a country handyman's son who had tried his hand at raising chickens and inventing things and running various small enterprises and working in marinas and different things. Finally, Stephen had gone off and joined the Marine Corps. He got married overnight in Las Vegas, and then had it annulled. He ran off to Belize and hung out in the jungle for a while. He came back to San Francisco and finally got a job teaching English. He started seeing these hippies coming into his class. He was kind of intrigued with the whole lifestyle and the attitude. He wanted to find out more about it. He started investigating some of the scenes in the early San Francisco mid-sixties period. He started doing drugs with the hippies. He changed and went through this period of wearing long fringed deerskin vests and bells on his shoes. He dropped his job with the college for a while and worked at the Post Office. He moved into an old school bus, so he didn't have to pay rent. He started excursions on LSD reading the occult texts of the *I Ching* and Thoreau and various occult mysterious old tomes. Through that process he managed to synthesize a philosophy that was eclectic but encapsulated the spirit of the times in that it synthesized the different converging views of the hippies into something that could be considered a unified whole. This was in its essence religious. Stephen Gaskin went through three periods that we'll talk about--Monday Night Class,

the Caravan, and The Farm. Monday Night Class began as a series of talks that he did at the experimental college in San Francisco. This is a young Stephen Gaskin. He began holding some classes in the experimental college at San Francisco State with titles like, "North American White Witchcraft", "Einstein, Relativity and God", "Meta P.E." He would attract in all kinds of weird people from off the street who just wanted to come in and rap about whatever these particular subjects seem to suggest. Gradually the classes became much larger than he could handle there at the college, so they moved down to the Glive Memorial Church in the Haight and then to the Straight Theater. Then they were too big even for the Straight Theater so they moved to the largest scene that they could get which was the Family Dog Rock Hall down on the beach where every Monday night they would fill the hall with people chanting the Om, playing conchs and cow horns, beating cymbals. With Stephen as the focal point leading the discussions, they would talk about everything under the sun. Stephen said he initially approached these Monday nights with some fear and trepidation. He would always walk in through the crowd and sort of back up to the stage and sit on the edge of the stage. He wouldn't come in from behind and step out on the stage. The stage was really just a couple of tables put together about a foot and a half tall. He would just be a little bit above the crowd itself. He would only have a head or head and shoulders above the whole crowd. There would be a thousand to two thousand people every Monday night, so he would raise his voice to speak. He made a great effort to not distance himself from the people. What he really did in these talks was not so much channeling the information as channeling the energy. He created what came to be felt as a shared communion, a sense that you could, through your own strength and telepathy and good energy vibe together and, sense a tranquility of all of the shared mind of everyone. That energy was what was built up through the course of an hour of talking together to the point where everybody was so stoned, they could barely speak or think or talk. They just wanted to hang out in quiet which is what a lot of Monday night classes ended up doing--just sitting there quietly. Two thousand people, even the babies would be quiet. This is the caravan. It's a line of school buses that left San Francisco. What happened was that at Monday Night Class we had these preachers and teachers who had come together at some convention in San Francisco and had heard of Monday Night Class. They came down to the Family Dog on a Monday night to listen in. They were just absolutely amazed at what they heard. They said this guy needs to go out and talk around the country and speak to our peace groups and church groups and our universities, so Stephen was invited to go visit these different colleges. At that time, he was living in his school bus, and he said, "Fine, I'll just put the bus in gear and go." He announced that he was going to adjourn the class for the summer and go off on the road or for the winter rather, it was October when they left. A few people said, "Listen, we'd like to come along and watch these college and church gigs." Stephen said, "Well, sure, get yourself a bus and you can come along." When they left San Francisco, they had about fifty buses following along. It formed this caravan that stretched clear around the country. It took a year to circumnavigate the country. The caravan is really the point at which the community of The Farm evolved. Monday Night Classes were a community of sorts, but they were a community that came together on Monday nights only. As soon as Monday Night Class was over people drifted back to their private homes and their private jobs and their different ways of living. The caravan was a commitment to live together for a year on the road in adverse conditions where you had to negotiate with the police every night just to park. If you look back to the caravan you will see the emergence of the governance systems, the economic systems, the lines of communication, the control, intelligence, and leadership of The Farm all emerging

through the process of the caravan. It was a welding of the community that occurred on the road. One of the first things Stephen asked was for everyone in the caravan to paint the top of their bus or van white so it would all look like one thing. Of course, there was probably a fair number of vehicles that left at that point because they figured this guy was on some kind of trip, and they weren't going to get into uniform for anybody. Indeed, those who remained painted their buses white. A lot of them swore to these mandalas that were the central design of the Monday Night Class posters. It was a mandala put together by Michael McCarthy. It was kind of the early logo of the group. About three hundred people travelled on the caravan. The early drivers' meetings of the caravan occurred every morning before they left from one place to the next. They were the first form of governance of The Farm community. The drivers' meetings were where everybody would get together to sit around and talk about where they were going, where they would probably stop for lunch, what to do about a bus that was having trouble, could they pool some money to get some gasoline, was there work somewhere where they could go to get some money to make repairs or buy gas. Incidentally, at this time the price of gasoline was nineteen cents a gallon. They didn't have to think very long about finding work to get money to buy gas. The caravan travelled around the country talking at different places. Eventually it landed back in San Francisco. They couldn't find a place to park. It had grown too large. The people didn't want to split up and go back to their homes or anyplace else. They wanted to stay together. They really enjoyed each other. Stephen held one more Monday Night Class. It was actually a Sunday night class. It was out at Stinson Beach, I think, or Central Park, somewhere up by the coast. At that meeting he said, "We've become a community. We need to go find someplace where we can get it on with the dirt. We need good soil, healthy babies, and a chance to grow together. Let's go find a place where we can farm." The idea was to head back towards Tennessee because Tennessee was where they had found work on a cold day in the middle of winter. They knew some people there who were real friendly and had treated them good. So, they thought that was probably a good cheap place to get some farmland. Let's head back that general direction. This slide is showing The Farm from a considerable distance. It's a small blue planet on the edge of the solar system. As you get a little closer and begin to penetrate the clouds, there do appear to be some land masses cropping up among the oceans. Indeed, there are some continents emerging there. It looks like you can see some land forms, although from this altitude it doesn't look like it might be too easy to find a place to set down a large spaceship. Here's something emerging from the middle of this forest. This is a forest on a hillside in Tennessee. In the middle of this giant forested area there's this ridge top that appears to have been cleared for cattle farming. It has a road going right up through the middle of it, a dirt road. It apparently has some pasture land. If you circle around it you can come in a little closer and maybe even find a flat area in which to set something like this giant caravan of three hundred buses from outer space, the Haight Ashbury tent of California down in the middle of Lewis County, Tennessee. Whoops! Went through a little too fast on that. I have to break a little bit better. We'll back up to the road level here. Yes, these are the dirt roads that existed when The Farm first landed on the farm. The original settlers figured, "Well, listen, we're going back to the land. We're going to do everything with horses. Forget this machinery business. We're going straight back to horses. We're going to plow with horses. We're going to do everything with horses." I'm going to break this down into four distinct periods of The Farm as a community development. Those four periods are what I call The Upward Path 1971-1977, The Top of the Curve (which is probably comparable to the peak of Mayan civilization before it disappeared) 1978-1980 in our case, The Collapse (which was 1981-1985).

Since I don't have slides of the collapse you may have to remind me to talk about it. And Rebuilding when we actually went around and gathered up all of the archival material and slides and tried to figure out what the heck it was, we had just seen for the last ten years. Rebuilding began around 1986 and continues today. The Upward Path is broken down into two distinct periods-the Camping Out Period from 1971 to 1973. Everybody was still living in school buses, Army tents, and whatever makeshift shelters they could get together. Then there was the period of Expansion and Success from 1974 to 1977. These are the two parts of the Upward Path. When The Farm first settled, the initial landing zone was acquired in a music store in Nashville. They had been travelling around Tennessee. Going back over the FBI files of The Farm you can see that even before the caravan arrived back in Tennessee, word preceded it by about two weeks that it was coming. The local papers were filled with rumors that it was being financed by the bank of Hanoi, and it had carried all of these anarchist, drug fiends. It was going to land on you, Tennessee. There were rumors that there was this fellow who had sold land to the hippies up in some county in eastern Tennessee. Newspapers from Nashville all rushed out to interview that guy. He was a bulldozer operator. He said he didn't sell no farm to no hippies. He denied it. Then there were rumors that it was somewhere else. They all rushed off and couldn't find it there either. Some poor hippie was caught buying land down in Van Buren County. The local police took him into jail and shaved his head. They told him not to have anything to do with Gaskin or his people. This was before the caravan even arrived in Tennessee. When it finally got here, we did find a nice lady in a store in Nashville. Somebody went in to buy guitar picks. This lady was working behind the counter. She said we could have the farm that her daddy owned down in Lewis County in Summertown for a dollar a year. We could just park the caravan there. We went down and parked the caravan down on the Martin Farm. [INTERRUPTION.] Do you want me for something, or do you want to watch?
GIRL: Do you have any work for me to do?
A: Sit down and watch this. This is good work. I'll pay you a quarter.
GIRL: Are you sure? How long is this? Fifty cents.
A: Ten minutes.
GIRL: Fifty cents.
A: A quarter for ten minutes. Listen, this is a good deal for ten minutes. This is where The Farm first landed.

Q: On the Martin farm?
A: Blackjack oak and steep hollows. It was land too steep to farm. It was a dollar a year so we couldn't complain. What the heck anyway, you know? We didn't know nothing about farming. We figured farming was sitting around cutting firewood, smoking reefer, and plowing up the dirt. This is our view of Tennessee at that time. We figured, "Hey man, this is idyllic. We're getting back to nature." Of course, at the time we settled into The Farm …

Q: Where was that waterfall? Is it on the land?
A: That's Rattlesnake Falls nearby. That was a picture of two horses being welded together. Actually, it's a welder working on a wagon rig. What we learned as soon as we got to the Martin farm was that there was a feud going on between neighbors over access to this particular parcel of land. We were what one neighbor was doing to the other. [Laughter.]

Q: You mean she was friendly to you to get even with her neighbors?
A: Something like that. As soon as we got in the other neighbor closed off the road so we couldn't get back out. It wasn't until we got a couple of horses and built a sled to drag stuff in and out that we could get supplies in to the caravan from town. Fortunately, the caravan was strung out clear around America. There were still people who were making the first circuit back to San Francisco by the time we got to Tennessee. The late-comers had enough vehicles parked out by the road that we could use them to shuttle back and forth for laundry, food and water, and different things like that that we needed. Then we used the horses to drag stuff through the woods to where the buses were parked. The buses were all circled up down in this hollow. I have another slide that seems to be missing. It's of the buses all circled up in a hollow down in the middle of this big thousand acres of oak, Blackjack Oak, on steep slopes. We had been there about a year. We made it through the first winter. About seventy people came down with Hepatitis from drinking water out of a contaminated spring. Eventually we made it through and made friends with the neighbors. We worked in the local sawmill. Some land opened up down the road that was just beautiful. It had the source of two creeks on it and had lots of springs. It had beautiful farmland--seven hundred acres cleared and ready to farm at only seventy dollars an acre. We went down the road and bought that from Carl Smith. That was called Big Swan at that time. That is the name of the river that starts there.

Q: Do you know any of the photographers?
A: No, not a one. Mostly it would be Gerald Wheeler, Daniel Lunida, David Frowman, Lee Cohn, Clifford Shappell--those would be the main ones, but there's probably a lot of others. This is an early meeting of the farming crew of The Farm. It's almost funny to look at some of these people. This fellow right here is Richard McKinney.

Q: Third from the left.
A: He's right here with his wife, Marta. His wife, Marta, looks almost like a twelve-year-old. Richard is now head of one of the departments of finance in the state of Tennessee. This fellow here, David Wheeler, and his wife, Mary. Mary is now tie dye Mary. She makes tie dyes and has an enormous business in the central south. David is head of the Kutua province bioregion in North Caroline. He publishes the Kutua journal.

Q: That's a great magazine. He's fifth from the left.
A: Yes, he's the publisher, there on the left.

Q: The tallest guy in the picture.
A: He's leaning forward a little. Cynthia Holsapple is at this time Cynthia Cohen, married to Bernie Cohen. Bernie Cohen was one of the people who founded Solar Electronics International. Cynthia Cohen is now the co-owner of the Book Publishing Company.

Q: They're to the immediate left of David.
A: Right. Going around a little bit farther to the left is Jerry Miller. He started the National Satellite business.

Q: There behind the tree?
A: Yes. Next to him is Robert Moore. He's another co-founder of Solar Electronics with Bernie. He's now the retired president of that. He's now The Farm manager. He's one of the people of the Board of Directors of The Farm. His official title is Farm Manager. Robert Moore. He's Farm Manager today. Most of the other people have their backs to us. I can't really say who they are. When we got there, we used the buses for about everything. The buses were used to live in. They were used for school rooms and for clinics, and dental clinics and certainly houses for a lot of people. We also turned a few of them into useful vehicles like pick-up trucks and flatbeds. This one here is stuck in a sorghum field. Whenever they would get stuck there would be this cry for "Monkeys!" Fifty to a hundred people would come out and lean into the bus to get it to move out of fairly thick mud. This is in the sorghum field. One of our first crops was cutting sorghum to make sorghum molasses. We learned how to do that from a neighbor named Homer Sanders. He didn't have enough teeth and loved sorghum molasses. That's probably why he didn't have enough teeth.

Q: Is that him there with the checked hat?
A: Yes, that's Homer teaching these people. That's Richard Cowler next to Homer with the pink t-shirt. Ruth Thomas who is a nurse. I forget the name of the guy on the right. It might be Phillip Zimmer, but I'm not absolutely sure about that.

Q: Did Homer just warm up to you right from the start?
A: No, Homer was in with the Ku Klux Klan. He didn't like us. He thought we were communists. Still, he had us come over and work in his sawmill because he needed people to work. As he got to know us, he got to like us because we were hard workers. We were honest. We never cheated him. It got to be hard for him to tell racial jokes around us because as soon as he told a joke about a black person, we would send a black person out to work for him. He would get to like him. As soon as he told a joke about somebody who was Chinese, we would point to Timothy Wang who was working for him. Pretty soon it got real hard to tell racial jokes because half of the crew was mixed. [Laughter.] Early farming was all by hand and horse, no machines. There got to be a lot of it. This is Betsy, the horse. This is a fairly advanced slide. It needs to go back a ways. Mainly we started off without having a whole lot of carpenters on The Farm. We sent a crew up to Nashville, one guy who knew how to carpentry and five other guys. They became a framing crew in Nashville. Once those five guys learned how to carpenter real good, they came back where each of them straw bossed another team that went up to Nashville to get jobs framing. In the process of building several hundred houses we developed a seventy-man crew of very competent carpenters. We rotated them back into The Farm to build things like buildings of frame construction for schools and houses.

Q: Was that one on The Farm?
A: No, that was off The Farm.

Q: That was a job?
A: Probably, I don't know for sure. These are some of the building materials we were using a lot of. They were old weathered oak and boards that we had got out of junkyards and construction sites. We put

together solar buildings and other kinds of things out of all these old building materials that were thrown away by other people.

Q: Was that the Hunt's house?
A: Yes. This is a school bus stuck into the side of the ground with the southern side left open for an exposure so that it was heated by the sun.

Q: I guess they didn't plan on driving that one anymore.
A: No. That was called the Cave House. It was buried up to its top on three sides. This is our early construction crew meeting in the morning. I'm going to take a break at this point.

Q: Okay. [INTERRUPTION]
A: The early years of The Farm from 1971 to about 1980 were a period when the average per capita income was all money coming in from outside sources, including the money earned in businesses, laborers going out and working as far away as Nashville and the donations and contributions made by incoming members who because this was a communal organization contributed all of their life savings, all of their inheritances and everything else. All of those capital contributions and earnings combined were never more than four hundred dollars per person per year. As a result, all of the attempts to build buildings or develop businesses and so on were all done with very little money. This is a picture of a building that was built in the early days of The Farm. You can see several distinct buildings within this one building. There's the oak materials that came from local sawmills. There's the salvage materials that came from other job sites around the area where we worked as carpenters and dumps and wherever we could bring in the scrap materials. The windows don't match. They're salvage from different buildings that were torn down. Over the windows, instead of storm windows, you see plastic. In some cases, the plastic is just replacing glass for lack of glass. Even the shingles on the roof were miss and match from different styles and salvage pieces of material. The Farm was always a kind of eclectic group in terms of ages and backgrounds. This particular family is made up of children who were born before the caravan, during the caravan, on The Farm, and then a grandmother who is in her eighties who came to live on The Farm after the couple had settled here. This is inside the adobe apartments which was a large building that housed one hundred and fifty people at it's peak. This is the kitchen area. It was just put together with scraps of plywood, an old woodstove, scraps of board that were put together to make shelves, windows, and doors. Here's an ancient propane range with great big pots of beans cooking at any given time to be able to feed that many people. This is the window in the bay window area of the adobe apartments. Just one apartment for one family. Off in a distance through a field we can see an old school bus parked alongside a house being built. This was a solar house, which had fiberglass panels encasing a closed-in air space on the roof which was used as a large flat plate collector to use sunlight to reduce the cost of heating. This is another bus home. One of the ways that housing was covered was to use buses whenever possible which was already available and already being lived in. We would just add on to the buses with bits and scraps of material as they materialized. In the background of this shot you see a flatbed school bus that was made into a tanker truck. This is the motor pool crew eating lunch. We had tanker trucks for hauling water and sewage. This particular one was a pumper truck for outhouses. We had old trucks of various different varieties that were used to haul things. We could get these big old

things like this white semi-trailer truck to haul buildings in. We got whole buildings on the hoof from dam sites and other places where houses were condemned. We just brought them back and set them up on The Farm. This church here in Summertown was hauled out and it is now called the Wideload House. There's a little story on it. That's the Wideload House. The gatehouse was brought here from forty miles away. It was in the way of a reservoir that was going into the Duck River Dam. This is a busy scene at the gatehouse after the gatehouse has been bricked up. The gatehouse was one of the busiest places on The Farm. With over twenty thousand visitors a year to The Farm at the peak period we needed to have a full-time gate crew. In fact, several hundred people were involved in running the gate on a regular basis, everyone from communications people who handled CB radios and telephone banks to guided tour guides and people who sold books and records and other paraphernalia from The Farm. We had people who handled the medical emergencies, the psychologically disturbed guests and other sorts of necessities. This gatehouse was bricked up by a crew of masons. This is the first job they ever had trying to brick anything. The bricks were salvaged from an old theater. It was this pants factory. All of these old bricks were brought together and put into this house. You can see the difference between the first five or six feet where the masons were learning their craft. About six feet up we had a visit from a group of Native American masons who came through on a tour. They just happened to be there at the right time and showed us how to actually lay brick. From about six feet up the work is really professional as we learned how to do it correctly. This is another Wideload house. This is the one that became the clinic. There are lots of old trucks and cars. We used anything that would run for as long as it would run. Sometimes they wouldn't run. In that case they filled up our bone yard. This is an old dump truck that we used for our hauling of garbage and various heavy loads. This is my house being built. It is Creekview House overhanging the creek. People who came down here in the second school bus into The Farm drove down through and found one of prettiest sites on The Farm. It's a cliff overhanging a hundred foot drop down to the creek. It's actually the contents of two creeks which form the Swan River. This is a California-style coal frame house that was built at that site with native oak from the nearby sawmill. Of course, there were no power tools. The entire house was built with hand tools. It was built to California standards, meaning that there was inadequate insulation for Tennessee winters. This is the window going in. Behind them is the bus that came from the caravan. The second bus on the caravan. Peter and Gerald's bus. That was where they lived while they were building this house. The background is a flatbed school bus cut off that was used for hauling wood. This is where we hauled our slab wood in from the sawmills that we could get for free just for the hauling away of it. We would bring it back to The Farm and cut it up to use for firewood. This is piles of unused scrap from the operation. When our operation was running, we would bring a tractor in and set up the power take-off with the saw and just run tons and tons of old slab wood through to use for firewood in the winter. School buses and Army tents took an awful lot of firewood to keep warm. This is the scene of that sawmill of our neighbors where we worked. We had about a five-man crew go out every day to help that neighbor take his oak through the sawmill. As soon as we could afford it, we would get these Army tents at auction. We would buy them for about fifteen dollars apiece. This was for a fifteen by thirty-two tent. This is an old multi-fueled dune buggy that was used for driving around The Farm. It's one of the first vehicles on The Farm. It was used for getting all around all the back roads. As we got into building tents, we wanted to try to keep dry and warm so we would put wooden floors in the tents. We would just set them up on some stones. We put in the old wood that was gathered from wherever it could be salvaged. This is not brand-new wood. This

is wood that has been thrown away by somebody else. It was laid down in a floor. Over here in the center of the picture you can see a pressure cooker and a big Dutch kettle. That's somebody's lunch that might have been cooked right there on the sight on a wood fire. With the pressure cooker we were allowed to cook soybeans in a relatively short amount of time. This is a sixteen by thirty-two Army tent. It's one of the kind in which we used many an outdoor kitchen. A tent like this might have two families living in it--one at either end. Or, it might have single people. It would have anywhere from eight to twelve single men or women living in it. This is a picture of the same kind of tent. In the community kitchen people took shifts. Different tents or different buses would take turns providing the labor for breakfast. It was originally here when they got the farm. It was this old-line shack. Indeed, it was a line shack because everyday there would be a line here three times a day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Through all this early period Stephen Gaskin was the main cohesion to The Farm. He headed up the drivers' meetings, he got people moving in the right direction, settled out on the land, walked the land with the surveyors, organized systems to get water, electricity, and everything else that was immediately needed. Medical care, midwifery, and all of that stuff started. He would hold something similar to Monday Night Class every Sunday morning, which we called Sunday Morning Services. It would start the same way Monday Night Class started basically with an Om. Then people would sit quietly for a while and talk. It would run something like a Quaker meeting where if you felt inspired to get up and say something you would say it. Sometimes it would be in the form of a question. Sometimes it would be in the form of a comment. Sometimes people would respond to it, and sometimes they would just let it go. Stephen served as a kind of moderator and facilitator for all of that. A lot of times he would get up and give a little talk first just to get things started on the right foot. He would talk about something that went on during the week or talk about something spiritual that came up in his meditation. We would have about an hour of silent meditation before the services started just to get the right frame of mind. Stephen was empowered by the County of Lewis and the State of Tennessee to marry people. Indeed, a good many marriages did occur on The Farm. Our basic rules as to relations between the sexes in those days were if you were making love you were engaged and if you were having babies you were married. We took marriage seriously. It was for life. You were expected to be faithful to each other and do the right thing all the time to help smooth things out. We figured just about anybody, if their will was in the right place, and they wanted the right things, and they all wanted the same thing, basically could live together in harmony and a righteous community. Anybody could make it with anybody else for a lifetime if they had that goodwill and that good spirit. The group started off with about three hundred and twenty people. This is a group photo when we were up to about five hundred. This is Sunday Morning Services in the meadow. Over the course of the first several years the group just kept growing and growing. We closed the gates at five hundred. That lasted about six or eight months and then there were enough people who just demanded that they needed to come in that we opened it up for another little while and it went up to about eight hundred. We tried to close the gates again, but that only lasted a couple of months. We finally just opened and gave up and said, "Anybody who wants to live here can as long as they abide by our agreements which are the rules, the basic framework for living on The Farm." Non-violence, pacifism, vegetarianism, looking out for each other, telling the truth, honesty in all your relationships. Once you agree to those agreements you get to live here. So, we quickly grew to a thousand people, twelve hundred, fourteen hundred, pushing to close to fifteen hundred people at the peak. About four thousand people came through at one time or another. A lot of

them left, and a lot of them stayed. We had two forms of Sunday Morning Services. In the summertime Sunday Morning Service would occur about sunrise, which would be about four or five o'clock AM. People would trudge down there in total darkness and sit quietly for an hour. As the sun came up over the hill, everybody would chant the Om together as the sun crested the hill. Then Stephen would say something to get the ball rolling. We would have a little discussion for about an hour. Then folks would go off. If we had other business that was not of a spiritual nature or stuff like business or government, nitty gritty things about plumbing or electricity or something else or roads or schools, if we had something like that to talk about, we would have a night meeting during the week. This is sunrise services on The Farm. Everybody is sitting quietly watching the sun come up. The fellow in the hat there is one of the older people living on The Farm. You can't just have them sitting on the ground so he's sitting in a folding chair. In the wintertime sometimes they would meet later in the day. They wouldn't necessarily meet right at sunrise because it's too cold out in the meadow at that time of the day. They would meet maybe at ten o'clock if it was a good day outside. If the weather was bad, they would come inside and have a stove going in the horse barn. This was the original place. We soon outgrew that and had to move over to the greenhouse which was the next biggest place. We outgrew the greenhouse too, but we really didn't have any bigger place than that ever. We met in the school and at a few different places but never really had a place big enough to accommodate everybody when we were at our peak. During the week Stephen would have meetings periodically at different parts of The Farm, wherever he happened to be. Where he hung out most was up at the old house. This was the original house of The Farm. This was the place where the people had lived who had lived here. That was kind of an old log cabin that was just recently torn down. This past year it was torn down because it was old and rotten and full of termites. This cabin became his kind of office where he held meetings with visitors and people who came in to check out The Farm to see if they wanted to live there. Newcomers, who we called "silkers," were people who were silking for a while to see if they really would like to be here. People who had problems of one kind or another and needed to talk to Stephen about it. He kind of set up his headquarters up there at the house and held meetings all of the time during the day. He would hang out and meet with anybody who came in the door. That included the local sheriff, the UPS man, and anybody who came in the door. This is a slide that belongs further back up the line. It's a slide of putting together makeshift shelters straight off the caravan. They're using polyvinyl or wood or whatever scraps of anything you could get to get the wind out. When we first arrived here it was November. It was very cold. This is the inside of a bus. It was typical housing on The Farm when the caravan first arrived. That housing lasted for five or ten years after the caravan arrived. This is what Tennessee was like in the winter. It wasn't like California at all. This is actually the slide that was supposed to go next to those two guys with the chain slide. That's the end of tray one. On to tray two.

Q: Hit the square button towards the light right there.
A: We're at the second carousel now. We're talking about setting up the infrastructures of a large community. One of the interesting features of The Farm was this lack of central planning from the outset. It evolved organically from a series of meetings in San Francisco where people came together to talk about how to trip. How were they tripping on the drugs that they were taking? What was it doing to their brain? They were realizing things about vibration, energy, and about inter-relationships among people. They were realizing that if you told the truth it would get you high. If you were honest with

other people, you could take the weirdest stuff and put it into your body and come out smarter on the other end, because you would use the principles of the Sermon on the Mount and the eight-fold path and the wisdom of the sages and ancients to see through heavy times. So, that was the framework for the community of The Farm. There was no plan from the standpoint of well, let's design a utopia and let's look at it from architecturally, agriculturally. How are we going to design the water systems? Where are the roads going to go? Can we do town planning? Where are we going to build our school? Are we going to erect a church or meeting hall somewhere? There was not even the basic planning that went into a Roman city two thousand years earlier. This was very random, all pulled together kind of ad hoc, as it went without any kind of capitalization. Today, most people who want to start a farm or an intentional community of some sort will start off by having planning meetings. They will raise some money. They'll develop a real solid understanding of what they're going to do when they get the land. How are they going to get the land? Are they going to pay for the land? What businesses they're going to start. How are they going to make it work? In great detail they will work all of this out. We started with our basic experience being a few people who lived at Wheeler's Ranch and Morning Star and Harbinger and some of the failed communes of California in those early years of the hippie revolution. We had a pretty good idea about what didn't work, but not any real idea about what did work. We were coming into this farm with none of us having any experience in farming. One person out of three hundred had some background in carpentry. A bunch of kids coming along having babies left and right, really. We were living on about four hundred dollars a year. Stephen had a certain vision about how things were done. He soon got away from the idea that we were going to grow everything organically and have horses do all the work. Pretty soon we had a stack of progressive farming magazines piled up at the house. We were understanding a little bit more about how you feed three hundred people and then five hundred people and then eight hundred people and then a thousand people. You have to get organized or it ain't gonna happen.

Q: Was that a special camera lens used?
A: Well, it was shot in a hubcap actually.

Q: In a hubcap?
A: This shot was a …

Q: In the reflection of a hubcap?
A: Yes, it was the reflection of a hubcap which gave it a fish-eye effect. We started off basically with just dirt trails that had been road that had been cut by loggers coming in to take out logs. Then they were made into farm roads for farmers to use to get tractors around the properties. This is an old cattle ranch that had just grown beef. The soil was considered too poor for anything else. We used bicycle parts and things to carry things around. Old wagons, flexible fliers, and things. We bought a road grader for a dollar. It took us two years before we could get the wheels to turn. We tried everything heat, oil, everything else.

Q: Were they rusted?
A: We finally got the wheels to turn. We got the parts greased up. We had one guy who knew how to drive it--Thomas Elliott. He got himself driving this road grader. We had a few good diesel mechanics on The Farm. They all worked on it. We got this old Gallion road grader working and started making roads. We needed the roads in order to drive through The Farm in the wintertime because we had a lot of need to reach remote areas with our ambulance. We had our own ambulance. Midwives needed to get down there with their vehicles. The roads would get very muddy in the wintertime when they first started getting heavy use. They would get up to the axles in mud. You couldn't drive on them. You would pretty soon be clogged up with cars broken down. We built a system of roads on The Farm. We paved them with chert from a chert pit that we opened up down the side of a hill. There would be some hippies who would say you're cutting scars in your mother, the earth, to use a bulldozer to go down the side of a hill and chop out a bunch of chert and bring it up to the ridgetops and lay it down on these roads. We had to say, "Yep, you're right. We still need to get down to the ladies who were having babies in the middle of winter, so we're going to do it anyway." There was a certain amount of Stephen Gaskin's philosophy there which held us together. The ex-marine, ex-college professor who would not indulge in a lot of bullshit about what it takes to run a community of five hundred to a thousand people.

Q: That was an aerial shot of the Plenty office.
A: This is an aerial shot taken from the original gate of The Farm which was in the lower part of the corner. Straight from the center in the lower part of the picture is a wooded area. That was the original gate of The Farm. Eventually we moved the gate because it was too close to our neighbors. We were running traffic, twenty thousand visitors a year, right past our neighbors. It was kind of an imposition. We decided that we would put the gate out somewhere where there weren't any neighbors. Eventually, that part of the Drake's Lane got settled so there were neighbors out there too. When we first put the road in there weren't any neighbors out there.

Q: They knew what they were getting into.
A: We built the road off to the right angle of the side of the straight road going right out to the right angle was built to get to the new gate.

Q: Is that the school in the upper right-hand corner, the old school?
A: In the upper right-hand corner is the old original school built in the L-shape pattern. I've got some more pictures of it further down the line. We had one certified schoolteacher licensed by the State of Tennessee who could teach school. We had eight grades to teach. We figured if we built an L-shaped school she could sit in the corner of the L and all our teaching assistants could go out in any direction. She could see everybody. She could be in the classroom with everybody. The teaching assistants would handle the various grades out in both directions. The first school was an L-shaped brick school. The other school in the basic campus area was called Schoolhouse Ridge, which is that road that goes out in that general direction. Off to the left is the horse barn, the budding apple orchards and grape vineyards which were just getting planted at that time. I'll show the water tower further down the line. Just off to the edge you can barely make out the motor pool and the laundromat down towards the far end of the pond. The farthest most clearing off in the distance is the head of the roads. This is some of the heavy

equipment that we were using. We also had a few dump trucks. The county was able to help us with hauling in some chert too. When we really needed to build roads, we could build them quite well, bringing in heavy equipment and hauling it down The Farm for making roads. This is Stephen holding Sunday Morning Services in the greenhouse. This is when the weather was still a little bit cold out, maybe it was raining. We would all get together in our greenhouse and be nice and toasty warm sitting down and enjoying Sunday Morning Services. This is a wedding at Sunday Morning Services. It looks like Jerry and Catherine Hutchins getting married.

Q: What are the pipes between the people?
A: Irrigating systems. Oh, actually those are steam lines. The insulated parts of steam lines. The cold-water pipes are on the top. The sprinklers are on the top. The steam lines are on the bottom. This is the building of our meeting hall. It is still unfinished. We're going to finish it one of these days. It's not finished yet. This meeting hall was built using trusses that were got out of this old warehouse style theater in Mt. Pleasant. Rather than set the trusses up on pylons the way they had been in the hangar style theater, instead we decided to put them all up going to one point, put one end in the ground on concrete braces and then move the other end up into a central point. Then put arches between those trusses to create a flower petal affect around a central radius. It was a much better design than the old-fashioned hangar. Across the archways we laid old grids of steel rebar that we traded from the phone company in Maretta. We went out and planted twelve or twenty thousand pine trees for them. They gave us all of the old steel from the old phone switching center when they shut it down. We welded that steel into the building. We ran a twenty-four-hour ambulance because we were having babies left and right. There have been more than two thousand babies born on The Farm now. This was not just mothers who lived on The Farm, but mothers who come into The Farm to have their children by natural childbirth. With more than a dozen midwives here all of them are trained with emergency medical skills, two back-up doctors, and a sixty-person clinic including a full neo-natal, pre-natal care and intensive care nursery for babies and a full laboratory and other sophisticated equipment. We were able to provide quite an essential service in terms of medical. In fact, medical is one of our great exports because before long we were providing medical services for the surrounding community and as far away as New York City. I'll get into that a little bit more later. This is Jeffrey Hurgenrather sitting in the green pickup truck. Jeffrey is one of our doctors. He is a graduate of Brown and a good skilled surgeon. He and my mother were roommates in college. I hadn't seen Jeffrey since I was about eight or nine years old when I went out to visit California and was introduced to him. I didn't remember him at all. He came to The Farm one day with his wife and kids. He wanted to join. He's talking with Gary Rine and some other guy. They're in the foreground. Gary Rine's got the purple hat on. He became a paramedic in his own right. He's still going himself. He's now a film maker in California. This is two of the midwives. On the left is Kira O'Gorman and on the right is Mary Louise Perkins. I don't know who the baby is. This is the senior staff of the medical crew. They don't look much like doctors and nurses, do they? This is them at the NAP SACK Conference which was the National Association of Pediatricians and something. They came to have their annual meeting at The Farm in the late 1970's. This is the stage we set up to do that with the tie dye done especially for the event.

Q: Those are intense.
A: The crew from left to right to Dr. Jeffrey Hurgenrather, Mary Furstead (Kira O'Gorman's twin sister), Leslie Luna, Kira O'Gorman, and Ida May Gaskin (the head midwife), and Dr. Gary Helatti (our second doctor in residence). Gary is now in Ethiopia. Jeffrey has a practice in southern California. Leslie Luna is in northern California. I shouldn't say Jeffrey is in southern California. He's up in Mendocino area, Sonoma County. The two sisters, Kira and Mary, are both out in California as well. Ida May is the only one left here in Tennessee at this point and time. She started the whole thing by having the first natural childbirth delivery on the caravan on the way to The Farm. They had a mother go into labor and Ida May, just using the spiritual power managed to help with that delivery.

Q: She had no training at that point?
A: No training at that point. In fact, the first baby was not a successful outcome. The baby died. It gave them an opportunity to access how heavy it was to be dealing with such forces of life and death. She read up on what's involved with midwifery and having childbirth and so on. She became self-taught as a midwife. She studied with other midwives and learned how to do it. She has delivered over a thousand babies on The Farm. Kira O'Gorman, standing next to her, has delivered both of my children. This is either Cara or Mary. I can't tell. They're at a pre-natal screening clinic. This is Dr. J. He looks like he's doing some minor stitching there in somebody's ear. He is working with Dr. Thomas Warringer. He's now a doctor. At that time, he was just a paramedic on The Farm. I don't see a whole lot of surgical septic technique here.

Q: Rubber gloves.
A: Rubber gloves and the patient is draped. Other than that, we have a doctor in bib tops. Gary Ryan is in the background and Catherine McCrorer who was an RN. I'm not sure who the lady is in the back. It might be Candida, but I can't say for sure. This is our laboratory doing slides. I don't know who that clinician is. This is the neonatal intensive care unit. Deliveries that were expected to be difficult were moved to here so that they could be done in a controlled setting. Although it was kept focusing on down home, it was ready for any contingency. There was oxygen and incubator units standing by. They had an ambulance sitting right outside. These are incubators with the Billy Rubin units over them. Most babies are born slightly jaundiced. A lot of babies are born slightly jaundiced in the United States. The Billy Ruben lights help to get their vitamin and mineral balance established so that they can have normal, healthy skin tone and ability by the time they're a week or two old. The Farm helped invent a Doppler fetus-scope which eliminated the need for x-rays to determine the health of the fetus just before delivery. We were always interested in finding ways to improve the outcome percentages of birth. As a result, we have one of the lowest percentages now in the nation, if not one of the lowest percentages in the world, for unsuccessful outcomes either injury to the mother or injury to the child during the process of birth. We are so successful that we were lured to export our craft. One day we were watching this documentary on television about the South Bronx in New York. There was a situation up there where the place looked kind of like Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There had been riots. Entire blocks had been burned down. Buildings were vacant and crumbling. Crime was rampant. In fact, the gang wars were so intense that city fire services would no longer go in to answer fires. They just let entire blocks burn down. The emergency medical crews would not go in either. You couldn't get an ambulance if you

had a stab wound or a shooting wound. We said we can do better than that. We sent a crew of ambulance attendants up to New York in our Plenty ambulance. Plenty was the name of our relief organization. I'll get more into that. We got a nice new ambulance on our foundation grant. We built a bat cave out of an abandoned building. It had a great big cellar in this building that we made into our garage, our pit area for our ambulance. We had two ambulances up there. They ran twenty-four hours for free. We had a very short response time, on the order of three to five minutes. With that kind of response time we could intercept police calls, fire calls, city ambulance calls, and get to the scene quickly with the kind of technology and skill that could save lives. Back on The Farm.

Q: Some of these slides are in there but they're not dropping down. The tops of them are curled. That's what's happened.
A: We found a number of kids who were living in South Bronx who needed to be out in the country. We did some blood tests on kids in our buildings and our blocks and found they had real high levels of lead from the paint and the air. We said they needed time in the country. We started a program called Kids to the Country. This would take these kids from the inner cities and bring them out to The Farm during the summertime and give them a little fresh air, sunlight, horses, and other kids to play with in swimming holes. We had quite a large kid scene on The Farm. This is a shot of mass production assembly line infant care. A lot of mothers needed to work in various jobs on The Farm. In fact, when we first started working on The Farm the only work, we could get in the area that paid money was for men with strong backs. We would send people off to work at Regional Manpower in Nashville for two dollars an hour. They would haul lumber, pipe, and various other things around from one warehouse to another. Or, they would work digging ditches or any number of hard heavy labor things. Women were not wanted in the labor force in Tennessee at that point in time. As a result, it created a void of men on The Farm since everybody was out working for money. The women were the ones who built The Farm more than the men. There was a lot of talk back in those days of gender roles and whether Stephen was sexist and things like that. Outsiders like Kate something from "The New York Times" came in and did a story on The Farm for "New York Times Magazine." She called us neo-puritans because we believed in marriage, family, having babies, and that sort of thing. She thought of that as a throwback where these hippie women were back in earlier gender roles of their mothers. In fact, the businesses on The Farm which we point to today as being our main cottage industries--solar electronics, the book publishing company, the mail order company, nutritional yeast, the dye works--all of those major businesses were either started by women or mainly built up by women who were managing those businesses while the men were out doing menial labor tasks off The Farm and bringing back money. When we first started having elected councils like the Board of Directors, the Council of Elders, The Management Council, and various other tribal councils that we went through over the years, the elections were largely won by women. The women were always on a majority of those boards. The reason was that they had the most experience of running these systems on The Farm. This is an evening dinner scene at the adobe apartments with another assembly line of slightly older kids eating in shifts. Kids first.

Q: Was that Farm art on the wall?
A: Probably. No, it looks like some cheap tapestry that somebody picked up at a flea market.

Q: On black velvet.
A: Yes, some kind of Christ scene. This is Donald and his kid. I forget his last name. He was a schoolteacher at Farm school.

Q: Before you go on, what was the cultural mix?
A: We were open to anything. We started off with Blacks and Asians mixed in from the caravan. As time went on, we came to reflect the groups which showed up at the gate and people who wanted to live there. Our experience was that those were mainly white, young, middle-class kids in their twenties with high school educations. A lot of them were college educated. They wanted something different out of life than the nine to five standard American white bred style of life. The young, smart hip black people, Asians, and Chicanos wanted the standard American white bred style of life. They had never got it, and they wanted that. I think that's basically why we tended to get more white people than black people over the course of twenty years. It wasn't because of any particular attitude we had. We had people here from Alabama and Georgia and other places joining us. We had a certain number of racists in the group--people who had grown up racists. It's possible. If you point to any particular instance, somebody may have had a bad experience sometime somewhere. That kind of thing is bound to happen. As a general community we were all pretty open to anything. We trip with anybody. This is teenagers growing up on The Farm. All of these kids in this picture were born on The Farm. As were these. This is Nadine Fromen and her kids sitting around cooking dinner at night. This is building The Farm school which was a passive solar school. The overhang is to prevent the high angle of the sun in the summer from getting in and heating up the building too much, but to allow the lower angled sun from the winter months to come in and cook the school while the kids are in class. This is the solar school from another angle. This is not only the largest solar building in the state at the time it was built, it was also the largest building built in the state out of recycled materials.

Q: Was it mixed?
A: Well, all those cement blocks were recycled. You can tell because they're some white ones and black ones mixed in there. There was probably a little bit of new material. The plywood looks like it might be new material, although it's probably seconds. This is the school campus from across the road. The solar school is in the background, the wooden school in the foreground. Behind and out of the picture is the brick school. This is inside the brick school. This is a class of probably first graders. More kids. Slides do not drop. More kids.

Q: Must have been school shots in there.
A: Probably. In the early years we got a lot of kids who kept their hair all the way through from the time they first entered school all the way through high school. They never cut their hair. Lately, there's been more of an outside influence. More televisions at home. More movies and exposure to town and sports events where we'll play with soccer leagues off The Farm. Kids who actually go to school in the county schools and come back. Mainly the county school influence but also the athletic influence where the kids want to blend in with their counterparts off The Farm. So, they don't want to look so distinctive. You won't see this long hair and bandana look in our Farm school anymore. You will see some of it. Some of them want to be that way, but not all of them. One thing we did have transmitted to the

younger generation was rock and roll. For some reason, I have absolutely no explanation of this, our kids like The Beatles, The Grateful Dead, the Allman Brothers, and the kind of music that we like.

Q: Actually, a lot of teenagers do, not just here.
A: Yes, but it certainly flies in the face of history. Girls like horses.

Q: There's a lot of kids.
A: Yes, there's a lot of kids. That's Sean Nager in the red bandana.

Q: I remember him. He's twenty-four or something like that now.
A: Yes, that's him. Let's see if I know anybody else here that's currently around now.

Q: That's okay.
A: I don't see anybody else I can point to. First computers in The Farm school. This one is a demonstration of Plenty's computer for the kids that came. It's probably an old dumb terminal of televideo genre, televideo nine ten. This is the printing press at the book company. We had big presses. We no longer have big presses at the book company. The printing business changed over the last decade. Some very small efficient printers came in with new electronically controlled instrumentation that were able to knock the socks off of our old presses. These old recycled presses that we bought cheap and fixed up were not able to compete in the printing world. We became publishers rather than printers. We would farm out our printing jobs to these other newer equipment and just do the development of the books. We still do some small press runs on smaller equipment. In the old days we used to have giant bunches of machinery with two big presses and a small press and folders and staplers and binders and cutters and massive assembly processes.

Q: Is this a bulk mailing here?
A: In those days we made all of the books. These days we just sell all of the books. Yes, that's shipping out books to different stores.

Q: Was the previous shot big boxes of paper?
A: That was folding and collating book sections going together. They'll go into those boxes where they will go to the binder. They will be glued together and perfectly bound. This is the woodshop. This is where they're putting together doors, windows, and cabinets to go in houses. When we first started out, we just slapped together things. You saw the adobe apartments made of old wood, old pine and stuff like that. As we got up to steam, we gradually got into things like table saws and band saws and started actually making cabinets and a lot of furnishings inside houses. Now they're built-ins that were built in our old woodshop.

Q: Where did the power come from? Were you on the grid at this point?
A: Yes, at this point we have TVA power to all of the major buildings, like the print company, the motor pool, the woodshop, and things like that. The major industrial areas. The businesses of The Farm.

Q: What year did that happen?
A: This would be mid-Seventies, 1977 or 1978. Right now, this is what I would call the Peak Period. This is the 1977 to 1980 period.

Q: Was it accurate what I've heard that for the first years you didn't want TVA power and TVs and stuff? Did that change?
A: No. Even at this period we didn't have any of that. All of our homes were on twelve-volt power. We did have some televisions. After Watergate we had TV. The first TV was in the Greyhound Scenicruiser. It was a twelve-volt set that everybody sat around watching all day during the Watergate hearings. We decided to get more TVs. We had twelve-volt TVs in the home along with twelve-volt radios, ham radios, CB radios and things like that. And record players and tape players because we were very musical. All of that was on twelve-volt systems. They were charges various ways. The most common way was to rotate a battery out of the car or truck that you drove. Have two batteries, one that was in the thing and one that was out. Or, have one that just came out of it at night. You had to be careful because you might not have enough starting power in the morning to get to work. The second most common way was trickle charge line that came in from the head of the roads where TVA power was stepped down to a battery charged system. The third possible way was pedal power, wind power or alternative energy in one way or another was used to charge those car batteries that ran the houses. We originally started with propane, kerosene, and other kinds of lighting systems. After several major fires, including some that cost some lives and children, we got out of kerosene. We just felt that it was too dangerous to have around these old Army tents. We got into electric lights from old buses and cars. This is probably 1973 or 1974. Even while we were still in kerosene quite a bit, we started getting more and more into running twelve-volt systems of electric lights to avoid fire hazards. That system went into the houses as they were built. This is a picture of framing up the house on The Farm. When the houses were built the twelve-volt wiring went into the house. This house was originally built with twelve-volt wiring. Then it was converted over later. We had to tear out some walls in some cases to put in Romex so we could run AC power. This is the adobe apartments from the outside. It was actually kind of a nice design. There's a little atrium on the inside. The adobe apartments were an experiment of making adobe brick. We were interested in finding cheap building materials at the time. This is Creekview Road off to the right. In Tennessee the adobe was only good enough to bear a wall up to about four feet. From four feet up you had to use oak because it wouldn't support a wall. That's how it was used. It was basically used as a foundation block here. Of course, it's not as good as the concrete foundation as it turned out. Termites just love adobe. They burrow up through it and right into the oak. After only ten years the adobe apartments had to be torn down because they were just rotted through with termites all the way up into the rafters in the ceiling. Here's another picture of the adobe apartments. It's a little bit better view. It's springtime. It's probably 1975 or 1976--that period. Another view of the adobe apartments. The finished oak on the outside is all from the local sawmill. The doors are all custom-made. There's some double Dutch doors and things that were made in the woodshop. Some of the windows were custom-made. This is the hand-crafted look of The Farm in the early years at its best. I can show you some pretty junky looking buildings too that were just kind of slapped together and weren't expected to last more than two or three years and ended up lasting for fifteen or twenty years. This is actually the idea. This is what people were going for. They were trying to create a hand-crafted building. It was built entirely with

hand tools. There were no power tools used in building this building. On the other hand, as we got up into the late Seventies, we needed a lot more housing because we had grown from five hundred people to a thousand, twelve hundred, and then fourteen hundred people. We had hundreds and hundreds of people who needed to be housed every year over the previous year. We started throwing up houses very quickly. We used everything we knew about carpentry to get houses up fast, including power tools. This is the woodshop with the lumber yard under that arch. This is all the lumber coming in that we bought to build houses on The Farm. As we became more prosperous, we were able to spend money on lumber. This building was built entirely by a Farm building crew. It was the original foundation office. Eventually, Plenty moved in on the upper floor. Plenty was started in 1974 as a relief organization to assist in giving out food that we had in surplus on The Farm. We found it took us about three years before we became self-sufficient with food. Then we had more food than we needed, even to put away for hard times. Instead of selling it or something like that, we decided to give it away. We gave it away in Mt. Pleasant, Honduras, Guatemala and wherever we found need. We hooked up with the World Mennonite Association. Modelling after them we decided to start our own organization which we called Plenty. The preface of which was that there are enough resources in the world that if everybody lived in a way such as to share these resources fairly without ripping each other off, that everybody could live at a high enough standard that we could all live very happily on the bounty of the earth and not be a rip-off, not be exploitative of each other or the planet. That's the preface of Plenty, a world of plenty. This is the upper floor, the original office of Plenty. If you look at that building today where that stairwell is it has been moved to the other side of the building. There's a window where that door is on the upper floor. This is the lumber yard again. This is the old white again loading up wood. This is probably lumber corning back to The Farm from a sawmill somewhere. It might be slab wood that is corning in to be cut up for firewood. That was our giant … On the front of the scenicruiser bus where Stephen went out with the band on tour to rock and roll and preach, there was a sign where the destination board of the bus is it said, "Out to Save the World." When the scrap wreckers here went out to get steel, they cleaned up the backyards of farmers for twenty-five miles around bringing in steel and scrapping it. They had a logo on their business card that said, "Out to Salvage the World." This is the motor pool in its heyday collecting old junk and making it work. That's a big old Kenworth right up in front there with some modified school buses and various other old decrepit vehicles. Here's a pumper truck, a step up from the school bus. This is The Farm store. The Farm store was originally built to be a meeting hall, but it got to be that we were a much larger community than something like that could handle. It had the architecture of the early period where we were building mandalas and building circular things. Having read Black X Speaks we didn't want to live in square houses. This was about the right size for The Farm store, so this became the center of distribution. In the early days when our economy was entirely communal you didn't have to have any money. In fact, the idea was not so much to have an economic system. It wasn't that we were communal or communitarian or capitalist or some other economic system, it's that we didn't believe in money. Our idea was no money on The Farm. If you needed something you went to the store and you got it and took it home. The businesses that we had put their money that they made from the businesses into the pot. The pot was used to buy food for the store or firewood or whatever. Then it got so we didn't actually have enough that everybody could take all they wanted of everything. So, we had to ration it. Each week there was list of things that you could take. You would get a quarter pound of margarine per person and a half pound of sugar and two pounds of flour. Although actually flour was

pretty much unlimited all the time because we made our own. Anything we grew our own was pretty much unlimited because we could always grow more. Stuff we had to buy like lightbulbs, toilet paper or diapers were always strictly rationed.

Q: Is this building still here?
A: Oh, yes. It's The Farm store.

Q: Oh, it is? It looks bigger. It must be the photo.
A: Yes, a wide-angle lens. This is a composting operation. Boy, did we have a big composting operation. We went around and gathered up organic garbage from everybody's home kitchen, the community kitchen, the soy dairy, the horse barn, and everything else. We hauled it out to this field, mixed it altogether—the garbage, the horse manure, and the sawdust--and made these great big long piles covered with black plastic to keep the temperature up so they wouldn't develop flies. Every week or so the horses would come out and turn the pile. We had skip loaders, road graders, bulldozers, and lifts that came out and moved it around. We had a giant composting operation. Using this operation and the manure spreaders pulled behind tractors and things we would take the soil that we made and spread it over these fields. This rich top that used to have nothing on it but clay-like dirt that was the color of sand. When we first got there, it wasn't good for growing anything but beef cattle. It was kind of like range. We turned it into the color of chocolate. We were growing corn and soybeans. We were growing forty bushels to the acre in soybeans. A hundred bushels to the acre in corn. This is the front porch which was one of our many efforts at marketing our food locally.

Q: Was it in town?
A: This is at the Summertown crossroads right across from Muse gas station. This is Columbia. We had a bigger store called The Farm Market in a warehouse in Columbia. You could come in and for about two dollars fill up about four big paper bags full of our produce. We were a very popular spot in Columbia.

Q: Those are both gone now, right?
A: Yes. Joe Kochinsky, who is now The Farm lawyer, was our green grocer back in those days. He would go around to the Farmer's Market in Nashville and other places and buy up big buys on nuts and apples and onions and things. He would bring them back and sell them in The Farm market. We had a big trucking company that went coast to coast called The Farm Trucking Company. Everything had a fairly basic name. We didn't believe in a lot fancy names.

Q: That's that mandala that you mentioned?
A: Well, actually that's not Michael's mandala. It's a different one. It was designed by the graphics crew in the book company. The Farm Trucking Company hauled commercially all over the country. They had several semis running. This is The Farm soy dairy where we made our own milk. One of the keys to the success of The Farm and why we survived the early years and dire poverty and were able to feed as many people as we were able to was directly attributed to the fact that we were vegetarians. If we had tried to live with growing cattle and poultry, we would have gone bankrupt in no time at all. You can feed many many times more people off of soybeans if you don't run them through a cow. You make the

milk directly from soybeans. You make the soymilk into tofu which is basically your curded cheese. This is what we did. We made a giant factory here that made soymilk into tofu. They made ice cream and a variety of other cheeses and other things out of the soymilk. This is the milk being curded in a great big pot. That fellow's name is Jeffrey Koffman. Lori Praskin was one of our first soy technicians. She's been all over the world consulting for the World Bank and UNICEF and other places to teach people in the Third World how to grow soybeans and use them to improve protein supplies.

Q: Is that the label there to the left?
A: That's the Texturized Vegetable Protein label designed by Albert Bates in The Farm graphics studio. Those were my artist years. Lori is now on the Plenty Board of Directors. She's living in California and serving as a soy technician consultant. We invented soybean ice cream on The Farm. That's one of the many inventions of The Farm. A hard soybean ice cream, it was originally marketed as a Farm foods product Ice Bean. It eventually sold to Baracini Foods as a whole products division. They began making Soy Frogurt and various other soy ice creams.

Q: Tofuti?
A: Tofuti was a soy icemilk product that was a spin-off. It was basically the same technology being taught. This is the ham radio shop, one of the centers of communication on The Farm. The fellow sitting in the wheelchair is not actually paralyzed. He's an Eagle Scout named Albert Houston. He had a ham radio merit badge. He was a teenager when he came on the caravan to Tennessee. He was probably fifteen or sixteen, something like that. When Stephen went on the road with The Farm band that first winter in 1972, he took with him some of the key people like Ina May, the head midwife, and Joseph Moondough, the head mechanic. They needed to stay in touch with The Farm to be in constant regular contact. Long distance phone charges were so high that they decided to set up a ham radio inside the Scenicruiser bus. Albert Houston was the chief ham radio mechanic. They set up a bay station back on The Farm. Ham radio became our entree into a variety of different projects. Plenty grew to its stature primarily because of its expertise in ham radio. We set up a ham radio on the rainbow warrior Greenpeace's ship to help them communicate back news stories on what they were doing with whaling, stopping the slaughter of seals, and fighting radioactive waste disposal at oceans and things like that. Albert Houston helped set that up. He was the whiz that came up with a variety of electronic instrumentation. He helped Daniel Sike develop the Doppler Fetus-scope. He was instrumental in the discovery that led to the Nuke Buster, which was a circuit that allowed a Geiger counter to operate for two thousand hours on a nine-volt battery. That's something that had never been done before. This made a light handheld Geiger counter possible. We introduced it as the Nuke Buster. This was his original radio shack here. On the back wall is the mandala Monday Night Class period. poster from the Mark Lawn is another one of the ham radio buffs. In fact, there are about a dozen licensed ham radio operators on The Farm. I was one of them. Mark Lawn is another one. Mark became interested in satellites. As he grew more and more able to do things electronically, he got interested in hooking up with the amateur radio satellite in orbit to use that to broadcast to the band when they went to Europe. He talked to them when they went to Australia and around the globe. His satellite interest led to the formation of a satellite business on The Farm. We made our first earth station using chicken wire and oak two by fours out back of the barn. We set up oak two by fours in a square and put chicken wire and

holding it in the right parabolic attitude until it was actually able to not only pick up HBO but television from Moscow. That was our first experience with dishes. That was before they had home earth stations. It was strictly commercial for the major outlets to use earth stations to communicate like that. There were relatively few satellites then. Now there are lots of satellites and lots of stations up there. We have a satellite business where we sell earth stations. Mark Lawn went on to write the first book for consumers of Earth stations. He's written five or six books now, including the World Satellite Almanac which he puts out every year. He writes and edits a newsletter for Satellite Earth aficionados in Florida. He consults with various congressional committees and the UN. He travels around the world working for various governments consulting about space communications. This is Albert Houston and Daniel Sythe at Three Mile Island demonstrating a solar-powered communications module to allow them to take radiation readings at site during the accident and transmit them directly to Civil Defense Headquarters without bogging down in the traffic of the phone lines. This is an office somewhere on The Farm. This is our 8-track recording studio. Our Farm band mixed its records and put out about five albums out of this recording studio.

Q: Are we still around 1980 here?
A: Yes, we're at the peak now. Somehow here I missed the slide that was supposed to tell you that you had reached the peak. We're out of the growth period and into the peak period. This is the point at which The Farm had become its own culture. We were travelling around exporting it at various places. This is our rock and roll band called The Nuclear Regulatory Commission. This is the fully equipped Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner. Not only did they make rock and roll music, but they were among the first to make music videos. Of course, The Beatles were probably the first or actually probably some footage before that. They were making music videos into television camera mode and putting them out around mainly for the purpose of educating people about nuclear power. In fact, we did full scale animation using super 8. This is Bobby Bonickson, the lead singer for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Live and in concert somewhere, this is the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and some other band. This is the original Nuke Buster. This is not the original. It's the second version. No, this is the third version of the Nuke Buster. The second version didn't have a meter. This is the third version of the Nuke Buster. It will plug into your car lighter just like a Fuzz Buster and sit on your dashboard. If you get into a high radiation field, it will tell.

Q: How often do you run into those?
A: I actually ran into one with the first Nuke Buster, the very first. Gene Honniker and I were going to a speaking gig up in Paducah, Kentucky. Actually, we were going into southern Illinois. On the way we had to drive through Paducah, Kentucky. Driving through Paducah, Kentucky we set off the alarm. I said, "What is that?" We drove through Paducah, Kentucky with the alarm going. It's three times normal background. We got up to Illinois and were doing this interview with somebody on the radio station there. We had spoken at a rally and were doing an interview. On the radio talk show we mentioned that we had had this experience going through Paducah, Kentucky with our Nuke Buster. There was a call-in. The call-in was Joe Harding. Joe Harding was a worker at the Department of Energy plant in Paducah, Kentucky making uranium fuel for nuclear power plants. Joe Harding had a thirty-pound tumor in his stomach.

Q: At that time?

A: Yes, he was dying. He had cancer all over his body. He had a list that was long of all the other workers who worked with him. He had tales to tell of how these workers had gotten sick and died of cancer, how they got over-exposed, how the overexposures were covered up, and how they were under-reported and everything else. It was a real scandal. Joe Harding's story has been told all over international media. We got the story out. He's actually kind of a folk hero now. Rob Hager at the Kerista Institute took his case and is still handling it for his widow, Clara. He's trying to get compensation. We found Joe Harding with the first Nuke Buster. The satellite dish business. Travelling the byways and highways. We set up twenty-footers like this. This is probably even the twenty-footer we set up for Albert Gore, Sr., Al Gore's dad, who was on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. When he retired to his farm in Carthage after a career in politics, he kind of missed his access to world events. So, we got him a satellite dish so he could stay up with CNN and the news feeds from Moscow or wherever. A twenty-foot dish going up behind the water tower at The Farm. That was to The Farm cable system. We ran cable to all of the houses so that not only could we have Showtime and HBO, we could also have our own TV station which was called NBS, for No Bullshit. We had a kid crew with a videocam that went out and shot pictures of what was happening during the day at The Farm. It might go to a scene like this and interview some people in the rows saying what are you picking? You would see it that night on your evening news what got picked that day and where and what fun it was and why weren't you there? Strawberry fields forever. [Laughter.] We're going through a rapid sequence here of some farming shots. This is early tractors on The Farm. We've slipped back in chronology here. We've gone back in time a little bit. We're in the early Seventies again. This is Francesca. One of the things we have about the difference in farming then and now. If you look at this field, it's difficult to imagine that you could go out with a hundred people and plant these plants from the greenhouse. You can lay them out in rows and transplant tomatoes and do all these corn crops and bend over all day planting these things and cultivating them and harvesting them. To go into a field that's a hundred acres or more and look down a row of corn, you and your little hoe, and maybe ten or twelve other people with their little hoes going down this row, it's a major undertaking. The first few times it's not so bad. You kind of enjoy it, going down a row of beans like this. After you've walked the first mile or two it gets a little tedious. After you've done it for ten or twelve years it gets very tedious, just the thought of another season like that can be quite daunting. Today, we garden in small patches behind our houses. We can go out anytime we have a half hour or twenty minutes and do some weeding or cultivating. It's a lot more laid back and pleasurable than this massive industrial scale of farming that we were involved with before because the people aren't treated like machines. I'm running through a bunch of quick pictures here to show the level of machinery in farming we were into. Of course, that was the problem. Even with these old beat up machines that we kept trying to fix all the time this was capital intensive farming. This is soybean harvest here. Capital intensive farming.

Q: Is this late Seventies again?

A: Yes, this is probably 1976 or 1977. We had to borrow money to buy tractors, combines, and fix them up. Hopefully, the harvest would cover those expenses or make a little. This is our TV crew out there filming to get all this stuff recorded for history. This is what I was talking about. Daunting!

Q: A long row of beans!

A: String beans and corn as far as the eye can see. This is corn getting sorted and husked. Monkey power! This is a 706. We have an old joke about farm trivia. The question is why did Michael O'Gorman buy the 656 and the 756 on the same day? The answer was he couldn't decide between them. It's like we had hundreds of thousands of dollars of loans that we would take out before farming season. If we had a bad year, we could lose all of that. That was the basic American style of farming that we fell prey to. This was probably a mistake in retrospect. We were into a very large scale of operation. This is soybeans going into the grain bins. We tore down these grain bins in Pollasky and brought them back to The Farm and set them up here. They had been part of a mill that had burned down about twenty years ago. We got it for just the tearing down of it. This is where I worked as a flour miller. This is The Farm flour mill. This is a typical scene on a typical day at The Farm. There's a basketball game going on outside while the machinery inside grounds flour. We just had to check in on it every day, every once in a while, to make sure it was well oiled and running. This is where we made the whole wheat flour, white flour, buckwheat flour, soy flour, cornmeal, cereal, bran, soynuts, cornuts, peanut butter, grits, groats, and horse feed. We did it in about two tons a day. About a ton of it was white and whole wheat flour. A picture of a basketball game. A lot of that flour went straight over to the bakery. The same day it was ground it was made into bread. We had a French baker named … His name escapes me right now. His family had been baking for years and years and years. In fact, about thirteen generations. He came to The Farm, got him an oven, set up his shop, and started making French bread like you wouldn't believe. It was the best bread you ever had. Of course, it was real good coming straight out of the field, straight into the mill, straight into the bakery. We eat it by sundown. We just love it. This is potatoes, russet potatoes with red husks coming off. getting washed and straight into the bags. Idaho potatoes. This is probably turnips, maybe onions. They're being sorted in the greenhouse. This is bags of potatoes and fruit either coming or going, maybe coming up from our Florida operation. We were so large that we would truck all our equipment down to Florida in the wintertime and keep right on farming. We had semi-trailers that loaded up with the combines and the tractors and took them on down there and set up and we would grow it in the wintertime. In the Spring they would bring all of the equipment back up and we would do it again. It just ran continuously. This is a semi load of surplus food and supplies going out on Plenty. This is all crated up for Plenty to go down to the docks in Mobile and be loaded for trans-shipment to Central America for giving away. This is the carousel that deals with collapse from 1981-1985. I've broken this period of collapse down to three distinct sub-periods--Crisis Management, the Change of 1983, and the Gradual Decline from 1984-1985. If you look at this graph you can see the population of The Farm varied from its initial founding size of about three hundred and twenty people arriving on the caravan in 1971 to a growth of about four or five hundred people. It levelled off there. Then the gates opened up again. We experienced rapid growth until we hit a little over eight hundred and tried to level off. We didn't really succeed. We sent out a bunch of people as astronauts to start other farms between eight hundred and a thousand. They were still part of the system. In 1977 and 1978, we decided we had to bring those people back because we were losing money in our farming to such an extent that we needed every able-bodied person to produce income here in Tennessee. We closed down a lot of those satellite operations in different states and absorbed the debts of that rapid shut-down in those other states and brought all of those people back which pushed the population up to its peak in 1980 of about fourteen hundred people. That was the peak. From 1980 on it went into a

rapid decline. In fact, it was an accelerating decline eventually resulting in a system breakdown, a variety of different systems. There were not enough people to manage The Farm water system or The Farm electrical system or the store or various other things that had developed on these larger systems with more people. The gate and medical systems and so on started having problems continuing. They had to all restructure in the early 1980's because of this decline. What precipitated the decline? Lots of things. One of them was the farming operation. We borrowed and borrowed and borrowed. In the early 1970's we were really successful farmers. We did very well. We produced plenty of food. We seemed like we knew how to farm pretty well. We grew rapidly and got a lot of equipment and were able to keep it running. We had industrious people. Farming on a large scale was not what we really enjoyed doing. I pointed that out in those pictures of the fields and the long rows. It got to be a burden on people. During the winter months and when farming wasn't happening people would look for other jobs. They would develop businesses that were more prosperous than farming. Then they would have the excuse that they needed to go off into those businesses because they were bringing more money in than farming. It was difficult to find the people to staff this large farming operation. We had a constant inflow of visitors and people coming in who wanted to live there, so we always had this unskilled labor pool to draw from. In 1976, we borrowed three hundred thousand dollars for a major capitalization of the farming crew. We were going to expand to over two thousand acres under cultivation. The banks were ready to loan money very easily at under ten percent. We were happy to take out these large loans knowing full well that we would be able to repay them as we always had. It was a good year. In fact, it was such a good year that crops were bountiful all over the state. The price of tomatoes was down. The price of squash was down. We ended up having whole fields just sitting there rotting because it would cost us more to harvest them than it would the price, we would get for selling them. So, we lost money. We said, okay that was our learning experience at that level, but now we know how to operate at that level. We'll plan a little bit better next year. We borrowed another three hundred thousand dollars.

Q: The second year in a row?
A: The second year in a row. We went in even deeper. By the end of that year we were in over six hundred thousand dollars. Adding to that some other loses from other businesses. We got about eight hundred thousand dollars in the hole by the end of 1978. By 1979, we were looking for work wherever we could find it. Farming was not … We were getting vehicles repossessed. This is amarand which we were growing as an experiment for a plant operation. These are the grape vineyards. This is corn, tomatoes, solar power stuck in here.

Q: A swimming pool.
A: Right. This is a nice house but unfinished. What I want to get to through here is why some people left. One of the reasons was there was no money for anything other than to pay the burden on the loans, the interest payments. We had a ten-man crew whose sole purpose in life was to answer the phone and fend off creditors and go around to talk to bankers to try and roll over loans. That's what they did for years. People who were living in houses that were half finished wanted the money to finish them. They didn't want to keep stoking the furnace in the winter months because they didn't have any siding on the outside of their house. They were building houses like this off The Farm.

Q: That was a solar house.
A: Right. We had houses like this on The Farm. The standard was getting to be appalling, especially when you're raising a bunch of young kids and you want better things for them. You go to the bank lady and you say, "I need money for diapers." She says, "Tear up an old T-shirt." This is the Shaker standard in Dorothy's house on Drakes Lane. Everything is built perfectly, well-designed, square, plumb, perfectly fitted, works, everything done to immaculate standards, inexpensively.

Q: This is the inside of the solar house we saw two slides back.
A: Right. This is for somebody off The Farm. On The Farm people were working to the ragged edge. They were getting home after eighteen-hour days, grumpy, feeling like they were boxed in. The women on The Farm felt like the men were treating them like animals. They got them very uptight.

Q: Is that the NRC again?
A: Bill paying, something that we did all the time. We were trying to figure out how to make ends meet. There's a bank lady with two phones going trying to balance creditors and let them know that we don't have any money, but we do intend to pay them eventually. Don't foreclose! The same thing you see in the farms all across America in the 1980's. At the same time, we had thousands and thousands of visitors arriving every day. Our policy had always been everything was free. You come in, you get fed, you get housed, you get handled, you get tours, you get taking care of, people walk you around and show you around. There's a crew of one hundred people take care of you all the time to meet your every need, give you advice, tell you about The Farm.

Q: For free?
A: Yes, all for free. People typically had ten overnight visitors in every house every night. There was never any peace or privacy. People were getting fed up. I'm getting into more reasons why people were leaving The Farm. They were burned out! Everything to everyone. We took in anybody who wanted to stay-single mothers, people in serious medical situations, people who were straight out of insane asylums who could not cope, who had been through the Reagan Administration or whatever and had been mainstreamed back into communities. There's a particular term for that--being institutionalized. We would take in anyone for any reason. If they wanted to live on The Farm, they could, whether they were productive or not. Pick the person in this picture who actually produces an income. One guy. All the rest are dependents. This is a typical meeting of The Farm's Council of Elders in about 1979 or 1980. No, I would say it's longer than that. 1981 or 1982. At this point, The Farm is more than a million dollars in debt. The basic budget, what it takes to feed The Farm, is about ten thousand dollars a week. The income is anywhere from five thousand to eight thousand dollars a week. So, we're going in debt at about two thousand dollars a week at this point in time. This meeting is made up of people who are elected to be on the Council of Elders. Seventy people are elected because there are various methods of election--geographical by work or expertise, by categories of age, and various methods which were developed to make it fair and equal. So, the body expanded in size to meet these various different needs for balance. All of the constituencies of The Farm are represented in this meeting. This seventy-member body is talking about everything from whose going to fix the plumbing in the adobe to what's the next book going to be published by The Book Publishing Company. Enormously inefficient.

Q: Yes, not good at administration.
A: Disastrously inefficient. Of the people in this picture two still live on The Farm.

Q: Two?
A: Two--Joel and Cynthia. Everybody else is gone. They could see the writing on the wall. It filtered out to the rest of The Farm. With this style of management operating at this scale, this is not long for this world.

Q: Nobody in this group came up with the idea of hey, let's reorganize.
A: Reorganize? Yes, I was in this group. I formed a constitutional committee. We met intensively for months. We came up with a new plan. I'll get to the new plan. This is an interim step. This is tree planting, one of the great ideas for raising a lot of money in a short amount of time. Send people out all over the country planting trees in distant areas in season. Bring back hundreds of thousands of dollars in a short amount of time. It worked and it didn't work. Sometimes it worked and sometimes it didn't. Mostly it was a waste of time. How are you going to take those people out of good-paying jobs and other businesses that they've already established and plunk them down in a tree? We had a draft where we pulled people out of their jobs and put them into tree planting. Everybody had to serve. It was a universal draft. They had to go tree plant. It was very difficult to get exempted for any reason whatsoever. Medical people generally could get exempted. We had a few special cases like that. Everybody else had to go. It was a tug of war. This is the constitutional committee. This is Peter Schweitzer. He stood up and told The Farm this is what we decided we were going to do.

Q: Was this a Sunday meeting?
A: Sunday Morning Service. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to change things. We're not going to have a seventy-member board deciding every single thing. We're going to have a nine-member board deciding policy, which will be implemented at the local level. It's called a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors will change the decision-making process. This board will be elected onto three-year terms. We'll go from this size group to this size group. This is the status of The Farm. Actually, since The Farm went down in size it's down to seven members. They' 11 be elected for three-year terms overlapping. A new election every year of three members. This group will develop expertise in a variety of subjects, so they don't have to be brought up to stream at every meeting on any particular thing. They will set policy for The Farm. They will make decisions. We elected the first Board of Directors. The first thing the first Board of Directors said was we're going to de-communalize. We could go to a form of script where we issue money, some form of paper where we say you have to earn this in some job, and you pay that into the store to get your bread. Instead, we'll just use dollars. It's simpler. You have to buy your food at the store. If you want to send your kids to The Farm school, you have to pay tuition. If you want to build a house, you go to the lumber company and buy the lumber. If the prices on The Farm are not as good as the prices in town, buy it in town. That was the first major decision of the Board of Directors.

Q: Were they in power to make that decision?
A: That was the constitutional change. I created a monster, right?

Q: You created it?
A: I was on the constitutional committee that designed the new system. That was this Board of Directors.

Q: Was it that the people who got elected were of a certain mind frame where they really weren't into the communal vision or were, they business people or what?
A: They were primarily business people, successful and well-respected. They were not strongly ideological from the sense of communitarian. We didn't have any of that background.

Q: Were any of them original Farm caravan people?
A: Yes, three or four were original Farm caravan people. The over-riding thing that they had, which I have to respect, was that looking at the numbers and that includes the population decline, the state the businesses were in from under capitalization, the credit demands, the cash flow of The Farm, and the overextended nature of all systems, the crash and collapse of some systems from some people leaving. That really left them very few alternatives. They decided they had to make a separation from weak from chafe. It's not going to be easy. People are going to bitch no matter how you do this. You can go around and fire people from various businesses and cut down over-bloated systems, but mainly it's the service sectors that are going to have to get cut because six out of ten people are in Farm services, like medical, fire, motor pool, school and not income-deriving businesses. We need to boost the income sector and reduce the service sector. It's impossible to do that without pain. So, what we're going to do is we're going to create a system that is neutral to or impervious to human pain. That system is called laisse-faire. They didn't sit down and say they were going to make laissez faire system. They said basically, we're going to go to money. You have to pay to get these services. You have to earn the money to pay for the services. If you don't earn the money, you can't get the services. If you're a potter working at a kiln making pots, you don't have a market for your pots. You sell a few off The Farm or to visitors, but mostly they go in houses around The Farm. People who have a choice between sending their kids to Farm School and buying groceries and buying these pots are not going to buy the pots. So, the potter gets put out of business. The potter goes to work in something that produces money so he can have what he needs. That's the theory. It's neutral. You decide for yourself what you want to do. You're going to have to make money somewhere. Immediately the laundromat shut down. The school almost shut down. It cut down everything above Grade Six. All those kids went to county schools.

Q: What year was this board elected?
A: 1983.

Q: The population was nearly a thousand?
A: The population was six hundred to seven hundred, maybe more. Maybe eight hundred. It's hard to say. I can look at the figures. People all over The Farm talking about how it was going to change their lives. It changed everything. I went to bed like everybody at night. I would wake up in the middle of the night with cold sweats because for fifteen years I had devoted my life to developing a way of living harmoniously in this new system. Suddenly the system was gone. What existed was what had existed before I became a hippie only, I didn't have a job in that other system. Most of the people on The Farm

were in that condition. Like I said, six out of ten were in service industries. Most of which were not paying industries. There were several other moves. The canning and freezing operation shut down. The soy dairy continued in business because they could sell tofu in town. They were able to make a thousand quarts of catsup in a night.

Q: In a night?
A: In the canning and freezing operation--a giant canning and freezing operation. You should see the equipment. Some of it is still there.

Q: It's still there? It's adjacent to the soy dairy?
A: Yes. You walk through there on the way into the soy dairy. A lot of the equipment has been taken out, but a lot of it is still there. It was giant. They would make pickled eggplant. They would make relishes. They would make hot sauces. They would make stuff for an entire season. They would put up green beans and things. We had warehouses full of these canned goods for winter. We lived on that food all winter. We were feeding a thousand people all winter on canned goods. Mason jars alone filled them up. The canning and freezing operation shut down virtually overnight. Who is going to pay for it? It was cheaper to buy food at the store in town. Sunday Morning Services were suddenly very sparsely attended. That was a radical shift. People had lost faith in Stephen. There were several reasons for this. In some ways Stephen brought it on himself by vacillating between one position and another. He made some very large mistakes in the period of time when we were going through our heavy economic changes. In 1981 or 1982, there was a recession. When Reagan was first elected, there was a slight recession. Housing starts were way down. Neighbors who were in the construction trades as far away as Columbia and Lawrenceburg would come to Stephen and say we can't compete with your carpenters. They're getting our jobs. So, at Sunday Morning Services Stephen used his spiritual authority to urge people to be good neighbors and not take jobs away from carpenters in Lawrenceburg and Columbia. Let them have the jobs. Get out of construction for the time being. Terrible mistake! There was a lot of rebellion about that. The management board didn't like it at all. Stephen lost a lot of his authority behind that decision, that and a lot of other decisions like it where he tried to exercise authority after having withdrawn from a role of leadership in the mid-seventies where he wanted The Farm to run itself. He wanted to be able to go out and tour to raise money for Plenty, to speak around the world, to talk about philosophy, to go with the rock and roll band and things like that and not be concerned about the running of The Farm. Let The Farm have its own systems for running itself and not bother him about it. So, he had withdrawn. Then when The Farm was in this crisis situation he's coming back and using whatever moral powers he has to get it to make the wrong decisions. People resented his asserting himself. He saw himself, quite rightly I think, as coming back in as a strong father figure asserting a leadership which was needed to pull us through a difficult time. On the other hand, he was not viewed that way, also quite correctly. These two viewpoints clashed. They still clash today. Ask Edward Sierra. That's the kind of attitude he has-- that Stephen is trying to meddle into things he doesn't know very well how to do. This resulted in a loss of faith in Stephen Gaskin and a sense of betrayal. We put our faith in him and now here we are finding that he's just like any other guru. Why are we even here? Isn't this just Stephen's private farm? Even more people left. So, we're getting more people leaving The Farm. The austerity measures came in. They go with this change needing to find work. You know, if we're going

to live like we were going to live before we became hippies why do we want to do it here? The rebuilding period didn't actually began until all the dust had settled. We hit a lull of around two hundred and twenty people. It was like the people who stayed after the party to do the dishes.

Q: To do the dishes after the party?
A: That was about 1986. I put a number of sub-categories here-new economics, governing by agreement and subtle themes. At this point in time it has been four years since I gave this talk. I don't remember what the subtle themes were.

Q: They were very subtle then.
A: Yes, I guess so. (Laughter.) The new economics was experimenting with quasi-capitalism, moderating laissez faire, trying to help people who fell through the safety nets, and paying off our loans. By 1987 we had retired all of the million dollars indebtedness on The Farm. It was gone. We extinguished it by 1987. I was on the Board of Directors at the time. It was a great day to finally burn the mortgage. The attitude on The Farm that lingers to this day as a result of that is never again. Never again will we mortgage The Farm over anything. You saw in this in the discussions about the roads.

Q: At the second foundation meeting.
A: Yes, and also just at general discussions on The Farm about when we re-voted the roads did, we really want to borrow forty thousand dollars from the bank when we just got out of debt. Here's two hundred and twenty people, more than half of them children. You're talking about eighty to one hundred adults who retired a million dollars indebtedness.

Q: So, was it only eighty adults that cleaned up that million dollars?
A: More. There was a decline through there where everybody was kicking in some money. That was what was left at the very end. In 1986-1987 it went up to around a hundred paying adults and has stayed there ever since. It's a stable period now, the rebuilding period. We haven't increased the population of The Farm, although to do so would probably ease the burden a little bit because there would be more dues payers and would also raise the level of infrastructure and services. People are a little reticent to do that. Having been through this catastrophe with this close group of one hundred people it's difficult for outsiders to break in and establish the kind of sense of family and rapport that you have with people you've been through this the catastrophe with. So, we have this track record with each other that we feel very close-knit with. We're not actively recruiting new members because it's difficult to matriculate someone to that same sense of responsibility, the sense of commitment. This is the governing by agreement. The change now has been that we're a small enough group of one hundred adults. We can have town meetings where we can actually all of us meet together and come to decisions fairly easily. Most town meetings have no more than twenty or thirty people show up, but they're representative. A group like that can decide a lot. It's smaller than the representative body of the earlier period. For day to day running of The Farm, management of the basic budget, contracting for services, construction of roads and water systems, creation of a budget, that's for the Board of Directors, a seven-man elected body. That's what they're for. They do that admirably. The gate used to be seventy people. Now it's one part-time. This is the original gate man, Lesley Hunt.

Q: Who?
A: When Stephen first set up the gate he said, "Lesley, I want a gate like Pendleton." When we first got to The Farm, we had Ku Klux Klan all around us. In fact, one time we had people ride through with shotguns and horses. We've had stuff being shot up here all the time we've been here. We seldom report it to the police. We'd rather get along with our neighbors. Lesley was another Marine just like Stephen, an ex-Korean War Marine. He turned to Lesley and said, "I want a gate like Pendletons." Lesley set up the first gate at The Farm. He built a little sentry post and set up a metal gate across the main road in, set up a perimeter, and checked everybody coming in and going out. He has a gate log to keep track of everybody coming in and going out.

Q: Do you still have those logs?
A: Oh, yes, all hand-written. If they were typed, I would have had them in the computer already. Lesley is the original gate person. He built up this giant operation. Our principal businesses are making tofu, a good commercial soy dairy operation, a recycling center for glass and aluminum on The Farm. There is The Farm excavation company. Thomas Elliott goes out and works in the surrounding area with his backhoe and bulldozer.

Q: Does he hire other people to work with him?
A: He's pretty much a one-man job. He gets paid well and handles his own equipment. None of these slides are dropping.

Q: They're empty.
A: Oh, okay. That's comforting. I guess this is just closing out with some scenic pictures of The Farm.

Q: Tell a little bit each picture.
A: That was the apple orchards on The Farm.

Q: Go back to the first one.
A: This is one of the waterfalls on The Farm.

Q: That's gorgeous.
A: This is the view from my back porch right down from the house where we're sitting right now with the fog rolling in with the morning mists. That's the confluence of the Cock's Branch on the left and the cow pen on the right. Sorry, it's the other way around. The cow pen is on the left. The Cock's Branch is on the right. They come together to form the Swan River. That's the start of the Swan River right there. Swan River is the source of water for the town of Centerville in the center of the state. You have to go forty miles downstream to find it. These are the apple orchards. Here are the grape vineyards. They're still growing. We don't have to plant these.

Q: I just took pictures Saturday of a worker pruning all of those vines.
A: That's what they're going to look like in about four months.

Q: Four months? Gosh, that's fast.
A: That's the scenic cruiser bus.

Q: Out to save the world.
A: This is when they painted the bus for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's tour. They put whales on the side. Inside the bus on tour. They go three months like this. They can do it because they're used to living in these kinds of quarters back on The Farm. This is on their way down to Guatemala. They would drive across land to get down to Guatemala. You know, I have slides in another two carousels that I don't have here. The Plenty story is a whole other tape. This is a truckload of soybeans on their way to the soy dairy in Guatemala City. Loading up at the grain elevator on their way to save the world.

Q: Is that grain elevator on The Farm?
A: No, it was actually soybeans probably in southern Texas. It was cheaper for us to sell our soybeans at the grain elevator in Lawrenceburg, take the money, save the diesel fuel, go down to Texas, pick up the soybeans. They not only filled up the semitruck, they also filled up the bays of the scenic cruiser. Then they go down into Guatemala. This is our carpentry crew. I've got a few Plenty slides here. This is our carpentry crew in Guatemala City immediately after the earthquake. The earthquake left twenty-five thousand dead. A lot more people were homeless. This is a crew of Quetzal Indians learning how to build earthquake-proof houses and buildings. This is one of the buildings they're building. It's a city center in a small village in the highlands of Guatemala. We've built over three hundred schools, municipal buildings, and several thousand houses. This is laying seven miles of water to get water to villages after the earthquake. We just get out there with our transits and surveying tools and lay out this water line, said where we wanted to go. They said okay and showed it to the crew the next morning. They dug the trench seven miles.

Q: In one day?
A: No, not in one day. This is a ham radio going up in the San Andreas Itzapa.

Q: Do you still have ham radios around?
A: There's a few on The Farm. This is the Plenty Relief Field Expedition out to save the world, Foundation of Care for the World. Stephen on tour with morning glories on the side of the bus.

Q: It's quite a bus.
A: That's the soy dairy. This is actually where they make ice bean using The Farm recipe. This is one of the new municipal buildings in San Andreas Itzapa.

Q: Stucco?
A: Yes, earthquake-proof. This is water. We used to bring these jugs two or three miles up to the mountain top to get water and bring it back down. We laid cisterns at the top of the mountain and then ran the water down by gravity feed. This is Free which is a sailing ship that was used to stop nuclear tests in the French Atoll in the South Pacific. They brought it over. It was going to sail into the Caribbean.

We chartered it to take supplies down to various islands like Dominica and Haiti. These slides are terrible. They're all out of order. This is a school in Haiti where we gave them sports equipment and various other things. This is southern Africa. We're now no longer on the Free going from island to island. Instead we are in Lesotho where we're building our community training center to teach people how to do reforestation. This is Guatemala again.

Q: This is a round stone building with a wooden reinforcement.
A: Lesotho is kind of an island nation in the middle of South Africa where all the men were taken to be worked in the mines in South Africa. This ruined the farming economy of the area. We're trying to re-establish the basic farming economics and trying to reforest what was once the bread basket of Southern Africa. It's now been denuded through exploitation of the land. We're trying to improve the basic culture and improve the protein. These are Indian elders in Guatemala. We had a change of government in Guatemala during the early Reagan years. The government that came in was evangelical. They had American helicopters. They didn't like Indians. They thought they were Communists. They systematically wiped out entire villages. These are children's drawings of American-built helicopters coming in and soldiers spraying the villages with machine guns. The helicopters struck and burned everything, killing men, women, and children--mothers, brothers, sisters, friends they had grown up with. They fled through the jungle and wound up in the province of Mexico. This is the province of Mexico, the jungle, one of the most forbidding jungles in the world. This is an aerial view while we're flying around in our Cessna trying to find a place to land. These are villages of thatch made from the jungle. It's filled with hundreds and thousands of Guatemalan refugees who had been chased out of their homelands by military expeditions sponsored by the United States totally in secret. This is the area where we found the land alongside a river that's been cleared. This is a village of refugees in the jungle. These are the kinds of houses they were living in.

Q: Is that a clear cut from the jungle?'
A: Yes, a clear cut from the jungle. This is where we landed. What did they (refugees) need? They need medicine, food, but after that what did they need? They need the means to produce an income and the means to also retain their culture. In Guatemala their tradition is that they weave their cosmology. Popol Vu is the Mayan corn god. The giving of the corn to the universe. The galaxies of saints over their history is woven into their cloth. Each village has its own distinctive creation story. The mothers pass it on to the daughters as they weave on the hand looms. So, what did they want? They wanted the materials to go back to weaving. They didn't have them in these refugee villages. After food and medicine, we brought them cloth. In the middle of the story the slides get into another subject! They butchered my story! The next slide was supposed to be the weaving of the hand looms. As it is it's the Black Hills of South Dakota where Plenty is helping Native Americans on the longest walk to protest anti-Indian legislation and helping the poorest people in America on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation who are being treated not quite as bad as the Guatemalan Indians by the Guatemalan government. We're trying awful hard. Here's the slide I had wanted. Weaving of the Popol Vu, the corn god into the cloth. By providing them this material, we allowed them to keep their culture, and we also provided them the market for selling the finished patterns in the first world, so they could bring the money back in and rebuild their villages when the political climate changed in Guatemala, and they were able to go back

across the border in Guatemala, and that's the last slide. Well, this slide show is a little bit butchered. I apologize for the rough edges. There are better slides out there somewhere and some things that I didn't get to talk about.

Q: This isn't a production quality job. This is just documented history.
A: At some point I will sit down with a light table and actually lay out a good slide show to do in production quality.

Q: While we've got the tape running here, I wanted to interview you a little bit about your historian's role. Are you the self-appointed historian of The Farm or did you run for that? Are you elected?
A: [Laughter.] Self-appointed.

Q: What do you have collected?
A: In 1979 or thereabouts, the book company said we need to do a book on the history of The Farm. This is at the period which I call the Peak before we collapsed and rebuilt. This is the peak period of The Farm. We knocked it. We had it made. Although we were getting deeply in debt with farming, we hadn't noticed. We were still so cocksure that we could get out of it and it wasn't going to be a serious problem. We had a million-dollar bestseller in The Big Dummy's Guide~ CB Radio. A lot of things were going our way. We had some good rock and roll bands. Hey, Beatnik. This is The Farm book. Let's go through a chronology of The Farm books. The first one was Monday Night Class. This was a collection of edited transcripts of Stephen's gigs in San Francisco. The second one was The Caravan which was a collection of edited transcripts of talks around the country as he travelled in the caravan.

Q: Alternating with driver meetings.
A: Yes. There are a few driver meetings in there, but mostly it's talks to the groups. Then the third one is *Hey, Beatnik, this is The Farm*. This was supposed to be your introduction to what The Farm is. *Hey, Beatnik* was the first one printed on The Farm at The Farm print shop. I said where we learned our printer's craft was producing *Hey, Beatnik*. It's an interesting book because it's multi-colored and no two print runs were quite the same. The first book sold for one dollar which was vastly underpriced. They are real collector's items. I think there's on in the communal library, too.

Q: Oh, at the Center [for Communal Studies]?
A: Yes. The third book was *Volume One, Sunday Morning Services on The Farm*, which were edited transcripts of Sunday Morning Services. There's a variety of other books. The third book, *Hey, Beatnik, this is The Farm* went quickly out of print. Probably no more than five thousand ever printed. That book became the nugget around which several other books were written. The food section became *The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook*. The midwifery section became *Spiritual Midwifery*. The Sunday Morning Services became *Volume One, Sunday Morning Services on The Farm*. Several other sections in there probably developed into books. By 1978 or 1979, we realized there was one section that had never been developed into a book. It was probably the most important section--the history of The Farm. The book company decided to do a history of The Farm. They set up an office to do it. They gathered oral histories. They had at one time half a dozen people working on six separate computer terminals

plugging in stuff that went to typesetting. They had several walls of several rooms filled with artwork and photos. They had a darkroom working around the clock printing candidate photos. They were working with ten years of archives and just developing beautiful stuff. Then the change came in 1982 or 1983 after four years work on this book with a large staff and a lot of money. The book company could no longer justify the expense. They were limited to as many workers as they could have on payroll. All of those people got fired. The project was shut down. The offices that held all that stuff sat vacant for more than a year with all the stuff still on the walls. The computers that had all the transcribed and edited versions of all the oral histories were backed up on magnetic tape from hard disk. The computers were Ohio Scientific Computers system. The computer company was out of the computer business before we bought the computers. It was held together by an electronic genius named John Seward. In 1983, when The Farm went through its changes, he took a job in San Francisco and made an appropriate salary. Most of the people who were working on the project left The Farm in the exodus. One day I was going over there looking for some stuff from The Natural Rights Center. This was probably 1984 or 1985. I walked in and found the windows had been broken either from a storm or from kids. They had not been repaired. The floor was flooded. Two file cabinets were overturned and flopping around on the floors were printed transcripts of Monday Night Class--typeset chapters, stuff that was just soaking in the water on the floor. Photographs were falling down off the walls. It was in terrible disarray and in danger of being lost completely. I looked at it and realized the value of this stuff. This was awful that it was being treated this way. I went to the book company and told them that I would like to continue work on The Farm book. At this point the book company had been sold to two members of The Farm. They said they would like to continue work on that book. I said I would take it on, but if you want the book out soon, I'll have to have an advance against expenses because I was going to have to stop working. I had to feed my family. If I was going to work on this book, I was going to have to have an advance. They said they couldn't give me an advance. I said okay, I'll do it but in my spare time. It's going to take some years because it's a lot of work. They said fine. I said if I'm going to devote my time to this work, I'm going to need a contract because I'm going to be putting my time into it. I don't want you suddenly hiring somebody else to do the job if I'm going to devote all my spare time to this. We worked on an agreement where I give them right of first refusal on the book and they give me unlimited access to all the material that I could find and lay my hands on. So, I have first dibs on all that, prints, photos, and stuff. That's why I was involved at the archival meeting. That made me The Farm historian at that point in time. I immediately went around trying to gather up material. I told you about my experience finding out about Fletcher's book. Fletcher Knievel wrote *Seven Days in May*. He came down to The Farm in 1974 or 1975 and made two hundred and forty interviews on tape. He wrote a book called *The Big Juice* which was a true story of The Farm. He sent three chapters to his publisher and then sent copies down to Stephen.

Q: Did he write the whole book?
A: No, he just wrote three chapters. He sent three copies to his publisher. His publisher was willing to come up with a fat advance. He sent it to Stephen. Stephen didn't like it and said it was awful. He told Fletcher that and Fletcher dropped the book. I read the book. I see what Stephen was saying. Basically, it was glowing in its praise. It was flowery in its praise. On the other hand, it was very good from the standpoint of historical accuracy, I thought. The two hundred and forty interviews were barely visible in

those three chapters. They were invaluable historical records. I contacted Fletcher and asked what he did with those tapes. He said he left them in the garage in Princeton when he moved to Hawaii. It turns out the garbage collector came and got them. They no longer exist. They're lost. The next thing was what happened to the magnetic computer tapes.

Q: You're sure they're lost? You called …
A: Fletcher did.

Q: Oh, he checked personally.
It might be possible that they still exist somewhere, that somebody salvaged them and saved them. We don't know who or why or how. All of the stuff that was saved on the OSI [the computer tapes]. What happened to it? Well, I went dusting around the book company and found a box of computer tapes. I grabbed it and brought it over to Plenty. I still have it. Whether it's the same tapes that were on the OSI which crashed when the genius left and went to San Francisco and was sold for scrap or something completely different, I have no idea. All of the file names are coded with an FB prefix meaning Farm Book. I believe there were over four hundred files with an FB prefix of personal stories of The Farm. There are other missing archives. When we first went to do *An Amazing Dope Tales* book which eventually became *Haight Street Flashbacks* which is now in re-publication by Roden Press.

Q: Not the original title?
A: No, the new title is *Haight Street Flashbacks*. The old title was *Amazing Dope Tales*. It was originally conceived as a collection of stories of the Haight-Ashbury by all of the people on The Farm who had lived there. It was called *Amazing Dope Tales, the Working Book*. It was gathering up histories from all these different people with various psychedelic experiences they had tripping in San Francisco. I read hundreds of those when I worked in the book publishing company. I was working in the art department. We were trying to draw illustrations to go with the stories. I read lots of those stories. They were absolutely fantastic stories. I'll give you one. There was a guy named William Brady. I don't even know if he's still alive. He dropped acid at a friend's house. He was wearing a white t-shirt and a white pair of pants, I think. When the acid came on, he forgot where he was. He couldn't figure out his surroundings. He went to a mirror and looked into the mirror. He thought he had died and was in Heaven. He went out onto the street and walked down the street and didn't see anybody. He walked several blocks and came to this building that looked like it was doing something. It was a big white building. Since it was big and white, he went in. It turned out it was a psychiatric hospital. He walked up to the receptionist. She asked him where he was from. He said he was from Earth. She said, "Well, can you be more specific?" He thought she was the admitting angel and he had to give her his life story to get into Heaven. (Laughter.) She was actually the receptionist to this psychiatric hospital.

Q: That pretty much got him in, didn't it?
A: I guess it did. It was some time getting out. There are lots of stories like that. They're collected in a great big cardboard box somewhere. Eventually, the book became Stephen's stories because they didn't have room to do all these other stories. They just decided to concentrate on his which were the best anyway. They did that book on just his personal amazing dope tale histories. This other one, which is

terrific, is missing. I've been over the book company attic inch by inch trying to find it. I can't even find it. I don't know where it is. I went up to the editor. I found that the main stories that have been gathered for The Farm book were not there. They weren't in any file cabinets that were there. I found the editor living in Nashville. He had been the project manager for The Farm book. He was going to law school. I went up and saw him. He had the cardboard box of all the major material. It included a lot of photographs and a lot of stories. This was not the final edited versions. Those were all on computer tape. This was the original submissions by people who wrote their stories rather than spoke them into tape.

Q: So, this stuff might be in the four hundred and some FB files?
A: Oh, the four hundred and some FB files are invaluable. Even the people who typed their submissions or wrote them out and handed them in came in to use the terminals to edit. I personally edited many stories. Most of my work was straight into a magnetic media. I didn't write stuff and hand it in. I went over and typed it. Most people were like that. By far and away the whole thing was stored in magnetic media. As far as we can tell, there was never a printout of the whole thing in its final form.

Q: Is this magnetic media readable now?
A: I have no idea.

Q: You don't have a computer here that would read it?
A: We don't have anything that would read it. The operating system that it was using was an obscure OSI operating system. The word processing program was something called Quan Due Ho Sup or something like that that was from Hong Kong. You're not going to even find any operating manual for it or anything else. Presumably, somewhere it's up in there in the magnetic media that you could pull out.

Q: Do you want me to take one of those up to the Center and see if they can deal with it? That would be interesting. That would be fascinating.
A: Sure. The second thing that happened was as I'm sitting around and gathering of all this archival material now, I've got a school bus full of it. I've got a large utility truck full of it, boxes and files of stuff that I'm gathering. I keep gathering in more all the time, gathering stories. Every time I go to a Macintosh meeting with Stephen, I talk to him about history, his personal married life, his childhood, his early years in San Francisco, his war years.

Q: Do you tape it?
A: No, I make notes into a notebook, but I don't tape it. I gather up more of that stuff. When we went to Las Vegas he showed me the chapel where he first married his first wife. It was annulled. Things like that. I'm gathering up this information, this mass data. It's his innermost stuff. It's very forthright; he's a very honest and open fellow. The next thing that happened is we got sued by somebody who used to live on The Farm claiming that she was owed copyright money, royalties on a book that she had participated with seventy other people in developing. We had to defend that suit. She sued us in Texas. The book company hired me to defend that. I did successfully defend that. In the process I needed to gather up experts on communal societies to potentially serve as witnesses at trial to assist in developing

the theory of communalism and how everything is owned together. Nobody has any rights to it more than anybody else. You shouldn't be paid royalties in some future year for what you did back then.

Q: In the commune?
A: Yes. Nobody should be paid royalties. If anybody gets royalties, we all get royalties because we all contributed. I needed some experts. I heard about the Seventeenth Annual of the meeting of the National Historic Communal Societies Association which was being held in Canterbury, New Hampshire. I got the book company to front me a plane ticket. I went up and actually walked from the airport twenty miles to the site of the conference.

Q: Was that a pilgrimage or you didn't feel like hitching?
A: I did hitch a little bit, but I never got a ride. Finally, I said this was too pretty. This is the Concord area that Thoreau walked through. The Merrimack River is absolutely gorgeous in the Fall. Why should I even bother trying to hitchhike because it was lovely, so I just walked. It took me all day. I flew in in the morning and got to the motel late at night. I spent three days there. Not only did I meet Don Pitzer for the first time, but I also met Evan Eve, Jazz, and Way.

Q: Kerista Village.
A: Yes. I got my eyes opened and my ears filled with the language of scholarly communitarianism for the first time. It was actually quite breathtaking for me because as an amateur budding historian trying to context all this stuff, learning more about Amana and the changes they went through and about the Shakers and about the Hutterites and about all this other stuff really made me understand basics of what it is that communities have in common, what do they all go through, what are the economic situations that they all face, whether it's social and political context of being different. All these dynamics that I was struggling with in trying to write The Farm story. Wow, here's a whole bunch of people thinking about the same stuff. I became a fan of that whole business. I went to the next three meetings. They put me on the Board of Directors. They wanted a communitarian to be on the Board of Directors, so I started going to the meetings at New Harmony, the Board meetings, reading the books, the magazines, and the journals, delivering papers, and writing on these subjects, etc. I got into the Utopian Studies Association which is similar, getting on at that area. I describe it as a hobby. Cynthia says you're wasting too much time. You don't have this much time to waste in your life. Why are you wasting it on this? My answer is that I realize at the age of forty that some of the most significant work I have done in my life is stuff that I used to take for granted. Living in community and building The Farm was stuff that we did as a means to an end of working as an environmental attorney for the Natural Rights Center and as a development officer for Plenty, International. Building the community was the launching platform for this spaceship. I now realize that the launching platform is as important as the spaceship. (Laughter.) Even after the spaceship may have gone the launching platform is still something to be pointed at and admired. Most people here still don't understand that. Most people on The Farm who have not had the experience of going to these historical society meetings and things don't have any concept, don't have any feel for the historicity of The Farm.

Q: Couldn't you get enough big tents to host the CSA [Communal Studies Association] conference here? Wouldn't that be a trip to get all those academics here?
A: It would be a trip. We want to do it at some point. It's going to be difficult. We will do it at some point. The other things is that people on The Farm don't go to conferences even when they're here. We found that out at the energy fair.

Q: That's interesting. So, there's all that stuff, you're writing a book eventually.
A: Eventually, this year, in fact this month and next month I would like to at least get a first draft hammered out of a short history of The Farm. This would be in paperback form about thirty to sixty pages. No bigger than an early City Lights book to sell at the gate for five dollars or less to be able to have for visitors and to answer mail and to sell maybe at Ragweed Day and some of our twenty-year anniversary festivals. This is our twentieth year, so we're having big events around it.

Q: I can get all of this transcribed.
A: Well, this isn't all of it.

Q: No, not even parts of it.
A: I can do better when I sit down to a typewriter. If you're going to get it transcribed, you can send me a transcript because it would probably help me to keep track of certain things to make sure I mention it all. I was following the slides. There wasn't any conscious program. The conscious one that I designed was not there when we did the slide show. It was the one I did for Indiana State [University Evansville]. It had a better opening slide of the rousting of the hippies. It had a lot of interspersed tags between them showing where I was. I ran across a couple, but not very many. The blocks were broken up so that slides from one block were in another and so on. Some key slides were missing too. There's a slide that's in something I've already done. I forget what it was. It has all the buses parked in the field in the Martin farm all circled up like wagons in a wagon train.

Q: It's conceivable that one of those just didn't show.
A: That's true. You're dealing with master slides here. Those are not duplicate masters. Those are the slides.