

Interview with Horace and Betty Gale

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

May 15, 1996

HG = Horace Gale, BG = Betty Gale

**Q:** It's Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, right? I think I've got that right, and an interview with Horace and Betty Gale, who were involved in the Pinebrook Community. And I'd like to hear some of the events that led up to you becoming involved in the community.

**HG:** Well, for me it related very directly to my work. I was chosen to be treasurer of the American Baptist National Ministries Domestic Mission Agency in 1970. One of our programs which came out of the emphasis of ecology and justice was looking at alternate lifestyle. And very very attractive to me in that we would be examining our own lifestyle and perhaps questioning and possibly changing lifestyle depending on what we learned. So that was the beginning. Dan Carney was the manager of that particular program and did a major amount of work in bringing people together and giving us information about intentional communities. He was a key person, I feel.

**Q:** And when was this? Was this early Seventies? 1970s?

**HG:** Yes, about 1972 probably, when we started talking. We talked at least a year before anything was finalized, we found a place.

**Q:** And do you think it's unusual for a church to have been involved in this? I've just not heard that before, of a church being involved in the start of an intentional community.

**HG:** Well, I think our church, as you may have discovered, is somewhat unusual to start with, so it wasn't unusual for us to talk about it. The only unusual part as I look back is that the seventeen people who moved in May, 1973, all were either members or had some relationship to Central Baptist Church in Wayne. So it was a very helpful connection. We did many things in cooperation with the church, and there were a lot of church people helping us in getting set up and so on. So a very natural marriage, so to speak.

**Q:** During the year when you were getting together and talking about doing this, were you actively out looking for property?

**HG:** Yes. Yes. The property came near the end of the time when we were talking. We had to really make the decision among maybe thirty or so people, "Are we really going to do it?" And once that decision was made by six people, six adults representing three families, we started seriously looking for a place. And the others who were not a part of that small group were still interested and there were peripheral kinds of groups that were formed later, which included people who were thinking about it, but were not quite ready to join us.

**BG:** My notes here give a little more accurate time line. Dan Carney called a group of people together in March, 1971. This was held in his home, and I would say there were probably twenty or more people who came, just out of the blue. This had not been something he'd worked [??] on people. He called it the community idea and I have a copy of what he sent out at that time. And although I was pretty much in the dark about anything as drastic as communal living, I went to the meeting with Horace and was interested that the reaction to this idea of community was so different among the people who were there. Some said, "Oh, that would be great. I wouldn't have to mow lawns anymore," or all this kind of stuff. And then another person would say, "Oh, well I love gardening and I love being outdoors," so that we had such a variety of people. So that was March of 1971. And then we probably mostly then

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prepared, what do you call it, a dream draft of what we were talking about, and maybe he's made available to you some of this. And there was a great deal of activity among groups of people, and the groups kept changing. We'd have a meeting for anyone who was interested and we usually got good responses in numbers. And then we'd have the next one and there'd be a lot of different people. I think that's about where Horace had stopped, maybe, when I came in, but it really took two full years. We moved in . . .

**HG:** May 1973.

**BG:** Yeah, May '73. And so that was two full years of grouping and regrouping, looking at property. Just a long process.

**Q:** Was it frightening for you at all to think of moving in with other people or was this just an exciting idea?

**HG:** I don't think it was frightening. These were people we knew quite well to start with.

**BG:** Well, some of them.

**HG:** Oh, I mean the ones who started, the seventeen, were people we knew. They were members or related to our church, as I mentioned, and when you say, "Weren't you afraid," I hadn't thought of that word before, so I guess I wasn't afraid.

**BG:** He likes new things and jumping into adventures.

**Q:** Yeah, because that would've been a pretty big commitment. I imagine you probably had to sell a house or at least move from one place to another.

**BG:** We had moved here in March of 1970, and so here this was just about a year later. And we had bought this very nice home and we did sell it. Speaking of how we felt about it, speaking for the others, I think the biggest problem, the most common problem, was the fear of lack of privacy. And actually, that turned out never to be a problem.

**Q:** Oh, okay. And do you think that was in part due to the actual layout of the house?

**BG:** Yes. And each unit of people had its own bathroom.

**Q:** What drew the two of you to this idea? Why did you want to live together with other people?

**HG:** I thought we'd probably learn something that we wouldn't have learned otherwise. And having those kind of contacts. People whose values were similar to ours, we knew that. They weren't a lot different from us. And I think that it's very stimulating. As long as you can have a place to back off. I mean, I don't like the stimulation continuing, this is what I like about this place, there's a lot of stimulation here, because there's two hundred and fifty people involved in this complex, but I need a place to get away from it.

**Q:** Would you say the group had a particular mission or goals, purpose?

**BG:** Oh yes, we've got lots of information on that. Here's one statement, "It is our intention to be a support community for the realization of human liberation and self actualization as we: 1) live together to create an environment for personal growth, 2) work both individually and incorporately toward

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making our society more responsive to the needs of persons, and 3) to use responsibly the resources of the Earth."

**Q:** So the mission, you might say, was focused on personal growth and also ecology or environmentalism?

**BG:** Right. Right.

**HG:** There was a questioning of stereotypes in the male and female roles.

**Q:** Okay. So when you shared your work, were you careful to make sure that the work wasn't divided along gender lines?

**BG:** We tried, but it was hard to change some people.

**HG:** We went through the motions.

**Q:** Yeah. And I didn't get a very good idea from the other folks about how you split up the work. Could you talk a little about that?

**BG:** We had lists of jobs. And we were supposed to sign up, I think, about monthly, was it? I'm not sure how often we changed these, but this was, I'd say, one of our biggest community problems in that different people had different standards of how clean a place should be and what was important, and that sort of thing, and some people didn't know how to do certain jobs. A lot of difficulty with that in contrast to our meal cooking and cleanup situation, which worked just beautifully from the first day.

**HG:** The theory at the beginning about the work, I recall, was that when you think about it, for every job there's somebody who is maybe excited about doing it, or at least willing to do it, but at the same time, there were jobs that were really not very pleasant to do. So we thought about assigning credits or units, so if I'd clean out the outside latrine maybe I'd get ten points . . . .

**BG:** [unintelligible] we didn't have one . . . .

**HG:** . . . if we'd had one. And if you decided to sweep off the back porch, which we didn't have either, maybe that was worth one point. So there was a way of compensating for the good and the bad in the work that was expected from each person. It never worked out.

**BG:** Because what was fun for one was not for another. You couldn't put a value on these different jobs.

**Q:** Right.

**HG:** But the jobs got done. From the cleaning to the . . . there was an old orchard that had been neglected for so long, and a few people went out and really did a lot of pruning, cleaning up that space.

**BG:** That was a long term process.

**HG:** And there was a lot of work involved with the swimming pool, in which many people were involved with.

**Q:** That must have been a lot of fun to have a swimming pool as a community. Was that a gathering spot?

**BG:** Well, I don't know whether you heard about Camp Bee Hive [??] ?

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**Q:** A little bit.

**BG:** Well, during most of the summer, they were with us except for weekends, but were with us for say, 9 to 4 every day, and they had use of the pool. But of course, most of us were employed during the day anyway. But we had a lot of nice parties around the pool.

**Q:** I'll bet. Yeah. And one other thing I wasn't quite clear about was the lease. Was the lease actually held by the church? The others couldn't remember who held the lease. They thought they made their payments to the church and then the church . . .

**HG:** Yes, that was the way. The [unintelligible].

**BG:** Wait a minute, was it the church or National Ministry?

**HG:** Yeah, it was American Baptist Church. It was the National Ministries. It was the agency that Dan and I worked for, and so they felt a little better about it, they were dealing with them and the agency knew us well enough to say, "Sure, we'll do this," they were just a conduit.

**Q:** And that made the abbey or whatever, the monastery, feel better about it?

**HG:** Yes, I think they had less of a problem than just picking up a group of seventeen people and trusting their property to them.

**Q:** Was it pretty economical to live there? I mean, were your monthly payments and food payments pretty reasonable?

**HG:** I thought they were. We started out, I thought we started out seven dollars per person per week for food, wasn't that it?

**BG:** Yeah, I think, that's right.

**HG:** And we had our food money left over, so we didn't have any trouble really cutting down the food cost quite a bit.

**BG:** The food was very reasonable and we had excellent food. But of course, that seven dollars didn't last very long. I forget what it was at the end of the four years.

**HG:** But another part of the money was that we chose at the beginning, and this carried through most of the time we were there, we would pay according to income, and I forget the percentage we used, but for our unit I was the only one employed. In Dan's unit, both he and his wife were employed, and so their rent was considerably higher, because the percentage was the same, say fifteen percent, and theirs might have been doubled what we were paying, but we felt that was appropriate as part of the living together idea. It didn't penalize somebody who was at a low level of earning.

**BG:** But there was a minimum rent. And this did not last very long. Several things entered the picture, and this was . . . it didn't last for more than two years, and maybe quite a bit less. We had one woman who either quit or lost her job, and it appeared to the community that she wasn't trying very hard to get another job of equal income and was sort of taking advantage of the, I think, it was a hundred dollars a month of the minimum. And then one of the young men decided to go back for graduate study, so he was kind of in that same boat. And so just some things like that. We came to the conclusion that this wasn't working, so then, I guess we must have set a particular amount per person per month.

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**Q:** So you went from a percentage to then a flat rate.

**BG:** Right.

**Q:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Did you have any list of rules or some sort of a behavior code for living there?

**HG:** There were two that I think of. One, we expected everybody to eat together the evening meal. We expected everybody to attend a weekly meeting in which we hashed and talked about common . . . but beyond that, the expectation of course was everybody to share in the work . . .

**BG:** And we did ask that they commit to at least a year.

**HG:** That's right. But after that year, people who chose to move did move, and we went through the process of interviewing people and them interviewing us about new people coming in. this is the way that Gwen Robinson and the . . .

**Q:** Marshals?

**HG:** Yeah, Marshals, got in .

**Q:** Yeah. How did the membership process work? Could you describe that a little bit? You said you interviewed them and they interviewed you? Was there some sort of a trial period, or . . . ?

**HG:** Well, we weren't really very far from any of the people who were thinking about coming in, it was just, do we really want to make that jump, you know? They would say, "Yes, we're interested if one day you get a vacancy, why, think about it." So they would come in, and I don't know. The process as I recall, was one where the whole group of our people or as many as we could get were there for interchange and those folks were there, and they would ask questions and we would help them to see what we felt were priorities, I mean, "You understand what we're doing here," and so on and so on. And they would ask questions. We never had a problem with the process . . .

**BG:** You're talking exclusively about people who came in after the group was organized . . .

**HG:** After we started, right, yeah, yeah. That's right. Now the process in getting the seventeen there was a little bit different because we had space for fifteen to eighteen people, we'll say, depending on the size of the family, as Betty says. Fortunately, we had a bathroom space for every unit. So that just sort of came together. We'd say, "Okay, we got room for two more single people," so we found two single people . . .

**BG:** Well, we had, as I mentioned before, lots of events and some weekends. Then when we got closer, we had a weekend at the property, and we sort of camped in and the people who at that time were the most interested came. And we just kind of evolved. As he mentioned, the three couples of us who had met together, I think, weekly for close to a year before we actually moved in, found the property and moved in, we had pretty much defined some things, always recognizing that nothing is cast in stone, but we had talked that through pretty well. So we had something that people who were considering could react to. So it was really from input from a lot of people who helped us put together what we came up with. As we went along, there were changes in families. For instance, our children. In one case, a daughter who is in college -- I forget, had she finished college? But anyway, she came back and wanted to live there with her live-in boyfriend. And another, maybe Gwen Robinson told about her daughter who came and had a serious accident, broke her leg or her hip or something . . .

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**Q:** Her hip, yeah, she mentioned that.

**BG:** So there were changes like this, and we seemed to be able to accommodate different needs of people who were either related, or friends, or had emergencies.

**Q:** Now, did the two of you have children?

**BG:** Yes.

**Q:** And what did they think of what you were doing? Were they grown by the time you did this or not?

**BG:** Well, our older girl was, I forget when she married . . .

**HG:** She was married.

**BG:** Yeah, she was in her last year of college, or something. She was in Michigan. Our younger daughter was with us and came to Pinebrook with us, I'm sure with lots of questions. And she had a boyfriend, but she stayed in the section we had, which was the former servants' quarters. And she really liked it and eventually her boyfriend came, and in fact they were married there on the grounds of Pinebrook. And she still talks very warmly about Pinebrook. She and her husband and her children live in Coatesville [??]. And I guess it was Gay [??] said you might want to talk with them. You might want to do so by phone.

**Q:** Is it a drive?

**BG:** Well, it's fifty miles from here and their wild schedules . . .

**Q:** Yeah, I could always do a phone interview. It's always interesting to hear the children's perspective as well. Yeah.

**HG:** Kevin would be a good . . .

**Q:** Yeah, Kevin talked a little bit, not much, but yeah.

**BG:** Well, you can imagine, Kevin was, I think, something like eight or . . .

**Q:** Nine, I think, when he moved in.

**BG:** Nine. So they put Kevin and Horace together in some cleaning jobs, they felt they were about the same level. And Horace and I were the oldest people in the group.

**Q:** Yeah, so you had quite a spread in ages then. Because weren't there some younger children later on?

**BG:** Well, no, it was at the very beginning. We had a couple who had a six month old adopted bi-racial child and a two-year-old. And if you ever got us started on this, we all agreed that this two year old ran the community. For a while.

**Q:** Now, you said you had weekly meetings, right? Was that basically your governing structure? Was there anything beyond that? And did you ever have what you'd call a leader of the group?

**BG:** We had changing facilitators of our meetings.

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**Q:** That's right, they told me that, and they said that sometimes the kids even got to be facilitators?

**HG:** They were welcome and expected to attend the meetings, but I don't recall a child doing that.

**BG:** Maybe. We just had two, Kevin and then Matt Robinson, who were old enough. But really, the children who had come from college, or like our daughter who just finished high school, about that age, young adults, you might say, they had an awful lot of trouble with our meetings. I think that they found it very difficult to see their parents dealing at a depth level with interpersonal relationships. We were very frank and there were some heavy times and I think the kids just couldn't take that.

**Q:** Huh, that's interesting. When you made decisions at your meetings did you use consensus procedure?

**BG:** We tried.

**HG:** Yes, for the most part.

**BG:** But sometimes they went on so long, the meetings. But that was our goal.

**Q:** And would you discuss things like how to spend your money? I mean, what were some of the things that came up at meetings?

**BG:** The community money, you mean.

**Q:** Yeah, community money, excuse me. Right. Sure.

**BG:** Oh, yeah. Bills to be paid, and repairs to be made.

**HG:** Well, there were some other major problems that we talked about, I'm sure, about pets.

**Q:** Oh, they mentioned that. Because of the dogs.

**HG:** The dogs, yeah. And also about parenting.

**BG:** Yeah.

**Q:** Oh. Because some people thought that parents weren't reigning their kids in enough?

**HG:** Well, some -- the expectations were different. The parents of the two younger children I mentioned were, I would say, very permissive and expecting the village, so to speak, to take care of the kids.

**Q:** To raise the children.

**HG:** Yes. And while that's okay, but the way I would take care of a child is not the way somebody else would. And so there was that kind of a clash, but we got accustomed to those kids, brought them up for about two years. How long were they with us?

**BG:** Two years.

**Q:** So did everybody take on parental roles with these young children?

**HG:** Well, when you would see things that they were doing that you obviously should take the parents' role. You didn't want them to get hurt, anyway, of course.

**BG:** Some were more comfortable doing that than others. I fairly enjoyed them, the two little ones.

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**Q:** So you were glad that the community was intergenerational, that it wasn't just all adults?

**BG:** Oh, yeah. Sure.

**Q:** What were your relationships like with your neighbors? Since I went there I recognized that you were somewhat isolated from -- you didn't have immediate next door neighbors, but I guess I just mean the surrounding area.

**HG:** There wasn't a good relationship. I don't think there was any relationship, myself.

**BG:** Well, but it wasn't good or bad, there just wasn't one.

**HG:** Well . . . .

**BG:** We didn't have contact with any . . . .

**HG:** We didn't work at it, and they didn't really come over and say, "We're your neighbors." Our kids went to public school, which identified them to some degree at least with the administration there, the teachers.

**BG:** You may remember having passed a Methodist Church getting to the property, it was just down the road. And before we moved in, of course, there was lots of newspaper publicity about this. And the Methodist Church people were concerned. So we offered to have some of us go and sit down and talk with them about it. Well, it was really funny. At least I, I don't know if you were in the group or not, but when we walked in and they saw our age and everything, you could just see how. . . .

**Q:** They were relieved?

**BG:** They relaxed, and there was never any kind of tension.

**Q:** Because they thought you were gonna be a hippie commune.

**BG:** I'm sure. I mean, at that time, who had heard of anything else?

**Q:** Right, sure, yeah, because that's what was happening at that time. Did you ever feel any sort of relationship with the hippies who were doing something somewhat similar to you? Or did you think yours was pretty different?

**HG:** Could you restate that?

**Q:** Oh, I was just wondering if you ever felt any commonalities with the hippies who were doing some things similar.

**BG:** I think I could relate to them in some ways.

**HG:** We were aware of what was happening around us, but except for that one fella who came, one of the younger men, Camilla's friend . . . .

**BG:** [unintelligible], but he had come out of a commune [unintelligible]. But you went and visited . . . .

**HG:** This was a part of Dan's job. I visited other communes.

**BG:** I'm sure there have been many, many, many differences, but the idea of people living together to support each other and to care about the earth and so on, they were pretty common values.

**HG:** We had a big garden, and it was really a community garden we made available to other people beyond ourselves. So this brought a lot of folks close to us.



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**BG:** Yeah, that's true.

**HG:** [unintelligible] different kinds of garden [??].

**Q:** You said you visited some communes? Do you remember which ones you visited?

**HG:** There was one down in Virginia.

**Q:** Oh, Twin Oaks?

**HG:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Q:** Okay. What did you think of that?

**HG:** It seems so vague in my mind right now. I don't think we were there very long, maybe no more than a half a day. I guess I just went along with Dan. You probably know more about Twin Oaks than I do, a lot more. Did they keep going? Are they still around?

**Q:** They're still around, they're very healthy.

**HG:** They were making . . . .

**Q:** Hammocks, they're still doing that, believe it or not. Yeah, they have a contract with Pier One Imports, and that's kind of kept them going. Were you ever influenced by any books? Like, the Twin Oaks people were influenced by B.F. Skinner and Walden Two, and I was curious if Pinebrook people were ever influenced in a similar way by any books that you read.

**HG:** Skinner's the one with behavior modification?

**Q:** Yes.

**HG:** Well, what about Neerings [??].

**Q:** Oh, Neerings, uh-huh.

**BG:** While we were there we went as a group to hear the Neerings speech at a friend's meeting, I think. I, while I was there, became acquainted with The Joyful Community.

**Q:** Yes, by Benjamin Zblaecki [??]. The Bruederhoff [??]?

**BG:** Yeah. We all read what we happened to get our hands on.

**Q:** What would you say were the best parts for you, in terms of living in community? What did you like the most about it, or how did you benefit from it?

**HG:** Well, for me, I think I was able to get to know a few people in much greater depth, at more than a surface kind of thing by being this close to them and doing so many things together with other people. The dinner every night, being with the total group was helpful. And they were supportive to me, don't forget about that.

**BG:** I have here some testimonies. This was at the end of our first year, and this is what I wrote, "In the past year I have probably learned more about myself than I have in the previous twenty. Unfortunately, I

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do not like everything I have learned, but fortunately, Pinebrook provides a climate which facilitates growth and change. Physical proximity is no guarantee that there will be community. Besides commitment, it takes a lot of hard work. The year leaves me with some unanswered questions. Can I discipline myself to limit my food consumption when on twelve out of fourteen nights I sit down to a delicious meal prepared by others? Weight gain: twelve pounds. Is it possible for seventeen people who express their values in many different ways to relate to each other in depth so that each one's needs are fulfilled? Is real community achievable? If so, is it sustainable?" That was at the end of one year.

**Q:** One year, yeah.

**BG:** Here are other interesting comments by others.

**Q:** Did you feel like you came any closer to answering those last two questions by the end?

**BG:** Well, by the end of the four years, yeah. I certainly do. I certainly feel we achieved community. Of course, the question about is it sustainable is another question. I can't help but wonder, it was sort of outside issues that caused us to break up, rather abruptly, and we brought closure to the experience at a time when it was all at a high, and I think that was good. We could really celebrate what we had done together.

**Q:** Could you talk a little bit about the breakup? It wasn't really clear to me exactly what happened.

**BG:** Well, this big mansion, some of the systems of the building were in very, very, bad condition, such as plumbing and heating and so on. And we, as well as the abbey, did not want to put major money into it, they didn't want to do anything unless we would sign a long-term lease, and at that point we were not ready to do that. In fact, the last day we were there we had to call a plumber, and he was horrified by the condition of the pipes. It seemed like there were miles of pipes in the basement.

**HG:** There were three furnaces.

**BG:** Yeah, and he said, "If you pushed your finger in the pipe," he was afraid it would just disintegrate. So you can see the situation that we faced. So it just happened that this was in the spring of '74. And the American Baptist Churches --

**HG:** No, honey, '77.

**BG:** '77, that's right. Annual Convention was being held in San Diego, I think it was. And Dan and Horace and were there others who went?

**HG:** Did you go to San Diego?

**BG:** Yeah, I went, but anyway, it was a major thing for Dan and Horace, and everything seemed to come together so quickly. I mean, they had to give all our time and attention to that, and we knew how hard it would be to find another place. We had continually, during the four years, particularly Dan really was, he had kept looking at possible property, so we knew from experience that that would be a long process. So the situation decided that this was time to bring it to a halt, very reluctantly. We had wonderful closing things, events. One was a public closure, and our church had a big part in that, in supporting it. And we also had a private closure. Did you hear anything about that?

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**Q:** Only briefly. I don't remember any particular story.

**BG:** We wrote, on paper, things about each other. There was a big newsprint sheet for each person and everybody went around telling what we appreciated about that person and so on. I have copies of ours, anyway. It was just a very moving experience that we shared these last moments together. The other was quite different. There was lots of people. Did they show you the Pinebrook banner?

**Q:** No, they didn't.

**BG:** Dan and Jan [??] have that. At one point, I'm not sure when this occurred, but some of the women in our church made this beautiful, oh, it's a big, big, banner. Around a circle it says, "Behold how good and pleasant it is when people live together in harmony," or unity, or something. It's a verse from Psalm 133. Beautifully done.

**Q:** So after the closure, what did the two of you do? Did you go buy a house, or . . . ?

**HG:** No, we found an apartment . . . [tape ends]. . . by that time Betty was working, so . . . and because of the Church relationship with the group -- many of the group still are around, so . . . Did they mention to you the Schroebels [??] ?

**Q:** Yes, and I was hoping to interview, is it Bob?

**BG:** Yes.

**Q:** But he went to Italy. I think the day I arrived, he flew out. I was disappointed because I heard that he's working on a book on the community.

**HG:** He talked about it, anyway, for a while.

**Q:** Yeah, he says he wants to do that.

**BG:** But he was only there for two of the four years, so I hope he doesn't forget the last two.

**Q:** He was there for the first two?

**BG:** Mm-hmm.

**HG:** Mm-hmm.

**Q:** Well, it sounds like it was a really meaningful part of your life even though it wasn't that long, I mean, four years, but . . .

**BG:** That's right, but I do feel, a very significant part of our lives.

**Q:** Since that period have you looked for other community living opportunities?

**BG:** Well, in a sense this is a kind of community. We wish there were more characteristics that we experienced at Pinebrook here, but here it's a hierarchical thing.

**HG:** The government says [??] completely.

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**BG:** And we are not used to being so under somebody else's control or decision making and so on. We can even get ourselves in trouble occasionally for trying to work toward a different kind of community feeling here.

**Q:** Right. Do people who live here get to be involved in the governance or is it just like paid staff that. . ?

**BG:** Paid staff and . . . .

**Q:** They're the ones who set the rules?

**BG:** And the board of directors who sit in offices or come to meetings. They told us that, at one time when they had a meeting of the board of directors, somebody suggested, would they like to see an apartment. And they had never been inside one of the apartments, and here they are, making decisions for the good of the residents. It's things like that. And I think since we've come we have helped to bring about some changes. Change comes very slowly, but [unintelligible].

**Q:** Yeah.

**BG:** And I'm sure that that experience at Pinebrook had a great effect on my desire to come here.

**Q:** Right. But immediately after you left Pinebrook, you didn't continue to live in community, you just lived by yourselves. Was that a hard transition?

**BG:** One funny thing for me was, when we went from a three family person to Pinebrook and you prepared a meal for seventeen people in this huge kitchen, I seemed to adjust to that fairly well, of course, you always had a partner. But when I went to the apartment I had so much trouble going the other way. I found it so difficult to cook for two.

**Q:** I bet. Before, I asked you about what the best parts were. What were some of the challenging parts or hard parts about living in community?

**HG:** I think there were many, but we felt, I felt, I think we all felt that we were not a part of the large community. They knew we were there but we did not participate in community affairs for [unintelligible] as representing Pinebrook community. And part of that was, I think, just the stereotypical feel of, "We've got a commune out here," you know, "and the abbey property," but we never really checked that out. I felt, looking back, we could've made more effort to get to know the neighbors, for one thing, and we could've done some things, maybe with the large flea market or something that would've brought the neighbors there. We did have a, what is it, where we sold vegetables?

**BG:** The food co-op.

**HG:** The food co-op.

**BG:** A lot of people were . . . .

**HG:** A lot would come in, but. . . .

**BG:** . . .came and went, and

**HG:** . . .it just seemed to me that we were isolated geographically because of the way that we were set up, as you can see, and so we sort of settled into that nest and accepted the fact. There were lots of

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positive things about the separation. We didn't have a zoning problem we were fighting about. So that was good. And I think that being on the church property was a big help there.

**BG:** On abbey property.

**HG:** Nice to feel a little more a part of the total community, it seems to me.

**BG:** But we did vote and took some part individually in local issues and so on. I thought Horace would say the hardest part for him was the two young kids.

**HG:** Well, the two young kids I had little influence or control over. If they were my kids, they certainly would not have been just sort of free running, like a pet, sort of. There would've been more expected from them. But it worked out okay. I can walk away from that and not feel too badly.

**BG:** Well, I really didn't have any serious problems. There were a few instances when misunderstandings occurred which were not handled in the most helpful way. For instance, I think we moved in there at the end of May and then our first Christmas there we had decided we wanted to have a common Christmas card that we could all use. So one of the members made a drawing of the property and in a group we all contributed what we wanted to say on it. When it came together in print, some of them were very upset, even though they had been shown the copy ahead of time and had agreed to it. Somehow, when they saw it, decided it was too religious. And that was a very disappointing experience to me because I had felt that it was work of the community, and then to have it rejected. But anyway, those of us who wanted to go ahead with the card with the printing on it, we did, and we also had a lot of them made without the statement, you could put your own message on it. In that way, it turned out alright. But there were a couple of other things sort of in that vein. One thing, one of the young women, she was middle-aged, but to me she was young, she told me that she had put me on a pedestal and she had certain expectations of me. This idea of being on a pedestal, I realized that that was a difficult position to be in. But we're very good friends. The end result, I'd say, is so good that it's hard to even bring to mind these things which were negative.

**Q:** I know it must have been very hard to break up when you did, but do you suppose in some ways it was easier to break up as a result of an external event rather than go on for a long time and then break up over internal bickering or something? Because you were able to break up when everyone was still friends.

**BG:** Right, yeah that's right.

**HG:** I think that's a good point. It made it easier for us.

**Q:** I want to make sure I have your demographic information accurate. I know something about your ages, but could you tell me just a little bit more about, oh I suppose, ethnic class, education sort of background? I mean, having met a lot of the members I have an idea, but I just want to make sure I don't generalize to everyone.

**BG:** Well, I was born in Calgary, Alberta, and my education, I have a bachelor's degree in Christian Education and had most of work done for a Master's and then got pregnant for a second time, so I got my Master's in motherhood. I have been a director of Christian Education in various forms in various churches, then when we moved out to this area I began working at American Baptist Churches, editing and writing curriculum, church school curriculum.

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**Q:** Would you describe most of the members as being fairly well educated? Uh-huh. Caucasian?

**BG:** Yeah, I think this was one of our lacks, but not because of our desire. After all, this was a pretty radical thing at that time. Adults living communally. It would've been nice to have some color.

**Q:** You mentioned a bi-racial child, I think?

**BG:** Mm-hmm.

**Q:** Yeah. Politically, would you say people were fairly left-leaning, or. . . ? Mm-hmm.

**BG:** Wouldn't you?

**HG:** Yes. I don't believe we had a Republican in the group.

**Q:** Uh-huh, Yeah. Well, I guess that's probably about all the questions I had.

**BG:** Did you get Horace's . . . ?

**Q:** Oh, no, I don't . . . .

**HG:** Well, what was the last question, about the good things? Is that what you were . . . ?

**BG:** No no no, about your . . . .

**Q:** I was asking about . . . .

**HG:** Oh, about the education.

**Q:** Education. Yeah.

**BG:** Education, career.

**HG:** Well, I worked as a certified public accountant before we came to Pennsylvania. Grew up in Indiana on a farm and attended the church where Betty was called for her first position to work, back in 1937. And that was the way we got acquainted.

**BG:** Anyway, he's definitely financial, what I call "numbers person." He thinks of everything in numerical terms.

**Q:** Well, that was probably a good person to have at the community, to have someone who knew the numbers.

**HG:** Well, it worked out well, although I wasn't the treasurer. It was fortunate that we had a person who did that very well and could do it easily and enjoyed it. But yes, that was my background. I was pleased, at that point, as a part of my life that I could be involved in the ultimate lifestyle to that extent.

**Q:** And then, did you continue to work as a C.P.A.?

**HG:** I was the treasurer of the agency from 1970 to 1982, and then took another job in New York City for a couple of years, then retired.

**BG:** So, his work as a C.P.A. really was when he had his own accounting practice.

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**Q:** Before 1970? Yeah.

**BG:** Here's something, I don't know if this is important to you or not, but I see some figures about, okay, "We pay our rent on the basis of eighteen percent of our income." This also was written, I think, after the first year, "In addition, we pay eight dollars per adult, five dollars, for food."

**HG:** What's the five dollars?

**BG:** For a dependent child.

**HG:** Oh, a child. One thing in looking back, where finances are so much a part of a person's life. Once we made the decision of how to pay the rent and how we're going to make decisions, finances paid weren't very important. They were just a matter of receiving the money and paying it off. I don't recall any issues of, "We don't have enough money," or, "What are we going to do with this bill," or that sort of thing. It was really minimal, which was unusual, I think.

**Q:** Yeah, sounds like it.

**BG:** Here's another statement. Do you want me to read this?

**Q:** Please.

**BG:** It says, "Some of the factors which led us to make this rather drastic change in our lifestyle: ," this was something I wrote about, " -- the desire to de-emphasize materialism and consumerism, which are so characteristic of the American middle class today, -- the need for a support group instead of the isolated houses and insulated people in our former neighborhoods, -- the need for primary relationships beyond our own immediate families so that no one person has to meet all of the emotional needs of spouse and/or children, -- the desire to break down traditional male/female roles, -- the challenge to respond to the changing social and ecological issues of our time, -- the opportunity to test our faith in the day to day living experiences." Then I said, "Are we glad we made the move? Yes."

**Q:** Oh, that was really useful.

**BG:** That was written January, '74.

**Q:** Okay. Mm-hmm.

**HG:** Would you like the telephone number of our daughter that you want to contact?

**Q:** That would be wonderful.

**BG:** Her name is Gwen Huite [??].

**HG:** Area code, see if I know this, 610-857-1259.

**Q:** Thank you.

**HG:** Her husband's name is Rob, and he lived in the community for a while.

**BG:** Not really, not much of a part of it.

**HG:** That's right, he was [unintelligible].

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**Q:** Okay. Great.

**BG:** It might be interesting for you to chat with her for a little bit. She's a very easy talker. But don't get confused, they have a son that most of us call Robby, but he gets called Rob, too, so.

**Q:** Okay, don't confused between her husband and the son?

**BG:** Right.

**Q:** Okay.

**BG:** But Gwen would probably be the one you'd want to talk to.

**Q:** Okay, great. Well, thank you so much for your time, I really appreciate it.

**BG:** No problem. As Gay said, "When ...