

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**Q:** Um, so can you tell me a little bit about how you came to be associated with Koinonia?

**AH:** Well, I had always heard about Koinonia because my mother was a devotee of, of the product. She, she got the products every single year. And one time, she got a chance to come down and visit Koinonia and it was the highlight of her life, I think. She was so committed, so, we, we had always heard about it and knew about it. And when we retired from active ministry, uh, we decided that we, one of the things we would like to do would be to go do voluntary service in various places, and Koinonia would be one of them.

**Q:** And what was your ministry, originally?

**AH:** Um, John is an ordained U.C.C. clergy, and I have worked in libraries.

**JH:** You'd better say "United Church of Christ"; I don't know that "U.C.C." is all that familiar.

**AH:** The tape recorder's on.

**JH:** Oh, it's on?

**Q:** That's okay!

**JH:** It's on the tape recorder now. [laughing]

**AH:** Uh, so, we applied to be volunteers in the spring of 1987. We had our own vehicle, we had bought a school bus and made a motor home out of it. And so we brought it down here and parked it in the R.V. lot there at Koinonia and were spring volunteers. And uh, then we just kept coming back time after time, and in the fall, we, we would go up to Maine in the summer and visit family and friends and do volunteer work up there. But then we would come back in the fall. And we did this for a number of years. And then finally we heard about the retired resident program, whereby we, if we demonstrated that we were in sympathy with simple living, we would, uh, be able to buy an existing house in one of the two villages Koinonia had developed or build a house. And we elected to build a house in Forest Park Village in 1990. And the house goes to Koinonia as our gift to Koinonia. And we've been living here ever since, except for going up to New England in the summer, because our family is up there for the most part. And I work in the library and John does maintenance and tries to relate to people in the village. And also, not connected with Koinonia, John, uh, is a Laughbaugh [?] literacy teacher at the public library in town. Um,

**Q:** So um, I didn't go to the library at Koinonia, and you said you work as the librarian there? What does that involve?

**AH:** Yes, uh, uh, [laughs]. I worked for Fran Warren, my dear Fran who set up that library, a Quaker lady from whom I learned a lot about, uh, not getting all upset over things. And also learned how she ran that particular library, which is different from most libraries. And I have tried to, uh, continue to do what I learned from her, but I'm getting on now, and uh, I don't choose to work a full 40 hours anymore. In fact I work nine hours a week. I, you can't begin to do the work that's necessary in that library in that amount of time, but I do the best I can, and I also am fortunate enough to have a volunteer work with me most sessions. So we do maintenance, and then, checking in books, and we do whatever cataloging and shelving of books is necessary, or that we can do.

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**Q:** What sort of books do they have?

**AH:** Oh, they have everything that's in any other library except that it's heavily weighted on the side of Christian living, Bible reference, Bible study, worship, and prayer. But we have fiction and science fiction, and mystery... we have economics and travel, and, and cookbooks, and health books, behavioral science, and other science books, and we have quite a good children's section. And, it, it's housed in the only existing building that was, that's still there from when Florence and Clarence bought the farm in 1942. It was a mule barn, and it's been converted to the library.

**Q:** Was Florence Jordan alive when you first started coming here?

**AH:** Florence? Yes, Florence was alive. In fact, she was our next door neighbor up at the R.V. lot, because she lived in the house that Cauffy [?] lives in now.

**Q:** And what was she like?

**AH:** Oh, she was wonderful! I've never met such a woman full of good sense and very hospitable, very easy to talk to and talk with and, just a wonderful Christian person. It, it was, with great sadness that we learned after we left the volunteer session in 1987, that she had died a month after we left. We miss her good sense and, ... good ideas and loving, caring concern for people.

**Q:** So when you first volunteered at Koinonia, they still had their common purse, is that correct?

**AH:** That's right. Yes.

**Q:** And when was that abandoned?

**AH:** Oh gosh, ...

**Q:** Fairly recently, or?

**AH:** Yes, yeah, within the last... oh I think, three, three, four years now. It's hard to remember.

**Q:** Yeah, so fairly recently then. So um, can you describe, kind of, the change, and what things were like maybe when you first came, compared to what they're like now?

**AH:** Well, ...

**JH:** Well, let me ask you if you, what your understanding is of an intentional community, and ...

**Q:** Well, to me, I guess it's a, it's a place usually where people share land, and housing, but they also have some sort of common mission or purpose. Um, some goals, some vision. Um, I've been to so many different communities now that I, my definition is getting more blurred.

**JH:** Yeah. Well I expected it might, it might vary somewhat anyway. Uh, what this was, alright, this was an intentional community, where people came to um, ... kind of devote their, their lives to the uh, well, Clarence Jordan called it a demonstration plot. Uh, ... they came because they were concerned with the situation uh, of the uh, local people, the the, Bla-, the Blacks in the area who were ...uh living in poor housing and uh, and were not making decent wages really. Uh, ... and they were isolated from the White community, per se. Um, so people, as I say, people came here to, to devote their lives to bettering the

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

conditions here for, for these, these people. And they uh, they did this by, by raising crops here, employing uh, local Black people, um, and paying them a better wage than they were otherwise getting. And then later on they came up with the uh, with the uh... project of building low, low cost housing for, for these people. And um, ... So they gave up their, most of them, many of them, gave up their material property, to the good of the uh, of the community, to, to support the community. Some of them also gave their uh, well, they gave their uh, some of their life, all of their life earnings, or some of their life earnings, on the bases of either a out, outright, uh, grant, or on the bases of a uh, um, a no-interest loan. Which, uh, and I don't know if, if that uh had, held any stipulations about when they could or could not withdraw that money. I suspect that it was mostly on the basis that if they, if they should leave the community that they, they could, and would then, withdraw whatever monies they had left. And uh, certainly, uh, some people who had turned over their car to the community, were provided with a car when they left. So it was all very uh, ... volunteer, and uh free-will, and that sort of thing, for the, for the good of this community. Now, it's uh, really like any other uh, profit-making organization, except for the fact that they do do some things to improve, they are having some programs to improve the lot of some of the people that are living in these, in these villages that were created. Um, ... let's, I mean that's kind of it in a nutshell unless you have some, unless this has caused you to raise some questions which might further, might bring out some other information.

**Q:** Well I'm curious about people's specific experiences, and I'm, I'm curious about what drew you to Koinonia, and why you were attracted to the mission here.

**JH:** Well, it was primarily what I was saying, was that we were, we were concerned with the plight of these, uh, people here, and in fact, that's what uh, prompted us to build the house here. So that we could be in community with these people. And um, and in some small way, we're, we're uh, we're still ... involved, well, trying to help them, and uh, in however ways we can.

**AH:** And they help us. It's a mutual thing.

**JH:** Yeah, and they have helped us. Yeah, uh...

**AH:** Just knowing them has been a wonderful experience. And we feel, uh, as if we're wanted down here in this village. They're glad when we come back in the fall.

**JH:** Uh, there was a time when, well back in the old order, if you will, of course, we along with many other people volunteered our time to uh get some of these products out, into the market. Uh, I'm somewhat reluctant to do that now, because uh, it may be taking, it may be taking away a source of income for some people in our neighborhood. And um, now, at the same time, of course, the organization that is now operating here, is uh, looking for every means possible to, to uh, have as little overhead, and uh, so they've, they haven't downsized like big corporations, but they have um, cut back as much as they can. So um, to the point where they are considering giving up um, producing some of the uh, some of the products that they have in the past.

**Q:** Now your wife said when you guys first came here that you met Florence Jordan, that was living next to you?

**JH:** Oh yes, Florence, yes, right, we enjoyed her, her uh, our relationship with Florence. It was uh, very exciting to us, for us. Having, uh, not known Clarence, um, that was next best thing.

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**Q:** Yeah, she sounded like a wonderful woman.

**JH:** She was, yes, she was.

**AH:** I'll just interrupt here: when we first came here, uh, most of the partners, many of the partners had, were older people and had been missionaries or in, in service in some other way, and, uh, and were not in it for their, for any gain, financial gain or anything on their part. Uh, and, a [more] superior group of people could not be found. Fran Warren, and Cauffy, and George, and, the Foyers, and the Fields, of course, who are still here. And uh, we, we learned a lot-, and Margaret Whitcamper-, and we learned a lot from them about living in community. And they were totally dedicated to it. And I think the change is what caused some of them to leave. They were getting older too, and uh, I, I just think that it started to change at that time.

**JH:** Well, do you have any other questions?

**Q:** Oh, you know, a number of communities that I've visited that have common purses, it seems that they almost, that they go through some sort of a transformation where they, um, they can't sustain that level of communalism, and they move to becoming more of a cooperative society than a purely communal society? Do you think th-, is that somehow inevitable? That all groups do that?

**AH:** I don't know. I wondered that myself as I've read about other communities. Certainly, you know, when we first came it felt pure. [laughs]

**JH:** Is it inevitable?

**Q:** Especially maybe after a strong leader is no longer there, like maybe after Clarence and Florence...

**JH:** Yes. I've thought of that many many times, and uh, right. And even uh, Millard too, Millard Fuller, was a strong leader, but uh, ... Millard was drawn away or out of the commu-, having served in the community and was drawn out of the community because he had another vision, uh, that he wanted to pursue, and, and, had, and of course has been very, very successful with it. And it's interesting that, this may relate somewhat to what you're asking, or observing there, that uh, he did not go off and form another community, per se. It has some aspects or elements of community life but, is really not, um, an intentional community, uh, but was instead a kind of uh, a uh, -

**AH:** We used to call it a "ministry."

**JH:** Yeah, I was just going to say, a ministry with a particular focus. Now, there are others who left here, in years past, who did however go on to form other communities.

**Q:** Did Jubilee Partners...

**JH:** And Jubilee Partners is one of those... right. And, and another coup-, there were three couples that left here at the time, and formed Jubilee Partners. Since then, two of the couples have left there, one of whom did go off, then not to, so much, as to form another community, although it, it too has some aspects of community, but to pursue a particular ministry. And that's a uh, prison hospitality house.

**AH:** New Hope House, it's called.

**Q:** Where's that?

**JH:** It's up in J-, is

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**AH:** Jackson? It's near the prison in Jackson.

**JH:** It serves at the prison out in Jackson, Georgia, in Georgia, yes. Not Mississippi.

**Q:** So Koinonia has, many things have come out of here, like Habitat for Humanity, Jubilee Partners.

**JH:** Oh yes, right, yeah.

**AH:** And New Hope House. They used to meet twice a year with other communities locally.

**JH:** Yes, Community of Communities.

**AH:** And they called it the Four Communities. But that didn't generate from here.

**JH:** It's had a very close tie here, but uh, as Ann says it did not

**Q:** Does that still exist?

**JH:** Oh yes, yeah. And that's uh, feeding the hungry, primarily.

**Q:** And where is Open Door?

**JH:** In Atlanta. And they also do a little bit of uh, housing, providing housing I guess too, don't they? In the facility that they, uh, where they themselves live, that is, those who uh, started the group and the operation.

**Q:** So the Community of Communities, was this place, Open Door, and Jubilee Partners, and New Hope House?

**AH:** And Koinonia.

**JH:** And then, later, the uh, the submarine thing, St. Mary's?

**AH:** Oh, they, the group that formed to protest the

**JH:** The nuclear submarines. Based down here on the coast of Georgia.

**AH:** But that was more of a political entity.

**JH:** Yeah, but they did seek and may have gained entrance, I'm not quite sure, into this community of, or these Community of Communities. Uh, yeah.

**Q:** What is Koinonia's relationship like with the outside community?

**JH:** With Americus[?]?

**Q:** Yeah, just people in this county, I guess.

**JH:** Well, that has changed. Although there are still uh, some, what I would call, hostile elements present as we noted when uh, when a particular project was uh, organized here to change a street name, to Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. And Koinonia supported that venture. Um, and uh, soon in the newspapers, some uh, letters to the editor began to appear saying that the uh, that there are a couple of roads leading out of Americus, and uh, people of Koinonia would be well advised to get on one of those roads, and to leave.

**Q:** Whoa! When was this?

**JH:** This was just couple years ago. It seems like it was a couple.

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**AH:** Oh, it's more than that.

**JH:** Maybe it's three or four years ago, I, time has a funny way of accelerating, I think. [laughs] Um, but that's reflective of the past history, uh, which you may have picked up along the way already, that uh, Clarence was, Clarence and the people living here were threatened, their lives were threatened, uh, with uh, various acts of uh, violence. They had set up some-, uh, a market stand over here on Route 19. That was bombed out at least once, if not twice. They had, uh, developed a, apparently a reasonable favorable relationship with a feed store in town, where they were trading, doing business, and that was bombed out. Uh, people came by on, persons came by here and threatened the lives of the people in the, what we call the farm area up there, where Clarence first settled and, started the operation, and shot at them. Um, Clarence and uh, and Florence were uh, evicted from the, a nearby Baptist church for their views, and their relationship with the local people. Um, ... so, and, and when we came, when we first came here and visited here in '79, for a week, um, then... there were very few of the partners who were uh, going to worship in the town churches, and the in-town churches, Americus' churches. Because they were persona non grata, uh, for their activities here, and their relationship with the local people. Um, when we came back in uh, '87, uh, people-, well, because th-, uh, they were not accepted in the local churches, they did -- and they might have done this anyway -- but they did have a worship service here in the afternoon, Sunday afternoon, and uh, and a potluck. Uh, but when we came back in '87, there-, we found more people, more partners than participating in some of the local churches. The Presbyterian church, and then one couple, in fact, uh, not only was attending worship, but, uh, George Thoyer [?], was accepted as an assistant pastor in the lo-, one of the AME churches, African Methodist Episcopal churches, which was, um, -- and for that matter, all the Black churches were accepting of, of uh, participation and attendance, and we --

**AH:** We used to have groups from the Black churches come out and sing for us --

**JH:** --during our afternoon worship service.

**AH:** --yeah, sometimes, too. And also what they had then which they don't have now were seminars during, during the year, uh, two or three I think at least. Uh, they used to have February as Retreat Month, and the spring volunteer session didn't begin until March. And that was so that the partnership could meet and discuss mutual problems and also, they had speakers like Broggerman[?] and, Walter Broggerman --

**JH:** Yeah, but that didn't involve the Americus community.

**AH:** No, no, but I mean, that's one of the activities that is no longer carried out here.

**JH:** Oh, alright. Yes, that's true.

**AH:** There's no uh, no attempt... the only on-, the only attempt now is the Wednesday morning worship service that they have over in what used to be the store. Uh, and that's where

**JH:** But that doesn't draw in people from outside, that's the--

**AH:** No, but it's, but it does

**JH:** --employees administration.

**AH:** Yeah. It does bring all Koinonia people together. It's one of the few things that, that does.

**JH:** Yeah, you could call that a community activity. Yeah. Um, ... but things have improved in town. Um, the relationship I would say. Although it, in the changeover, -- well I was talking with uh, B. J. just recently about the Chamber of Commerce, where, and, in the changeover, it was funny that, whereas

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

the Koinonia partners had become members of the Chamber of Commerce, ...following the, initially, following the uh changeover to the uh present form of organization, they withdrew their membership from the Chamber of Commerce, but now, they are or were or have, I'm not quite sure, I haven't been in touch that recently, uh, rejoined, the Chamber of Commerce. So, and they, and they have that um, that Chamber, kind of Chamber of Commerce activity, where they have, have the booths, and local business set up their tables and so forth. And uh, Koinonia participates in that. Uh, for a brief time, we had a, a little storefront in Americus, I don't know if you've heard that, where they were selling their products.

**AH:** Do you, have you met Julie?

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

**JH:** Julie Knopp?

**AH:** Yeah, she's back now, and she's uh, she ran the store for some time. She lives over in Jubilee House in the back apartment on the left. So you might be interested in talking with her, because she, she, they have more history than we do.

**JH:** Yeah, and she could speak very, very well, I would think, towards this uh, heh, we might call it at this point "town and country" [laughs] relationship. Um, yeah.

**Q:** Has Koinonia had a positive impact on race relations in the county?

**JH:** Has it had a positive impact?

**AH:** In the county... ?

**Q:** Or locally, in the area.

**JH:** Well, uh, it, it tried. Uh, one of the persons who had, who was a partner, ran for the school board, uh, but did not make it. So, uh, but, ...

**AH:** Well, I think yes, in recent, especially in recent years, uh, and the kids ... that were here when we were here, when we were first here, uh, went to the public schools, uh, so, their parents were involved in the PTA and things like that. School activities.

**JH:** I, I think it's a mixed... the answer is mixed, as evidenced, what I said to you before how um, some have told Koinonia people to leave. And um, and that's, that's a racist thing. That's a racist situation.

**AH:** It's sort of like the question, "Can Methodists dance?" Some can and some can't. So some people like us, and some people don't. And some people don't even know what Koinonia's all about, even yet.

**JH:** Oh yes. Right.

**AH:** And once they would... uh, come and get to know us, they'd find out we're just folk, like everybody else.

**JH:** I have made a suggestion, some time ago, under both the old order and the new order, that, uh, we ought to work on improving our relationship with the city community, town community, um, by way of inviting... local people to come and see us! Come to lunch, have a, have a conversation, and uh, so forth. So far that has not been done. But, maybe, who knows? In my years in the ministry, uh, suggestions were often uh, well, listened to, maybe? And then, and then uh, many years later, some while I was still there, but some after I left, uh, were adopted or have been adopted.

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**Q:** Yeah, it just takes awhile sometimes.

**JH:** Yeah, seeds are planted, and some take a little longer to germinate than others.

**AH:** I, I feel, I feel more hopeful about Koinonia now with this group of volunteers. The volunteers who came in the fall have all, except for two, have all uh, decided to stay on. So that, that's, and they're young people and, they're going to do things a different way. And that's okay. There's more than one way to, to have a ministry. So, and I know that they have developed, uh, some sort of after-school program -- you might want to look into this -- up at the, uh, at the other village, at the former KCDC building, the Koinonia Child Development-, have you been up there to see the KCDC?

**Q:** No, I haven't. I hope to, though.

**JH:** You going to be on another day?

**Q:** Yeah, I'm going to stay tomorrow.

**AH:** You're going to stay, you have stay longer than that!

**Q:** Maybe I can come back sometime.

**JH:** I'm just thinking of another, um, change which has been alluded to, implied. And that is that whereas, it was pretty much self-supporting, i.e. via uh, personal turnover of financial resources, or, uh, the selling of the products, it w-, it's no longer self-sustaining in the sam-, in that same way. So as a matter of fact, their looking to and looking for government grants... to uh, sustain and support their, their work.

**Q:** And those are getting harder to get too.

**AH:** You noticed. [laughs]

**JH:** So uh, so that's uh, that's quite a radical change, really. See, see now that's one thing that, uh, Millard Fuller did not do. He went to uh, well, we call it on public T.V., their begging [laughs] sessions. He has used begging letters. And some of them even going out over the name of Jimmy Carter, uh, to uh, to support that operation. And has been very very successful at it.

**AH:** Well Koinonia's turned to that, at least...

**JH:** Koinonia had not done that in the past but, they have done that too recently. Uh, I don't know how successful they've been, within the last year, they've sent a couple of letters.

**AH:** Within the last year, ... we were all supposed to go up to the dining hall and address envelopes, I remember.

**Q:** Oh, gosh... Now one thing that I, I'm still not really clear about is why the community went from, you know, having a common purse, to, and what caus-, what led up to the changeover I guess.

**JH:** No, I will say what that is, I don't care if it's on tape or not, in fact, I already said as much to one of the persons who was most, uh, influential in the changeover, um, ... a few years ago, um, we were not here at the time, but they invited, they: uh, Koinonia partners, invited, uh, some people to come down from Atlanta. And I guess, actually, go back prior to that, to that, those, uh, young women from Yale, ... both of whom... uh, ... saw what they maintain were racist actions and/or policies of Koinonia. This,



Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

these two groups of people got things all stirred up. The first group, uh, that got things stirred up, especially stirred them up amongst the, uh, the employees, who were all Black. All the employees were Black. All the partners were White. Just a fact. What is it, uh, de jour. Uh, ... the first, uh, as a result of the first group's observations, the employees in cooperation with the partners, formed a, uh, it wasn't a union, but it was a, a, an organization, to uh, to meet with the, with the partners or somehow have input to and with the partners, to uh, air their uh, differences, their grievances -- that's union kind of terminology, grievances, but -- that's what it was. And, I think that was in itself, a step in the right direction. And as a matter of fact, it, it caused Koinonia at that point to uh, to uh, appoint one of their members as a kind of a personnel relations person. And I thought that had some merit to it. Um, but this second group that came in, made the statement -- and this is, this is in print somewhere -- that uh, that Koinonia was as racist as the, even the worst racist in Americus. Well, they, they, uh the partners, or some of the partners at least, took this charge very very, very seriously, and very much to heart. And uh, ... and that triggered the uh, the real changeover. They decided they would give up the community uh, kind of aspects of it, and the common purse. Along with that, the common purse. Now not everyone he-, not every one of the partners was in favor of that, and for some time after the chan-, and so they, well then they brought in these outside people to operate the, the plant. Um, and uh, well, I'm, I've lost tr-, ... yeah, alright. Some of the people they say, some of the partners did not entirely agree with or go along with this, and they continued to meet for quite some time as a rump group, following the changeover, until.... finally, all of those who, who were in the rump group, uh, were gone, for one reason or another. One of them of course, was uh, our friend, Jophie Andersen, who was drowned, as she was returning from, uh, Florida, to Koinonia, she, ran off the road into the flooding waters and was drowned. But others --

**AH:** Two years ago, this coming July.

**JH:** That's right, yeah, two years, right. But others left, as Ann mentioned, some because they had, become disaffected with the, with the way in which things were going. Some because, uh, there was no, really, no longer a job for them here or uh, a life if you will, for them here. They uh, what they had been doing was, was uh, turned over to this other group, that was hired out. And then some of the, some of the extraneous ministries had been dropped, the homebuilding, for instance, that had been dropped. Uh, a prison ministry, uh, prison ministry, and uh, so for-, that was dropped.

**AH:** --as an official part of Koinonia, --

**JH:** Yeah, right, ultimately dropped, yeah.

**AH:** In fact, that fellow is still, there are two of them that are still here, in the area.

**JH:** Well yeah, one living here in this village, and, one living in town.

**AH:** One does uh, prison visitation, and that sort of thing, and the other does a victim-offender services, reconciliation services. But they were all partners here at one time. Um --

**JH:** --So, it was that, those were the sources of the, of the problem. Frankly, I saw the situation not as a racist situation, but as a labor-management kind of thing. I, I come from a background-, I was in the ministry, true, but I worked at Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company as a union member. I also worked for the Mass Mutual Life Insurance Company home office as a, ultimately as a supervisor, part of the management, which was a non-union kind of operation, and I know about labor-management problems. Uh, and, this was a typical, classical labor-management problem. Now it, it

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

happens of course, that labor was Black, and management was White. And so it, one could say, "Oh sure, it was a racist thing." ... So, in, in a way this... this leads back to your earlier question about, is it -- I can't remember if you said "inevitable," -- that, that uh, communities go this way? But, uh, ... I guess where you have um, people ... involved in something with, with a vision -- it happens in churches too -- and , where you have, uh, especially, kind of, independent minded [tape ends] ... community kind of operation. Um, I guess you're, you're bound to have these splinters and break-ups.

**Q:** Especially if there's not a leader who can unify

**JH:** Hold them together. Right. Yeah. And in situations such as that, where there is still a strong leader, uh, uh the community will probably still stay together, but what happens there is that individual members of it will just fly off and go, go elsewhere.

**Q:** So where do you think Koinonia's headed?

**AH:** Oh boy.

**Q:** Is that a tough question?

**AH:** Well, I still think God is, is, is what we have to turn to, and that God has been with us all these years, and, and will continue to be, and uh, so that gives me a measure of hope. Whether people will listen to God or not is another question.

**JH:** Well of course now you have to say, "What's going to happen to Koinonia?" not as a community, but as a corporation. Uh, ... and the dynamics of what makes one function uh, as over and agai-, as a continuing, and, I don't know if you can use the word "successful" in terms of a community, except that it's fulfilling its mission, its goal, but um, the dynamics are quite different. Um, one more dependent, of course, upon, uh, financial return, ... than the other. Uh, ... and I know they're trying to, trying their best to uh, keep it going as a viable corporation.

**AH:** There's a board meeting coming up in February, well this month. I'm not sure just when it is, but it, it will be a crucial board meeting, according to my sources.

**JH:** Well, we don-, know that one thing on the agenda is the, the continuance or not of products. So,

**Q:** 'Cause they might actually stop um, the candy factory or something?

**JH:** That would -- well, ... they might stop the whole operation, products, anything and everything to do with, with uh, the cons in particular. Or they might just cut out the pieces of it, even as they have done. They used to offer more products than they do currently, and they've cut back on that, uh, their line of, line of products. So, uh, ... and the, the, the economy, the economy of the country, would have an impact on uh, on um, their continuance of their operation of course. Uh, in fact, that's what has been quite harmful in uh, rather recent years is that uh, people haven't had the money to spend on these nonessential [laughs] products. Which is what they are. And Koinonia partners had a great struggle at times with producing these nones-, many, and most of these, nonessential products. And that's uh

**AH:** You know, it's interesting because, other people will come in and they will see things in a different way, and they'll want to promote uh, their ideas, and, and then, they leave, and then another group comes in and wants to do something different, and uh, so it's, it's always in a state of flux. I would think,

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

almost, I don't know, have you had experience in talking with other communities as far as continuity is concerned?

**Q:** Well it almost seems like a community has a certain life-span. [laughs] I don't know.

**JH:** Yeah, this one's had over 50 years. Well this one had over fifty years.

**Q:** Yeah, that's a very long-lived community.

**JH:** Now, of course, it's made a radical change, and, speaking of...

**AH:** But it's still here!

**JH:** Well, it's still here, but what are you saying "it"? What is the "it" that you're ...

**AH:** Well, the community. A collection of individuals.

**Q:** I guess there's a place to go when you dine...

**JH:** An operation is still here. Yeah. But you were speaking about a strong leader. And I don't know that we've mentioned anywhere along the line that, uh, under the old order of the partnership, the leader was changed, uh, each, or, every two years. Each year or every two years. Depending, upon the, the whims if you will, of the partnership. Because they, with, working with the board, they elected a new leader each year.

**AH:** Each two years.

**JH:** Well they elected one each year. But it might carry over, they might be re-elected for a second year. Yeah. But um, uh, that leader, also, uh, developed a management team. So the leader led with the uh, cooperation, assistance of, I think it was three or,

**AH:** Three.

**JH:** Three other--, now, going way back, it was three other partners. More recently, they did bring in, uh, an employee as a member of the managerial team. Which was quite a-, and I think that happened after that first group, the young women from Yale came down here, and observed what they observed . And uh, so, and that was , I think that was a great, great move. Uh, ... differences, differences uh, observed... When we first came here, we were surprised, maybe even, kind of shocked, of the uh, ... Black people, uh, not as, not being partners, no Black people as partners, but even more so surprising and shocking than that, was the fact that, uh, we had our, we had our noontime meal, and there were virtually, none of the employees, at the noon meal. And that may have been another change that came about, back when the first, again, when that first group, cam-, uh, from Yale, came here. So then, uh, it was a real push to get the employees to ea-, be eating with us in, in the common dining room. And that was great. I thought that was marvelous.

**AH:** Well they do now. A lot, it's a lot better now than it was. Most of the farmers eat with us now --

**JH:** Yeah the farmers eat with us.

**AH:** Yeah. And the candy kitchen people.

**JH:** A lot of them. Yeah. Yeah. When they're here. And of course, yeah, heh, on the other hand the administration sometimes, uh, hops out and stuff.

**AH:** Depends on what we have for lunch.

**JH:** Well, those are some, observations. Additional observations.

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

**AH:** As I said to you way back at the beginning, you know, we're sort of on the periphery anyhow, so.

**Q:** Just, as a final question, what's been the best part of your association with Koinonia?

**AH:** The people. Our neighbors, the people like Cauffy, and partners, and the people, and the volunteers...

**JH:** Working alongside and with, yes, oh yes. We met, Snowbirds, we've struck up some very good relationships with uh, Snowbirds.

**Q:** And people like Deacon Pope and Bonnie and stuff as your neighbors?

**AH:** Oh yeah, uh-huh, Bonnie's one of our --

**JH:** Of course Bonnie was a partner, Bonnie and John were partners.

**AH:** Bonnie, uh, we've been friends with Bonnie for a long time and we think that her, we feel as if their kids are our grandchildren. They're free to come over here anytime.

**JH:** Yeah we have toys here for them and they come over, and play with them, yeah. And uh, we haven't, uh, developed quite that relationship with, with some of our neighbors', other neighbors' children, but some of them do come here on Halloween, and that's nice.

**Q:** Now your wife's been involved in the library; have you had a particular type of work you've been involved with?

**JH:** Oh yes, I've done, uh, a lot of maintenance work, and that's a good aspect, that it's given me an opportunity to work alongside of and with, with some of the folk up there. Um, yeah, and I've done all kinds of maintenance work, I've, and I've worked, oh I worked, volunteered, uh, in uh, in the pecan plant and various operations there. Um, and then also we have --

**AH:** And you worked at the store when it was open.

**JH:** Yeah I worked at the store, I ran the store when uh, Mildred was not there, not available. I can't remember why she was -- well I guess she was hired on as just a, part-timer, wasn't it? No, no, she was manager. Yeah, now that was a good thing too that came out of that early changeover, that first of all, they reopened the store, the store had been opened originally as a cooperative, and then as a, more or less, a nonprofit and, again, a ministry to the, to the neighbors here, to provide this uh, opportunity to purchase certain items. And Mildred was, and Mildred was then, uh, made manager.

**AH:** But Mildred, in her early days, worked with the building crew.

**JH:** Yeah, she helped build houses. Well she's been involved more recently with that WATCH group, "Women . . ." I don't know what the acronym stands for other than "W" is "women" heh- heh. But it's something to do with housing.

**AH:** They're building houses, women --

**JH:** In Americus, in town, women, yeah.

**AH:** Have you talked with Mildred at all?

**Q:** I'm going to tomorrow.

**JH:** She'll like, she'll give you a good story. But I worked, yes, I worked at the store, I al-, we also had a, uh, a literacy program here for, uh, foreign students, who could co-, especially with Japanese students,

Interview with John and Ann Herrick

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

February 5, 1996

JH = John Herrick, AH = Ann Herrick

who could come here, uh, having, uh, not, not gotten a very high, uh, TOEFL score, for admittance to the local branch of the university, Georgia Southwestern. And they would come here, and we brushed them up on their, their English language.

**AH:** You had a part in that.

**JH:** We had, in addition to the Japanese, we've had, uh, one or two Korean students. We also had a group of Hispanic people here, from Central America. From um,

**AH:** Oh they were overflow from Jubilee. But that was neat because they taught us Spanish and we taught them English.

**JH:** And then I have done some uh, literacy work with some of the local people, with Queenie, the, whose normally in the kitchen, when she's not on vacation. She's on vacation this week, so. Uh, ...

**AH:** But I've done a number of things too besides the library. I worked in the sorting plant one year, one fall, and I worked in products, I worked at shipping, one fall. Um, I worked, I've worked at the store, when I first came was a, as a volunteer, I was assigned to the store. And I, and then at that time it had three bosses. And I worked for three of them -- John Stit was one, Bonnie's husband. And, um Mildred, and uh, Jophie, the one that died in the flood. I worked for all three of them. So I've done a number of other things here, besides the library. But the library's my first love.

**JH:** Yeah I worked on the, on uh, house-building, and I worked on house renovations. We re-, we have also a little community over in Plains, the Martin Luther King subdivision, that Koinonia built, and I've, I've worked over there, renovating buildings... work here in this village, repairing and/or renovating.

**AH:** He's a handy guy to be married to. [laughs] Now we're still, the stuff out there is still, our house was flooded. So we're still working on restoring some furniture.

**JH:** I guess that's about it.