

Interview with Ruth Baer Lambach

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

April 19, 1996

Q: This April 19th, 1996, and an interview with Ruth Baer Lambach. And this interview takes place in a car, so it's not necessary to transcribe any of the interview that refers to directions, highway directions.

A: So where were we in the story?

Q: You know what I would really love to get you to do, if you don't mind, is to start by talking about your Hutterite childhood. Because I'm fascinated about that, and that would be really pertinent to what we're interested in, if that's okay.

A: You mean the stuff that's in Colony Girl?

Q: Yeah, well, yeah, if you don't mind, if you could give a thumbnail sketch, at least, of that. Because I'm curious about your parents. They didn't grow up Hutterite, did they?

A: No.

Q: So they joined as adults?

A: Yes.

Q: Before you were born?

A: No. I was seven.

Q: You were seven! I didn't realize that.

A: Okay, we talked about the Bright Colony, that was, where there was one side of the street, yeah, and they're still going on now. We visited. That place was within sight of our farm . We lived on this place called Hall Farm. And it was my father, and his two brothers, and their families.

Q: So your folks were Canadian.

A: Yeah, and they were Mennonite. Sort of old order Mennonite, actually, my father, and my mother was a regular Mennonite, and my father's father was a horse and buggy kind of person. I remember going to church with a horse buggy, and a horse and slaves [?] . I also remember going out to the woods, collecting maple syrup with slaves. That was in Ontario.

Q: Did they dress differently? Did your mom wear a bonnet and all that?

A: Yes. My mother wore a bonnet and two strings hanging down. And you see, among the Mennonites they have, some people tie the string under the chin, some people let them hang loose. Found new churches based whether you tie the string or let it hang. So we had, ... I remember very, it's interesting that it should have to do with hair, but when we moved from the Mennonites to the Hutterites, we um, ... it was a hair business at that, uh, there were three girls at this time. So each of us, my mother to her best ability tried to duplicate the hair style of the Hutterites already before, so that when we entered, we were not these fancy people with bright ribbons in our hair, we had more modest things. But I also know that my mother's little tiny French braids were never quite like the Hutterite French braids. We were always bigger and looser. And also her hair, if you ever see pictures -- the more I think about my mother, the more I realize that she was a real rebel, she was a quiet rebel. She would go along, but always, under her own terms. In other words, she did her hair, and she would never tie it under the way

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the Hutterite women do. She'd never had her shawl exactly the same way. Her skirts were never quite as long as the Hutterites were, because she couldn't stand anything on her legs -- she was a very fast-moving woman, so she didn't like those long skirts. And she made short cuts also in the way that she sewed her clothes, because the women all sewed their own clothes, so she did her own adaptations and variations -- just in little ways. And that's the way in which she was a rebel. But on the surface, she went along with everything. At any rate, I remember, getting on the train, -- we made two out there. One was a trip in the back of a van, where we had mattresses where we slept. We never stayed in a hotel or anything, and there was a stove in the back of this van. Actual stove with a fire in it, because in those days, I guess, the cars weren't heated. Can you imagine that, with mattresses and little kids and a stove! But we were disciplined, so, you know. So we joined the Hutterites in 1949. Well this is all in Colony Girl too. And arrived and, we had to sell everything from when we were Mennonite, and to this day there are many, many family pictures that are all crumpled up. In other words, my father, he was, 100% kind of -- when he went into something, he went in with both feet, 100%. You didn't compromise. You didn't try to sneak in a little bit of something from the world, you just went all the way. Okay, so no pictures, no pictures. And I think either my mother's relatives or my mother must've rescued some of these family pictures that have emerged then, later on. Um, I had never been to any school before I went there. In other words, my mother taught me at home, whatever I learned, whatever I knew. So when we arrived at New Rosedale[?] Colony, near Portage[?], LePrarie[?], it was in April. I entered school for the first time, and I think immediately they put me in second grade, based on my reading and writing and knowledge.

Q: Now what, if you can back up for just a second, why did your parents decide to join?

A: Well, um, ... my father, and several of his brothers, they were restless. You see, they had a father who was very strict. And um, my father, even as a young man, would investigate other religions. I know they went to um, the Holy Rollers, they went to a Methodist Church, they went to the Catholic Church, -- they were just curious. And um, ... because their father was so insistent, and so strict, I think that's when you make -- if you push kids into a corner, I think they will more readily try to, uh, you know, figure out how to get out of it. If you just allow them complete freedom -- and to me, it seems like the best way to allow these religions to get destroyed is to not say anything about them, to tolerate them -- they'll just disappear. If you want to make sure that something stays alive, you persecute it! You create barriers, then people are going to do all sorts of things. So there was a passion and intensity and so on, because there was that in my grandfather. And so the boys were that way too. And I think that my mother was attracted to my father, uh, for maybe the same kinds of reasons that you and I are fascinated with the Gary Stinekeys [?] and the Unabombers, you know? Because he was that kind of a wild, undisciplined maverick, that you don't know where he would go next, what would pop out of him. I mean, I think we lived in about five different homes. Each of us were born in different homes. Now that seems awfully restless. Before we even joined, um, -- we didn't exactly join, but we went to live at the Bright Colony, in the summer of '47 we lived there. And I remember my younger brother, Moses, almost dying there, um, -- he had an intolerance for cows milk. And he had blood coming out of his stool. Um, so, I mean I'm, I feel fortunate, as the oldest, having been nursed at least 4 months. And each successive baby she nursed less long. I think that's too bad. That could be one of the reasons that all three of us girls have nursed our babies for 2.5, three years. So we, um, ... okay. One of my father's brother's wife died. She

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had, um, uh, mental illness, nervous breakdown, and in those days they did cold water treatment, and whatnotall, and she, as a result of having so many cold water treatments, I think she got pneumonia, and died. And there he was with seven children, bang, bang, bang, bang -- just like in our family. That was Silvester, Uncle Silvester. His whole family is still in the Hutterites now. And they married with the Mendels, but they're up in Canada. So, I think, um, ... that was one of the reasons that -- because he didn't have a wife, that my Uncle Moses, and his family, and my Uncle Silvester and his seven children, and my father, bought a farm together, called the Hall Farm. And a couple of years ago I went back to see it, and it's a beautiful stone house! And it was bought by um, some Iranian, rich guy, recently. Last summer, I was up there to see it. It was a huge place, and I remember the big, big stone things that were -- and I remember that as a very positive experience, all of us do, because there were lots of kids, there must've been 21 kids. Two mothers, and 21 kids, and three fathers, or three men. We had cows there and pigs and whatnotall, and there was one man, Norman Randall, who would walk across the field from the Cougal Sect Colony [?], that's what it was called, in those days., to visit, in the barn. And I got up at 5 o'clock every morning with my father to go out and milk. And I remember Normal Randall and my father arguing and talking religion. They were just, doing, having philosophical discussions. Because my father, you know, had read the Bible 12 times. That's virtually the only book that he ever read. So, I think he was passionately interested . He was a seeker. He was a true seeker. His natural bent was an entrepreneur. And, but this other, the biblical stuff is what always modified him, somewhat, you know, and turned that energy that he would've normally turned into just being, becoming wealthy, it was turned into also doing his religious seeking. But this was the '40's, and I'm backing up now, when I was a very little girl, I remember, even before we lived on the Hall Farm, that I was told that I dare not go out to the mail box to pick up the mail as I had been used to. I mean, that was my regular thing. But for some reason, I was prevented from doing that. And the obvious reason is that, he was expecting to get a letter from the provincial government, to call him to go to join the army during the war. See, I always figure, well, there were two reasons why my father joined the Hutterites. One, that he was a true seeker, for utopia, and the other one was that when he married my mother, his intention was to have 20 kids.

Q: God, was it really?

A: And you have a better chance having 20 kids if you don't join the army, you know and get killed. So in the Hutterites, he found religion that supported his goal of having 20 kids, and the Hutterites had an absolute pacifist stance. Which the Mennonites, because there enough Mennonites in Germany, where the Mennonites did not take an absolute stand in this situation. They said, "This is a special kind of a situation, and it's to your individual conscience whether you join the war." And my father, I remember him talking about, "You can take your sunshine religion and stuff it!" Because he was, he's one of these absolutists. And there are about three people in our family who are like that. I think it's a missing gene, actually. That, where they, they cannot see any gray, they cannot compromise. And they become fundamentalists. They take absolute hard-line positions, and they will die before they will change! And this is my father on this kind of an issue. So, he ... um, so he, I don't, believe me, he, --okay. One winter, I'm not sure, I'd have to figure out which year this was -- he had the money in his pocket, and it was a lot of money, I think, to fly to England. He had heard about the Bruderhof [?], now God damn, I don't know how. I'd never got to ask him how he found out about the Bruderhof, but he had the money in his

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pocket to fly to England to join the Bruderhof. That could've been a very strange and interesting turn of events had we done that, eh? We probably would've joined. Before he left -- he was supposed to leave the next day -- he went out in the woods to help his brothers, uh, cut logs for firewood. And when he was out there that afternoon, he cut his finger, just cut it off, and I remember him coming into the house with his finger dangling just by a piece of skin. And he, I guess, took that as a sign, you know, went to the doctor, took it as a sign, he didn't leave. And that was it. So, then, um, and he was around again for the winter, but I think he was still kind of chomping at the bit, for going to the Hutterites. My uncle Moses, who is a Mennonite bishop, he was educated at Goshen -- I always admired that family. You see, there were three brothers that married three sisters. Uncle Moses married my mother's sister. He was a bit older than my dad, a year older. And he went to visit the Hutterites, he and his wife, in the winter time. Farmers can take vacations in the winter. So, the kids stayed with us, and Uncle Moses and Aunt Selema visited all the Hutterite colonies -- Alberta, Manitoba, the whole thing. Now, Uncle Moses, because he was college educated and a minister, he was always a bit more mellow than my father, he wasn't as extreme. And his wife also, had, I think, there was also a more equal marriage. In other words, the wife had not given in as completely -- well, he wasn't as radical, so then you didn't have to sort of give in, the way you did to my father. So, that family, I always admired it, they were always a bit more balanced. They had a piano in their house, the kids could practice. They learned music. I mean, our family was always up in the air. Truly, when you look at it, we have all of the traits of a very dysfunctional, alcoholic family, without the alcoholism. And everything went according to my father's will. He had this unbelievably -- evidently he born premature, and he was put in a shoebox in the oven, you know, to keep warm. And I have a feeling -- and he was the seventh in his family -- I have a feeling that uh, that he got a way with a little bit more than the average kid did. Because not only was he naturally a kind willful person, but he got a lot of extra care and extra holding probably, and so his will didn't get clipped as much. And there were seven sister and seven boy in that family too. And there's one person in our family who I would say, whose will did not get broken too, and that was Elim. And Elim had epilepsy, and there was epilepsy in my father's family also, so I think that might account for some of the erratic mental behavior too. Even though my father was not epileptic, but he was, -- in some respects my father was an absolute genius. My father's connection to his primitive stuff was absolutely brilliant, right on, I mean, just in many, many -- the way he made snap decisions and snap judgments and followed his -- when he followed his nose, after he was rid of his religious stuff, he was right on, usually. So there was some way in which he was not, um, ... his will wasn't broken. You see, among the Mennonites, by the age of two, you were supposed to have the will of the child broken, because otherwise you couldn't work with them. And uh, I think my father, because of his being little, you know, he was smaller than average, he was not a very tall man, I think 5'7" and a half, something like that. He was probably a little dynamo, and so he snuck through. And if you're a seventh kid also, you can sneak through. And so I don't think his will was quite as broken as the rest of them in the family. So, ... and also, around this time, 1946, in February, um, ... you see, if you look at my father and my mother, I would say my mother had the "male" mind, if there is such a thing as a male or female mind, and my father had more of the intuitive, sensitive female mind.

Q: Oh that's interesting. So they kind of had swapped roles.

A: Yes. My mother was the calculating, logical, ... you know, planned person.

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Q: And he would do things on a whim? "Let's go join the Hutterites."

A: Yes. Yeah. I mean, if my father saw some pretty flowers in a ditch, "Oh! I want to get those flowers!" He'd stop the car and run down and pick them. Or he'd drive the car down there and get stuck and pick the flowers. I mean, there's a very funny thing that one of my sisters-in-law wrote about my father. She couldn't, she just couldn't believe it. Her story was that he spent more of the time of his lifetime in ditches than on the main road. That's my dad.

Q: So you guys joined in New Rosedale when you were seven?

A: Yes.

Q: And then later you moved to Forest River?

A: Okay. In New Rosedale, that was 1949. New Rosedale was getting to the point where it was large -- you know, Hutterite colonies divide, and having these two more families arrive there probably just tipped them over. So within a year, uh, after being there, we divided. And I remember that division thing taking place, um, we went to be at night, and we didn't know if we'd go to the new colony or stay in the old one. And, uh, our family, they split the two brothers, Silvester and Allan, I don't know why they did that. I suppose they did that to -- the Hutterites had a strange little, quirky, practical ways of dealing with stuff, and they probably didn't want to start a dynasty. So they figured, both of these men are outsiders, and they have to be properly integrated. So Uncle Silvester was on one side, stayed in New Rosedale, and Allan Baer, we happened to be in the group that went to North Dakota. And we, we arrived, or we moved across the border on my birthday, my ninth birthday, in 1951. Um, so that's how we came to North Dakota. But actually, I went, I did my first three years, or, grade 1, 2, and 3 in New Rosedale. That story, Goose Eggs, that took place at New Rosedale, when I was in 3rd grade. Having just arrived -- I did those three grades within two grades.

Q: You know that picture that you sent me that we published with the article? How did you get that?

A: I don't remember how I got that.

Q: Because pictures were forbidden, right?

A: Yes. And that's a very old picture. I mean, back then, I'm not sure how I got it, I don't remember who gave it to me. But it's a copy, I had it enlarged. It was a much smaller picture. And you know, two weeks ago, somebody was here, from um, ... there's a woman in Winnipeg, with this, the guy Sam Hover [?], who's -- have you read that little book called Hutterite Stories?

Q: No.

A: He's an ex-Hutterite, and they put out a page, they wanted everybody who was an ex-Hutterite to submit stories. Unfortunately, nobody submitted except me. I submitted three of them. I submitted the Goose Eggs, and I'd wrote another one called Choke Cherry Picking, um, and then something else, I forget what it is, -- oh a poem, I think. I might have sent four things. And she was concerned that I change the names. But I didn't feel that I said anything that would damage anybody. I guess Jack Jensen, the teacher that I mentioned in that, he's still alive, and he became a farmer after that. And he never could figure out why the children didn't like him. He never ... but he quit teaching.

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Q: Now was he the English teacher?

A: Yeah, he was the English teacher.

Q: Was he a Mennonite?

A: Probably. As were um, the two -- there was Rudy Clausen[?], and Frank Clausen, and I was in love with both of those guys. I swear, I think girls these days do not have, um, you know, they, um, they don't have these men to identify with if they don't have male teachers. I mean, in elementary schools. They have all these women teachers. But all of my first teachers were these first year Mennonite kind of guys. And then in Forest River our first teacher also was a uh -- Frank Walker.

Q: Now when you moved to the Hutterite colony, did you start speaking Hutterish then?

A: Okay, that is something that's very important for me to think about, especially in these days when we have bilingual education and so on and so we spend a lot of government money teaching the children's native language in school, which I think is a total waste of taxpayer's money. And I've debated my very professor, when I've put my foot in my mouth, and have been outcast because of this, because of my position. I belong to TSOL, which has, their position is, to fight against U.S. English. And U.S. English is called also, "official English", which is trying to pass a law that English should be the official language of the United States. It doesn't mean you outlaw other languages, but it just mean that you state -- and 23 states so far have passed that law. But anyway, my reasoning is based upon my experience in the Hutterite colony. So we came to the Hutterites speaking Pennsylvania Dutch. Which is an unwritten, German dialect. Very significantly different from the Hutterite Tyrolian [?] dialect.

Q: So that was your first language.

A: Yes. Yes, that's spoken by the Amish, and the old-order Mennonites, to some extent. The Hutterite kids told us that we spoke a horse-language. And you know, that kind of rubs you a little bit the wrong way. And uh, probably before we even, I would say within four months, as kids, we had mastered that fricken Tyrolian dialect. We did. I remember when Luke was born, August 7th, 1950. And we, uh, my parents called him Luke. The kids would ask, well what's the baby's name. Luke. And for the Hutterites, they just teased the hell out of us. A "luke" was a whole that goes up into the attic, in their dialect. So we learned that vocabulary --

Q: So what was "Luke" from the Gospel?

A: "Lucas." But the Hutterites didn't have Lucas as a name that had been in their normal -- and since then, there are actually a number of names that our family brought into -- really. Luke is one of them, another one is Joel. Uh, Luke and Joel are probably the only two. Because the Hutterite names, I mean, I could list them for you : Sarah, Susie, Rachel, Katie --

Q: You fit in fine, because they probably had Ruths, right?

A: Yes, they had Ruths. They had Ruths, and they didn't have many Miriams, and they didn't have, I don't know why they didn't have any Naomis. But since our family joined, they have had many more of these kinds of names, and they also have other names now from the outside. But we had to learn the Tyrolian dialect, and you see, my parents, especially my father, my father was an enormously effective

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communicator, and he, the words or the language or the dialect, nothing stopped him. He just grabbed whatever he needed to grab. When he was among Norwegians, he's mix Norwegian and Swedish and English and German and Pennsylvania Dutch, it would all become one language. And that's, I think, characteristic of business people. Of entrepreneurs. He was an effective communicator, he just didn't honor the guidelines of the language. So we were always embarrassed that my father never learned proper Tyrolian, and neither did my mother. Each of them spoke it with a very distinct, different dialect. And some of these German dialects are mutually unintelligible, because of the sing-song nature. You know, the Hutterish dialect is, "[speaks in Hutterish]" -- it's how you deal with the vowels and the stress, and in Pennsylvania Dutch, "[speaks in Pennsylvania Dutch]," and when you're listening, it takes a while to figure out what is meant. But anyway, kids learn this stuff very, very quickly.

Q: Did you know English at that point?

A: Yes. Yes, um, so I probably, technically grew up bilingual, speaking English with the outside, with the neighbors, you know the different neighbors who were not Mennonite, and speaking Pennsylvania Dutch in the family. And I believe the service, in the Mennonite services -- yeah that was another thing, we also had German and English services. My uncle gave the sermons in this hall place -- we had to have two services and two Sunday schools, all of us kids, once in English, once in German, once in English, once in German. And my father did the German, and my Uncle Moses did the English. Exactly the same message, but in these two languages.

Q: Well you had to learn high German, too, right?

A: Well that's high German. The Bible is not, the Bible, nor any of these songs, these hymns, are written in Pennsylvania Dutch, or in Tyrolian. So all of the church services and the school, that's all --

Q: So you knew high German, Hutterish, Pennsylvania Dutch, and English, as a little girl!

A: Right. And that's the point that's missed by many of these bilingual people, is as long as you keep the environments separate, -- and an environment can be as simple as a grandmother and a child, that relationship, speaking one language, that's a clean environment. What's happening in our schools -- and I'm sorry to go off track here -- is that you pollute the environments, when you take one teacher in a classroom who can speak Spanish and English, and who does both languages. And you know what the kids come out with a subclass education, they speak "Spanglish". And we're paying for it. I just think it's really lousy. Because there are different ways of thinking. When you are learning a new -- I remember when I went to a German summer school. When I was in college after awhile, I figured, "Well, how do I get out of this institution the quickest?" I mean, I considered college one more institution like the mental hospital and the jail, you know, I've been in them. So after four years, I had changed my major many times, I wasn't quite sure, because everything was so new. First I wanted to go into anthropology, into history, into English, and so I finally figured, "Ah! German! German! That'll get me out of here the fastest!" Then I got a scholarship to Deutchesumershula [?] . In that sumershula, we all committed ourselves to speaking only the German for the seven weeks. And during those seven weeks, one time I turned to a fellows students, and I commented, I said, "You know, I don't think that we would be friend in English." I was aware that you have a different persona in a different language. I believe this is the central resistance that the Hispanics have to learning English, because they are aware that learning a

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new language, it's not politically neutral, it's not culturally or politically neutral, because it opens up new ways of thinking. I mean, in certain African tribal cultures, you do not have the noncount [?] concept for anything except God. So that's a profound change in your cognitive schema. So anyway when you speak another language, you have another map of the universe. Yeah, so those are the languages. And we were not permitted to speak Hutterish in our "English school" so-called, the six hours during the day. The German teacher would come along, one hour before the English school and one hour after English school and do the German lessons.

Q: And that would be high German?

A: Yeah, using high German songbooks, of the songs by the martyrs, back in um, --

Q: So you'd be studying the Bible, and the texts of the martyrs, and things like that?

A: Yes, and having to memorize these songs. That was a Hutterite-style education was just rote memory. And we'd memorize long, -- we'd have homework every single night to memorize these things. And I remember, I didn't know the names of the -- I didn't know the meanings, I mean, the concepts did not even exist for me. "[Speaks in German]" -- they are sorrowful things: "My God, it's morning again, I'm still in jail! And I'm still on the earth, I'm still alive where every day has it's ale and it's sorrows and travails!" You understand some German, right?

Q: Not much...

A: So we were talking about language and the Hutterite -- I mean I've even written something that's been published about another point of view. And so for us, we felt sorry for people who didn't speak German because we were sure that they couldn't go to heaven, because God only spoke German. That's how powerful a -- and comprehensive, you know, the environment -- the Hutterite culture is an enormously -- it hits you at every level. At your food level, at your clothing -- it's complete, it's total, it's completely integrated. So when you learn something, you learn it and it goes all the way through you. It's not like you're just going to school and you're intellectually stuffing something away, filing it in a little system, because you take it in with the barefoot soles of your feet, and the knowledge is all part of you. What I find interesting, as I am in ESL with lots of other people, is that my mind works a lot more like the Black mind, the Cambodian mind, the villagers, the fisherman, the people in Africa, and I think my sister Naomi would probably concur. And I think the difference is that, -- and it's just absolutely, diametrically opposed to Tom's kind of mind. See, the intellectual who -- it feels to me as if there's a cut right here in the head, and the brain is out there and is collecting all this stuff, but none of this ever comes out of the asshole or comes through the gut or sits in the gut -- there's no action, there's no collection. Some of the most violent fights that Tom and I have are about my sort of insistence that everything that you have and you know be fully integrated into everything. You know, that if you take a piece of my thumb or a piece of my leg, it had integrity, it's a part of the whole. See, for Tom, ideas are interesting in and of themselves, and they don't necessarily have to take action. For me, ideas have to have legs, you have to see it, you have to feel it, you have to know it. And so when I learn something, my learning style is very different from his. And also, my style of expression is very different, and I find -- and just this last week, I've been, I went to this conference, and I had to, for two graduate credits, write up a report of what I did. The interesting thing is, academic English is something that the English

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teachers these days are struggling with, because how do you take an intelligent, let's say journalist, who's an author, from Brazil, who also has that style sort of integrative, holistic style of the South American writers, how do you take them and train them to write in this dry, almost as though you're speaking -- your head is disconnected from the body. And you teach them how to write in this academic style, where you have to have your proofs, and your thesis statement, and this and that and the other thing. And if you dare put any kind of personal comment or indicate that the person who's breathing and living and has a belly behind there, you put any kind of a piece of that in there, "Oh, that's irrelevant! What does that have to do with it?" And when I write, I always feel that it's important, if I have a headache, if I'm constipated, that's of course a piece of information that should be relevant. So, okay, and that's what I struggle with, in fact, I don't have my masters in linguistics right now, because they didn't approve of my style of writing. I am a brilliant teacher, I understand all those principles, in this little blue book, and I didn't have enough -- and that happened in the same year that I landed in jail with all that custody battle stuff. So, and then, I never went back, and by the time I woke up, after doing 12 hours a day of working with refugees, by the time I woke and came to my sense, "Whoa, I really should work on that," they tell me, "It's too late." You know, the credits are old. So, that's why I'm battling this academic institution. I've gone to Loyola University, and they say, "Well, get a lawyer, that's what you should do." And then I went and talked to a lawyer, and he said, "Nah, you don't have a chance." So here I am, having presented, having supervised teachers in my program who come from the University of Illinois, and I've also presented at international conventions on, on, um, on linguistic issues in that whole field. And I've supervised Ph.D. candidates who come out to my programs. It is very frustrating. But it also shows me how deadly this sort of academic world is, an inability to kind of deal a little bit, and make holistic judgments. Because when I was in the school -- see first of all, I was, um, I was a very accomplished German teacher. The head of the foreign language department of the state of Wisconsin, was told to come to my class when I was a teacher, a neophyte teacher, first year out. And then he took me, and he brought me to his graduate class that he was teaching at UW in Madison, and uh, I demonstrated. I didn't think anything of it, because, again, I was naïve. I mean, most of the trouble that I have come into in my life is because of my naïveté. I didn't, I didn't understand the significance. I mean, these days, I would now, "Wow, that's a credit, wow, that's great, I ought to capitalize on that, write it up on a résumé, you know? Do something with it." Hell, I didn't know. So here I come to teaching in this linguistics program, and the guys that are teaching me are teachers that are lousy. And the one particular guy, this professor, he was younger than I was, he was not a natural teacher. See, I'm a natural language teacher. I've come to understand that, and accept it. And so I would demonstrate to the peers something, and he said, "Well, what method is that?" And um, so I'd say, "Well, it's a little bit of this, and a little bit of this, and a little bit of that," and only years after I'm out, about ten years after, they have something they call a "natural method," which was exactly what I was doing. Now it's got a name, now only because it has a name, this asshole can recognize it. And I was already doing it, without having any training. And that is what's for me very, very frustrating, that in the very -- so, there is, as I've said earlier, that you repeat patterns. And I know that what I'm repeating in my life is um, the lack of acknowledgement for who I am and what I do. And I think um, sometimes I've had resentments about this too. If I would have taken the energy that I put into scrubbing and cleaning windows and floors, and keeping boys clean at the age of 11 and 12 and 13, had I poured some of that energy into becoming a singer or a dancer or an actress, or a writer -- I mean, I have enormous talent in all of those fields, but

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none it's developed. Instead, there I was, totally unacknowledged, in a culture that valued me for keeping a house clean, ironing, sewing, spinning, all that sort of stuff.

Q: Well and also, living up on the Hutterite colony, you didn't know the rules of the outside culture, right?

A: That's right, no, none of the rules. And I still, as long as -- I have been out since 1959. And uh, this is a little bit about what I talked about too when I talked at UFC the other day. You know, the refugee resettlement, they have programs, and they expect certain things of people, and I have news for them. When you come into this culture from another culture that's, where the value system is so different, um, you scratch me, and inside, I'm still a Hutterite, because I was a fully shaped, acculturated Hutterite by the time I was 17. You can tell that from my pictures -- I was ready to accept my place in the society. I knew how to be a mother, I knew all the stuff. The other stuff that's on top, is sort of a veneer that's on top of me, although intellectually you integrate. But I still approach every job, for example, I automatically assume that everyone is working together for the common good.

Q: Well how long did you live in Forest River?

A: Okay, Forest River, we arrived on June 7th, 1951, my ninth birthday, and we left shortly before, or probably right about at my 16th birthday, so 1958.

Q: Were you baptized?

A: Nope. I've never been baptized. That's the funny part, with all this religious stuff, all this religious training --

Q: You must have just missed it then. When do they normally baptize?

A: About 18.

Q: So you were going through all the preparation, but you didn't quite make it?

A: I, yes. That, -- I was going through the preparation and anticipation, and there was no more powerful anticipation than anticipation of becoming an adult, and that means age 15. And you see, I didn't make that. So last summer when I was at that conference in Elizabeth Town, this one social worker, anthropologist, social worker from Seattle, who brought the Hutterites to that conference, she said, "I know what we're going to do with you. You know what you need?" Because she was in the presentation where I gave it, and uh, she was sitting out there, and she said, she said, "You know, you are still a young girl. What we're going to do with you is dress you up, and you're going to go back to the Hutterite colony, and uh, and you're going to graduate." Her idea was that, something about my body movement or something indicated that I was still [tape ends] ... I mean, that had occurred to me a number of times already, that that's probably what I needed to do, is to symbolically graduate into adulthood. And I have done symbolic things like that. For example, I made myself a blue dress that was a dress that I would remember a wedding dress to be in the Hutterite culture -- I made, the long skirt, I made a long matching apron, I made the top. Without a pattern, I just made it. And I wore it to um, a women's group that I was in at the time. And it really did make me feel different. Um, see, I think when you um, ... never having gone through childhood in this culture, 20th century culture, there are many, many pieces that I

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missed. You know, so you are, um, I think, if I truly want to become an American, that I have to go through some of the experiences. And what Hugo has provided me, what the Indian Trial provided me with, was being a teenager, in a way. Because as a waitress, you have very low, limited responsibility. I took my bicycle to work, I had one uniform, two pair of shoes - my bike shoes and that. In fact, I even conceived that I could live on the beach. I wanted to live on the beach. See, the time that I lived there, you know, when I was in --

Q: In Active Acres?

A: In the psych ward, yes. It was in the early '70's, must've been '72, I, the one time when I left the psych ward, I bicycled out to Active Acres. See, once again, when I was in trauma, I seek community, a home-base, what is for me, emotionally, a home. I mean, I could not have a picked a more radically person than Gearhard Stinekey [?]. Because Gearhard Stinekey was this alienated, isolated, orphaned kid, maverick sort of person, who essentially was against the whole world. He could get into a fight in a grocery store with somebody. He was just continuously -- so okay, so I go out there for community, because -- and then I came back again, and again the question is, how do you kind of, slowly, when you have a trauma like that, how do you bring yourself back in it? For me, it has represented a uh, an easing back into the 20th century, because it was a land, and there cows there, there were pigs. And you see Herb Hoover [?], at that time he was called Immanuel Branch -- Herb Hoover, he was a Quaker from Iowa. And in the '50's, he had been chosen by, it must've been President Eisenhower, to go to India with a bunch of farmers. One of seven or eight people from the United States. He was a very successful farmer in Iowa, and he was a Quaker. And he was so profoundly and deeply moved -- or maybe I've told you this before? -- by the poverty in India, that when he returned, he got rid of everything that he had two of. He kept one pair of pants, one pair of shoes, really, to try to simplify. And his family thought he was nuts. And do you know what they did? Took him to a psych ward and gave him electric shock treatments. And I think the man has never been the same since . He had three daughters, and one of his daughters got married out here -- anyway, her, so I, he lived out here with his wife, Eleanor, and um, I moved into the house. And then they had another, a farm a little ways away, and this hippie couple were living over there. They had these special pigs that could not be with any other kind of pigs because they would be, they would get diseases, they were not very resistant to diseases. And they had Charlay [?] cattle. And see, there was a cow, again, where I got up early in the morning with Herb and would walk out in the pastures, and these beautiful hills that were covered with daisies, and we'd go out looking for new calves that were born over night. So I have nothing but very, very positive memories of this place. And of course they loved me, because I was completely at home and adapted to everything, the routines. You know, making butter, making bread, the social aspect of it, of going to Folklore village on Friday nights with a potluck -- all of that. I was very -- so I was a real part of the family and part of the community. And uh, but Herb, I think Herb was always interested in me too. At least this is what Hugo says. But I never did anything with him. And he was also involved with this other woman, the women that went on the Phoenix to North Vietnam. I forget her name.

Q: Did Herbert go on the Phoenix?

A: No, but the woman did. [driving stuff] ... So I'm on decent terms with him, I've come out to visit him twice since I left. And each time, I've um, you know, stood, taken a picture with him, and he's very

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friendly. He used to write me letters. Um, but there is something in him that is a bit off.

Q: Yeah, and it's probably the shock treatments?

A: Probably, yeah. I think he also is a person who has native intelligence, and his native intelligence was never disciplined into any particular field. I think it's absolutely important when you are, um, if you do have intelligence, energy, or whatever, to be, um, modified by the interchange with peers. While he was a farmer down in Iowa, you know, he had that going for him. While he was up here, and I'm sure he'll talk about this -- I'm real curious to hear what he has to say, because uh, um, from my perspective, Herb Hoover came out here much like my father -- when he went someplace with his whole self, all of his assets, and that was a very expensive move, to move a herd of Charlay cattle and pigs, all of his equipment, he brought it up here. He sunk himself in deep. He was part of the earth. When you even saw him folkdance, he was a man who was uh, you know, there are people who dance on the earth, but the farmers are in the earth, they are standing in the earth -- they don't dance on the earth. They're not loose objects that are separate from the earth. And this is what Herb Hoover was. And it was in distinct difference, he was quite different in that sense, from, for example, a psychologist, who was also out here, who supervised the building of the yurt back in the woods. And then the uh, another guy who had a health food store in Evanston, was also out here, and he was a potter . And he still lives out in this area someplace. But all these other people had -- and then the other intellectuals and historians and so on, the visitors -- they danced on the earth, they used the earth, and they flowed over it, and they could dance that way too. But with Herb Hoover, you felt like you had a clod. If you think about a pebble and a clod, is there something, a Blake poem about that, that you couldn't take the guy out of his, out of the land. He was um, ... and that was really the beginning of the rub, between those people, um, ... who are, -- and that's the same kind of thing that happened at Forest River. Where you have the real farmers who know the weather, the animals, the needs, they are very deeply integrated with the actual landscape from which they derive their sustenance. As opposed to the other people who come from Paraguay and New York, and hell, they could set up a commune over here, there, no matter where. And the commune and the communal life is kind of separate from the needs of the pigs or that whole other, uh, ... you see, when you're a farmer, you're controlled by weather, you're very much aware of that. You can't just ignore it. And you factor that in, in everything you do. And the other people who worry about having the good spirit, and building community and having good relations and so on, they don't think about those things.

Q: Was Active Acres a Christian Commune?

A: Well, Christian -- are Quakers Christian?

Q: I guess. I'm not sure.

A: See, I think Quakers are more like Unitarians. They're not exactly ... I think, if you believe in the inner light, and that each person has this inner light, I think right there you have taken away some of the importance of Christ, and being baptized. I mean, you never hear Quakers ... at least in my experience. When I was in Pittsburgh, I lived with Quakers too, and you never hear them talk about salvation, you don't, they don't sing those kinds of songs, they don't use those kinds of words, so I would think that the Quakers, perhaps not the Quaker types that Nixon came from, but the Quakers that I know of, who sit in

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meeting...

Q: Yeah, I actually go to a meeting.

A: I am not so sure that they are the same kind of Christian. I think that the other regular Christians that go to church and celebrate Easter in that ritualized manner, and Christmas and all that, with um, -- do Quakers do communion?

Q: No. Although maybe the -- the unprogrammed [?] ones don't. Maybe the programmed ones do. I'm not sure.

A: So is your Mennonite farmer husband a Quaker too?

Q: Well he goes to the meeting. He used to go to the Mennonite fellowship in town, but he left because he felt the church was getting too focused on its own institution, and not involved in what a church should really be doing in terms of service and stuff like that, so he stopped doing that.

A: Isn't it beautiful with these farms around here?

Q: It's gorgeous.

A: You can imagine in the summertime, bicycling through this area.

Q: That would be lovely. You must've been in incredible shape! Well I mean think of that, if you were bicycling a couple hundred miles at a time, my God, Ruth!

A: And all the time, I mean every weekend. Practically. I bicycled all the way up to, about a month before Carl was born. He was born in November. In October, I was out in Washington D.C., at a national youth hostel meeting, and um, ... end of October, and I climbed the Washington Monument. That time you could still go up. And this lady from England who was with me, she just was so scared. She said, "I don't know how to deliver babies!" I mean, I looked like I was going to have the baby any minute. And uh, I beat her up the, I had no problem doing the 555 steps up the Washington Monument. You can't go up there anymore. That would've been something for Carl to be born at the top of that.

Q: That would be great! ... So I want to know something more about the chronology of events. So where did your family go after you left, um, the Hutterite colony?

A: Okay, the Bruderhof came to uh, Forest River colony in about 1954, just after this picture was taken of my family, you know the one where I was 12 years old. And uh, my mother was actually sent on a trip to go check them out, so on. And then began that horrendous split at Forest River. So literally, I have not experienced a very long period of time of no chaos in any of these places. So anyway, the Bruderhof arrived, 60%, or 40%, I'd have to figure out which way it was, 60 or 40 -- it was a 60/40 split. Probably 60% went back to the real Hutterites, to New Rosedale. And 40% stayed at Forest River colony, and we joined with the Bruderhof. And for '55, '56, '57 we attempted to have a, a community. And during that time, many, many English people, German people, from the Paraguayan came up, and it was a wonderfully exciting, interesting time, on one hand. And we started going to high school.

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Q: So you became more "of the world" at that point?

A: Yes, exactly. And we slowly left -- for example, I started wearing jeans! Wow! Can you imagine? Some of the girls cut their hair . I never did, at that point, because it seemed too fast to me. So I didn't want to let go. We got rid of the kophtoch [?], we got rid of the clothes, because at that time, the Bruderhof was um, not at all dressed like Hutterites. So in '57, the Bruderhof finally left. And the spring that they left, there was this infamous sale. They had collected all the farm machinery, and put it together in one place, they were going to have an auction sale.

Q: Because they were going to move to New Meadow Run?

A: Yes. And to this day, nobody knows who had the power to alert the sheriff from Grand Forest North Dakota, to come out and stop the sale. And my father would never admit to it, but I know it was my dad.

Q: Wow. And he stopped the sale because he felt the Bruderhof didn't have the right to be --

A: Yes, yes. My father got some papers -- my father threw the place into receivership. He had been the business manager, you see, just before the Bruderhof came there. And based on his relationships with business people, and uh, -- see now, for a Mennonite, and a Hutterite, to go to a sheriff, to call on the law, that for me -- my most embarrassing time in this whole interchange in the custody battle, was the fact that I had to be using lawyers, courts, and policeman, had anything to do with them. That was utterly -- it still, to me, it means that your system of thinking, your way of thinking has completely broken apart and broken down, and you are at wits end. Because that is so -- and I think that my father was um, -- because we were supposed to be above the law. If you have to stoop to use a sheriff! My God, it's equivalent to calling in the Devil! So my father never admitted to it, but it's clear -- the sheriff came out there and stopped that sale. And then there was a lot of, there was a whole lot of agony going on during that time. Telephones ripped out of walls, people, grown adults pushing each other off the stairs. I was used as a spy at one point because I was still -- I had become a novice in the Bruderhof. And then when you do that, you have to make a personal commitment, and you have to say that you don't, you know, whatever, you want to leave. And so for about three days I was betwixt and between, because I had recommitted and said, "Yes, I want to stay with the community, I want to keep to my vows," and I went home and my parents didn't say a think. Not a word. And that pressure ...

Q: So then, did your parents stay, and you went off to New Meadow Run, without them?

A: Okay, a lot of people went ... my parents, um, okay. This time the split was, four families were left at Forest River, and all the rest of them went with the Bruderhof. And the four families that were left were are family, and essentially just two families -- our family and the Joe Mandel family, because Joe Mandel was there also with his [tape is inaudible] ... um, we then, this was '57 when the Bruderhof left, and that's the time when I went around and I literally pulled down all the papers and everything that reminded me of the Bruderhof, because I wanted to symbolically kind of clean them out of there. And then we started, we had our own little community there. And I continued to go to high school. This time I went to high school by myself. All the rest of the group was gone, I continued. And I graduated then in May of 1958. You know what I have in common with the Unabomber? Three things.

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Q: You're the same age?

A: Yes. We both are Gemini, both born in 1942, and both graduated from high school in '58, which meant that we skipped some classes. I skipped one high school and one grade school. So he must've skipped too. That's the other part that -- but anyway. So I went to high school by myself. I was kind of dressed medium, sort of half Hutterite, half whatever.

Q: Now did you guys back at Forest River, did you start, um, contacting the Hutterites and wanting to become re-affiliated with them?

A: Well, we were in Aushchwa [?] so to speak, so no Hutterites would want to have anything to do with us. And no Hutterites had anything to do with that Forest River colony for a number of years, maybe 15 years, actually not until the '70's. So it was -- anyway, so we lived there until '58. But in the winter of that year, of '57, my -- Paulie Waldner, who was as son-in-law to Joe, went on a trip, and when he returned, he came back with some stuff that the Hutterites had talked about in other colonies, saying, "You've got to watch out for that Baer, he's got all those boys, he's going to take over." And my father, he was just disgusted with that point of view. He was absolutely disgusted, because he was sincere about community. And, he thought, well, I think he must've made up his mind that winter, he just kept quiet about it. And for the first time in our lives, probably, he honored -- I don't know if it was because of winter or what -- but he allowed us to finish school, and maybe because he had contracted with the school board secretly, you know the money that the school board saved from not having to go out to the colony to pick us up, all that money my dad bargained for, for our train tickets down to Georgia.

Q: Oh, to go to Koinonia! Oh, okay.

A: Uh-huh. And that's probably the real reason. He didn't give a damn whether we finished.

Q: Well how had you guys heard about Koinonia? How did you --?

A: Okay, Clarence Jordan, had, in the mid-fifties also, early fifties --

Q: That's right! They had gone up there! I met one of the women who was up there with her family. Margaret Wittcamper, I interviewed her when I went to Koinonia.

A: Did you? When did you go to Koinonia?

Q: Oh, a couple of months ago.

A: Did you? Wow.

Q: Wow, so you guys went down to Koinonia.

A: Yeah, well, see, Clarence Jordan had started his farm -- he started it also in 1942, the year I was born. And then about ten years later, he came up and he visited all the Hutterite colonies, made a whole tour. And he made a wonderful impression on the Hutterites. Because the Hutterites love story-tellers, and Clarence Jordan was a wonderful storyteller. He had the gift of gab. And um, so everyone talked about Clarence Jordan. And my father, during that winter, must've, sort of been considering, "Well, there's this Clarence Jordan. I mean maybe he's got the real community spirit" that he was idealistically looking for. I don't know where he got -- he had this notion of how people live in community, that really, truly, there

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is equality. People have equal -- anyway, so he got the money from the school board, had bought our tickets. See, he was always, he was um, -- but the Hutterites were, you know, they were okay. We packed up a big truck, and two of the Hutterites drove the truck down there. Our furniture, some of the furniture. And all of the family, with enough food to carry us for the two or three days, got on the train. And we went through Chicago. And I remember being in Chicago. I remember moving from one train depot to another one, where we had to go by cab, and then we all kind of walked along this long train thing, each of us in perfect rabbit order, in chronological age, carrying our bags. Two nuns on the train came to my parents and congratulated them on what great, disciplined children they had. I mean, we were absolute perfect little bunnies, sitting in the train station. We were not like normal children who would dare make a squeak or peep or noise. And when it came to food time, my mother had these two-quart jars of canned chicken. You know how Mennonites do jellied chicken? Jellied meat? Okay, that's what we had. And pickles, and bread and butter. That's what we ate. And cookies. And it was all very quietly, neatly doled out on the train, we just sat and ate our stuff, and never said peep. Looked out the windows.

Q: Were you dressed as Hutterites?

A: Yes. But, oh, I tell you, the excruciating, ever-present, heavy heat and humidity of the South, came through the train. I don't know if the trains were air conditioned in those days, but God, I almost felt like I would die. Because we had come from North Dakota. Now in North Dakota, you can have 120 degrees, and you don't quite feel it, or you can have 25 degrees below or 45 below, and you don't quite feel it, because it's dry. Okay, so in Koinonia, I'll make it short. We had a house, we were welcomed, and it was marvelous! Oh, watermelon, peaches, pecans, okra, grapes, peanuts! We hoed peanuts. We had to handkerchiefs around our feet, in order not to burn our bare feet when we were out in the fields. Red soil. Water moccasins, you know diving into the water with a water moccasin sitting underneath the diving board. We had all sorts of new adventures -- it was a wonderful place for kids. And there were all kinds of people from all over the place. People, workshops, you know, from Detroit, Michigan. I remember this one girl, the Black girl -- I wanted to go for a walk, I had absolutely no prejudice, I mean, she was my friend. And we wanted to go for a walk at night. And the people told us, "If you walk out there, you're both asking to be shot." So, and during that time, the fruit stand was bombed one day. And another day, somebody shot -- we woke up in the morning and two cows had been shot, so we had to quick-slaughter them. Another day the shots came through the building and they went right through a person's hat. I'm not sure which man it was, but they were, there was a hole through his hat. So it was a dangerous time. But still, we went out and visited Black people. And I remember visiting one. And here again you have -- talk about judgmentalism. There was a Paul Goodman who lived down there at the time with his two children, and his goal was to find a Christian wife. That's why he came there, his wife had died, and I would go and read children's stories to his children every night. And the guy wanted to marry me. He's the age of my mother. He's now about, I think close to 80. But I'm still writing to him.

Q: Does he still live at Koinonia?

A: No. He lives um, in North Carolina. And last Christmas I went down the visit him. I mean, the previous Christmas, '94. I drove down from New Jersey, where I was staying with Tom, went down and visited him. He's by himself. Anyway, he was one of the characters down there. There were characters! Boy,

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there were people there! So it was interesting from a people point of view, it was interesting from a vegetation point of view. But my father soon realized that at these meetings, um, some people had more clout than others. And it angered him, and after a while he started calling the place, "The Clarence Jordan Farm." And that was the beginning of the end. So in November -- we arrived in June, we left in November. In November, we, got on the train again, and um, ... moved. This time we left our furniture and everything, there. He figured that, well, maybe he should give the Bruderhof another chance, maybe he didn't give them enough of a chance. And he had to write a letter, my mother had to write a letter, and I had to write a letter. Now, I was so, I liked Koinonia. I had started going to college there, in Americus, and I'd only done maybe two months. But it was aborted. And so, we um, got on the train and went to um, via Washington D.C. In Washington D.C. -- my dad was still the adventurer, still always the kind of -- he really was a delightfully playful kind of person. I don't know why he had this other streak that kept putting him into situations that were negative, that would just block all of the natural stuff that he was. And it would come out when he had a few days freedom -- it must've been his father, you know, the superego of his father. So, in Washington D.C., -- I mean, normal men maybe wouldn't put forth that much effort -- he insisted that we all get the tour of the place, and I think I wrote about that too. We all got stuffed into two cabs. The cab driver was complaining, "Too many people, too many people!" My dad insisted. So we had a tour, in those two hours that we spent there, looking out through the cracks of my brothers. You can imagine if you stuff all the people into a cab. And then got back into the train and went to Union Town.

Q: ... I'm real curious what he was like. Was he charismatic?

A: Yes. He definitely was, and I think that was a threat to my father too. See, my father was charismatic and energetic, and he liked to be the alpha wolf. He came there, and there was already an alpha wolf in place, who not only, he had a little more education and sophistication than my dad, quite a bit more. And he could quote the Bible as well as my dad, and even had studied it, read it in Greek. So, this guy was clearly, not only the spiritual leader, but also the economic leader. And that's why our stay there was quite short. I mean, Clarence Jordan could sing. He could tell stories. He um, ... and then, but Clarence Jordan also wore jeans all the time, and worked right along with everybody. But I do remember at meetings, I mean, everyone was kind of in awe of Clarence Jordan. Everyone who came there, obviously came there because of Clarence Jordan. He was the best, he was the best promoter, he was the best, um, uh, ...

Q: But he also must've scared people off too, because eventually, pretty much everybody left except for the Wittcampers, right?

A: Um-hmm. You see, the trouble also came with my brothers and Lenny Jordan -- the boys tend to be a lot more territorial. Women build community, build friendships, and men kind of stake out positions or have to demonstrate their achievements and whatnotall, so there was competition. And I think ... I remember that, I think this is where my father first got the idea. [driving stuff] ... So this was on your list? It would've been on your list in spite of me, or because of me?

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Q: Yeah, probably Tim got the information from you, but Tim has a list of groups, and Active Acres was on it, and then Jeff Kozney's given us a lot of addresses from his data base, and he had an address for Active Acres, so I fired off a letter when I knew I was coming up here. And I said, "I don't have a phone number for you, call me collect if you can." And so I got a collect call from Herbert Hoover.

A: Did he call himself Herbert Hoover?

Q: No, he called himself -- he didn't even tell me his name, and I had to ask him, and he said, "Well, Branch is my name," or he said something like, "Well, Branch will be on the mailbox." He never said, "Oh, I'm Immanuel Branch." So I had to say, "Oh, are you Mr. Branch," and he said, "Yes." And I did tell him I was bringing a friend, but I didn't know, so he knows I'll be with somebody. But he was really nice on the phone, he said, "I'm glad you're doing the project, I think it's important. I'm pretty eager to talk about what we're up to." And he said he calls his place Four PM Cooperative, whatever that means.

A: Okay, right here, this is the other place. This is the house in which I lived. It's tiny, isn't it?

Q: Rockridge Co-op Center.

A: And you walk way back there and you come to the Yert.

Q: So this was part of Active Acres?

A: That was Active Acres, and this was the barn. So he lives in the barn. See, it's right around the corner here.

Q: Well, he said not to be shocked by his place. [driving stuff]

A: See, this was a barn, and that was a barn, and all this land, I mean, it was beautiful. And here in these hills I walked, looking for new baby cows. [driving stuff]. Here it is. Four PM Learning Center. I love the persistence of people like this. Look, he's got all these chickens! See, this is another kind of guy like Paul Goodman, like the guy who wanted to marry me.

Q: Okay, just so I know where we are, this is, we're still April 19th, and this is a continuation of an interview with Ruth Lambach, and we just finished an interview with Immanuel Branch of Active Acres and Four PM Co-op. So Ruth, tell me what you thought about Immanuel Branch.

A: Well, frankly, I thought he looked a lot better than he did the last time I was here. And primarily, it's because he has chickens. Chickens, geese, turkeys, he has plans for three different gardens -- something has happened, something has changed. I mean, I have seen him 2 or 3 times over the years since I have been gone, and um, he has had some very, very low points, where I don't know how he stayed alive. Maybe, maybe his ex-wife, Eleanor, has sent him some money up from time to time. I wouldn't put it past her. I mean I'm glad I asked that little question about Eleanor, that Eleanor agreed to sell out everything, I thought that was -- I was watching his, I was sitting in the back seat, and I was watching his face during this whole time, and personally, I feel, uh, kind of sorry about this interview. I feel that it opened up a lot of things, and that we haven't gone deep enough.

Q: Yeah, I hated it, it seemed like he was hurting.

A: He was hurting in many, many spots, and I think exactly those spots where his hands were starting to

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start, and he was really hurting -- that's the psychologist in me -- that's where you want to dig deeper, and figure out. So I know that there's something very powerful between him and Rachel, for example.

Q: That's his daughter?

A: Yes, Rachel was his daughter. And at one point he even confused her. I don't know if you listened to it carefully -- he instantaneously switched from Rachel to Eleanor, who had a number of miscarriages. I don't know if you are going to listen to this, but I was very aware of that.

Q: See, I don't know enough of the history to be able to pick up on that.

A: He has a devoted woman, or he had a devoted woman. And I think, I think she's wise -- for me, this is something that stimulates me to want to go back to, interview Eleanor, to talk to her, because, when I was here at Active Acres, I was in such pain myself, I was utterly traumatized, so that I didn't become deeply involved in the management at all. I saw surface things. The one question I didn't ask him was uh, I, huh, I missed it completely. I wanted to ask him how long he had an affair with Betty Boardman [?].

Q: Oh, okay, so he was actually sleeping with Betty Boardman.

A: Yes, he was. And that complicates things, of course. Once again, the more intimate you have been, the deeper and more vicious is the fight to struggle when you separate.

Q: Yeah. He left out a lot of details that made it really hard for me to follow his story. Like, I didn't understand, maybe he talked about this and I just missed it, but I don't understand why he went to jail. I mean, what was he being accused of?

A: Oh, that was before he came up to Wisconsin, right?

Q: Right. Was he being accused of communist activities or something? What was -- he never really said.

A: That I'm not sure of, and that's where I also wanted to ask, and I wasn't sure how much I should butt in at that point. But I wanted to ask how long he was in jail, when his wife fell in love with a Black man. Maybe I should write him a letter. Maybe a letter would be -- do you think he would --? You can tell the way he writes, whenever he comes to an emotionally, um, shall we say, pregnant moment, or powerful knot, he, he kind of verges off, veers off into something else. And his story is very, uh, is very scattered, it's all connected. But I love the way he tied together his grandfather and his father and all those little experiences in his lifetime that moved him in the direction that he's going. Just even his, even the meaning of his name, Herbert. So, he's obviously, ... uh, ... he had a big ego. And he didn't speak about that directly, but he said about what he learned, you know, that all of his competitiveness when he was a -- it's such a shame. To me, that's utterly tragic. If you would've seen those cattle, the Charlay cattle, it was the first time in my life I ever saw Charlay cattle -- they were exquisite! They're the kind of cattle that you would drive by the road and you would drive slowly just to admire them. They're not ordinary cows, they were very expensive cows. So he had, ... and that's why I think the healthiest thing I see right now is he has -- he just doesn't have an ordinary turkey out there, it's some exotic sort of turkey. He doesn't have ordinary white chickens, he's got these wonderful, colorful birds. The very thing that he loves, that he can do, um, you notice how his hand shook and how disturbed he got about the cats dying on him? See, he knows, I have that same kind of sense in me, that when I am negative and down, that

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everything around me will die. And he has that sense about animals, that the connection that he has with animals.

Q: Well, with people too. I think when he was talking about Eleanor having a miscarriage, and also when he went through that period when he was in the closet, and he opened the door and he hit her -- so he does have this sense of how he affects his world.

A: Yeah, he perceives himself in a very powerful way, and of course it's fortified with all of his reading in the Old Testament. Which was full of a lot of macho guys!

Q: So if I had just talked to him and never talked to you about Active Acres, I would have this sense that Active Acres was just this portable battle ground, just filled with litigation, and it was nothing else but that. But I get from you, that it was entirely different, so I'd be really eager to hear from you, some of your story of Active Acres, and how you got involved in it, and what it was like for you.

A: Well I was brought out here by Bob Connley[?], whom we mentioned. Bob Connley was a bicyclist, a youth hosteller, and also a womanizer. And he brought me out here, -- and he was also a folk dancer. He died two years ago, just bingo, fell off the bicycle. On a bike ride, he keeled over, dead. And he was also a uh, uh, conscientious objector in the Second World War. He worked in a CPA camp. And he was also a Quaker. So Bob brought me out here, thinking that uh, ... he just, didn't think that, you know, the hospital, the psych ward, the Lutheran in Milwaukee, was the place for me. And so I agreed. As I said, I biked out here once, and then I um, I came out here. And actually, Gary brought Carl out here, so Carl came out here also. And, essentially, you give me a garden, some animals and some open space, and put me back into a communal setting, with land around, and I'm completely at home. I'm happy, everything's okay. And for the life of me, I don't understand why it was that I even, that Hugo had the power to bring me back into civilization again, because the few times -- see, I would come with Herbert and bring produce to sell at the co-ops. We had a big garden. We must have had a fifteen acre garden. And we harvested things and brought them in. And see, that was also fun for me. Working with people, working together, and various people would come out and uh, stay for a week, visit, we'd have conferences. Their family, they were so very close their family would come and visit. So for me, it was home base, home base, but only for that one summer. It was also interesting for me to note when it started. Active Acres started October of '71, and I came April or May of '72. So I was here right at the beginning. So I don't think there has been a whole lot that took place here. I think lots of things got started, got off the road. See, they were building that house for Fred Batson. Now Fred Batson had a health food store in Evanston. Before that he was an entomologist, and he became very upset with the poisons and all of the herbicides and things that we have that were causing, well he felt, irreparable damage, in the world. And so he quit that job, and uh, for a whole year, sat, did research, and decided to open up a health food store. It was very successful. He was also a Quaker. And he came from Madison. No, he was in Chicago, he came from Chicago. So from Chicago, he came all the way out here on the weekends. And he then also became a potter. Does beautiful pottery. And so up in the hill, we didn't see the building exactly, but it's kind of nestled back in the hills there, he built, as Herb said, an old barnyard, a nice kind of potter's hamlet, with southern exposure, with all old glass windows that he'd just rescued from -- so that was quaint, that was a beginning. So the idea was that lots of different people would come out here and do their thing, whether it's pottery, whether it was folk dancing, whether it was

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farming, whether it was weaving, whatever. Whether it was meditating, and that yurt was then built also by the psychologists, for groups to sit around and talk. The yurt was built on two different weekends. The idea was that everybody builds it together, and it's quickly put up. And we'd walk back there, we'd do hiking, um, ... so, as I said, for me, I think it was the wading through the crick, making -- I picked up and did a lot of the things we used to do in the Bruderhof. And, as I said earlier, with the Bruderhof, when they came to Forest River colony, for me, it was a very alive and engaging time. Because the Hutterites lived pretty much in the mindset of the old martyr, tortured life of the Middle Ages, repeating it. And the Bruderhof lived under the umbrella of the German Youth Movement. I suppose the original hippies, that would put a booksack on their back and then go out in the countryside and uh, extol the virtue of the life of the gypsies. And they'd go around singing across the countryside. It was also the origin of the youth hostels, was also connected to that. And I used to teach German, and I taught all the songs to my students. So I had this whole romantic vision of Germany. And my students were always asked to entertain at PDA meetings and so on, because I taught them all the stuff. So coming out here to Active Acres, was for me a way to reactivate some of the things that had been abruptly cut off as a result of me leaving the Bruderhof, namely, the folk dancing, the eating together, the socializing, and the natural setting. Those were prominent features of my life in the Bruderhof, of my life at Forest River colony, and I hadn't been engaged in those activities all the time I went to college, and so, it was reactivating all that.

Q: Should we go back to that? Because you haven't told me about your Bruderhof experience. Or would you rather do that later in the story? I mean, we left off when you were talking about leaving Koinonia and going north on D.C. and taking the tour of D.C. in the taxi, and I think that's when we stopped for lunch.

A: Well is the purpose of this to figure out what kind of people go out to these little communes, is that the purpose?

Q: It's just to, learn about, more about communal living in general, and -- there's no real set agenda.

A: For me, communal living is intimately tied to the earth, to gardens, to animals, to um, ... I mean, I probably have been sort of stupid, in a way. Why do I go follow some weird Chicago business man back into -- honest to God! He came out -- you see, what Hugo introduced to me was music. He studied music at Northwestern University, and he totally seduced me with that music. Now the music was very powerful when I was living in Milwaukee, and he'd come up and we'd sit in the car and we'd listen to it. There are pieces that I had never heard, you know, Chopin pieces, and Schuman, the leader of Schubert, that I had never, ever heard, and I was just transported. You see, as a Hutterite, you're not trained in music, but I'm very sensitive to music. Hugo had me, we could sit down and I could detect the difference between a [unintelligible] and a [unintelligible] performance, for example. That's how much I listened to music with Hugo. And when he came out here to um, to Active Acres -- maybe I should back up. See, while I was in the hospital, in the psych ward, I think one of the reasons that the psychiatrist put me in there was so that I wouldn't be torn between these two men, between Gary and Hugo. Because, you know I had an affair with Hugo. And he would come up to visit. And then I, I admitted to Gary, I told Gary about Hugo. And Gary got on the telephone immediately, it was about 2 o'clock in the morning, and called Hugo, and uh, dear old Hugo says, "It's an affair of the heart." And I stood right next to Gary

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and said, "Forget it, Hugo, I've told him. I've told him the whole thing, you don't have to pussy-foot around with 'affair of the heart.'" And Gary made a deal with Hugo over the telephone. "You let me have her for one year. If after one year, she still wants to go with you, then you can have her." And so that's the deal they made! Can you imagine? So, Hugo agreed that he wouldn't do anything. But all this isn't going to go into the story will it? This is the kind of stuff that I need to write. But that's how I, um, -- see the Connleys had never, Gary was hostile toward the Connleys, he was very suspicious of them, especially with -- people who are orphans and people who are paranoid and um, uh, who are, ... Gary had just an inordinately powerful antenna, as far as people were concerned, and he never, ever trusted this Connley guy. And he was right not to trust him either. And there was some really awful interchanges. Gary was, throughout our whole marriage, was really -- we could go to a bar, and some man, I mean I was in my late 20's, and I was attractive -- some man would say something, "Oh that's an attractive couple," or something, or they'd say something to me, or, and Gary would haul out and punch a guy. So, he was just real, a ticking time bomb as he was called. But he came out and visited me -- in fact the last time I ever slept with Gary was out at Active Acres . I have to say that I did have a real marriage, once . I once had a marriage, and that was to Gary Stinekey. For all of its tension and stuff, it was a real marriage.

Q: Now with your pretty strict, Christian upbringing, was it difficult for you to have an affair with somebody else while you were married, and also to get divorced?

A: Yes, of course, I mean it was impossible. It's as impossible and complicated and difficult as it is to use a lawyer, or the courts, or a policeman. It was just, you have to be utterly, utterly at wits end. And then, you notice what I did, I worked against myself -- I sabotaged the whole thing, because I knew it was wrong from the beginning, so how do you, how do you clear your conscience of that huge evil of using the court system? You sabotage yourself. And you make sure you don't win. That's what I did. That's what I did -- I played into the hands of Gary, in every single situation. I don't know if Gary understands half this. Way back when, I had the feeling that maybe I would know Gary when we were really old, that we could somehow talk about this stuff, and uh, because, given my intrigue with the Unabomber, I realize, my God, I'm still intrigued with Gary, that element in him! That sort of rigorous, unrelenting individualism. And I was surprised that Herbert Hoover said that I told him that he wasn't strong enough. That's amazing. I don't remember saying that.

Q: And that he remembered it. That's another interesting.

A: Because probably that whole time, he was there, but very careful, and very quietly, and --passive aggressively, by the way he's passive aggressive. Not aggressive, but passive aggressive. But he figured -- so he was probably, I mean each time I go out there, I feel, just like with Gary, my heart goes out to him. I mean there was a time when I came up to court, and I think I began telling you this story, then I got side-tracked, where I stepped toward the courtroom and I saw Gary standing in there, and my God. For all of, my entire heart went out, and wanted to take Gary and hold him. Gary, was my enemy. And what I wanted to do was to hold him. And I was completely cut off from my son, Carl. I didn't have those kinds of feelings for Carl. I mean, 'cause I figured Carl was okay. But my, I knew where the hurt was. I knew Gary was the one that was hurting. And that's sick. That's sick. And you know why it's sick? And I have to forgive my parents for that. And I forgive the Hutterite colony and the whole communal thing. Because I

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was developed, from the time I was 3 years old, because that significant little sentence in my story -- that, I changed my brothers' diapers. Every one of them, every one of my brothers. And if I figure out the dates, the fact that I was able to take my brother James out of the crib and change his diaper, and my father picked me up afterwards and applauded me, and yeah, I'm going to be a good little mom, from that time on, I knew how I would get attention. I knew what way to develop, and I was a fully developed -- I saw a picture recently of me, at the age of nine, and I looked like about a 23 year old mother of a little baby. I was holding the baby. My brother Zenus, who was just here. So, because I had that maternal stuff so well developed, that's why I get hooked into needy men's, um, wounded stuff, when they have broken with their mother. So, we talked about that earlier. But anyway, where were we in the story now?

Q: Well it all depends on kind of where you want to go. I don't know if you want to talk more about Active Acres, or if you want to go back and tell me about Bruderhof story, or --?

A: Oh, okay, so we're doing my coming out to Active Acres. Alright, so I bicycled out here a couple times, and um, and, I mean, hell, I was so -- do you have any idea how mixed up I was? How impossible it was for me to take anything for myself?

Q: Now this was after the custody battle?

A: I wasn't divorced yet, no. I was separated, I was just separated.

Q: This was before the custody battle. Okay.

A: Yeah, I was just separated. And Gary had put a private detective running after me in Milwaukee, and had all kinds of pictures of me, with Hugo. Never in any compromising situations or anything, but he'd spent a great deal of money. So I, for a time I was relying on Hugo for protection. And I mean, there were times when I, literally, I asked Hugo to stop the car on I94, and I got out of Hugo's car, and ran back to Milwaukee, to my house. I was a mess. I was a total, total, fricken mess. And this all was after I had been in the psych ward -- I mean in the psych ward I was okay. I was tested and all that. I came out, I think they said my IQ increased by ten points, after I was in there. The whole thing was, for me, a pleasant little interlude. Most people would not think of a psych ward as being that. But the one thing that I was very sure about when I went in there, I knew what kind of a place it was, I had enough sense that it was not a regular hospital. So that I refused even to take an aspirin. Even if I would have a headache. God dammit, I didn't want to have anything done to me that was outside of my control. And I knew that, I mean, we had a strong anti-medical profession sentiment in our family, as probably the Anabaptists generally do. God is we could record the beautiful terrain here! So ... with my one suitcase, I left the house, the kid. And Hugo came out to visit, one time, with his um, with his car, with a nice sound system, and the great music, and I realized, ... the sixth symphony is nothing compared to the actual birds and the actual creek and the actual thunderstorm and the actual power of nature that I have experienced out here. To me, the music paled. And I thought, "Huh, maybe the only place that music has meaning is in an urban setting. Because you have all this stuff when you're out on the land. And it's all there in nature, and this music that Beethoven wrote, is a copy of something." I mean, he very powerfully and very beautifully recreated something, but I had, my experiences out at Active Acres were um, I just relished, I relished everything. Pulling turnips out of the ground, eating them raw, the carrots,

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the water that -- we went hunting for watercress. And you see, all the people who came together at Folklore Village -- Folklore Village was a focal point. Every Saturday night, you had people from as far away as Chicago, Madison, and Minneapolis, driving to Folklore Village, to experience the folk dancing. And um, Jane Farwell, she was a lively old lady, maybe she was about 60, when I was here, about 20 years ago. But she had a 27 or 30 year old boyfriend living with her. And it was interesting to note, at lunchtime that Herb Hoover mentioned that he was very supportive of her, and would come out sometimes when she said there were only five people there folk dancing . So evidently that was her commitment, to keep that folk dancing going, every single Saturday night, throughout her life. And so I, through connecting with all the, the sort of hippie-type, hip-type people, who brought exotic foods and vegetarian dishes, and breads, and whatnot all together, it was a, um, I think that I have, as a result of Folklore Village, maybe a glamorized, romanticized vision of Active Acres. I guess that's what I want to say. Which is lucky for me. Actually, I think people get out of something what they bring to it. And if you choose to see that -- there could've been other people here who had come out to visit and who wouldn't see what I saw, wouldn't have gotten as much pleasure out of getting up at five o'clock in the morning and walking through the dew grass and looking for a new baby calf. Or picking the black-eyed susans, or um, what is the other flower, my favorite flower in June --daisy, daisies. There were just hillsides full of daisies. And there were berries, and jack-in-the-pulpits, all sorts of -- and terriliums. I mean, um, I ... I smelled and drank in and touched things out here, that, without knowing it, my whole psyche had been probably starved for, since 1959. So that's what I took in out here. Um, I cannot imagine -- well I guess I can. I can imagine living in a commune in the city, because there's a different kind of richness that you have when you have people together. But I, but the richness that you get when you're out in the country is um, -- and it stays with you. It uh, it grounds you in a way that you feel rich no matter how much money you have in the bank. Because, um, ... I feel sensorially, I have been blessed, I have taken in of the beauty of the universe in the same way I can say in the last 15 years in Chicago, by working with refugees, feel 100 million times blessed and enriched, because I've chosen to relate to people in a one-to-one way, and to learn about other cultures and other countries, other languages, other smells, other sights, other sounds, and I'm not sure if I would get any more out of being a tourist, for example, in Southeast Asia. I already I feel like I can, I already know what Southeast Asia smells like, what it tastes like, because we have it in Chicago. So anyway, getting back to Active Acres -- there was no religion. There were no, um, you know, rituals that were in place, because it was so young a place, you know. Herb and his wife had been there, only since October, and I arrived there... but there was a lot of kind of excitement, because there was ... new people coming. And every time of course a new person comes, there're hopes and expectations and dreams about what the person brings and what they contribute and what new things will develop as a result of that. And I wasn't aware that Herb had these -- I knew that he had two sets of cattle, and that one was for milking and the other one was for beef cows, but I wasn't as distinctly aware that he was specifically grass growing [unintelligible] corn. And see then we had pigs. Jodi and her boyfriend took care of the pigs, over on the other farm. And they also had some cows over there, and they were supposed to do the milking. And uh, this is the time that I developed my, I began sort of sorting out -- you know, for me, because I was new in this culture, and I still was new, even though I had gone to college, but I was still new in this culture -- the concept of people who didn't understand that when you're on a farm , you have to discipline yourself to the needs of the cows. Now for them, we had these huge enormous dinners at night. Jodi was a gourmet cook. She

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had spices and kettles and exotic recipes. She'd grown up in a house in Connecticut, in a very wealthy home where they had a Black maid. And so she learned to cook from the Black maid, she hung out in the kitchen a lot, and literally, it sounded to me like the Black maid raised her. And this probably also accounted for why Jodi was so heavy, because she had gotten used to that sort of life in the kitchen. She'd gone to a private school and I don't know what brought her out here, I don't remember. But she, ... um, ... so she cooked. I mean she had... the kind of cooking utensils that I hadn't ever seen. Special little wrought iron things to make corn, um, corndogs or corn fritters. They had the shape of a corn cob, you know? All that sort of exotic stuff that I'd never seen at a Hutterite colony. And elaborate cakes, and, um, there would be, you know, six to 12 people who would eat together. We'd have wine -- believe me, I don't know where the money came from, I don't know where it came from. We'd get drunk, and then always they would do pot around the -- and I smoked pot a few times, but it never had much effect on me somehow. I never got, um, I never got a taste for it that way. And I also think I was in my own inner turmoil, my prominent anxiety was still the fact that I, my whole situation with regard to my marriage, my separation, my son. So for me, this little experience in Active Acres was a little glitch, a little side-trip, where I could temporarily re-coop and pretend that things were normal. And I think, I go to nature for nourishment, when I'm down. Instead of going to, um, psychiatrist or a counselor, I mean, number one, I will talk to people, and number two, I will be utterly silent and just go to, hug trees if you will, lay in ditches, lie on the side of a hill. That's what I will do for reconnecting to my own psyche. My father was very much of a grounded, natural person. Um, ... like Herbert, you know, a man of the earth. I mean, when we saw him today, I wasn't sure that it was the electric shock that did everything to him. What did you feel?

Q: No I don't think so at all.

A: It started way earlier.

Q: Oh yeah, I mean that clearly contributed to it, but there are some other things operating there. I mean, anybody who runs for president . .

A: Of the United States. I mean, that's actually a pretty --

Q: It's a great story. I could spend days with him, talking to him.

A: I mean, do you want me to come out and interview him again, because I have a tape recorder too. I could come out here and spend ... I almost feel as though as I should, because I've come out here now, this is the third or fourth time, and each time, it's a real short period, and I always feel as though I leave not knowing the whole story. And what I want to do is go up here to Spring Green where

Q: That's where Betty lives?

A: No, Betty Boardman is in Madison. God, she is a, she's a bitch. She is a bitch. But, the Batsons, husband and wife, they live up in here someplace. And they're -- I've been wanting to go out to their place. I've called them up several times. And they stay in touch with me at Christmastime and so on, but I haven't ever -- it would be interested to get his point of view, and I was interested, that's why I asked that question. To think that in this beautiful, beautiful -- remember when he talked about how the Indians felt like this was a very special place, and this is where they came to die in peace, back there,

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where the glaciers had gone over, and the glaciers have never really flattened it out. See, that's the other part, I also looked for, when I was out there, um, ... looked for fossils, or different -- there was some kind of a, geologically, there's something very special about this area, this low area where there have been some deposits of things that are rare. This was under, I think it was Lake Agassiz [?], it was a huge lake that went all the way from North Dakota, this far. That kind of disappeared, how many billions of years ago was that? You never heard of Lake Agassiz.

Q: I'm sorry. I'm so ignorant!

A: Well I am too! But there have been a number of geologists that have come through this area and they pick up exotic little things from the sides of the hills and so on. Especially when you cut across Wisconsin, just before O'Claire [?], you have these unusual outcroppings of things, where people from around the world come and study them. Also it shows where the glaciers have come through, and those things have been left standing. The glacier usually kind of wipes everything down. So, I guess a lot of my education, a lot of my broadening of my horizons -- you see, when you grow up in a Hutterite colony, at least for me, I was limited to the house, the garden, the ritual of the life, gets you so engaged, that you don't even have the curiosity to ask larger questions about, you know, "How did the world start?" I mean,

Q: Well, that's purposeful, isn't it, because if you started asking those questions, it might lead to the demise of the community.

A: That's right. So the community has that vested interest in keeping the ritual so tight and so going, that you don't move beyond it. And so this kind of experience out here at Active Acres was a very, very important piece for me, as has been the experience of going into the urban center in Chicago. I mean, I could not imagine having committed myself to living out here and then repeating the patterns of bringing the cows in the morning and milking them and so on -- no way. Uh-uh. And probably something inside of me knew that, that I couldn't possibly -- I didn't belong here forever. Even though, let me get back to -- the few times that I went in, sometimes I went over to the university and I would, I would be so ... intimidated with the traffic, the chaos, the noise, the clutter -- because when you live out in that valley that we just came from, you get very quiet. And then even Madison, Wisconsin, at that time, seemed like a huge, chaotic place, so, my God, going all the way to Chicago, that's really insane. But uh, I did, but then when I went to Madison, I would hug the lake, they have two big lakes, and I would just walk around the lake, and then come back out to the comforts and the security of the farm, of Active Acres. So actually the experience that I'm talking about is one summer of 1972. That's what I'm talking about. It was probably three, maybe five months.

Q: Was Active Acres income-sharing?

A: The other people, like the psychologists and Betty Boardman, they all had their jobs, you know, in Madison, and that's really why they wanted to have a place out there. You see, Herbert was right. He wanted to start something in Missouri so that everyone would have to leave their home base, and come and begin anew, where everyone makes a common commitment. The way it was, was that he, of all the people, is the only one who made that powerful, 100% commitment of financial resources. And I think they gave him a very hard time, you know how city people come out and they begin, "Oh it smells, we

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shouldn't have the smell of pigs out here." I remember him, burying a pig that died, and I think that Herb is so sensitive about that sort of thing that he thinks that he's powerful enough to make a pig die -- to me that's, he's a little bit off. So he buried this pig, and they really objected to that, to polluting the land like this, by digging the hole and just -- it was a shallow hole that he dug, and he dug it just right next to the barn, and the barn was very close to the house . And so, these are the kinds of things that people squabbled about. And of course his clothes always smelled of manure.

Q: They still do!

A: I mean, he's a shit farmer, that's what he is. A shit farmer with big ideas, with an ideology, and that's a hard place to, it's a terrible situation to be in. But I'm so glad that he explained that little bit about Eleanor, and the kind of commitment that Eleanor made to him, you know, to follow the -- I'd never known that.

Q: So why did you end up leaving Active Acres?

A: Um, ...

Q: Did you go back to Gary, at that point?

A: No. See, some of that stuff is getting a little bit hazy with me, because I was under such trauma. I would have to sit down -- I know that I came to Chicago, October of '73. And I wasn't - maybe it was two summers I was at Active Acres. I was never here through a winter, I was only here in the summertime, you know, April, May, June. And um, I think that I saw ... I hadn't talked to Hugo, I hadn't been writing letters to him, -- Hugo didn't know where I was. Hugo didn't know where I was for I think a whole year. And during that year I got divorced from Gary, um, I let go of the custody of Carl, I um, because I didn't want to fight, that September. And then I moved to Madison. That's what I did. I moved to Madison, Wisconsin, and got a job as a waitress. Always, I had my bicycle.

Q: That's how you worked out your problems.

A: Yes. I had my bicycle. I lived quite a distance from where I worked. I didn't even have an address in Madison. Actually I lived in Tulangon [?], but what I wanted to do, what I envisioned was that I could just live down next to the lake. I think I probably need to sit down and talk this stuff all the way through and realize how many times I really just wanted to get rid of myself -- I would never admit to myself, I could never imagine taking, not in that way. But just now as I realize, I wanted to get rid of an address, I wanted to live without an address. In Chicago, when I was working as a waitress, I didn't want to have an apartment, I wanted to live just down by the beach. Now some of that has to do with my sense of being natural, being primitive, being, you know, being simple. But some of it I see also has to do with um, a wish to get rid of yourself. Probably, if I really think about it, what I did, which is namely, having an affair, breaking up a marriage, I probably had to punish myself for breaking up the marriage, that's true, for having an affair, and then losing custody of the child? I mean, that is just, how can you get up the next morning and ever look at yourself again? I mean, that's just so impossible. So impossible from my culture, from everything that I've ever been. I have broken through and bashed every principle and every belief that my entire family and culture was based on. And usually [tape ends] ... the, my relationship with Tom has done one thing for me, and that is that Tom is the one who is very aware of

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what he says is my self-destructiveness. And I think he's somehow hooked into that. And whether or not he does something about it, you know, openly, whether, ultimately he can do anything about it, I don't know. But I know that um, ... he, again, as I said earlier, he's very compassionate. And he has uh, ... he has picked up the level of hurt that I experienced with the whole custody thing and with loss of Carl. Um, because I think he's tuned into victims and hurt and all that. He's very much -- I recognized also when Herb Hoover was talking, uh, you know and the children made fun of him when he was only 7 years old? That's the same sort of situation that Gary was in, and the same kind of situation that Tom was in as a child. See, they're abused children, they're strange, they're unusual, they're the ugly duckling, they're the outcast, and so they were abused by the other children. And I'm sure that Hugo was that way too. Hugo had a hearing problem. Hugo has about a 90% hearing loss. And he also was an unusual kind of weird nerd as he was growing up.

Q: Can you communicate with him, verbally?

A: Yeah. That's why my voice is so loud. I speak very distinctly, haven't you noticed?

Q: Yeah, but I didn't know that had anything to do with it!

A: No, it probably has to do with a combination of talking to Hugo, and being an ESL teacher, because when you speak, you have to speak very precisely. At least, I think you have to. Some teachers don't, and I just think that is much harder for the students. So where were we? This Herbert Hoover thing. So why did I leave when I um, ... and see, Hugo came out after this long absence. And I'm sorry that my sexuality and everything is kind of mixed in with all this.

Q: That's part of the story!

A: We made love in the barn out there, with, in straw, among straw and hay and so on, and I must say, I had the distinct -- you know, I have an idea about "Humpty-Dumpty sat on a wall, Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall. All the king's horses and all the king's men could not put Humpty-Dumpty together again." And my sense is that when you have a wonderful, great big love-affair, that's just kind of perfect, cozy and perfect, and something comes in there and breaks it apart, and I'm not sure if you ever get back together again, if you can ever go back to that original sense of being intact, of having that same kind of feeling again. When Hugo came out here, I had so much distance and so many things that happened between, that I clearly was not swept off my feet and swept away by him. Nonetheless, I had this little calculating voice inside, that said, "Well, you know, you don't have a car, you don't have any money, you don't have anything, so how are you going to get yourself someplace out of here, to get someplace to get a job and start your life some way?" And, uh, so that's how I calculated, and that's why I um, that's why I contacted Hugo, told him where I was, and he came out here and picked me up and took me into Chicago. And uh, ... then I stayed with him for a little bit, and tried to get a -- and I got a job. And he's -- Hugo is very clever. Hugo has studied psychology. You know, he's worked with mentally ill patients, he's worked with music and mentally ill patients, he knows how to use music to quiet down real nasty people. So he used all of his skills, including talking off and going to California and leaving me alone in his apartment for two weeks, so that I could get my own, sort of sea legs. And ... during that time that he was off in California, I packed all of my things -- I had his little mug, I packed my things in that little mug - - I think I felt so guilt-ridden, that I decided that rather than being at one camp or the other, you know,

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rather than being in Milwaukee or Chicago, I'm going to come up and live in Madison. And that's how I got to Madison, now I remember. Now I remember the turn of events. See, I was out in Active Acres, went to Chicago, spent a month or so there, and then came to Madison. And at Madison, I lived at Tulangdon, and I was in terrible shape, I was in absolute horrid shape. Whenever these poor [?] things would come up, I would bleed excessively. And I walked into a nursing home, and there was a woman in there, she had been a former army sergeant or something, and she took one look at me and she said, "You look like you need a job. Here, here's a uniform." She threw a uniform at me, and she said, "You come here tomorrow morning at seven o'clock," which I did, just like that. I didn't fill out a blank, I just -- and so I stayed with a friend in Madison, a girlfriend, and walked, I think I walked to work, and I worked in this nursing home. And that was 1973, so Carl would've been five years old. Gary wouldn't let me see him, he wouldn't let me see him at Thanksgiving, he wouldn't let me see him for his birthday, Carl's birthday is 18th of November. And I was just utterly, you know, kind of devastated. And I wondered, what the hell do I have to be thankful for? But working in this nursing home, I walked in and I realized "My God, I can walk out at the end of the day!" There was one guy in the nursing home, was about 30 years old, who'd had a car accident and he was maimed for life. He would never ever be able to feed himself or anything, and it made me ... just like refugee work, that work pulled me out of myself, to somebody else's problem outside that was larger than mine. See, I think in some ways, Herb Hoover out there has been very self-indulgent most of his life. Everything is reference to himself. And I think when you see it that way you lose sight of uh -- well maybe not. Maybe that's too simple a statement to make, because he is aware of, he is aware of refugees, and he was complimenting me at the end. It's interesting. He's aware of the larger world, that's an oversimplification on my part. Anyway, I don't have to go into all this stuff do I? So what are we talking about now?

Q: Just whatever feels comfortable to you. You were talking about leaving Active Acres.

A: Yeah. So now I've left Active Acres, and um, I did come back to uh, folk dance from Chicago several times. Two or three times. Hugo's not a folk-dancing type, he was much more high-culture, classical music, rather than folk music. He's a very different type. I mean he went to school at Northwestern, and his idea of what is acceptable, artistically and so, is much narrower. That's one of the things by the way ... Julius Belsur, and Reba place. You felt uncomfortable after you interviewed with him. I have been to their church services, and it's very, it's colorful. It's engaging. It's very Bruderhof, actually, there's a lot of Bruderhof influence there, and a lot of kind of charismatic Mennonite stuff there too. They'll bring real leaves in and they'll do dances, and it's staged spontaneity, what I call. And staged spontaneity, let me tell you, that's calculated! Very carefully calculated to produce a certain result. So I have always, I have felt weird when I have left those meetings. Privately, I have spoken with Marianne Childs, who is an ESL teacher at Truman College, one of the people that works for me, who I'm supervising, and she tells me that she, she's in her 70's, so she says, with regard to the Mennonites, trying to get together with the Blacks and so on, and I just know the patronizing attitude that they have with everybody being equal and so on, and I think, if you try to do worshipping with the Anabaptist idiom, the Anabaptist aesthetic, and the Black aesthetic, nah-uh. One or the other is going to suffer. It's not the same thing. I guess they sort of, they kick themselves for not being able to reach out and get more of the Black people into their church. They would like to have more. But I don't think they should -- Marianne Childs agrees with me -- it's like trying to insist that jazz music should be the same as Bach, or as classical music. You can't, it's a

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different idiom! And I think that people should be permitted their own style of worshipping. If they want to turn somersaults, if they want to wave their hands and say, "Halleluiah," or if they want to be silent, hell, leave it up to them! And you can't kind of come up with a new culture that tries to blend. When you try to blend something, when you try to stage something and try to make it, um, look politically correct on the surface, I think you rob everybody of some vitality. And anyways, if you'd talked to Hannah -- Hannah Mandel lives at Reba place -- she refuses to go to those church services anymore. I occasionally go when there's a visitor who would be interested, I go.

Q: She's a member of the community, but she doesn't go to their church?

A: She lives on their property, and therefore has cheaper rent and so on. But she doesn't go to church at all. See, I don't know what they explained to you, but there are various levels of membership.

Q: Yeah, I did get that ... he didn't open up much, though, and I felt like he was annoyed by some of my questions.

A: Oh, I'm sure he would be. See, how long has he been there?

Q: Ooh, a long time.

A: See, that's what I consider to be -- he's a guy with an investment. And those kind of guys, they will whitewash all the problems over, and after awhile, just like when you are invested in a military system, in a bureaucracy, what you're going to -- basically all you're doing is you're just hanging in there, because that's your way of life. That's what you understand, and no way in hell are you going to change, or nobody's going to kick you out of there, and you have your whole stuff there. And whether it works anymore or not, you know, that's where you are. And when you are a person -- it's like being a teacher. I watch ESL teachers, and they get a real big head about themselves, because every single day, they have a captive audience. And they are the chief pin. And this is what Julius Belsur is like. If some guy has been able to maintain their position of authority over this herd of sheep, he gets a big head about himself. He has not, you know, I think occasionally those kind of characters ought to go out in the world and be kicked around a little bit, get their quarters rounded, get their edges taken off. And that's the advantage of operating in various systems, so you don't get such a big head about yourself. There's no way in hell that I would ever go out and live with Herbert Hoover. Because I understand the power of his soft-spoken, sweet, kind ideas. They're precisely the kind of ideas that will lead to hell. The kind of hell that he has created, that he created out there, with his passive-aggressiveness, non-openness, non-conformative style, not admitting to himself or other people that yes, he is invested, yes, he is proud, yes, he is a competitive person. I mean, if a commune cannot allow competition, you do not have healthy human beings. Because human beings, there's one element about them, they're competitive! And it seems to me the healthiest thing is to acknowledge that you are competitive, and simply allow for that. And allow that maybe you're competitive here, and you're not competitive here. But just kind of -- remember what he said? I thought that was deadly, what he said, that what he learned in the commune was that um, all the competition that he did when he was in grade school and high school and college with this Future Farmers of America, that all that was no good, and didn't prepare him well for living in community. I would never want to live in a wimp-ass community like that, that wouldn't allow for competition. I wouldn't . I would never, ever want to live in a community like that. I mean, and that's

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one of the things that I liked about the Hutterites. The Hutterites are so damn stupid in some ways, -- that is, they're not psychological, they don't dig underneath things, and they, so they, you can be a natural person! So one person does better stitching than another one, another one has better looking noodles, another one has better looking children, and another one does better floors, you know? And you're competitive, and your competition comes out in harmless little ways, that make the whole place better. But to deny competition -- and to me, competition is not the opposite of community. I'm sorry to get so loud about this.

Q: No, I think this is really important.

A: For me, it's a central piece, and one of the reasons I would never join a commune if -- because the first and most important thing is you have to have a healthy individual, you have to have a healthy person. If you don't have a healthy person, you cannot have a healthy commune. And I do not feel that Reba Place is healthy. It's sick, and as we can see, Active Acres was sick too. And by the way, that Jodi who was over on the other farm with her exotic dinners and so on, she was, most of the rest of the time, she was upstairs, and her boyfriend would say she was upstairs with a feather, you know, sort of playing with herself. It was wild, I had never encountered like this. Never in my life, who were so much into the sensuality of life.

Q: Was this your first experience sort of in the world?

A: Let's see. Well, when you're with a man, you know, you're protected. When I was with Gary, I was protected and I was in a limited environment. When I was in college, I was very much in a very tiny world. I'd never dated, through college. I just stuck to the books, had a job. I always worked full-time. I worked my way through college. So it was work, and school. I was very serious.

Q: Where did you go to college?

A: Moorehead [?] State, Minnesota. Right across the road from Fargo. Did you see that movie Fargo? I haven't seen it yet but I hear lots of interesting things about it.

Q: So did you go from the Bruderhof, to college? Or was there time in between?

A: There was time in between. The Bruderhof, I was out in Pittsburgh, and then I only went to college, I started college -- see I graduated from high school in '58, and I started college in 1961. Yeah. And in between '58 and '61, according to Tom, he thinks I had just one long, nervous breakdown, but I was so stubborn that I didn't break down, I was still able to keep the alligator brain alive, that is, you know, function. So in other words, my whole -- and all the way through college too, I was in a very, I've seen pictures of myself in college, and I have a strange look on my face. It doesn't surprise me that I never had a date. I was there in person, in body, but my brain was not there. But I could function -- it's amazing that I could function! I don't understand how I did it.

Q: Did you go back to Minnesota and that area because you wanted to be back near the Hutterites?

A: No. Okay, the way it was, let's backtrack a little bit, and I'm in Pittsburgh, and I'm working as a dental assistant. I got the job through the Quaker meetinghouse, where I landed, I landed on their doorstep. They didn't expect me, the Bruderhof just delivered me there, dropped me. And uh, I had \$20, I didn't

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know how to make change, I didn't understand money. I probably owe a lot of people a lot of things, I probably do, and maybe that's why I worked with refugees like I have, and put people up in my home, to pay back the universe what I got. Because I was blind. I mean, if you're raised in a commune, you're just out of touch with what it takes. Telephone bills, electric bills -- you don't know any of that stuff. So, I lived with them for about two weeks, and during those two weeks, with the Doclashes [?], they lived in the third floor of the Quaker meetinghouse. And they accepted me, they took me in. And that's by the way where I met Helen and Scott Mering [?], they came by in the wintertime with their soup, their canned soup. And they were surprised the way I ate their soup, and they said, "Boy, you're the first, kind of, regular person who is eating our soup." Little did they know that I was the kind of person who, you put something in front of me to eat, and I'll eat it. Because I was trained that way. There's not much discrimination. Anyway I trudged the streets for two weeks, literally, by foot. I didn't understand anything about public transportation, buses, nothing. I walked past places and I looked in windows, and I saw people being waitresses, and I thought, "Ah, someday I can work up to being a waitress." But I knew that somehow, now, I wasn't good enough yet to be a waitress. I don't know, but so I perceived that I could work in a hospital. So I walked all the way through Pittsburgh. On foot. Believe me, I'd like to go back there and connect all those various hospitals, to see where I walked. And my legs were aching at the end of the day, and I don't know how I got back to where I started from. Half of it's a blank. I know that the policeman would pick me up and drive me, I could give them the address. Because I was evidently walking in areas that were dangerous. I was totally unprepared. I did not expect anything ever to do anything bad to you. Why? I would cut across people's back yards because I didn't have any concept of private property. Because I did have a sense of direction, you know. Once I got established. So finally, after those two weeks, through the Doclashes, they helped me get a job as a dental assistant. Because each time I got to the hospital, I'd make out these forms, and nothing. Nothing ever came of it. But the job as the dental assistant was in the suburbs, and that meant I had to take public transportation. And I think I wrote about this a little bit, maybe this is published in Colony Girl, where the first three days, you know what I'd do? There were street cars, and I started introducing myself, talking to people, because I thought, that's what you do, talk to people. Because it's inconceivable when you come from a commune, that you could be next to a human being and not find out about them. So here I was out in the world, bringing my need for community with me, and after about three days, I realized, "Oh-oh. There's nobody else in this place that's talking except me." And there must've been people that just thought I was loony tunes, escapee from a mental institution. So I looked around and I noticed that people were reading newspapers and magazines and paperbacks. Next time when I got into a drug store, I bought myself a paperback. And the paperback, someday I want to reread it again. The paperback I bought was *On the Beach*, by Nevil Shute [?], which is a story of the end of the world after a nuclear holocaust. Sort of a fictionalized version. And believe me, this was my psyche. My mind, that's what I felt like. That's the kind of world that I had entered. I had entered in a weird, weird world, where nothing, nothing that I comprehended was the way it was supposed to be. Nothing. I wasn't prepared for it. It felt like a very, very weird world, as weird as that world that was described in that little paperback.

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Q: When you left the Bruderhof, or when the Bruderhof dumped you out in the streets of Pittsburgh, where were your parents? Were they still in the Bruderhof?

A: Isn't that weird? Isn't that weird? They were on the place. I shook hands with my father, I don't remember saying goodbye to my mother. They had no power, no capacity, because they were in deep shit themselves. Because the Bruderhof -- can you imagine? Can you imagine the power that the Bruderhof has, to put a wedge between members of the family? Between husband and wife? That is how powerful that Bruderhof is. This is why, this is one of their cult-like things which the Hutterites do not have.

Q: That's so horrible.

A: It is. It's inhuman.

Q: Ruth, that just brings tears to my eyes!

A: Okay, so then when I come back, after nine months of experience outside, where I am simply frozen, I'm absolutely frozen inside, totally shut-down. Total shut-down, I'm just going on alligator brain. I am a nobody, a nothing, I have nothing that resonates with me, nothing that I can connect with, nothing that is similar to me in any way. And one time I visited, I asked if I could go home to visit, and I went home and I slept in the same bed with my sister Miriam, I remember. And I literally shook and cried all night long, just uncontrollably. I didn't know why. I just shook. And I felt like a rag the next morning, I felt like I had been just completely drained of everything. But at least it was real, it was something, some kind of a feeling. And in that state, my father intuitively sensed where I was. He took me to the Greyhound bus depot, and he literally, I remember his big hand, pushing me on the Greyhound bus. Because probably he felt that I wouldn't have, that of my own accord, of my own lack of strength or whatever at that point, that I wouldn't have been able to do it, because I think he knew that I had cried all night, but I never talked with him. And they never talked with me about anything. And within about five or six months after that, I wrote another letter and asked if I could return to the community, and said all the right words. I knew the words to say, because there were a certain pattern of words that you have to say, "that I want to try the life again." So, on the very day that I returned, there was no letters back and forth, no telephone calls, nothing, on the very day that I returned, I stepped off the Greyhound bus, out on Route 40, which is just a couple of steps from New Meadow run. Have you ever been to New Meadow run?

Q: Yeah. I went there on that ICSA trip, when we took the buses there. Yeah, you were on my bus, I think.

A: Well, then you heard my story on the bus, somewhat, did you?

Q: Some of it. But you know, it was just sort of bits and pieces.

A: So, anyway, when I stepped off of that bus, there was my dad. And I hadn't seen my dad smile, electric, alive, vibrant, forward-looking, I hadn't seen him like that for years. And he announced to me, immediately, as I stepped off, "We're leaving. Tomorrow." But, you see what my problem was? I couldn't suddenly change my mind. I'd asked to go back. Because the commitment to the community was a powerful thing. When really, it probably was just separation from my family, to some extent. So, I

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took my 500 bucks that I'd saved, and my father didn't even ask for it -- I took it and put it in the steward's desk. And they gave my father \$50 the next day to leave with a big family. And my mother left on the train on half the family, and she got 50 bucks, and my father got 50 bucks and an old jalopy car, and the other half of the family, and they left. Can you imagine? That they didn't talk to me, didn't try to cajole me, didn't try to bring me in? That is how powerful and deep the separation is at the Bruderhof. That is something that is very similar to what the people in Ghana [?] and Waco, that's the kind of individual commitment they make to the leader, or to the ideology. That's very powerful, when you separate blood, when you can come in between that. They do that between husbands and wives. So there I was, I don't know what kind of a state I was in, I have no pictures of myself. But I was recently at a KIT [?] conference, and this one man, he said, "Oh yes, I remember you at Woodcrest. You were crying all the time." And I don't remember that. I must've been just absolutely crying. And the thing that I was doing was um, uh... they immediately knew -- I mean, the Bruderhof, again, know enough about psychology, they figured, okay, if she wants to make a new start, let's take her to a new place, not start over again in New Meadow Run, but we'll take her to New York. And so that's where I started again. And I was put cleaning toilets. Cleaning toilets in the front end room of the main dining room. The public place. That's kind of where the um, that's the bottom ladder job. Everyone's feet come tramping in, and your job is to clean that, and then the toilets. And I guess during that time I must've been weeping. So after about another nine months or maybe a year, -- I need to sometimes sit down and just calculate, you know. I turned 17 out in the world. I recently calculated that, so I actually left when I was 16.

Q: Gosh, you were so young! That is so young to be separated from your family!

A: Yes, very young. And not only that I was young, but that my mothering stuff was all well-developed, and all these were my babies, all these boys, you know, all these children. So, that, I um, that's why I know that wound was opened again when I lost custody of Carl. That was the wound. And that I got a chance to look at again and to experience again. Because I think when I was in Pittsburgh, I didn't experience it as a wound, it was such a wound that it was just numb. You know how when you first, if you cut your arm, you wouldn't feel a thing. That's the body's way of protecting you against excruciating pain. So I was numb. I went into numbness. And that's a protective measure. So, okay, so in Woodcrest, all I would think about is making a commitment --but I didn't feel that inner calling to community. As deep as I searched in me, I didn't feel that inner calling. I couldn't make a commitment. I think I was probably just missing my family at such a deep level that um, ... and I didn't talk with anybody. But one night I -- again, you see, I go to nature -- I went outside. I've never consciously sort of calculated that, but I evidently must do that. So I went out under the stars to sleep. I took a blanket along. And it was right next to the little house that I was living in. They must've been worried about me. I realize that, because evidently the guys were looking for me, the elders were walking for hours. Because at that time, in the Bruderhof, there were lots of weird happening. People were taken off to mental hospitals, given shock treatments, people committed suicide, all that sort of stuff was happening, among young girls especially. And even when we visited the Bruderhof that time, when we visited Woodcrest once, there was a girl sort of sitting like this, and she was sitting like that when we first arrived at the Bruderhof, and she was sitting like that when we left, about two or three hours later. And again, I thought, "A-ha, that's one of those deep, searching kind of experiences, where you go into that." So, anyway, a couple of days after I slept outside, I think they got really worried about me, and decided they

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were going to send me to my family. They knew where my family was, in Lakepark, Minnesota. I think I'd gotten one letter from my sister Miriam. And so they took me to New York city, put me on the Greyhound bus again. And believe me, I don't know how I got from New York City to Lakepark, Minnesota. I mean, the bus drivers of course drive. But I was just, I was a total zombie, an absolute, total zombie. And my brothers thought I was a ghost, my sister Miriam called me a zombie -- I didn't know what a zombie was. And this is how I arrived on Halloween, 1960. Halloween night. My mother remembers the idea of Halloween, because she remembers sort of the idea of a ghost or whatever.

Q: Didn't your mother have a baby in 1960?

A: Yes she did . Last one. The baby was six weeks old when I arrived, and that's the one that I hadn't seen.

Q: She must've been fairly old at that point.

A: How do you remember that?

Q: Because it's on the quilt that I saw this morning.

A: Right. That was Ned [?]. And I didn't even know that I had a youngest brother. So there was this little guy.

Q: Wow, that must've been a stressful time for her.

A: Believe me. So, here I come out there, and they are in absolute, they were in poverty. Believe me, they were eating boiled potatoes. They had left in March, I believe, March or April, and here it was October.

Q: Was your dad trying to farm?

A: Yes. He had just, I guess in the summertime he had just purchased this farm, with \$3000 down that he had borrowed from his brother in Ontario. [interrupted] ... arriving in Minnesota on that Halloween. And they had goats tied up to rubber tires on the hillside. The hillside was really muddy, and I went up it. There was this old ramshackle of a house with an outhouse up in the back, and there were big weeds all over the place, because they'd just moved there. And um, the main dish the following night was boiled potatoes in jackets, and lard. So it was pretty clear to me that bonding with my family was not of greatest importance. What this family needed was money. And that what I needed to do was go out and make some money. And uh, so, I think I might have read one or two nights some stories to my brothers as I had been used to. But, there was a whole different -- the younger, the boys, they were in heaven. I mean, my father was enthusiastic and forward looking and all of my brothers were, they were all being indoctrinated now into becoming millionaires by the time they were 30. That was their goal, that was what my dad was pushing. I mean, when I was little he was pushing utopia. And now, here it was 20 years later, and utopia was in the almighty dollar.

Q: So he had thoroughly rejected communitarianism at that point.

A: You know what he was even willing to do? He was willing to go over and be the preacher at the local Lutheran church, they needed a preacher, and my mother had to talk him out of it. The guy, he was,

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"Oh, yeah, I could go over there and preach a sermon." And he could've. He could've. He was a great talker, and he knew the Bible. So, but my mother knew, that inside -- my mother was a wise lady. She was a very wise lady. She knew that inside it would be hypocrisy for my dad. But that he'd pull it off for \$200 a month. So she never let him do it. And she had all the little boys go to Lutheran Sunday school, up until, I think, forth or fifth grade. So somehow or another my parents compromised on that. My father just wanted nothing more to do with religion. He just, he didn't want any of that Jesum [sic] stuff anymore. "This is what Jesus wants us to do." And it was always [unintelligible]. I mean, my whole, younger brothers were raised, and they all know about Jesum, the Jesum Fetter. Jesum this and Jesum that, and he was just simply, getting it out of his system. [tape interrupted]

Q: ... you arriving back in Minnesota, and what you saw there, and how you learned that what the family really needed was money.

A: I had some money left over, so I gave it to them so they could buy a case of milk, for Ned's[?] milk. He was a little runt. I mean, I have never seen any of my brothers come out that little and skinny.

Q: So did you go up to college then?

A: First I did babysitting around there, you know, when I was, it was winter in Minnesota. Winter in Minnesota is hell. I know what kind of winters you've had there, but my brothers have had really, just bad winter. And during that winter, -- you see, because I had had this experience in the city, which still had left me somewhat traumatized, you know, in Pittsburgh, I said, I somehow felt, on the farm, out in the country, you have a better life out in the country. Just, outrageously ignorant. So my father had seen this ad in the newspaper. And he'd seen the ad for month after month after month, which wanted a, they wanted girls to work on this dairy farm, near Brainard [?], Minnesota. And um, so I went out there and I got the job. \$25 a week. We lived in the home of the family, and they sold raw milk. So that all day long you had to respond this little "ding-a-ling", like somebody going into a gas station, going over a wire, and you had to run out and sell them raw milk. They had 80 cows, and we had to help with the milking, and we had to bottle all the milk, every morning and every evening. And then in the house, we baked cookies, we cleaned house, we set the table, cooked, and so on. And then we cleaned the hired men's homes too. There was one other woman there, she was from Northern Michigan, and she was Finnish, by nationality. That was hard work. Five AM to 10 PM, being a house slave. That was just hard work. Six days a week, one day off. Sunday. And I worked at it for I think 2 or 3 months. December, January, February. And then, ... I really, I got sort of depressed and felt, you're just on a track, when you're out there in the country, and there is nothing. And they had this one hired man, and I couldn't stand the way they had an attitude toward the hired man. You know, when you come from a community, you treat people with respect. You figure that each human being -- at least I realized that's one of the things I got out of the community -- that the essential human being is regarded equally. They may not have an equal job. It felt so awful to think that these people were in the house, and they would only let this guy, this young guy, sit right inside the door, in the kitchen, where we were always working. And so I started talking to him. He was a [unintelligible], you know, and he just felt so awful the way [unintelligible]. And the other girl that was there, she gained something like 24, 30 pounds when she lived there, and I made up my mind, I said, "No way, uh-uh. I'm making a rule of one for myself." So I know sometimes when I go into situations that are sort of negative, I take a look around and I figure,

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"Okay, how am I going to survive here?" So with a rule of one, I was able to live there and not gain any weight. In fact I lost weight. One egg, one piece of toast, one cup of coffee, one cookie. I didn't deprive myself of anything, I just made a rule of one. Because this other girl, she was my age or younger, and she was just like a balloon, a fat little balloon. I thought, "My God, is this what happens when you get here?" And the man was bragging, "Oh sure, we feed our help well!" you know. So I um, we worked, we had to pick eggs, I mean, I can't begin to tell you what we did, we were the hired hands. One Sunday, I guess I'd just had it, from the milking and washing up all the utensils from the raw milk and so on. So I came in and said, "I'd like to leave." "Oh no, you can't leave." So the lady of the house, she takes me in to Brainard [?] and takes me out to a movie, and to dinner, on Sunday. So of course, I couldn't leave. Two weeks later I told her again, "I want to leave." So I got the same treatment. And then, the third time, when I had this impulse -- believe me, I have no consciousness of how I came to these decisions, I don't know how I extricated myself sometimes from one place to the next. I, it's blank to me. But I think there must be some mechanism inside that's for self-preservation. So, I simply ... came in. I didn't fight or argue with anybody, it was more just, dead end. I came in, walked up to the telephone, and called a cab. Went upstairs, put my stuff into the suitcase that I had, my clothing, and by the time I came downstairs, the cab was sitting out front, and the man came out and said, "Oh, you're just like all the other girls!" And that was just the piece that would've gotten me to stay, to prove to him that I was not like all of the other girls. I knew how to work hard, I don't quit when it gets tough. See, I don't want to be a quitter. But there I was. I was caught between my two weaknesses. The one, which was to please everybody. I called the cab -- how could I say I don't want a cab. I called the cab, I had a good reason. So I took my suitcase, and um, and jumped out in the cab and took off. And went back to within a few miles of my parent's place. But I was so ashamed of coming home, of having quit a job, you know? I was so petrified of going home and facing my father, God I just couldn't do it! So I sat ... in the telephone booth. And do you know what else I was trying to [unintelligible]. I was sitting there, going flip-flop. I was doing what Herbert was talking about, going into the closet, doing the struggle with the tiger. There I sat in the telephone booth. And isn't it weird to think that there's a human being in a telephone booth, there's a whole God damn big world out there, but what you have pitted there for yourself in your brain, is you have two sides. You can only see two. I mean I...