

Interview with Cat Yronwode

Interviewer: Deborah Altus

May 29, 1996

**Q:** This is Wednesday, May 29th, and an interview with Cat Yronwode. Well, I'd love to start by just hearing some about your background, and what you feel are the influences that led to you living communally.

**A:** Okay, well, let's see, I grew up in a liberal, left-wing, culturally but not religiously Jewish household. My father is Italian, but an atheist, and he was completely from my life from when I was four. So there's absolutely no Italian influence on me. My mother, although you've interviewed her now, and see a person who's pretty well at ease with the world, when I was young, she was still suffering what would be called post-traumatic stress syndrome, from having been a refugee in Germany. She was a much more um, gloomy, frightened, and depressed person to be raised by. Although she gave me an awful lot of books and stuff -- she was a librarian, and was always surrounded by books -- there was this real sense that she conveyed to me that the world was filled with, um, I don't know whether I would use the word "stupid," or the word "fascist," or just "fascist stupid people," or "stupid fascists," but something like that. And this was also during the McCarthy anti-communism era. And I remember when I was very young, her saying things to her upstairs neighbors, the Fineburgs [?], because there was this thing called the "loyalty oath" they were requiring from the people at the University of California, and she was studying at Cal at the time, there was a big flap about it. And I remember her and Harry Fineburg saying, where would they go next? Where would people go next. Now Harry Fineburg was Jewish, but he was not an immigrant like us. But they were pretty serious about that stuff. This was when I was around five. So I always had the idea that the culture that you were in was not necessarily the best culture to live in. Um, and when I say I was Jewish, by the way, I have to explain, I have never been in a synagogue in my life. I'm completely culturally Jewish, not religiously. And I have been in some Christian churches, so. But not [unintelligible]. So, um, the idea was that I felt really strongly growing up was that there were better ways to do this -- there had been the Vomer [?] Republic, there had been socialism before the Bolsheviks [?] took over there with the, there was Trotsky. And I had good friends who were Trotskyists, and you know, there was, all this stuff was being talked about. So I thought it was all kind of optional, the culture that you had was optional. I didn't think of it as something like, you're born in Kansas, and you grow up doing what your grandparents and your parents did. I just didn't, I thought it was all optional. And all my mother's friends were bohemians. A lot of them were in academic Bohemia, in other words, they were librarians. They had bohemian aspirations, but they earned their living by using their minds for academic bean counting, or whatever, cataloging books. My mother's semi-fluent in a bunch of languages, so she got to be the person who cataloged books that came in that were in other languages, because she could do Latin, and from there all the romance languages, and the Germanic languages, and she could, "Oh, we've got to catalogue something in Portuguese, okay," and she'd look at it until it made sense to her. She can't speak Portuguese. I kind of got the idea that you could be a person of the world, that you could just do anything. Of course, growing up in Berkeley, my peers were of that type too. All of my childhood friends, with a very few exceptions, were the children of bohemians, and academics, or both. Children of folk singers. Children of professors, and children of school teachers and librarians. That was sort of the world that I grew up in. And I was a very lonely kid. I was an only child until I was 14, so I consider myself as being raised as an only child. And I read at least one, sometimes two books a day. And we spent a year in Europe. My mother got money from the German government, called Liedergemachen [?] money, which was, "to make it good again." And uh, around the same time, oh, her father had died. I don't know, she just decided to go back and see

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Germany. And we . . . first went to Italy, which was the place she really liked. She had wanted to be a professor of Renaissance art, I mean I think that was her ambition -- her other ambition was to be an opera singer, but her more realistic ambition she had had would've been to have been an art historian. And that was terminated because of Hitler, she ended up being a maid in England and then coming to America. But she still liked Italy. So we went to Italy, and we went on this tour. My stepfather, who was, had bohemian aspirations and pretensions, but was not from the kind of culturally free and intellectually educated family that my mother was from, um, but he didn't own like a lot of that stuff, I think he was a little out classed by her, but anyway, we traveled around Italy, and she would take us from one place to another. Now she had been there in the '30's, when she had -- I don't know if she's told you all this?

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

**A:** In the '30's, she couldn't go to college in Germany. And so her parents were very, very, very, very wealthy, and they sent her to Italy to study Renaissance art history.

**Q:** And that was because she was Jewish, she couldn't go to college?

**A:** Yeah, right. So she went to college in a little town called Perucha [?], there was a university there, the University of Perucha. And she lived there. And then I think what happened, and you'd have to check with her on this, but I think Mussolini signed some sort of pact with Hitler at one point, that Jews could no longer go to college in Italy. And she came to America. Once she went back to Germany or back to Italy, and then she had a, terrible things happened to her. She had an illegitimate child who was born prematurely and died. I mean, she just was, basically, her life came apart. She was 18 around this time, 17 or 18 years old. She ended up in England as a maid, and then eventually got a visa. Her uncle, one of her many uncles, lived in America. And this family had been very wealthy, they were very wealthy, they were bankers and lawyers, and Uncle Arthur lived in America, her Uncle Bruno lived in England. He had been captured in WWI, and uh, he had been an officer, he had been captured in WWI, and had married a nurse who'd nursed him back to health, a Christian woman. This whole family, I have to explain, was a very, um, uh, . . . assimilated, upper-class, German Jewish family. They were so assimilated that, my mother to this day, like when people say, "Do you speak Yiddish?" she goes, "Why would I speak Yiddish? I speak German?" I mean, they were not ghettoized at all. So, she ended up in America, very poor, and um, met my father, who was an Italian-American, and was on this bohemian quest as an artist. And they lived in Greenwich Village. And they were very bohemian. Anyway, they eventually came to California during WWII, and then I was born after WWII. So anyway, to get back to this, my step-father, my mother, and I went to, um, Europe, and spent a lot of time in Italy. And um, they simply took me out of school. They didn't make a pretense of having me do homework, or anything like that, it was like, "Now you're going learn about art history, and this is it, and about other cultures." And they colluded with me, and basically lying to the Berkeley school system and telling them I was doing some sort of home study program. In essence I skipped a grade by simply just dropping out for a year and then coming back and rejoining my classmates. And we went into Austria, and then we got into Germany, and my mother was hit by a car. She and my step-father were crossing the street, and a car hit her. She was in the hospital for four months. So at that point we kind of stalled out in Germany. And we were staying, at the time that this happened, at my grandmother's house. My

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grandparent's had been given their old house back after the war. And they lived there half the year, and the other half of the year they lived in New York. So I ended up, like staying in Germany for awhile. And that's when I became really aware of the arbitrary nature, and this is a word you're going to hear me say a lot: "arbitrary," the arbitrary nature of the culture in which I had been born. I saw that my mother had been born into -- I actually got to witness the culture she was born into to a certain extent. There was nothing really left of the upper-class German families. And by the way, the house that we stayed in was their summer house. Their town house had been in Munich -- that had been destroyed and taken from them. Actually the building still existed, but their summer house had been returned to them by the German government. And they were . . . typical, these very wealthy Jews who went and hung out with these Bavarian peasants, in this little Bavarian peasant town. There are photos of my grandfather and my grandmother, dressed in Bavarian peasant clothes. When I was very young, I thought they were German peasants. When I found out later what they really were -- they were bankers, my grandmother's family were bankers, and my grandfather's family were hops merchants and hops bankers, and he'd become a lawyer -- and it was like, they were on a dude ranch! And the photos are beautiful, they look so bucolic [?], and so German, you know? So my grandfather had collected books on German folklore, all of them in German of course, and my mother had these books when my grandfather died. And I used to pay mother 50 cents an hour -- I got paid 50 cents an hour to babysit for my little sister, when I was 14, and I remember turning that money around when I was 14 and giving it right back to my mother, 50 cents an hour, if she would translate the German books on folklore for me. Um, and she wouldn't write them down either, I'd have to memorize them, because she would only do a running verbal translation. So I was interested in all of these different cultures -- you have to understand, it was not just commune life, but the whole, the left-wing idealism, the um, the idea that the culture you are in is arbitrary, that only one world -- there's only one human species and there's only one world, and all of these arbitrary distinctions of color and hairstyle and costuming are interesting, you can memorize them -- are these Maldivians [?], are they Albanians? You can look at folklore books and you can see these things. And I saw that they were all being rapidly homogenized, because my grandfather's books showed 19th century peasant costumes, and this was all being homogenized away by the time we got there in the '50's -- '57, '58. So, I was just fascinated by the potential to make your own culture, do-it-yourself culture. And . . . other books that I was reading around the same time were Earnest Thomson Seton's [?] book, Two Little Savages, in which a young Canadian/American boy, just on the border, learns from a local remnant Indian, who's sort of a sad, pathetic figure, about how the Indians lived. And then he gets a bunch of other boys together, and they have a summer camp where they live like Indians, and, but it's folkloric, it's natural history, it's a whole mix of things. And I became obsessed with Earnest Thomson Seton's books, I began collecting them. My parents at that point, my mother was a librarian, but she helped my step-father, who really bounced from one kind job to another, to start a bookstore. Um, also, around the same time, before we went to Europe I should say, my mother was working at UCLA in the special collections department, and they had a collection of Victorian children's literature, which I was allowed to read. And I was always very carefully told, "This is the customs of the past." Or, "Here, here's a book from 1909. Why don't you read this?" And I would read it, and I would be like, "Wow, this is so cool." And I saw that, I didn't believe in progress, I believed in arbitrary fads and fancies of society. So, I was spread all over the map. I am still am spread all over the map. I mean, I can speak about my childhood, and it's as immediate as I am here. And as far as I'm

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concerned, 1909 is just as immediate. I'm um, one of my best friends once described me as a historical mimetic. And that was a pretty good explanation of what I'm like. I can live in almost any historical time period. All you need to know is the rules, and like that period enough to live in it. So, um, and this had a bearing later on, what kind of commune life I got into, because there were several different phases in which I went through different historical, technological periods, based on my interest in history and technology. Um, . . . so. Um, . . . my mother wanted me to be an American. She wanted, uh, me to not be an outsider, not be the child of a sad, weeping immigrant, which is what she was, a lot of the time. And . . . at that period in her life, she wouldn't even allow German records in the house. There was nothing to remind anyone of Germany, it was not allowed. Um, she would burst into tears. One of the most traumatic incidents that ever happened in my childhood, we were at a record store, music shop they called it, on Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley, and I was old enough to know how to read, I must've been five. But I saw, it said, "Psalms of the Bavarian Alps, " on this record, I could see the cover and everything. And I knew she was from a part of Germany from Bavaria. And it had a picture of the Alps, and another little inset picture of people dancing a dance called the shoptotla [?], and I thought, "Ah, this is, she'll like this!" And I handed her this thing, and she started crying. She ran out of the music store, and left me there. And this tall, cadaverous man came over, and he said, "Do you know where your mother went?" And I said, "No." And I started crying. And she didn't come back. And they had those little phono-booths where you could play, sample the records, and he took me in and he let me play some records. And he said, "She'll be back. I know she'll be back. She'll come back and get you." But, see I almost cry when I talk about it -- I didn't think she'd ever come back. So that's how freaked out she was about Germany. So, and I remembered what happened then, she came back, this man had given me square dance records to listen to. And they had collars, and I thought, "These are happy people." And I asked her to buy me, a little ten inch EP square dance record -- I wanted to be an American. And I liked dancing. I think it actually was filed next to the Bavarian dance music, it was just all dance music. And um, and she also bought me Lead [?] Belly's Negro Songs and Spirituals. This was a Moe Ash production, Folkway's Records, it's now in the hand of the Smithsonian, Library of Congress, whatever. I didn't realize then who Moe Ash was. Moe Ash had a tremendous influence on who I was. He was another liberal, left-wing, bohemian, labor-oriented Jew. You can find out anything you want to about him, he's a very famous guy. And he had two record companies: Music Craft and Folkways. Folkways was folk music, and Music Craft was other stuff. And he put out records of Negroes, and records of cowboys. And he was the company that put out Woody Guthrie's Dustbowl Balance, and Pete Seager was on Folkways. But there was also on Folkways, there were a lot of, the Library of Congress recordings that Alan Womak [?] sent me in the '30's and '40's, which were public domain because they were LC, Moe Ash put them out on Folkways Records. And my mother -- I had never really asked her this -- why did she buy me those records? I got Lead Belly's Negro Folk Songs and Spirituals, I got Carl Sandburg's [?] An American Songbag, which was mostly cowboy ballads, sung in this very cracked voice by Carl Sandburg. And she told me, "And he's a famous poet!" It was like, "Oh boy! A famous poet sings cowboy songs." And um, and I had Woody Guthrie, and just all this stuff. And we moved into this house that when we moved in, the room that became my bedroom, there was a closet, and in the closet there was a very short stack of 78's that the previous occupants had left. And among them was Lay That Pistol Down, Babe, by Al Dexter and His Troopers, which was a country novelty hit with the WWII era. So, I became really, really interested in cowboy music and blues music. I just, that

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was when I was five. And to my mother, this was garbage. Just total garbage. She had all these Richard Talbur [?] opera stuff, and she would sit and listen to them and cry, and she'd, she'd say the word Mozart, she'd break into tears. She was a very depressed person when I was a child. She's not like that now, and I'm very glad for her, but boy it was weird growing up with this woman, who would just cry at the drop of a hat. She's say things like, "Oh, Wien, Wien," I don't know, she didn't even live in Vienna! It was like, she knew it had been bombed, and it was like, everything was sad to her. So, I had all of this, oh God, Cisco [?] Houston records, just this stuff! It just kept on accumulating, and um, when people would ask me what I wanted, I'd say I wanted these records. And I was a prime, early example of the folk music craze from the late 1950's and early 1960's. That I was going to rummage sales in Berkeley, buying 78's. I had, at one point, 500 78's of jazz, and blues, and folk -- by folk music, I don't mean drum bayous, I mean Lester McFarland, or, you know, Vernon Dalhart [?], you know, those guys, the real folk music from the '20's and '30's. And I'm a tremendous memorizer, so I would memorize these lyrics. I knew, at one point, when I was in jr. high, I counted the songs that I knew all the lyrics to, and there were 450 songs. In high school, I already knew 1000 folk songs I knew all the lyrics to. I know this, how does this have to do with communes? I'm getting there. I'm getting there. Okay, so, I was living in a, in, in a past that was in a large part comprised of socialism before WWII -- actually, really, socialism before WWI: pre-communist, Christian socialist books. I still have them. That whole shelf is full of them. Capital versus labor -- that kind of thing, when it was very . . . I joined the IWW when I was a teenager, and I, I immediately, I had to become a migrant worker. How can you become a migrant worker when you live in Berkeley and you're a teenager in Berkeley high school. I went to Walnut Creek, when Walnut Creek was still rural, and I picked walnuts, and I picked peaches, and I picked thinned apples, out there in walnut creek with my boyfriend, and I would sing Woody Guthrie's "The peach trees, they are loaded. . ." and I was, "Yeah, I'm out here in Walnut Creek picking peaches!" And there were all these Mexicans, and like, me and my boyfriend Tom were the only "White" people, only I was Jewish, and he was from the south, he was an Alabama guy. Everyone else was Mexican and spoke Spanish. And we were like, "Hmm, this is kind of an anomaly." But we really liked being that. He was into Woody Guthrie songs too, that's how we'd gotten together as boyfriend and girlfriend. And by this time the folk music revival was happening in the '60's. So he and I were real, he was real impressed, he could name the song and I'd sing all the lyrics. That was my gig. I don't have a really pretty singing voice, but I churn all the lyrics. And we got involved in this growing counter-culture. Okay, now, what was this counterculture? I have to say, that this is like before hippies. There was no "hippie" word at that point. We were the children of beatniks, that was the best way we could define ourselves. And, um, we were specifically the children of academic, Jewish, ex-beatniks. And we felt our parents had "gone straight." Now, this is not my boyfriend Tom, who was from Alabama, but my friends like, um, Nikki Kant [?], who was folk singer Ralph Kant and Barbara Dane's son. They were the children of bookstore owners who weren't necessarily Jewish, like my friend Kevin Farrell, who's parent's had a bookstore, Farrell's Bookstore. We were a very distinct group -- when I look back on who we were, almost all of us had dark hair. Um, there was a huge percentage of Jews. Almost all of us had brown eyes. All of us were involved in the Civil Rights Movement. But again, this is, we're not talking Martin Luther King "I had a dream," we're talking back in the late '50's and early '60's, the Cadillac Row integration marches in San Francisco, the Woolworth integration marches in Berkeley. If -- have you ever seen a movie called Berkeley in the Sixties? It's a really important movie, you should check it out, it's available on video. The

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first few minutes of Berkeley in the Sixties, right up to the point of the Free Speech Movement, that's where I was. In fact, there is a picture of the Woolworth picketing, and I'm not in that little clip of film, but I was there. I looked at it and I thought, "Whoa, if they left this on a little bit longer, you would've seen me." But I was just a teenager. I was just a kid. My parents marched in peace marches. In 1961, I marched in my first peace march, which was a march from Sunnyvale to um, . . . city hall in San Francisco, but we didn't march all the way from Sunnyvale, and it was called Witness for Peace. And I still have the big pinback button from that. And it's so naive. It's the United Nations Logo, it's light blue with the United Nations on it, and it says "Witness for Peace, Easter, 1961." So it was connected with that Christian, Easter, Fellowship of Reconciliation type people, of War Resister's League people. Um, in '61 I joined a group called Turn Toward Peace, which I since found out was a CIA front. And that's a whole nother story. But I didn't know it was CIA front. It's been exposed since then by very reputable people. It was in Berkeley. It was actually designed to lure in reds so they could be labeled and identified, but it posed as a peace group. And it was funded by the state department, the CIA, underneath all of that.

**Q:** Wow. Was there any UFW stuff going on at that time? The Caesar Chavez thing?

**A:** No, no, this is way –

**Q:** When did that start? That didn't start until the '70's?

**A:** That's was in the sixties, but no, no, no. No, this is the . . . okay. My parents were like, um, giving me books on utopian socialism and communism. My mother, I don't know if she told you about her and her sister's encounter with the borsodin [?]?

**Q:** Yeah, she did tell me that.

**A:** So these were the things that I grew up knowing about. Okay, in the middle of all this, I, I was a very rebellious child, and there were reasons why I didn't want to stay at home, there were reasons why I wanted to get out of my house and home life, very young. And I left. And um, . . . the way I managed to do this was to wangle an early entrance into college, before I graduated from high school. And I was sent to a college, I begged to be sent to, and I was sent to a college called Shimer College, which was a private college in Illinois, there was only 400 students and accepted early entrants. Uh, a forth of their student body were early entrants at an earlier time. And, uh, the college doesn't exist anymore. It had been an Baptist college, and then it converted to this sort of, similar to Reed College or Antioch, or, what's the other one, Old Berlin [?]? Um, but it was less successful. And I went there because my boyfriend, Tom, had gone there, and he had gone there because he knew -- you know it was like this whole thing, how to get out of your home and go to college: go there. And they scored you on your SAT scores -- they didn't care if you were flunking. Their whole thing was, you know, you could be a genius and flunking, but if you have high SAT scores, you could go. And um, so I went there. And when I got there, I found that, that the student body was really cut into two groups. There was just these kids from the Midwest, it was a local college, and then there were other kids like me, from the East Coast. And I met a guy named Michael Lawless, who was also from a liberal, left-wing, socialist, Jewish family from New York City. They were also immigrants, and did the whole thing. Their name had been Balach [?] at first. And uh, meeting him was very transformative for me. Um, I really began to get -- see, because my

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mother always talked about New York, and I really began to get the whole picture of the bohemian world having no boundaries. Here's this guy from New York, and here's me, and you know what? If I broke into song, if I said, "On the 14th day of April, in 1935 . . ." he could complete that line! He knew that was the opening cut of Woody Guthrie's Dustbowl Ballads. And you know why he knew that? Because his parents had given him the same Moe Ash records. And so we had all this stuff in common. Also, I've left out one other thing, and this is science fiction fandom [?]. Berkeley had a very highly developed science fiction fandom [?] at the time, a lot of them were also liberal, left-wing Jews, whatever. I was very, very young in that group. I was what they called a "Young Fan." And um, these people were mostly going to Cal -- Berkeley. And uh, but I hung with them. I also lied about my age. I lied about my age always, I would tell people I was 18, because I knew they wouldn't want to be around me if thought I was "jail-bait." I don't know how many I fooled, but I was 15, you know, 16 at the most. And these science fiction fans were very important in forming what later became the hippie movement. There was some experimentation with drugs, on a very mild level. There was, again, the idea that any culture is arbitrary. In science fiction, you learn you can make up any culture you want to . And to be a good science fiction writer, you have to make up the culture all the way down to the plumbing. And, we were big fans of um, Robert Hinelin's [?] Stranger in a Strange Land. And I'm sure you've heard this mentioned by other people. Okay. It, that had a really profound effect on science fiction fandom. There were people who went for it, and people who did not. Those who did, formed either actual sexually polyamorous groups, or they shared water, which is this term from the book, with others who they did not have sex with but who they vowed to be brothers to. This is all still way pre-hippie. Marion Zimmer Bradley, who is a famed science fiction/fantasy writer now, she wrote The Mists of Avalon, was married to a man who was a known pederast , and I say that, he was jailed later, so I don't need to say "alleged." And uh, in '64, the World Science Fiction Convention was held in Oakland, um, along with what was called Westercon, which is an annual science fiction con., that's always held in California. And Walter Breene [?], Marion Zimmer Bradley's husband, had been, um, caught molesting a young girl, the daughter -- she was five -- the daughter of some prominent science fiction fans, and I was her babysitter. So I knew about this, I knew what was going on, and I became real involved in the politics of science fiction fandom. And one of the things that was going on was . . . a split, among these people, all of whom had claimed that they shared water with each other, but now, like, what are they going to do about Walter Breene, he's one of us, and yet he's committed this horrible act. He was barred from the convention. There were fanzines published, and there was a -- I was very young. I was a bystander, but I was a very observant bystander. But I really became, uh, knowledgeable at that point about what a subculture is. The subculture of science fiction fandom, which was very tight, just came apart in 1964. And, . . . I went away to college. And when I got there, there was this young man named Tom Armested [?], and he was from Texas. He was a science fiction fan, he was known as Young Fan Tom Armested . That was his full name. And uh, he had met Marion Zimmer Bradley in an airport in Dallas. He was what they call an "army brat," and his parents had no idea he had an interest in science fiction fandom. He did not know that Walter Breene was trying to seduce them by mail, he thought Walter Breene was just being a tremendously supportive older guy who didn't treat him like a kid. And Walter Breene had encouraged him to go to Shimer College, "Get out of your home and go to college," right? "And then come see me." Well, when I met this kid, Tom Armested, who was a hayseed, but very smart, very interesting person, but, not like me, anyways, he was the first blond guy I actually had a friendship with.

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I mean, he was like, he was blond, it was like, wow, where do these people come from? Um, . . . I'm sure I must have seemed like, I was from outer space to him too. But we were water brothers, technically, according to science fiction fandom. And um, I turned him on to dope, marijuana, to grass, pot. And uh, my friend, Michael Wallace, um, who so obviously became my friend, and uh, my lover who was the Jewish boyfriend in New York, he and I were like, "How can we spread this to these blondhaired people? We started like, we would find this ditchweed, marijuana that had been grown for hemp in WWI in Mt. Carol -- there's only two places, Mt. Carol, Illinois, and Carol County, Illinois, near the Mississippi -- and we found all this ditchweed, and I knew what it was from studying botany books. And it was like, "Man, we could make money with this stuff." And it was very low in THC, but we could sell it, you know. And we would take it into Chicago, and uh, we would sell it to these mafia guys, we'd bring in like a suitcase and come into the Burlington Northern [?] with a suitcase of marijuana, and then they would give you a little bag of Acapulco gold, which you would then cut more of the ditchweed with and then sell to your college friends. And we got pretty good at it. And there was another guy named John Zimmerman who also did . He was not one of us, but he also had figured out the scam. And there was another guy named Sebastian Orfolly [?], who all -- I mean we were kind of a little weird crew out there. We were the, the nonlocals who were going to Shimer, all of us were early entrants. And we were starting, I mean the drug use there became kind of like, very open. Now there was a boy named Fred Pratter [?], and his father was a pharmacist, and we said to him, "When you go back on Easter vacation, go steal some amphetamines." And um, 'cause we were already making deals selling. The girls who had the prescriptions for diet, um, . . . dexadrines, I would take them and mark them up and sell them to other students who wanted to study [?]. And uh, you could get -- people didn't know. These girls were getting this stuff on script, and they would ask for more, and the doctor would give it them. This was before all this "drug abuse" stuff really hit the fan. We were smoking marijuana openly on the Burlington Northern railroad. No conductor stopped us, they didn't know what we were doing. And my justification for it all was, hey, I had these old Louie Armstrong records, like "Muckles," by Louie Armstrong -- I knew what muckles was, you know. I had, I had um, Will Shey and the Memphis Jug Band doing "Cocaine Habit," you know. "Since cocaine's gone out of style, you can catch them shooting needles all the while." It was like, well, you know, I didn't do cocaine because, hey, it said in the song, cocaine's for horses, not for men, so I knew you shouldn't do it. Lead Belly sang that. So, but I figured they all talked about use of viper and stuff like that. I was also not just into blues and jug band and country music, I was also very into Bing Crosby at the time. I was very much living in the -- oh yeah, I was completely obsessed with Bing Crosby's voice, I still am. Every, I have every record Bing Crosby made before 1935, and that's hundreds of them, including ones he sang back-up on. I'm a total Bing Crosby fanatic . But after 1935, that's it. Um, and -- his voice changed, his attitude changed. Anyway, so I was like living in this real past life with all this um, this stuff about old drug use, and laughing my ass off about finding out that Coca Cola used to have cocaine in it. I was a collector of knowledge and information, and I just saw how arbitrary, where we were stuck in. Why were we stuck in this world that they told us we were in when we weren't? We could be anywhere. Um, and, I was real obsessed with the suffrage movement, I was studying about them too, and just every possible variant of human existence, and eschatology [?] also, I mean, just anything, anything. I wanted to learn everything. So, . . . um, . . . Tom Hall showed up at Shimer, and uh, Michael Wallace and I, Tom Hall would go on about who, I was going to be his girlfriend. I ended up leaving, splitting with Michael Wallace. And we hitch-



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hiked away, and um, and I know this thing about Michael Wallace. Michael Wallace had, was very heavy into the Civil Rights movement, had been in the Mississippi Summer, he had been in the voter registration drives. He was two years older than me. He admired me because I had been part of these Woolworths pickets and things like that, and I admired him because he had actually gone to Mississippi - but I would've had I been old enough. And, he and I made a real fun pair. We were real idealistic, and you know. So we were hitch hiking around a lot. Every time it was a weekend, we would leave the college and hitch hike as far as we could go half the time and then come back. And we hitch hiked, and made a specialty of kind of hitch hiking south, from Illinois. This is related to why I ended up in the Ozarks. We would hitch hike to St. Louis, or we would hitch hike down through Harbindale [?], just try to find out -- anyway. We got busted for hitch hiking in Great Bend, Kansas. And, it was real bad. And I, at that point, I lost it. I said, "I'm not going back to college, I'm not going to do this anymore, you can go back, I'm going on." And we had just enough money between us, he gave me his money too, and I got on a Greyhound bus, and I could only go as far as Santa Fe, New Mexico. And uh, the reason I stopped there was that a friend of mine and a girl from the college, who was another bohemian girl, her name was Connie Metropolis [?], her aunt was married to, I regret to say I've forgotten her aunt's name, but her aunt had been married to Frank Waters, the man who wrote The Book of the Hopi. And of course, I was real interested in Indians, and I knew who Frank Waters -- I read The Book of the Hopi backwards, forwards, I mean I had that thing memorized. And I wanted to meet her aunt, and I wanted to go there. And so I took all the money I had and got to Santa Fe. When I got there, called on her aunt, who was a very nice woman in the late 40's I would guess, now looking back. She might have been in her early 40's. She seemed older to me. And she was very kind to me. She took me in, she let me stay with her. She got me a job working for a jeweler named Emile [?] Phifer [?], who was a beatnik. Big beard. He was, um, oh one of the family that Phifer State Park, in Big Sur, California, it was their land, and he was in trouble with the law for blowing up some bulldozers as they were trying to bulldoze some roads for Phifer State Park, because he resented the fact that his family's farm had been turned into a state park. And so he was sort of hanging out in Santa Fe, and he was like really into nature and canoe trips, and rafting, and hiking. I think he might have been this woman's lover -- I know they were, but they tried to keep me from knowing, but I know they were, because she stayed over night a couple of times. So I ended up working for him, and by this time, I was like on my own. I wouldn't go back home, I was on the outs with my family, and um, and . . . I stayed in Santa Fe for quite awhile. And I became real interested, of course, in the local culture there, the local arbitrary, New Mexico, Spanish-Mexican influence.

**Q:** When was this?

**A:** This was in '65. Um, April, '65, was when I arrived -- no, May of '65. I was, my birthday was when I was there. And um, so, . . . okay, there I am hanging out in Santa Fe, and um, just scrambling to live. I had no job, I was just doing things like cleaning people's houses to be able to stay in their house, and making jewelry for this guy, on a freelance basis. What he had me doing was making ring-chain. It was all "hand-crafted." And he sold it in art galleries. And I was person who wrapped the wire and cut the ring chain and soldered the rings. And um, . . . and it was, you know, you don't get rich doing that, I'll tell you. But they were so nice to me. And again, these people were bohemians, they were part of this whole, you know, this world that I really was seeing scattered around on the globe. The uniform nation

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of Bohemia. And uh, . . . Tom and Michael both showed up, to see which one was going to come get me. They were still sort of both on my track. And um, . . . and um, Tom showed up with a Honda 50 motorcycle that belong to a guy named Richard Reed. I always get this confused because in comic books there's a character called "Reed Richards." His name was Richard Reed. He's now known as "Rico" Reed. But his name was Richard Reed. But he, I think, had also gone to Shimer. Somehow, Tom had this Honda 50 scooter, motorcycle, and it was supposed to be delivered to Rico, and Rico had moved to a commune, and um, it was Tolstoy Peace Farm, in eastern Washington. So, we gave -- I decided I was going to go with Tom. We gave the motorcycle to Michael Wallace, who'd never been farther west than he was right then. We told him, "You're going to love it Berkeley, don't go back to New York -- go to Berkeley." We told him the names of some people to look up, including some of Tom's other girlfriends, who were in science fiction fandom. And he took off on the motorcycle, Tom and I took off hitch hiking, and by the time we got there, he was already hooked up with Tom's ex-girlfriend, and they were going to live together for the rest of their life. They ended up having a child and eventually breaking up. We still had the motorcycle. And by this point, the Vietnam War was on, and a lot of problems happening with our friends. Turn Toward Peace, which I had worked at, did draft counseling. And that's where I had met my first boyfriend, actually, he had come in for draft counseling. His name is Norm Powers, he lives in Berkeley now. And he and Tom Hall were roommates, and when I broke up with Norman I became girlfriend to Tom Hall. Norman remained my friend though. Um, . . . we also had another friend named Michael Wells, and Michael Wells was a conscientious objector, and he had been given two years of service working in goodwill industries. And uh, people were like scattering. The unity that had held us all together, people were leaving to go to Canada, never to be seen again, and it was just becoming, the scene was becoming very tense. Also we were taking acid by then. Acid was still legal. The first acid I took was in Santa Fe, in '65, May of '65. And it was Sandose [?] laboratory acid. But that was a real mind blower, because I started seeing all these, you know, Aztec calendars whirling through the sky, and just, you know, this huge archeology event happened, and I realized again, the arbitrariness of culture, and that all these people are trying to make these different cultures and it's like, God, why not be an Aztec, it doesn't really matter! So, um, Tom and I got fairly heavily into acid. And Michael Wallace had meanwhile, he had set himself up in Berkeley. And we had, we took some acid. And this is why I [unintelligible]. We had this motorcycle which we knew we had to be returned -- to this commune. We took acid -- this would have been November of '65, because it was Michael Wallace's birthday, and someone dosed that acid. I don't know what was in it to this day. But I believed it was belodonal [?], based on what happened to me and other people. It was not pure acid. It was a prank, I didn't know I was taking it, it was in punch. And um, it might be that I simply dosed so heavily, because I might have been thirsty and drunk a lot, but I don't think so. I'm pretty sure the stuff was cut was belodonal. And um, I went into a terror, and then a fugue state that lasted days. I -- at one point they were trying to feed me thiorazine, at one point it was going to be they were going to take me to the mental hospital. Um, I was, I was dysfunctional, nonfunctional, anti-functional -- I was completely freaked. And at one point, Tom, trying to calm me down, said, "What would you like?" and this is the big cosmic questions -- "What would you like?" And my answer was, "I want a tabby cat, I want a wooden cook stove, and I want waffles cooked on it." That was it. That was the cosmic answer, that's what I wanted. And, . . . when I came down off the acid, like it took four days, I -- I mean I was really clung [?] to, and I thought, "Yeah, I don't want to live in 20th century urban America. I'm getting out of

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here. Right now." So we went to deliver, we went to visit Michael Wallace -- excuse me, Michael Wells, we left Michael Wallace, and took the motorcycle to Rico, and along the way we stopped at Michael Wells' place in Portland. And uh, we got up there, and it was like, hey, Big Grand Coolie and the Bonneville Dam, a bunch of Woody Guthrie songs, we get up there to Tolstoy Farm, and it's all these peace people that, some of whom we knew from other peace marches and venues. Most of them had come together through the Guantanamo [?] Peace Walk, which is an East Coast phenomenon, where Huw Williams had been. I don't know if you know much about Tolstoy. Um, --

**Q:** Not really. I know Tim knows a lot about it, but I don't.

**A:** Okay, well Huw Williams, which is spelled H-U-W, which is an odd spelling, he was raised there, his parents had a meat farm, and they were very -- they were what I would call "Christian socialist" type people. His grandparents lived in this canyon, and there had been another guy who's name was Turner - the Turner cabin, it was called . And there was a house called the Hart House, which was where the Hart family lived. The Harts had some sort murder-suicide thing and the house was empty. The Turner cabin, Mr. Turner had died. And Huw Williams' grandparents lived down there, and he bought some land along with a guy named Sperry[?]. Now Sperry was, um, a descendant of the man who invented the hydraulic ram. In fact, the whole Sperry-Rand company derives from patents that Sperry's grandfather had come up with. And Sperry was very wealthy compared to us. I don't know much else about him. I, I would make some speculations, but you'd better find out for yourself. He was an unusual person. His relationship to us was of, of patron, in some ways. Sperry fronted the money for um, the land to be bought, and we had to pay him back at a very low rate. And when I got there, the people who were living there were Russell VenLacknobs [?] and his wife Patty Nobs, whom he had met on a Guantano Peace walk, and he met Huw. A guy named Ken Miester [?], who had been a Sunday school teacher, and as I understand it, again, I was a teenager, but as I understand it now, looking at it, he was gay. I mean, I know he was gay for sure, but I think he was a gay Sunday school teacher, and he left, basically. He left some small New England town. He used to always recite this uh, he loved to milk a cow, and he used to recite this Robert Louie Stevenson [?], "Little cow, red and white, I love you with all my heart." And he had this wonderful New England accent . A very, very kind person, much older than us. And uh, much older than Huw, who was older than me. And he seemed so knowledgeable to me. There was a guy named Stash, and that was short for Stannice Louse, but I don't know what his last name is, he was from upstate New York. And he also, later, came out to me as being gay, with weeping. Now this was at a time when people didn't [tape ends] . . . " . . . I want to tell you about." And I said, "What?" And he goes, "I think I'm a homosexual." And, I'm sure he's okay now, but at the time that was -- and I said, "Oh, well, my mother knew one. Jim Mink, who was a librarian at UCLA, he was a homosexual!" You know, "it's okay!" That's all I could say to this kid. He was about my age. Um, and I'm trying to think who else was there when I showed up. There were others, I just don't remember them all. Other people came and went later, there was a guy named Bob McRaith. Oh, Bob, I want to say his last name was Chase, and his girlfriend, Patsy -- maybe I'm thinking, his name was not -- no, Bob Wilson was his name. Bob Wilson. The reason I say "Chase" was because I think his father was somehow connected with Chase-Manhattan bank. Um, . . . and, yeah, that's what it was. And he was also very wealthy. A lot of these people belong to the CCCO, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors. Some of them were War Resistor's League, um, some of them were Fellowship of

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Reconciliation. Most of them came from a Christian background. Most of them had not done drugs to the extent that I had. They did not come from a bohemian background, but from this very earnest Christian -- some of them were Dorothy Day types.

**Q:** Yeah, that's right, Catholic Workers.

**A:** Catholic Workers, and again, I would love to talk with somebody like Huw about this, who had been older than me. He must've, I mean, what was going on at this place? We had this place, the Hart House, Huw and his wife Silvia had built their own little cabin more down by his grandparent's place. His parents would invite us up, or selective groups of us, up for Saturdays. His parents had adopted a mentally retarded, actually, very strangely mentally retarded, what I would consider a high-functioning autistic, a young "colored" boy, he was a very light-skinned Black/White combination person, who um, had been raised in a mental institution all his life as a retarded person, but didn't seem to be retarded. But he, he was a, he would paper cut with scissors, he could cut silhouettes so you could look at them and stuff. And they had him living there. Obviously they were charitable people. They were doing good. They had taken this man in. He was older than me. They were caring for all of these protohippies. I think around that time the word hippies that came in. I remember before we left Berkeley, Tom and I began to use the word "hip people." "He's hip." "And "he's hip" meant "he smokes marijuana, and won't mind if you do in front of him." Um, for awhile we toyed around with reviving the word "viper," but it never really stuck. So we were a little bit more from the beatnik world than some of these Christian socialist types, and Catholic Worker types. When we got there, we fit in pretty well, and so Tom and I decided to stay. And especially since I was totally out of my mind still from this horrible, horrible, bizarre acid trip, and I was like very frightened. Oh, there was a girl there named Andrea, they called her Andy, and a man named Tom Ordway [?], and Andy called herself Andy Ordway, but she wasn't married to him, I don't think -- she had also had some sort of schizophrenic or mental breakdown, but not from drugs. And she had actually been at one point, I think locked up, and Tom was very concerned. Tom was an ex-marine who had become a pacifist. All of these people were pacifists, and I was a pacifist at the time, although if anyone had cornered me and thrown me up against the wall, I would've told them I was not a pacifist, I was an anti-militarist. And that was a tremendous distinction. But I buried that, and said I was a pacifist while I was there. Um, . . . for me, I had been raised too much on the cowboy ethic to want to be a pacifist. And I didn't come from a cultural, Unitarian, Universalist, Quaker, all this, these people were those types of background. And I didn't come from that background. But I had been raised to believe that, you know, you escape to America rather than be conscripted, right? That was the story that I was hearing all the time. And I knew that I would escape anywhere rather than be conscripted. And uh, but I hung out always with CCCO people and stuff, and I passed. I could pass. But when they would talk about, "Would you fight back if you were raped?" I'd be like, "Yeah!" I would kill him, you know. And we'd have all these long conversations about it, and I'd always say, "Well, I guess you're right, I guess I wouldn't kill him." But I actually had a switchblade at one point, which was my pride and joy, to show my toughness. I was a sort of feral child, you know. So, okay, I got to Tolstoy, and it was an anarchist commune, and it was run along anarchist principles. These people were very sophisticated compared to me. They were complete free-will, mutual aid, Cropotkin [?] anarchists. And they had a work chart, and the work chart was a big list of chores to be done, and a list of days of the week and days of the month. And as the spirit moved you, you signed up for a chore.

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And when no one signed up for a chore, Ken Miester, who was the most . . . long-suffering person I know, would sign up and do the chore. And one time only, he finally broke down, and he said in a public meeting, he said, "Why is it that no one will do these things, like wash the dishes or cook? Why am I always the one who has to sign up?" And I really, I all of a sudden realized how selfish everyone had been. Because at the end of the day when the next day's chores hadn't been filled in, Ken Miester filled them all in and did them all. And after that, I became much more aware of how people worked in a commune. And I tried to pull my weight. And, also Ken Miester was not that good a cook! No offense. And I realized that there could be better food if someone else cooked sometimes too. And we used to cook in teams. We used to bake all our own bread. Now we were into self-sufficiency, and um, we began talking about what we would do in the event of a nuclear holocaust. These were -- you have to understand the time period, or maybe you do understand the time period -- we were in the bottom of a canyon which you could only get down to in first gear, no matter what vehicle you had, and this was before four-wheel drives were common. And . . . we talked about dynamiting the top of the canyon, so that no one could get in. The outlet of the canyon had been, had been flooded by Lake Roosevelt -- it was another way out, in a sort of V, but part of it just dead-ended in this lake, and the other part, there was another way out, the nearest town was Davenport. But it was a long drive. The drive that was in the closest was the Stevens drive, the back way to drive. The back way was really a difficult was to get in and out, but it was quick. And . . . um, Huw's grandparents had an apple orchard and things -- they had many, many, too many apples, and they also had green gage plums, and they'd let us pick their excess and stuff. We had chickens, we had cow, we had uh, Silvia had a Morgan horse. And uh, there was a little bit of class distinction at Tolstoy. There were people like -- well Silvia had this horse. I couldn't have a horse, where was I going to get the money to have a horse? Her parents had given her the money to have a horse. Um, and . . . so, it never was a pure commune in that sense, although I believed it was at the time. But I also was so enculturated in the culture of private possession that I never stood up in a meeting and said, "Silvia, I want your horse too!" We did have a big commune horse, it was a big draft horse, it's name was Gabe. And I really cared for that horse, I loved that horse, but I would've liked to have had a Morgan to ride myself. Um, we all were helping each other build houses, log cabins. There had been a gypsy moth infestation, and the trees at the side of the mountain had been, they sort of in this band had been killed, and there was all this standing dead wood. And so we were logging and uh, to earn money, Tom and I immediately proposed fruit picking, because we were so Woody Guthrieized. And we went down into the Yackama [?] Valley, and we took bands of people with us, and we lived in these Hooverilles. And it's funny, because I feel -- I know this sounds sort of weird -- I feel very privileged, I got to live in a Hooverville, one of the last of the Hooverilles. They were still there then! And, with these giant communal showers, and these little horrid cabins, and the filth, and it was amazing. It was something I'm really -- it was something right out of a Dorothea Lang or Walker Evans photo, and I was in the middle of it. And we would pick fruit, and um, instead of taking out money -- we were trying to have a barter economy, and so instead of taking out money, we would take out fruit and money. What we would do, we'd ask them if we could pick, and one person would pick and take a certain amount out. And we'd always rotate -- there was this woman named Diane, she fell out of a tree, out of a cherry tree and dislocated her shoulder, but I don't remember her last name, she was a heavy-set woman. The first heavy-set hippie I ever met. Everyone else before that were thin. Um, anyway, we picked cherries, and we canned them. We brought our own canning

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supplies from Tolstoy. And then Huw and some people came up and made a relief trip, and brought more canning supplies, and made cans, and we also brought screens for drying apricots. Maybe we dried apples, I take it back -- I don't think we dried apricots, I think we dried apples. Apricot drying was in winter, it was California. Anyway, we did all this stuff. We would bring back this food and the money, and um, we tried to have it down so that the only things we bought were products we couldn't grow, which included um, legumes, on a massive scale, uh, grains -- we could only just glean from up on the plateau [unintelligible] . . . it had wheat. And wheat wasn't cheap, you couldn't just walk off with it. So grains, legumes, sugars, and oils. And there were those among us, including Tom Ordway [?], he would say things like, "What do we need oil for? That's just a taste sensation we're used to. We could parch these grains. We don't need oil." And then I would argue, "Well you need a certain amount of oil, otherwise, you know," we would actually argue about this shit, you know? Or, "Would we have enough oil from the butter from the cow? How many more cows would we need to have to have enough butter to be able to have two tablespoons of oil per person per day?" Or, "Should we just obviate the discussion and allocate a certain amount of money to go buy Wesson oil?" And we bought things in bulk, we would drive to Spokane, to a place called The Cash and Carry, and we would buy -- this is before all the hippie co-ops. However, I grew up in Berkeley, and I knew about the Berkeley co-ops, which had been founded in '35, plus the Fort Brag co-op, which was founded in -- oh, I didn't mention, my mother and my stepfather had this summer home in Mendocino, and that's another place where I went to get away from the city, move to the country.

**Q:** Is that the house I visited today?

**A:** Yes, but then later they had a farm outside of town. But that was the first house that they bought. Actually, first we rented a house one year, but then after that they bought that house. And at the time, since it was a summer house, the front part, where my mother lives now, was rented full-time to somebody, and the back part she now rents out to someone else, was our summer house. The renter in front paid to mortgage, basically.

**Q:** There was an Oldway Food Co-op in Fort Brag?

**A:** Yeah, actually, it was older than the Berkeley co-op.

**Q:** Really?

**A:** Yes --

**Q:** Does it still exist?

**A:** I don't think so. And it was founded by Finnish socialists.

**Q:** Oh wow! I'd love to know about that!

**A:** Yeah, there's a whole lot of Finns, Finnish socialists, in Fort Brag. The one family I knew up there was Sorenin [?]. There's a Sorenin's Paint Store. Anyway, yeah, the co-op there was Finnish loggers, mostly, I mean, it was, let's put it this way -- they were not bohemian beatniks, starting a co-op. But when the bohemian -- see, when Mendocino became an art colony around '60, '61, '62, and my mom's friends, the Rice's, moved up there to teach, and Bill Zoka [?] and all these beatnik types moved up there, they

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fit right into the Fort Brag co-op. It was like, "Oh, it's a co-op!" And it had the same symbol, two pine trees and all, the whole thing. So, um, . . . yeah, so, I knew about buying the bulk and stuff from that. And so I became kind of an agitator at Tolstoy for us to always a year's supply of food. And . . . now, here's the question that I would love to ask Huw that I alluded to earlier: we had a library, it had been the living room of the Harpins [?], it was a big room. And it was lined with books. And in among those books were long runs of Organic Gardening magazines. Dating back to the forties. Now, I don't know if you know organic gardening was also started by a Jewish socialist. J. I. Rodale [?] was a Jewish socialist back-to-the-lander. Oh yeah.

**Q:** I've certainly heard of Rodale, but I didn't realized he was a Jewish back-to-the-lander –

**A:** --socialist. Oh yeah, he was. And um, I presumed that these were cast-off copies of Organic Gardening from his grandparents and/or parents. But in amongst them also were copies of a magazine called The Way Out, which was a . . . I don't know now who put it out, but it was Borsody [?] - like, of the Borsody era. It was '30's, '40's.

**Q:** Oh, Tim probably knows about it, because he's up on all that stuff.

**A:** It was called The Way Out. There were like long, unbroken runs of this, but every one of them, there were magazines that were, um, being published by other intentional -- there was a place called, um, . . . I want to say Hundred Mile House, I think it was called?

**Q:** Yeah, an [unintelligible] community in Canada.

**A:** Right. In Canada. We had all of their newsletters. There was a place called Koinonia Farms in Georgia. We traded them. They needed nails. They were building. We actually shipped them nails, which we, I don't, we got, we had some lumber, I think from our barn that had fallen. We took all the nails, we were straightening these nails. We shipped them nails, and they shipped us pecans. And the idea was, it didn't matter was the UPS cost was, we were going to do this without U.S. government money, right? And, um, gosh, it was really, living there was really interesting. There were uh, . . . through, um, the winter of '65, Russ' wife, Patty, left him. She had um, been a lover of Mel Limen [?], do you know how that was? Right, the Limen family. And she went back to the Limen family, leaving Russ totally distraught. Um, Russ and I then became lovers. Tom and I were into this nonmonogamous thing, well actually Tom was, and sort of forced it on me. So I became very close with Russ, and uh, he lived in the Turner cabin or Turnerly cabin or whatever. Anyway, he lived up there. It was the only place on the property that had electricity. And he had been a ham radio enthusiast as a kid, and he had all this ham radio equipment and stereo, and everybody who had records brought them up to his place and we could sit up there and listen to them. He also had a tape recorder, which was very unusual at that time, reel to reel. And he would make these reel to reel tapes, it was a battery operated, I think Sony tape recorder, and he would bring the things in. I remember we made a tape of every version of the cuckoo, and we played in on the Fourth of July, '66, because the songs says, "She never hollers 'cuckoo' until the Fourth of July." And we had tons -- and everyone sort of left their records there with Russ because they couldn't play them. And . . . I was considered somewhat of a freak because I wanted to buy comic books, but I had no money. And so, a couple of times, horder [?] was allocated so that I could buy comic books. Because I was a popular culture fan, I had been a comic book fan as a young college student,

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Marvel Comics was real interesting. And . . . and I also wanted copies, like Mama's and Papa's records and things like that, and they were like, you know, I was a little too much of a teenager, for some of their way of thinking. Too hung up on pop culture. But um, hanging out with Russ, you see he had a radio, and I could listen. I remember when Yesterday came out, by the Beatles, I was real excited. I was not a Beatles groupie-girl type thing, but I remember it was so interesting to have this cello, whatever it was, and you know, it's like, "Wow." So, I was at Tolstoy, but I also was still trying to maintain this little link to this, little radio that was set up, he had this antennae going up his tree, and his tape recorder -- I was still trying to maintain some reference to popular culture, mostly past popular culture, mostly old popular culture, old work songs and country songs, and blues. And, . . . there was a lot of political stuff that went on there, about what we should spend money on. I remember one time, Bob had money, he turned 21, and he was given a sum of, a large amount of money, and he wanted to give it all away, because it had been, it was the product of . . . exploitation of poor people, and he wanted to live in a way that was, commensurate with the way that the bulk of people on the planet lived. And so, . . . he lived in a little house made of straw bales with corrugated tin on it, because that's the way most other people in the world lived. He wasn't going to live above them. There was another guy, also named Bob, Bob McRaith, and he also lived in this little house made of haybails -- but these were not, we're not talking strawbail construction, we're talking big enough to crawl in and sleep in. Bob McRaith had been married to a woman, I believe was named Cathy McRaith, and they had some children, and he had this sort of mid-life crisis, and he had just run off and left her. And she was a very left-leaning socialist woman, but she wasn't socialist enough for him. He had to go live in a haybail, you know. And, Tom and I decided that we wanted to grow a cash crop, because -- what really kind of turned me toward this was a big scene that developed, Patsy wanted tampons. And, every bit of money was voted on by everybody. And, Tom Ordway stood up, he was. . . a very harsh person. Actually, in many ways, he was a very noble person, and now looking also at that, and having been an ex-marine, what was he doing there? I mean, the whole thing was very odd. But he was very, very abrupt in his way of talking, and very, uh, imposing, he was well over six feet tall, a very strong, muscular guy. And he was, he said, "Why should we spend money for tampons? Women have done without tampons for years." And, all of us women were too embarrassed to say anything. We just couldn't say anything. And. . . I didn't say anything. And my mother would send me five dollars now and then, and I could buy tampons. And uh, but Patsy couldn't, Patsy's parent's didn't know where she was, or they didn't send her money, or she didn't accept the money, or whatever. And, she and I were talking, and she said, "Yes, Bob won't let me use toothpaste either. Because 90% of the world don't use toothpaste." And at that point, I realized that I was -- what I was living on was the common good that we all had, but in order to make my life bearable, I was relying on my parents sending me \$10 a month, \$5 a month. It was \$5 a month. And um, for my tampons, and my comic book, or whatever it was that I needed to keep myself happy. So Tom and I decided to grow marijuana as a cash crop. And, this was really the cause of a lot of anger. It was, there were a lot of people that didn't like it, and um, we did it anyway. And, they were anarchists, and they couldn't stop us. And we . . . really felt that we could use the money -- we also felt that we could use money because we had been trying to grow lentils, and for some reason, lentils were the legume of choice because the climate we were in, and we just were not getting anywhere growing lentils on a commercial scale. And there were up to 20 to 40 people there at all times. In the winter we get around 6 to 10. But we had to keep this going if we were going to keep the animals around.



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Everyone wanted to go away for the winter, it was awful, awful weather, but always there was a skeleton crew. And you had to do your time on the skeleton crew at some point. At least two months of the winter you had to be there. And some people were there the whole winter. Um, Tom and I went back East and sold marijuana to make money. And we stopped off at Stash -- a place, he was there, in upstate New York, and his father fixed our truck. Came back with our truck, this was in '66, and the truck broke first gear going down the hill, and we had to get out again. And there we were. And um, so we were growing dope, and we got busted. Now I believe this was August of '66. I have the clippings. Yeah, that sounds about right. And the way we were busted was um, . . . we allowed anybody to come into the place, anyone. And word had gotten out in Berkeley, um, and . . . this, stop the tape for the minute, they're up in the office . . . "Sixteen Arrested in Dope Raid." I've got all of these, um, here, because a fan of mine, who wrote to me from Spokane several years ago, and I said, "Oh, I used to be in Spokane, I went to jail there." I didn't live there, I went to jail there. And he went into the library and looked these all up and pulled -- I mean, he spent hours, yeah it was really nice of him to do this for me. Okay, "Sixteen Arrested in Dope Raid," this is 9/19, 1966, Spokane Daily Chronicle. And like I said, you can make copies of this, but I'm just going to read you a little bit of this, because this sort of says it all. "Sixteen persons were charged with being in possession of narcotics, marijuana, Saturday afternoon following a raid on what officers said was a 'pacifist colony' at the so-called Tolstoy Peace Farm in Lincoln County. Lincoln County sheriff, James E. Attwood, said six women and ten men were taken into custody at the farm, six to seven miles northeast of Davenport, and bond was set at \$2,000 each. He said about two bushels of growing marijuana planted around on the farm were pulled up and confiscated as evidence. He said none of those arrested offered more than passive resistance when taken into custody. 'Some of them had to be picked up and carried,' he said." Including Ken Miester. "Prosecuting attorney, Willard Z. Zelmer, said there was no evidence that the farm was connected with a narcotic supply ring. The prosecutor said the sixteen suspects were charged in a justice court complaint reading in part that they had knowledge of marijuana on the premises, had possession or constructed possession of the same, and did on occasion use or encourage the use of marijuana. The 16 were arrested on a warrant, after a search warrant was used Saturday afternoon by the sheriff and five of his deputies, Sheriff Atwood said." Um, here's the good part: "Russell G. Goodman, chief criminal deputy sheriff, said the raid was made on a tip by an informant who's name could not be disclosed at this time. He said Zelmer said that most of those arrested apparently were not permanent residents of the Tolstoy Peace Farm, but were persons who came and went with some regularity. He said those arrested at the farm were loaded into school buses to be taken to Lincoln County Jail and were charged in Justice Court later Saturday. Many of those arrested were uncooperative in giving information regarding their identity." This is from Zilmer, "'As soon as we got up on the physical work of the arrests and charges, so we know for sure just whom we've got, they will be taken to Justice Court for preliminary hearings.'" Okay, it goes on and on and on. Alright, what happened was . . . in the summer months, more and more people would show up. In '66, I'd say there were twice as many people on a given day than there had been in '65. And, people were coming up from Berkeley. There was a guy named Charlie Brown Artman. He was known as Charlie Brown, and he publicized the uh, Tolstoy Farm through these things he had called tea time tea parties, which were folk music singing parties. And, he had been in the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley. And he told a lot of people about Tolstoy, and a lot of people showed up who were not part of the peace movement, they were just, like, "Let's go up

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there." And, . . . among the people who showed up was this guy named Allen Bell, uh, he came from Bellingham[?], Washington, I think, a guy named John Tortelo [?], who I think had gone to college in Antioch. His father was on the board of the Hartford Insurance Corporation Company. And um, this guy named Carly, and I don't know his last name, from Berkeley. He had been an adopted child of two physicists, and he was very stupid, which was my first real understanding about genetics. He was never going to be a physicist -- he was just dumb. But a nice guy. And these two kids showed up, who were younger than me -- these were the first people at Tolstoy who were younger than me. And um, one of them was named Lee, and the other was a girl, and I don't know what he name was anymore. I've just simply forgotten. And they had escaped from Napa Mental Institution. And, . . . um, why they were in Napa, I don't know, but we sort of romanticized them into this sort of David and Lisa type, you know, wrongly put in a mental institution, they were young schizophrenics, whatever. They also both had epilepsy, and we also, we thought perhaps, that was their problem, they had epilepsy and their parents had warehoused them in Napa. Lee was um, not as prone to epilepsy as the girl, and I just wish I could remember he name, but I don't. They had not been there very long. And we had a gun on the place, you know, to shot animals or whatever, and it was a 30-6, and it was upstairs -- there was men's dormitory room, where the men, who in retrospect all seemed to have been gay, but where the men lived, and any single loose men who weren't gay stayed there. Tom and I lived downstairs and our bedroom was off the library -- we were like next in line to have our house built. Um, Tom Ordway and Andy had already started working on a house and were living in a log cabin which wasn't finished yet. And there was a guy named Walter, his last name starts with the letter "E", German sounding. Walter was older than the rest of us. He showed up -- he, I don't know where he came from. He, he slept in his car a lot of the time. And um, and Rico was still there -- at that time he was still Richard Reed. And um, . . . anyway, this guy and gal showed up, and Carly and Tom Ordway, and Andy, and a couple other people, liked to play cards. They would play gin rummy and hearts and things like that. And they'd have kerosene lamps on -- we had this long trestle table and after dinner they would play cards. I didn't like playing cards, but I would sit there and do handicrafts and stuff. And Tom would sit and sing. And sometimes Tom would play cards with them. And this guy Lee came down, and he had a strike-anywhere match, and he struck it on Carly's ass. And lit it. And I guess he lit a cigarette. I guess. And Carly got really mad, said, "What are you doing?" And he goes, "Stop messing around with my girl." Now Carly was too stupid to mess around with anybody's girl. This was a scene right out of a Steinbeck. Carly was so dumb and so harmless. And um, this guy Lee got really, like, he was like, you know, "You're trying to make it with --" name of girl. And um, he got really angry. And he ran upstairs and um, and he got the gun, 30-6. And he came down and he started shooting. And, he shot a hole through the ceiling that went up into the stairs, he shot a hole through the wall, and he shot, or someone knocked over, the kerosene lamp. And I was like, "Oh my God, it's going to be a Western movie, the kerosene lamp's going to catch on fire, the whole place will burn down." Nah-uh. It just went out. It was kind of weird. There was kerosene all over the floor. And um, and, . . . there was, I was there while it was happening, I was like trying to stop it. I didn't know what to do, and it was just this stand-off, and . . . this is when the anarchist principles were put to the test. What happened was, I think I actually went running to get people, because I figured, I'm not involved in this, and I'm small, and I'm quick, and I'll go get some help here, because this guy could kill people. The girl was having a total freak out and had an epileptic seizure. Um, yeah. Oh, this was like, this was a nightmare. And it ended up -- oh and Charlie Brown Artman was visiting at the

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time, and he was not a real member of Tolstoy farm, but he was a pacifist. And he . . . grabbed the gun, and he put his hands over the muzzle of the gun, this shot gun, and he's like, "Give me the gun. Give me the gun." And the guy's like, "No, no, I won't give you the gun." The guy's got the gun, [unintelligible] . . . "Shit, he's going to blow Charlie Brown's head off!" And, um, and I have to explain, Charlie Brown, I knew Charlie Brown because he, my ex-boyfriend Norman, and my then husband, at that time Tom Hall, had all been roommates together in Berkeley. And that's how I knew Charlie Brown. He was a local character. He was kind of a nut. And was a big advocate for LSD and drugs and stuff. Anyway, like I said, he was just visiting. But he was . . . he was like, "Give me the gun. Give me the gun." Um, Huw showed up. By this point it was like late at night, and Huw showed up, and he said, "How about everyone just sit down?" So they all sat down. This guy's holding the gun, pointing it at Carly, who doesn't move. Charlie Brown is like holding the gun, saying, "Give me the gun. Give me the gun." And we all sit down around them, and they're like standing there, frozen, just like tableau, while we're all sitting on the floor like it was a meeting. And, discussing, what we should do now. And um, you know, "Has the girl with epilepsy been taken care of?" "Yes, she's asleep now." "Well, okay. Why don't you give up the gun. You know, we're all pacifists." It was insanity. It was just insanity. And I said, "Why don't we call the sheriff?" And I was -- "How could we call the sheriff? We're anarchists. We have to learn to settle this without the interference of the state." And I said, "Yeah, but this guy's escaped from a state institution. Um, you know, the ancient Greeks had banishment, but we can't enforce banishment, unless we call in the state." And like they're saying, "Yes, but that's not going to work. We have to figure out a way to make him come to his senses." And the whole time this guy's sitting there going, "I'm going to kill ya! I'm going to kill ya!" Anyway, at one point, Tom Ordway came in on all of this, and he's like, "What's going on here?" and obviously was filled in very quickly, and he said, "Drop the gun, Lee!" And Lee didn't drop the gun, and he just went "POW!" on his head, like that, and grabbed the gun. Because he was an exmarine. And then, Huw had the temerity to say, "That was a very coercive act." So then we sat up till two in the morning talking about "Was it a coercive act?" And what would we do about it?

**Q:** What happened to the guy?

**A:** We decided to drive him -- the consensus was to drive him to the edge of the property, and tell him he was not welcome anymore. And that the girl, who turned out to be only 15 -- we could've all gone to jail -- um, she was taken to the sheriff's department to be put in a foster home, because we felt that they would -- they would take away our freedom if we tried to help her, so we had to reluctantly put her in a -- and she was given to a foster family. And uh, various -- Andy, Silvia, and so forth -- all made a point of going to visit her once a week, we would all drive up to where she was. And um, but we felt she would've been better, freer with us, but you know, God knows what happened to people! That is what cracked Tolstoy farm open, although we didn't know it at the time. The sheriff then knew, really, what was going on there. We had involved the local police. And we probably, at that point, should've stopped growing marijuana. Now we'd been growing it and selling it, Tom and I were selling it, without other people even knowing about it. But by this time they all knew about it, because we, and Rico also, Richard at the time, we'd all put in this big patch, about a quarter acre, as a cash crop, against some people's serious objections, but again, they couldn't banish us, right? So, um, once, I didn't, I feel stupid now, in retrospect, but gosh, let's see, in 1966 I was 19, no, . . . yeah, 19 years old. Um, I wasn't hip to

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the way things were. I should've realized, and I should've said something, that once the cops had been there to take away this girl and everything, and that we should not be growing marijuana anymore. But we kept it up. We were just so -- because I was still living in this sort of past of 1964, where you could smoke it on the Burlington Northern, and no one would bust you. I thought, these guys are such hicks, they'll never know. So we kept on growing it. Now I'm not sure when this thing happened. It would've been maybe June, when this incident happened. Um, Englebrict[?], that was his name, Walter Englebrict, the older man. Um, and . . . this girl named Carol Ann McCaffery [?] showed up. Strangely enough, she was driven down by the sheriff. Now that got some people suspicious, why would the sheriff drive her down? But other people said, "Well now the sheriff knows where we are, and he saw --" she said, "He saw me hitch hiking in, he said, 'Oh, well I'll take you down there, don't want you to get in trouble.'" We thought, "Now we've got a kind of good relationship with the sheriff -- we give him our psychos and then he gives us these nice hitch hikers," right? Also, during this time period, the FBI showed up once. On a weird, that was so weird, and I still, I would love to know the answer to the mystery of why the FBI showed up. Two guys - it was the men in black, with the black sunglasses? They were FBI, they were looking for me. They came in a white Lincoln. They drove down the back way. We knew they couldn't get back, but we told them how get out the front way. Because they came up the back way, they drove right to the back door of the house! And I was shelling peas. So this would've been in the spring of '66. And, uh, I was with Andy, and I'm very near-sighted, and I'm going, "What? It's a white car! It's a sedan. It's not a truck! How did it get down the hill?" And Andy goes, "They want you." And I'm like, "They want me?" And she goes, "Yeah, they asked for you." And I went out there, and they go, "We're from the FBI, ma'am." And I'm like, "Whoa. What --" Now I knew I had been photographed a lot by the FBI, taking part in anti-war demonstrations. And in fact, I had been . . . very wary of the fact that I had, I had been photographed at an anti-war demonstration in Chicago when I was at Shimer, by a red haired man. And I'm interested in people, and like he was red haired, it was like, "Whoa, bright red hair!" And I had also been photographed by that same man in San Francisco, at the federal building in San Francisco. Like, two weeks before. Either -- now I don't remember the sequence -- either I went home for like spring break, or I went from -- one way or the other, it was like I had gone to college, and he was there again. And . . . he knew me too. It was like, he photographed me in San Francisco, and then he photographed me in Chicago. And the second time I saw him photographing me, and I looked at him, and he looked at me, and was kind of embarrassed. And I was like, "Oh my God, this is true, they really are infiltrating the anti-war movement!" I just was like, paranoid delusion -- no, it's true! So, I thought that this was connected with that, when these FBI men showed up, I was like, "Oh, shit, they found me," [unintelligible] W, I've been busted many times for demonstrations. Other people had been busted for throwing blood on draft records - I mean, we'd all been arrested. We'd been arrested in Spokane for picketing the federal court building. Um, we all, even out in the woods, we all did our part. And so I thought, what are these FBI guys doing? No, they asked me about a guy who I'd gone to college with. His name was Sergay [?], and his last name started with a "B", it was something like Borenstein [?]. And I said, "What did he do?" And they said, "Something very bad." And that's all they would say. And I said, "Well I haven't seen him since I left college. How did you find me?" I had run away -- now I told you how I got there -- I was a runaway, my parents didn't even know where I was. They didn't tell me.

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**Q:** Man, that must've freaked you out.

**A:** Oh yeah, oh yeah. And then right after that, we get busted. And I'm like, "Oh, is there a connection?" But I don't think there was. I think the FBI was tracking me along with the hundreds and thousands of other people who were the anti-war movement. But that was really scary to me. I realized that I was not going to hide very far. It's very likely that someone who was still at college had tipped them when they had gone to the college, "Oh yeah, she's at Tolstoy," because I had written some of those friends, but still it just seemed very strange to me. Anyway, we got busted. Carol Ann McCaffery turned out to be a narc. Turned out she was the granddaughter of the sheriff.

**Q:** Now she's the one that got driven in?

**A:** She's the one that got driven in by the sheriff. She came in, she flirted with Allen Bell, and John Turtulow [?], and she smoked dope with them that night, in the living room. They told her that Tom and I were growing grass, and she went out and found our patch, and took Polaroid pictures. And we went out, um, after the bust, and we found the backs of the Polaroids all on the ground around the area. But at the time we didn't see that. And . . . um, she then disappeared, and I was real upset, Andy was real upset. And Tom was upset. And so was Tom Ordway. And we were pretty sure that something was coming down, but we didn't know what. And the next thing we know, these school buses come down, and they trapped us in the canyon, the only two ways out. And they arrested 16 of us. There were 20 people there, and four people were -- a couple people were in town, and Bob McRaith and somebody else, went off into the woods, and just simply vaporized. Actually, they arrested 17 of us, that's right. That's why they say 16 arrested, because they got us there, and Rico --that's why he's now known as Rico --Richard, um, it got to be dark, they were still trying to book us, and it was a tiny little town with a one room jail and a one room dispatcher's office for the deputies. And we were all -- they had us all sitting in a circle. They didn't even have enough handcuffs for us. They were way out of their league. And Rico, the door was open, because it was a hot evening. And Rico just started backing out the door. And he --scooting on his ass. We were all sitting cross-legged, Indian-style. He just started back down the stairs. When he got outside, he just fell off the porch of these little five steps of cement, fell off into the high granger bush that they had there, whatever it was, it was some little shrubbery that they had there, and he lay there all night. Because he thought, if he ran, they could accuse him of running. But otherwise he could say, "Oh, I just fell out, and I fell asleep." But, by morning, they hadn't noticed he was missing, so he got up and left. And he went back to Tolstoy, and he changed his name to Rico. And they came looking for him once. We were like, "Oh no, that's Rico. He's Israeli." And it was like he had this whole persona -- he was Rico, and he was Israeli. Um, he's been Rico ever since. I hope I'm not blowing his cover. I thought it was really brave and daring of him. Um, . . . there was some resentment from the non-marijuana growing people that we had got them all busted. But there was also another kind of resentment that worked very strongly too. We were told it cost \$2,000 for bail. And we were very clearly made to understand that that would be the bribe money too, for \$2,000, you could get out. And we were, a lawyer, court-appointed lawyer came and told this to me and Tom, to our faces, "They're gonna want to send five people up. The last five people -- it's a game of musical chairs." John Turtulow's father had lawyers come in by airplane, by um, rented plane, to get him. He was the first one bailed. Everybody was getting bailed. Huw Williamson's parents bailed him and Silvia out. This guy named José Fuente, I think he was with us, he might have been. Actually, I'm not sure that he was with

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us, I know that he had been there. Um, anyway, who was left to not get bailed? Me and Tom Hall, and Walter Inglebrict, the guy who was living in his car, the older man, um, Allen Bell, who was completely on the outs with his family, and um, who also may have been gay, in retrospect, although I'm not sure of that. He certainly had no girlfriend. And um, . . . yeah. Now here's a little interesting thing. Here's some pictures -- "Pacifists Appear on Dope Charge. Being carried back to jail --" la de da de da. And they say they're carrying a man identified as Richard Reed, but it's Ken Miester. See, they lost Richard Reed, and they didn't know who he was, and Ken Miester would say, "I'm not telling you my name." So they said, "Well you're Richard Reed, aren't you?" And it's like, "I'm not telling you my name." So, but that's Ken Miester. And um, and that's Tom Ordway right there, that's the big guy I was telling you about, ex marine. Um, . . . that is Allen Bell. That's Huw Williams, and I'm not sure who that is. So anyway, the um, the deal was they let Huw off, because he was a local boy, and uh, . . . and you know, he basically said he'd never do it again. Um, there's Allen Bell, there's Walter Inglebrict. Um, Walter Inglebrict turned out to have a prior criminal record, he had stolen a car when he was a teenager and gone to reform school. Poor guy, they have him, um, six months, and rest of us got, um, no excuse me -- he got a year, and the rest of us got six months. Here's Huw. And um, . . . yeah, that was Walter. He had a bad heart too. I felt sorry for him. That really was a bad scene. Um, the judge was very nice. If you read these, you'll hear the judge making statements like, "I know these people didn't mean anything bad, um, I know that --" he talked about our politics, um, it was very, very strange. And um, Tom -- the judge was crippled, he'd had polio as a kid, and he had a bad leg, one leg shorter than the other. And Tom had Osgladshlater's [?] condition -- water on the knee, and he limped real bad. And the judge stopped the whole proceedings at one point, and says to me and Tom, he says, "I want you two to come into my chambers, I want to talk to you." Because we were "married." They didn't know it was the Universal Life Church marriage, didn't count for shit, but they thought we were married, we told them we were married. And um, . . . and he says to Tom, "Son," he goes, "were you born like that, or can that condition be treated?" And Tom said, "Well, it would take an operation, I'd have to have my knee cap replaced." And um, and he told him what it was, and the guy says, and the judge says, "Son, I don't want to see you have to go through life like that. Now the bail money that you've got --" because we had by that point raised bail, my mother had loaned us money, and his aunt, Tom's aunt had loaned him his money. He goes, "If I found you, uh, guilty, I'd have to send you to jail. But if you plead guilty, I could do a presentence investigation, and you could, you could be released on your own recognizance, and use the bail money to get an operation, and son, I think that would be a really good idea." And Tom said, "Sure, yeah." So we were, we plead guilty, and Tom went to, we came back to California, and Tom got an operation on his leg, and it's fine.

**Q:** So you never had to serve any time?

**A:** Oh yes! Oh we all had to go back and go to jail! Oh yeah. He didn't want Tom to go to jail with a bad leg.

**Q:** What a nice guy

**A:** He was a very nice judge. These whole clippings are full of -- see, this was when [tape ends] . . . yeah, here's a quote from the Spokane attorney, Carl Maxey [?], who was representing us, "These people aren't runners," this was trying to get them to lower our bail, "These people aren't runners, they're

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stayers, they do not run from anything. Rather, they appear to stand and demonstrate against what they disbelieve in." And he said the bond reduction was consistent with the charges against these people. And, um, "They appear to do nothing more than demonstrate, meditate, and dissent," Maxey said." This was our lawyer, mind you. Um, "he said they identified themselves as people who had demonstrated against the war and capital punishment." And the judge refused the motion, but referred to us as a "homogeneous group from varying backgrounds and localities, which would indicate a varying risk on our bonds. Several have shown their contempt for our laws in this court." And so they didn't reduce the bond. Um, . . . and, . . . he says here, he refers to, "'You'll never get a poorer group in front of you, judge,' said Maxey, referring also to one defendant who doesn't even have shoes to come to court." That was Ken Miester, who had taken a vow of poverty and wasn't wearing shoes. You know, when I look back on this, it's, they, they were completely clueless as to who we were. Um, and there's all this stuff about, "You know, these are innocent, young, " here I am listed as Catherine Manfritty [?] if you read through these. Oh, Laura McRaith was Bob McRaith's wife, and she was just visiting him, trying to get a reconciliation -- she got busted. Bob McRaith was one of the ones who went into the woods.

**Q:** Now was "Manfritty" --

**A:** That was my father's name. Um, yeah, the Fuentes -- José Fuentes and Sandra Fuentes were there. Oh, Andrea, and it gives her last name, but I can't read it. Andrea . . . Garrison, it looks like. Bad photocopies here. Um, anyway, so that was the end of my involvement with Tolstoy Farm. By the time I went to jail, it was um, . . . '67. Um, I . . . was told by the judge, although he made me deny it in court, he had me go into court and say, "Was there any deals struck," and he said I would have to say no, and so I did say no, so on the record I was saying no. But the deal was, "Go back to California where they understand your kind of people, and we will give you probation. Otherwise, we will have to do the entire five-year mandatory sentence in Washington." So I got three months, because I was only female - - all the men got six except for Walter, who got a year, and I had to go to California to serve on probation. So, that kicked me out of Tolstoy Farm. Now, as far as the organization of that place as a commune, it was strictly anarchist. Everything was done by consensus. Everything was, um, laboriously talked over. Um, there was a strong grounding of this, as I said, Christian socialism, 1930's left-wing utopianism, uh, Borsodi's books were there, um, other books were there too, on um, what I would now call "permaculture", or sustainable agriculture. Books like uh, Tree Crops, by Russell Smith. Um, books that were very important to me later on. I certainly learned how to garden there, uh, on a big scale. My mother always gardened, so I knew how to garden anyway, but -- and I learned a lot about how to raise animals there, which I had not done other than keeping pets. And um, . . . it, . . . in a way, the other thing that was very good for me was the people were from so many different backgrounds, so many different lifestyles, and so many different natures. It was not like hanging out with a bunch of my college buddies, "Let's start a commune." I fit in as, at that point, the youngest person, with a bunch of people who were in their 20's and 30's, who had a strong political and/or religious grounding. Um, although nobody went to any religious churches locally, as far as I know. Some of the people inclined toward vegetarianism, but there was no, there was no, it was none of that new age vegetarian stuff. There was nobody there -- and the reason I mention these things is because these were characteristics of other communes I was at later -- nobody was into Jethro Plaus' [?] Back to Eden. Nobody was into high colonics [?], you know what I'm talking about? Nobody, that health food tinge was not there,

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although, there was a health food store in Spokane which we used to patronize. They made papaya juice, um, papaya nectar things. And we would go there, but we were not vitamin freaks, per se. But we would go there to buy raw sugar, things like that. And all of this came from Huw's family, that knew about this health food store. But that was in, from the days when a health food store -- okay. In the pre-hippie period, health food stores often had juice bars and other food. Then, in the late '60's, health food stores really became pill pushing stores, they just had things -- and then when the food co-ops and the hippies started again, then again there was the resurgence of healthy food. This place was an anomaly, because at a time when all the health food stores in Berkeley were just pill places, and had tiger's milk, that was it, this place was a 1930's style health food store, and was very interesting to go there. And the people there were very supportive of us -- again, the word "hippie" was not known to them, they didn't know what we were. They called us the "colony", like they called it in the paper here. We were a colony, they didn't use the word commune, and we didn't use the word commune because of the word communist. Um, and we identified ourselves primarily as being anti-war, anti-capital punishment. Some of the people had been arrested for demonstrating against capital punishment. I never had. And I never was very strongly committed to being anti-capital punishment. I had been raped, and um, and I . . . was very, when this fellow, Carol Chessman [?] was executed at San Quentin, all of my cohorts and their parents were extremely against capital punishment, demonstrating, because this man was an intellectual and all this stuff, but um, and I went along with it. But shortly after that, I was raped when I was 16 or 17, in Berkeley. And, after that, I thought, "Yeah, I don't care if they kill those guys. It doesn't make any difference to me. If the guy did it, and someone says 'Yeah he did it,' and you can prove he did it, then kill him. Get him off the planet. Don't need him." So, again, I kept my mouth shut about that, as far as my being opposed to capital punishment. And I would oppose it on the grounds of, um, it's used selectively against people of various gender and color combinations that are not fashionable, but I still secretly believed at the time, if a person confessed, to kill him. So, again, I, I um, I was at Tolstoy Farm and of Tolstoy Farm, but there were some ways in which, I just kept my mouth shut. I was not a "good person" like those people were. I was a tougher person than they were. But not all of us were that good either. Tom Ordway was a tougher person, wacking that guy over the head and taking the gun. And um, he was furious over the bust, oh he was outraged! Uh, because it was all for money, you just did it for money. And, there had been conversations about, is it philosophically right to grow marijuana to show our contempt for the laws of the state. And a lot of people there wouldn't smoke it but were willing to take the money from it, when Tom and I contributed money. And when others who participated, including Rico, also contributed money.

**Q:** What happened to the farm after the bust?

**A:** They continued. They were all let off, you see they were all found not guilty. And it was a huge split. Some of the people left forever, like John Turtulo obviously went back to wherever, with his upper-crust family. Um, the place continued, and it, all those little private houses that were built were then more or less declared private. And . . . Huw left to go to a more primitive, anarchist Christian-type commune, the type that he had originally founded. Um, some of the people ended up in Quarter Lane [?], it was a, um, and I couldn't remember the name of it, and I don't quite, I want to say it was called Peace Keepers, or . . . Earth Keepers, or something like that, commune in Quarter Lane. And um, have you heard of that? I just wish I could remember the name. I don't.



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**Q:** Let me look on my list. We have a list. So I should look under Peace Keepers, or Earth Keepers?

**A:** I think it was Peace Keepers. Peace Keepers is kind of the name that comes to my mind. But it might have been, something like that. Anyway, they were in the Quarter Lane area, which is right across the line from Washington, I mean, it's like really close. Do you have them sorted by locale?

**Q:** No, unfortunately, this list is not. I mean, I could do it that way, but.

**A:** It's no big deal. There is an extremely biased and inaccurate account of Tolstoy Farm on Stephen Gaskin's web page.

**Q:** Oh yeah?

**A:** Yeah.

**Q:** What's it doing on his web page?

**A:** Apparently, someone who wanted to write a history of communes, but it is so inaccurate. I only found out about it last week. A friend of mine from Garden of Joy Blues, this guy Mark Purkell found it. Because he had lived at Gaskin's communes at one point. And he forwarded it to me, and I was so outraged, I didn't even want to bother writing back to explain it. But it was all about how the whole farm was filled with -- it had been taken over by runaways and dropouts and mental patients -- no, two mental patients, who were runaways. That's it! I had been a runaway, but by then I was over 18, it didn't count anymore.

**Q:** I wonder who did the web page.

**A:** I don't know. I didn't check, I was so --

**Q:** It doesn't say "Maintained by --" or anything?

**A:** I'm sure it does, but see, what he did was he clipped the . . . you know, he clipped the copy and put into a letter to me. He didn't send me the URL for the web page. I could find out or ask him, because he's a -- one of the things that Mark wants to do is do his Ozark hippie archive. Not just for communes, but all Ozark hippies. So, he's been searching out other web pages to see what they have to say but, anyway, it was very weird to see this thing about Tolstoy, because it didn't give the feel of Tolstoy to me at all. It didn't . . . it didn't mention the bust either. The bust was not mentioned. I don't know how -- and I'm sorry, you know, this was like a big factor of our lives from September 1966 to um, uh, December 1967.

**Q:** Oh my goodness! So it was like a year and a quarter or something like that.

**A:** Yeah. This was not something that was a little problem here. And yet that thing at Gaskin's Farm doesn't mention it at all. So, anyway, now my feeling is, I can go onto to the next communes I lived in, or you could ask me questions about Tolstoy. I think you should probably ask me questions.

**Q:** There is something in here called Earth Cycle Farm. Could that have been it?

**A:** That could have been it.

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**Q:** It was Edwall [?], Washington? No, you said Idaho, didn't you? No, okay, never mind. That's the only thing I found that looked even close. Okay. And where was the place that Huw went to?

**A:** That I think was near Quarter Lane.

**Q:** That was also? A different place?

**A:** Same place. See, yeah. Some people from Tolstoy who were "serious" moved out, and the Hart house later burned down, I was told. I was no longer allowed to be there, because I was on probation, I had to leave. And, I still resent to this day the fact that there was no solidarity, that the poor ones, and Walter Englebreck, who never grow dope, the poor ones went to jail, and the little . . . the pink boys didn't, you know what I mean? And it pissed me off. And I never trusted people -- I became much more of a wobbly [?], and less of a fellowship of reconciliation person after that. Because I saw that it was a classist thing, there was a classist thing going on there. Um, --

**Q:** Because the bail money could've been pooled and all that?

**A:** All of those people could've gotten bail money for all of us. And they probably would've bribed us all out and dropped the charges and all this -- it was a bribe between -- the guy Maxi, nice as he sounds there, Maxi stood there with his hand out, and he said to me, "Two thousand dollars," and pointed into his hand, and tapped his palm like that, "Two thousand dollars."

**Q:** Now was that to line their own pockets, or were they getting it for county money, or --?

**A:** I presume they were getting it for county money. See, we only . . . eventually we had to only put \$500 for bail. They kept us until they had gotten \$2,000 for everybody, those people all got off. The ones who paid \$500 all went to jail. And well, what can I say? The marijuana disappeared also, and talk about corruption -- but this isn't about communes, -- but they said they got two bushels of marijuana, ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! They got a truckload of it!

**Q:** What do you think they did with it?

**A:** The deputy sheriff set up with a dealer. And I know this. Um, we also had selected seeds, we had two Prince Albert, big Prince Albert cans, not the little ones, the big pound Prince Albert cans, full of seeds from Acapulco gold that Tom and I had been selling. This was at a time when regular U.S. marijuana was ditchweed. And we had the good stuff here. For then. I mean now, that would be ditchweed, but at the time it was very strong marijuana. And um, and hey, I was into breeding, we were trying to breed a line here of good stuff. And um, all that disappeared, and the deputy, one of the deputy sheriffs quit, I was told, and went into selling. When we showed up for uh, the trial, the amount of marijuana they showed up with was a bushel basket with just a little bit of stuff in it! I little bit of broken leaves and stems. And I actually said in court, "Where is it?" They had been cutting the stuff down with scythes when they hauled us off. Also, they didn't get it all. Rico, when he went back, first thing Rico did was cut it all, and he threw it into a patch of stinging nettles down by the creek, so that anybody who went to get it would be stung, and he let it just dry and cure there, and we sold it, and that's where we got money to set up down in California, while we there in pretrial investigation, and Tom was getting his operation.

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**Q:** I know you disliked the written account you saw on Stephen Gaskin's web page, but are there written accounts that you like?

**A:** Of Tolstoy? That's the only one I've ever seen. I've never seen another. As far as I know, although there would've been contemporary things in some of the peace magazines of the period, because various people wrote in, um, I've never seen an account of Tolstoy –

**Q:** So no one who lived there has like written a book about it or anything?

**A:** No. As far as I know, no. And I don't feel like -- I was so young, I could tell a lot about day-to-day life, what it was like, you know some of it you'd have to paint as sort of laughable, the woman who was not allowed to have tampons because 90% of the people don't. And we were instructed to find out, well, what do people in other civilizations do? Oh gosh, we don't know. Well, I found out about milk weed fluff. I mean, I'm sorry, this was, . . . the guys didn't put themselves through that. Like I said, I learned an awful lot about sexism and classism at Tolstoy, unintentionally on everyone's part, I'm sure. Um, I loved those people, I was close to everyone there, and Stash, I miss Stash a lot. I'd really like to know what happened to him, I hope he's okay. If he ever finds this archive, I want him to find me. And Andy, I think about her a lot too, Tom Ordway also, but Andy more. I have seen Russ Nobs. He ended up being a jeweler, a whole sale jeweler in Spokane, he's married, and he and I stayed in touch for a while and then dropped out of touch, been in touch, dropped out of touch. He was good to me when I was in jail, he's already left Tolstoy and, he figured it was too risky to live that way, and he set up with a jeweler. He had learned how to make um, bend wire to people's names, you know, "Mother," and that kind of thing, for carnivals. And he taught me how to engrave jewelry and things like that. He and I spent a summer, he would bend the wire, and I would engrave it. So he was on his way to what became his career, this wholesale jewelry supply place for crafts people. And he published for awhile a um, an underground newspaper called Spokane Natural, which I wrote for. And when I was in jail I wrote for it and I would smuggle out my letters from jail and things like that. So he was very supportive of me, very nice friend. He's the only one I keep in touch with. He knows, I think, where Tom Ordway and those people are. But I don't think, see he also left feeling kind of bad about it. He had left, he was not there for the bust, but he felt the whole thing was handled badly. He'd already left by then.

**Q:** How long had the farm been going on by the time you got there?

**A:** I don't know for sure. I would guess a year and a half, two years at the most? It might have been started in . . . well, I don't know. See, Rico was there, okay, in '64 I went to college, and I believe Rico was already at Tolstoy, because I remember reading an account by him of how the farm was below the water table, and there were these springs on the side of the hill. And that had lead to this creek he was calling Mill Creek, running right by the place. And I visualized it, and when I got there, I was right. I mean my visualization from his description had been so accurate. And . . . that, I read that when I was in college. That would've been '64, '65. So if he was there already, and he wasn't one of the first people there. Um, . . . you could find -- the Gaskin page may give the date. The other way to find out would be to find out when the Guantano Peace walk was, which was probably very well document.

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**Q:** Yeah Tim probably knows the exact dates

**A:** They went down to Florida -- they never made it to Guantano, needless to say -- and Ken Miester went on a 30 fast before that. He was a real hair shirt kind of guy. And um, Russ Nobs had been going to college at Ritslair [?] Polytechnic Institute in upstate New York. He was from upstate New York. And Patty came through with this Mel Lieman [?] contingent on the Guatano Peace walk -- she was from Boston. And when they got to New York, there was some little spur group, and Russ joined in, fell in love with Patty, and never went back to college. And um, they got down to Florida, and it was while they were all in jail in Florida, that Huw said, "Come live on my land." Someone should interview Huw. Very shy, retiring kind of guy, very soft-spoken. I wouldn't be surprised if he had a lot of resentment for the proto-hippies who showed up. And I have to say again, these were not hippies in the sense that you think of the word "hippies." Um, now, while we were there, we would come and go because we were making our money selling marijuana -- we came down for the Human Be - In [?], in January of '67, that would be? By then, there were hippies. But the Human Be - In, for the Bay Area, kind of marks the beginning of the hippie, you know the end of the children of the beatniks and the beginning of the hippies. And, Tom and I came down in that Chevy, 1940 panel [unintelligible] that he had. For the Human Be -In.

**Q:** Now I'm curious about, at Tolstoy Farm, since a lot of these people were like, Fellowship for Reconciliation, or Quaker types, did they, did they talk at all about wanting to follow the book of Acts, you know, like um, live like the early apostles? I mean, did they talk a Christian line?

**A:** Only Ken Miester. He did. He was very Christian. And he was, really, one of the few Christians I ever met in my life, I mean, I just didn't know any. I knew people who were laxed Christians, but he was a Christian. But he didn't go to church. He regretted that he could no longer teach Sunday school. He had lived at home with his parents, and uh, had lived what I would consider that cloistered, decorous, homosexual life, you know.

**Q:** So this is a pretty big stretch for him then, to live like this?

**A:** Yeah, but, I think, you know, he had this Thoreau -- there was more quoting of Thoreau than Acts, actually. Um, boy, if you walked through the door and had not read On Civil Disobedience and Walden Pond, they were put right in your hand, and you were told to read those before dinner, please. I'm kidding, but everyone was expected to be very familiar with Thoreau, and be able to quote long passages of his, especially Civil Disobedience. Because that was our leading idea. That's why we were out there at the Federal Building, and why we were on peace walks.

**Q:** And, excuse my ignorance, but I haven't heard why they chose the name, Tolstoy.

**A:** Oh, Count Tolstoy, Leo Tolstoy?

**Q:** Yeah, I know who that is, but I don't know why they chose it.

**A:** Because he was a pacifist. And uh, they named it after him. Um, also, interestingly enough, he was also involved in a form of sexual practice, he was a friend of this woman named Alice Bunker Stock [?], who was the fifth woman to be named a doctor in the U.S., and she had gone to India and had studied tantric yoga and stripped it of all of its Hindu connotations, she was a suffragist, and believed in birth

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control, but she couldn't say that, because it was illegal. And she invented the sexual practice called caretza [?]. She was a friend of Tolstoy's, and Tolstoy translated her works on sex reform -- this is Victorian reformed sex, "new thought" type sex, including orgasm control and um, no corsets, the daughter would force the woman on her wedding night, it was this whole program of reformist thought -- and Tolstoy was involved in that too. And I later became a student of Alice Bunker Stock and wrote lots of articles about her, in fact, have stuff on the web about her, and am completely into her, and the Tolstoy link has always been very funny to me, because she went on this world tour to study the cultures in which women were dominant, in other words, in northern India and on the coast of India, some fishing tribes, and also northern India, there were some villages in which the women had property rights. And she wrote about this as a way of saying women could have property rights in the U.S. and the fabric of society would not crumble. And Tolstoy translated all of that stuff, and she, after having gone to India, went to see him, and they were life-long friends. Um, so, . . . it wasn't, I'm sure they were looking at it as Tolstoy from his pacifist point of view, but there was much more to Tolstoy when you began studying Tolstoy, that had to do with social reform on all levels. And uh, . . . well, it's just sort of one of those strange pointers that I got in that direction while I was there.

**Q:** Were things written down at all, like were there statements of purpose, or --?

**A:** Yeah, there were little letters that were sent to different , like CCCO booklet, things like that. I seem to remember there was a British little, you call it "fanzine" nowadays, a little British publication, about anarchy, I think it was called The Anarchist Times. And I remember seeing in a back issue, someone from Tolstoy had written before I had gotten there, talking about Tolstoy Farm. And I also, this guy wrote the book Tree Crops, J. Russell Smith, I remember his name from before, J. Russell Smith. His book was there at Tolstoy, and I remember writing . . . and corresponding with people about the idea of tree crops, although we never really got into it too much. Um, and the idea of making Tolstoy -- I guess it was for these people in Georgia, Koinonia people and pecans, they were also into things by J. Russell Smith. And there was correspondence between us about the agricultural aspects of Tolstoy, as well as the philosophical things. But we were very limited in what we could grow because of the climate, it was very cold, very short growing season.

**Q:** Were there, well I knew you were anarchists, but you did have a sort of a, work sharing system in that you had that chart .

**A:** Yes, but it was all voluntary.

**Q:** Was there anything else that was kind of structured or written down.

**A:** No.

**Q:** No, that was it.

**A:** That was it. And if it hadn't been for Ken Miester, we'd probably all have started to death.

**Q:** Were there leaders? I mean I know you operated by consensus, but --?

**A:** Huw was considered to be deferred to somewhat because . . . he had co-bought part of it, I think he bought 20 acres of it, and then 100 acres Sperry had put up the money for . Sperry wasn't there. Sperry

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lived in [unintelligible] . . . smoked dope with Sperry sometimes. He had been there, he was the benefactor . Sperry had a cabin, by the way, which Walter Englebreck ended up renting. Um, and Sperry, it was another log cabin, it had been built, I guess, as sort of a summer get away, but Sperry never used his. Well, maybe once or twice. Sperry was a friend of Russ Nobs, also, because they both liked machinery, and radios, and things like that. I'm not sure in fact if Russ had not introduced Sperry into the situation because of their both being into ham radios. I think that may be the case.

**Q:** So the land was in Sperry's name, and also Huw's?

**A:** Yeah, there was 120 acres, 20 acres that Huw owned and 100 acres that Sperry owned that we paid him. It had cost \$10 an acre. And we were paying it back.

**Q:** So did you guys form some sort of a corporation?

**A:** No!

**Q:** So when you say you paying it back, it was just this loose –

**A:** We just gave him money.

**Q:** Then eventually, it was going to be in somebody else's name?

**A:** Maybe it wasn't his name -- you know, I was so naive, now I would never join a commune without asking who's name is there? No, I have no idea who the deed to the trust was. It probably was in Huw's name, probably. But he was a responsible person. Deferring to him got less and less, when he and Silvia moved off to one side, and moved down the other end of the canyon. That's where there, they had, maybe they had 7 acres down there. There was 120 -- that's what it was -- there was 120 acres of land, and 7 acres on the other. They were on the other side of the grandparents, and . . . um, they really almost kind of left, uh, I think they were discontented with what was happening. I don't really know. Maybe they wanted more control over their lives. But um, yeah, it was always consensus. We'd have meetings, my memory is that they were every Thursday, but I may be wrong, sometimes they might have been Tuesday. And we'd just sit around and we'd -- we'd have little envelopes. Um, . . . I don't know who's idea it was. I certainly used it thereafter, and I kind of think I might have come up with the idea there, although that would of them to take me into the [unintelligible], but I kind of think I did. I'm a very literal minded person. We had \$50, and I'd say, I do remember saying this, "Let's have some envelopes, we'll put 'food' on one, 'rent' on one." And these envelopes were thumb-tacked to the wall. And we would divide up the money at the meetings and put money in different envelopes that were tacked to the wall. And if you wanted to add more money after the meeting. If you felt, for instance, that we needed more money for paying off the land, or more money for food, you could then quietly --it was like a church service. You could quietly donate to the envelope of your choice, but you couldn't take any money out of the envelope, and of course nobody ever did.

**Q:** So you weren't expected to throw all of your money in then?

**A:** No, but some did and told everyone that they did. And some did not. Um, as I said, I kept the aside the money that my mother sent. Most people kept aside the money that their parents sent. Some did not though. Some had no parents to send money, or their parents didn't send it. Um, and those . . . I

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mean, all I kept aside really was to buy tampons, toothpaste, and comic books. Everything else I put into the kitty. And Tom and I, I remember once we put in \$100. Which was a lot of money in those days. Um, which we had got, that was after our cross-country dope smuggling tour.

**Q:** Were there any kids there?

**A:** Yeah. Um, the Fuentes, José and uh, Sandy Fuentes, had a kid. Bob McRath and his wife Laura did. But when he was there first, no kid. She showed up, and there was a six year old kid, that was the oldest child. There was no attempt at communal child-raising. The children that were there just stayed with their parents. Um, -- actually, wait a minute, I'm not sure, maybe I'm wrong. Did the Fuentes have a kid? Gosh, now I'm confused, maybe they didn't. I remember her holding a child, but you know what, it might have been someone visiting. There's no mention of a child in the bust here. No, I guess they didn't. It was someone visiting's child. But, . . . no, that's funny, because Laura McRath and Bob had a kid too, and there's no mention of that kid either. I don't know why.

**Q:** Did they home school the kids?

**A:** Well, the one kid I remember being held in Sandy's arms was definitely a baby. Two years old at the most. And the other, the little girl, . . . no. I don't remember her being schooled at all. But it was, you know, it might have been like summer vacation when she showed up. There were no kids. It was not . . . you might ask the question another way: "Were there couples?" And what were those couples doing? Tom and Andy were a couple, no kids. Patty and Russ broke up. Patsy and Bob, no kids. Huw and Silvia, no kids although I believe they later had kids. I think they had two. Me and Tom, no kids. And uh, in fact as it turned out later, Tom was sterile, but I didn't know it at the time. I just thought I was lucky. Because I didn't want to get pregnant. And I was very erratic with birth control, and I never got pregnant with him, it was like great. I later found out, when he did married, and wanted to have kids with somebody, he had to go through a whole in vitro fertilization problem thing. Um, . . . Bob and Laura were separated. Um, the Fuentes either had a little kid, or no kid at all. They might have had a little -- God, it's like how can I forget that? I don't remember. Walter Englebrict was single, there was all these single men. I didn't mention weirdos like Corey Ell [?] -- now there's another mental patient, although he wasn't a mental patient. His name was Corey Ell, he claimed he was in touch with flying saucers. And he had found us through some flying saucer theosophist, Christian, peace, blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah-blah. Um, Charlie Brown Artman was just a visitor, so was Corey Ell. Um, . . . Allen Bell was a student, you know dropped out student. John Turtulow was a dropped out student, those were all single guys. Stash was single and gay. There were lots of other people there, but those were the people who stayed, you know what I mean? See, when they say, that there were up to 40 people, what they say on Gaskin -- I remember the day we had 40 people. It was not, well it was for a summer. Rico was a single guy. So, there weren't that many couples. There were no single women. That's why Caroline McCaffery stuck out. She was the only single woman. Anyway, any other questions?

**Q:** Well, maybe we ought to move onto the next place. Did you go to Equitable Farm next? Is that your next experience?

**A:** Yeah, that was my next experience. Yeah, I got busted, and I moved to Albion [?] with Tom while he got his operation. He got that in Oakland. Lived in Albion, we just lived on some people's place. They

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had a little cabin and they lived on it. They were not there part of the time, and some other people rented it. Went back, went to jail. When I got out of jail, Tom and I knew we were going to split up. We just didn't have much in common. And uh, he was screwing around with a lot of people, and I really wasn't into that. And we agreed that we were going to break up. And I went and visited him in jail. And said goodbye to him, and only saw him one time after that, ten years later. And I came back down to Berkeley, where I looked up my old boyfriend, Michael Wallace, who was living with this girl, Danny, at that point, she changed her name to Melissa, something like that, and they had a kid named Vandy. And I crashed with them for awhile. And then I ran into an old friend of mine from Chicago, from when I had been dealing dope and going to college in Illinois, this guy named Bill Cody. That's his real name. Buffalo Bill Cody. And Bill Cody said that um, you know, "Gosh, I've just moved out to California," and I was like, "Yeah, well, I have too, but I don't have a place to stay." He told me that he was caring for the cats of Norman, my ex-boyfriend. "Norman talks about you all the time." I was like, "How do you know Norman?" And he goes, "Oh, we ran into each other, small world." And I was like, "Wow." He goes, "Yeah, Norman's on the road with his roommate, Peter, and uh, I've got to go there every day and feed the cats." I said, "How about if I move in and feed the cats until they come back?" So I did. And when they came back, Norman and I kind of took up again together briefly. But we were better friends than we were lovers. And one thing lead to another and I got together with Peter. So I never moved out of the house. And then People's Park happened. Well, meanwhile, all this Vietnam moratorium, and you know all of that stuff, right? So we got tear gassed much, much tear gassing. In the movie Berkeley in the Sixties, there are several pictures of Peter, before I met him, um, there's one scene where you see him, he's wearing a sort of light colored tweed sports jacket and a motorcycle helmet. And he was part of this movement of people who -- he had a motorcycle -- and it was like, because they were so afraid of getting hit over the head by the cops, the cops were starting to be very violent at that point, but he's dressed so, like this little sports jacket on, it's just - he was a student, and he was a good boy, but he's got this motorcycle helmet on. That was probably half a year before I met him. Tom Hall, by the way, my ex, ex. Was also in that movie Berkeley in Sixties, in the Free Speech Movement scene, you can see him standing around the police car and the cops are swarming. Anyway, so when I met up with Peter, we were very involved in demonstrating against the war. And Peter had also been busted for demonstrating against capital punishment in San Quentin. Peter had also been busted for growing marijuana, just one plant in his window sill. And he was on probation. When he and I met, we were both on probation, and um, and we had to be very careful to let our probation officers know that we were seeing each other in such a way that they wouldn't find it out and bust us for seeing other people on probation. We wanted to kind of break it to them gently, and actually ended up, they gave us all their blessings, like, "Of course, you guys are okay." So we lived in Berkeley, and when the People's Park riots came down, I was very . . . okay. Now we get into something personal that's not much about communes, I'll try and make it brief. When I was in jail, I became interested in, um, . . . John Lennon, of the Beatles. Um, . . . I was interested -- I wasn't as like a Beatles fan, and I didn't think his poetry was as good as Bob Dylan's poetry. But, I became interested in what it was like to be him, because he seemed to be like inside of himself, looking out, saying, "Help! They made me famous!" It was a kind of a strange attitude about him, which was very appealing to me. And I had a dream, oh this is, there we go, Martin Luther King -- I had a dream that, this is before I went to jail actually. When did I --? No, . . . that was before I was in jail. I had a dream that I was looking for John Lennon. I met a girl in my dream who I



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had gone to high school with, never seen again, never have seen again, Cindy Sergon [?] -- Cindy, if you read this, contact me! Um, she was from Berkeley. Cindy Sergon appeared to me in my dream and she handed me a blank map and she said, "You're looking for John Lennon." And the map was blank, except for that it had a little border around it, and on it, it had marked "NSWE." And a the little compass points. And I woke up, and I was like, "What the hell?" Because I wasn't a Beatle fan, I was an old folky, you know? And um, so I decided to find out -- I was really into investigating my dreams, so I went to Telegraph Avenue and I found a magazine about the Beatles, and it mentioned that John Lennon was a big fan of Lewis Carroll. So I went down to the Berkeley public library, and I decided to check out the annotated Alice, you know, with Martin Gardeners, but it was gone, all three copies were checked out. But there was a book by Lewis Carroll I'd never read, called The Hunting of the Snork [?], and I opened it up, and the first page, is a blank map with "NSWE", and I went, "Oh my God!" And I thought, "Oh, this dream is true!" So I read the book, and um, it's just a little poem, and it's about the hunting of the snork, and I thought, "I guess I am looking, I'm looking for this elusive object." And in the dream I was told I was looking for John Lennon. So I was like so stoked, and I was telling all my friend, "Man, I can't believe this." Anyway, so um, like I was so completely wilded out. I had had this dream that I was looking for John Lennon with this map, and then here's the map, it's in the book in the Berkeley public library, and I'm like, "Whoa, I guess it's all true." So I posted some things on bulletin boards, on Telegraph, and I was saying, "I'm looking for John Lennon, whatever you want, I'll do you're horoscope, I'll embroider, whatever you want, give me money." And people started giving me money, but like, large amounts of money. Like one guy gave me \$50, and said, "I would love to go do something like. What I would like to do is go up in a balloon and scatter peace literature over China." He was an astrophysicist. God. So, people gave me money, and uh, my mom even gave me money. By that time I was back being friends with her. So, I went off to England, to make a long story short, I decided to make a vow, I was reading a book on the Holy Grail, Scholarship of the Holy Grail, different grail myths. And one of them was about Circa [?] Wayne, who has a tangential Holy Grail myth. And in it he says he'll make a vow, it'll be a year and a day to find the grail. And I thought, "That's me. I'm pretty earthly. Like going, I'll make a vow for a year and a day." And on that day, which was December 17th, 1967, this was like right before I went to jail, I said, "Okay, I'll look for John Lennon for a year and a day, and that's it." So, um, when I got out of jail and I met Peter and all, I was like, "Well, I'm sorry Peter, although I am in love with you, I've still got this vow, I've got to go find John Lennon." So, I took off, to meet John Lennon. I went to England, and uh, . . . this is a whole other story about hippies in the '60's, not communes in the '60's. I met John Lennon, and in the weirdest way, and it was exactly a year and a day after I made the vow, but I didn't even know it was a year and a day after I made the vow. Completely, this is like totally immune synchronicity city. It was like the Albert Hall, at an event called the Alchemical Wedding, and um, it probably was the most extended run of synchronicity I've ever had. We were talking earlier about, is there an opposite of paranoia, person who manically believes that everything is working toward good? I don't, am not like that, but I talk about runs of synchronicity, and this was a year and a day's run of benevolent synchronicity that was like so intense. And then it was over, and I came home. And there was no point to it either. Synchronicity almost never has a point. I met John, and, yep, I met him. He was a heroin addict. Oh, just like my uncle. My Uncle John was a heroin addict, John Lennon's a heroin addict. Oh cool. I kept on thinking to myself, "What do I have in common with this man. I didn't find out until years later, when I had a daughter who was born on his birthday. Then,

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"Oh, now I know what I have in common with John Lennon." She became his devoted fan, not me. Um, she was devastated when he was killed. Um, so whatever. There was this strange little side-current -- by the way, by this time I wasn't even smoking dope or using acid or anything. This was just happening. Um, I'd kind of given up drugs after getting busted, because I didn't want to get busted again. So I came back from having seen John Lennon, and uh, . . . and Tom, uh not Tom -- Peter and I were living in this little apartment, and he was raising fruit flies, he was studying entomology, and he was raising fruit flies on his window sill, and he was thinking of raising bot [?] flies by leaving out meat, and Norman was like, "You're not going to raise flies! God!" And um, and I said to him, "You know, I used to have goats, I used to have rabbits, I used to have all this stuff, animals, used to live in the country. Please, let's get out of here." And um, he didn't really believe me, that what it was like to live in the country was so much better. Well, he always studied natural history. Um, but we went up to um, . . . see some of my old goats that I had given away, that had been in Albion, and they came running and they recognized me of course. They're smart animals. And he's like, "Your goats know you!" And I'm like, "Of course goats know you, they're at least as smart as dogs." And he's like, "Well, this is wonderful, this is really great." So we started talking about it. And I have to say, I was really pushing it, to get him -- my, when I came back from England, the day I came back from England, I made a new vow, which was I'm going to only live in the city until I can find a guy to leave and go to the country with. So, when People's Park came down, we'd been tear gassed a bunch in the events leading up to that. And then this guy was killed, James Rector [?], was killed. And I said to Peter, "There's no point in dying for a square city block. If I'm going to die, I'm going to at least die for my whole watershed, or a county or something." And he said, "You know, you're right." And we got out, and we moved to Forestville, this town that I'm in right now. And we lived across the river in a place called Hacienda Canyon, which was not a commune, but it was "on the land." It was a couple of brothers in their fifties, who were Rosicrucian's [?], members of the Amork [?], ancient mystical order of the rosy [?] cross out of San Jose, which is a 1920's, wacko occult group. Um, they have had a vision that, the hippies were the children of the Aquarian age, and that they had to be good to hippies. So they opened their land up, and anyone could live on it for \$12.50 a month. And, that was to help pay their mortgage. And so, Peter and I began building a little cabin there. And Peter was -- he and I are so similar, sometimes I think it's just too bad that we broke up. We are from very similar backgrounds, his background was some [unintelligible], but he and I temperamentally are so similar. Um, he loved old technology, we had books on um, turn of the century [tape ends] . . . centuries, and there was a book from MIT on Chinese technology around the turn of the century, that was republished, I think by Dover, maybe MIT republished it, great stuff, trouble [?] operated machinery, just things like that. So we were living up in Hacienda Canyon, and um, we got red tagged, in other words, they, in California there's a thing called the universal building code. And we were using used lumber to build our place, and that's against the building code, so we were read tagged, condemned. And um, . . . I remember writing on the building, in fact there's a photograph. My friend Norman Powers who had been my first boyfriend, still was my friend, he was at that point a professional photographer, and he took a lot of photos sort of, of us and what we were doing. And I wrote on the side of the building, it was clapboard, and I wrote on it, "This house is dedicated to --" and I just named all these dead musicians, that died abruptly. I remember Buddy Holly was definitely the first one there. Buddy Holly, Richy Nells, Big Bopper, um, Bessie Smith -- it was just a whole lot of people who had died. Oh and it even had Sacko [?] and Venceti [?], -- Sacko and Venceti were the only non-musicians in this

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thing. Um, and I wrote this in chalk. He took this photo, and it appeared in a couple of magazines, and things for hippies. You can't see me. I'm just sort of into the house. And so we had to leave. At that point we had three goats, and uh, three or four hutches of rabbits, and chickens, and a tabby cat. So, meanwhile, my mother and stepfather had started up with a farm, and it was already going, and had been going for quite a while. How they got the idea to start that place, I think part of it came about when they came to visit me at Tolstoy. Although their vision was a little more gentile than Tolstoy. They weren't willing to take vows of poverty, which was what most of the people at Tolstoy took, in a Christian sense. They were taking vows of poverty. At Equitable Farm, the inspiration was Josiah [?] Warren, and I don't know if my mother talked to you about that.

**Q:** Just a very little.

**A:** Josiah Warren was this anarchist, sometimes referred to as "the first American anarchist," who in the 1820's, in Ohio, first he started a thing called The Time Store, I think it was 1824. 1827 he had started Equitable Village. His whole thing, he was an inventor, he invented a Linotype[?] machine, he invented -- you name it. The guy was a crazy genius. But the Time Store, he'd invented a clock that had um, settable hands, in other words, it had one set of hands that told the hour and the minutes, and all the other hands were just idle, which you then could turn them, and then they would start tracking from the noon position, tracking off minutes. And they were different colors. And he could tell how long a person had been in the store. And, he considered that his role in life was to learn to play music, which he was not apparently gifted at, but he had this thing he wanted to learn how to play music. He wanted to learn how to make shoes, he wanted to read books. He had these certain goals. And if you came into the store to buy food, you were wasting his time. So you'd pay for it. So he would charge you the price of the goods -- say it was rice, and say it was 4 cents a pound, rice was very cheap back then, 2 cents a pound, whatever it was -- plus ten minutes of time. It was the first self-service store, because to avoid the time charge, you were allowed to come in and say, "Hi Josiah," and get your own paper bags and put your food in it. If you served yourself, he didn't charge you for time. He only charged you in his time for unloading the cart, and shelving. So every piece -- 2 cents plus .5 minutes -- surcharge of time. Then you owed him time. And then he'd make you teach him trade or teach his children trade, or something like that. He ended up with the -- he's really the forerunner of what's called the Lets [?] program, in Australia. He then had a big board where all the different times. You could switch -- maybe this one guy was taking up a lot of your time, but he had a service, you had already gotten all the service he could offer. So you would then trade chips, or scrip, for his time with someone else's time. So that you could get another guy's who owed him time. And there were doctors, there were dentists, there were all sorts of people involved in this, and eventually they started a commune called Equitable Village. It was in Ohio. And they made bricks to be able to trade to the United States. See, I knew all about them at Tolstoy, and this is why the idea of growing marijuana was our "trade" to the United States. And . . . anyway, Josiah Warren was really an important person at Equitable Farm. I almost say, Equitable Farm was named after him, his Equitable Village and his Time Store, his equitable scrip stuff was what we followed and believed in. I have somewhere, and I haven't been able to find it, because of Kay's [?] stuff being all around the stuff, but I will find it and send it to you, I have equitable money that I drew.

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**Q:** Cool! I'd love to see that!

**A:** Oh yeah, there's a goat on one side and um, --

**Q:** Oh, please do send me that.

**A:** Yeah. His um, . . . Josiah Warren, one of Josiah Warren's main mottos was "A bushel of wheat for an hour's labor." And at the time, that was true. And the weird thing was it was still true in the '60's, it was still true in the '70's, until um, mechanization and the um, the world wheat cartel kind of got in charge. Wheat is now worth less than an hour's labor, in America. We are paying [unintelligible] . . . I don't want to get into it. Fill in the blank, total left-wing paranoid conspiracy theory, pro-labor, anti-upper-class, blank, there, that goes right there. But wheat used to be worth an hours wage per bushel, and it still should be. And right now it's about half. And this is going to -- the chickens will come home to roost, I predict it. Because it cannot be, mechanization of the wheat harvest has -- and now they're talking about grain shortage? Mark my words, it's fake! Anyway, I seriously believe is worth an hour's labor, and that that should change. As mechanization changes, the harvesting of wheat, the standard of living will change, and the minimum will change. They kept a parody for 200 years! Until the last 20 years. It's something that some wacko economist should be tracking this, and I hate to be a wacko economist, because I'm not trained to, but there's something very wrong going on with that. Anyway, at that time, in '69, when we moved to Equitable Farm, a bushel was an hour's labor, minimum wage. The U.S. set minimum wage was the same as the commodities price of wheat. So I made up these little scrip things, and we'd trade them around. And we had a very loose kind of organization, we all had private houses which were these chicken coops, that were converted. Except the one that Peter and I lived in had been a blacksmith's forge. Um, it had been built as a chicken coop, but had been used as a blacksmith's forge, so it had been reinforced a little bit more. And um, Peter, it had all the tools in it, Peter wanted to learn blacksmithing anyway since he was a mechanic. He was a philosophy major who took up motorcycling, because he was tired of being a little near-sighted, Jewish nerd, and he got into this sort of split personality where half of him was doing mechanizing, wrenching, and the other half was a little philosophy major who was raising fruit flies. Philosophy major with a minor in entomology. Um, so anyway, we lived in the blacksmith forge. Equitable Farm was . . . was different. It was a very low number of people. It was more like cooperative housing, than like a commune. We didn't share everything. There were assessments made for uh, cooperative expenditures. We took turns cooking for each other in a cooperative housing-style setting, whereby one household hosted the group every night, made the entire dinner and cleaned up afterwards. So that, in essence, since everyone there was couples, that meant that each couple hosted the thing. The people who lived there, some of them were related, but that was kind of coincidental, because when I moved there, I was the first person related to anyone there who had moved there. Um, then my step-sister Holly moved there, and then my other step-sister Kitrin moved there. So then it almost became like a family commune, it was kind of odd. But during that whole time there were other people who were not related to us. Like, David Borshlen [?] and Hala Arage [?], and there had been a guy named Joe Green. He had left. Tim and Holly, Holly is my step-father's daughter from his first marriage. Um, she moved up with Tim who had taken a master gardening class with Allen Chadwick, in Santa Cruz. And was, and is, a very good gardener. And so is Holly. She works for the county in Sacramento, but she also has another gig doing landscaping for people, and she's incredibly good at it. Very gifted gardener. Kitrin, her sister, my other step-sister, also

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showed up, she was at point sort of a runaway, and was very troubled. She has since straightened out, and gone on to be a, um, a palmologist at University of California, Davis. She's got a Ph.D. So, there was a lot of emphasis on agriculture, and on gardening. We were all disciples of J. Russell Smith's Tree Crops at that point. Um, and we were, there weren't these attempts at self-sufficiency. There were more attempts at the idea of growing a cash crop, and we experimented with growing garlic. Um, and braiding it. At this point in time, the old sources of braided garlic had dried up, but there were places in the city, like Ratto's [?] International Grocery in Oakland, that still wanted braided garlic, and could only import it from Italy, which made no sense. And so we were pioneers of the hippie organic gardening, what would now be called under C.S.A. There were no farmers' markets. But we were growing garlic, we tried other things. Let me think what else we were doing. Oh, Peter and I went and picked apricots, and dried them, the apricots were always taken out to be sulfured. And we knew people who of course would want non-sulfured, even though they were non-organic, they were at least non-sulfur. So we took out our wages in apricots, and sold apricots. And, I'm trying to think what else, what other kinds of things we sold. We were growing -- Bill, my step-father, was also a very good gardener, and for awhile we also had a gig in a store in Mendocino where we sold groceries. It was sort of a head shop that also sold groceries, and we had put in all the fresh produce there from Equitable Farm. And um, . . . oh we did, we tried a lot of things. Peter and I and my mother and step-father became real involved in cheese making, and yogurt making and things. This was all before the '70's, this was all before that stuff became, you know yogurt making machines were popular. So we were doing it by reading old technology books. Um, what I refer to as pre-DDT technology. Anything written before DDT was discovered, will tell you how to do something the right way. There's no pesticides involved in the agriculture, of that type. I mean they might have had tobacco and arsenic, but you can also have more of that. And, pre-TV technology, in terms of no electricity taken for granted. So we had a, when Lolo and Bill bought the farm, there was a [unintelligible] separator on the place, and we had goats, and you can't make butter from goats' milk, you have to separate it, because it's too homogenized when it comes out of the goat. So we did all that cream separating, we really were experimenting with cheeses. And at that point, we were pretty unsuccessful. We made good cottage cheese and things, but we were pretty bad at cuber [?] cheeses, although later in Missouri, Peter and I really got it down, we got good at cheese. And, . . . um, . . . a lot of it was this kind of restless search for knowledge. "Let's see if we can do it ourselves!" And, when Bill and Lolo broke up, um, the character of the place changed quite a bit. Um, now as for children, Lolo and Bill had a daughter, my half-sister, who's 14 years younger than me, so she was about 8. Seven or 8, 7 maybe. Peter and I had a child, and she died of sudden infant death syndrome when she was very young. So I was in a pretty despairing mood, most of the time I was there. At first I was very happy, I was pregnant, I gave birth to her there, everything was wonderful. After she died, I was almost nonfunctional. And um, the only person who held me together was my best friend, this guy Barry Carol. And he used to come and stay with me and Peter, and just sit and keep us company. But we became very withdrawn at that point, emotionally, from the other people, although we tried to do our part, but we were just in very bad shape. And Holly and Tim broke up, Holly went off, and I didn't see her again for 18 years. And um, but Tim stayed, so I kind of lost my step-sister, and ended up with my ex-step ex-brother in law. And um, . . . after our . . . next child, Althea was born, we decided to leave. And the reason we wanted to leave was that Peter felt it was too middle class. And, you know, Lolo had a job, she was working as a school teacher. And um, there was, again, the class

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distinctions. Uh, were you a hippie in a chicken coop, or were you a school teacher who had an income? Were we were peons, she the patron [?], or what? And I always felt comfortable being around my mother, but it was, that was not the problem. But it was only a 20 acre place, and Peter and I were real, -- after trying to explain to him about self-sufficiency, and showing him some of that stuff, he took it as a real challenge, and he and I went out, way out on a limb, farther than anybody we ever met. Among our friends we're still that way. And we've sheepishly gone along with their laughing at us, and yet when the two of us are sitting around together, we go, "You know, that wasn't such a bad idea." Um, what we did was we sat around one weekend and we wrote down everything we bought.

**Q:** Oh, I think I've heard this. Okay.

**A:** We wrote down everything we bought at it was 400 things. It included Kleenex, toilet paper, paper towels, nails, tacks, brads, you know everything separate like that. The first thing we did was look at the duplication. Could we wipe our ass with paper towels? Or could we not use paper towels at all, and wipe our ass with Kleenex? Or could we not use Kleenex and just wipe our ass with toilet paper? And could we buy it in bulk. How many types of nails do we need, or could he become a blacksmith and learn how to make all the nails we needed? So, the first weekend we knocked 100 things right off the list. They were just useless things, extra things. Um, . . . in the course of the next 6 months, we got rid of another 100 things. And, things like mayonnaise, you know, you could make your own mayonnaise; why use mayonnaise? Why not just melted butter and lemon juice? What is it that you want to mayonnaise for? What is mayonnaise giving you? Oh, you're using it to put on your artichokes, well why don't you use lemon juice and melted butter. It taste better anyway. So, uh, we went from buying mayonnaise to making mayonnaise, to just, fuck mayonnaise. We don't need mayonnaise in our lives. And so we just got, we started pairing down, and the other people at Equitable Farm were going in the opposite direction. Holly was studying to be an optometrist, and had gotten her degree, and she had set up an optometry shop in Mendo. So there was sort of like these budding yuppies, and my mother as a sort of a midlife yuppie, and then there was me and Peter. And so we left. And there were no hard feelings. We just wanted to try it on our own. So that was Equitable Farm. And Equitable Farm, the system there, we had uh, work wheels. This is my little fanatic thing. I love systems, and I love making little plans and little objects, and little two-dimensional, three dimensional conversion charts. So I came up with these work wheels that would allow people -- see, I was also very much involved in anti-sexism, which is not to say I was a feminist, I was an anti-sexist. And I wanted to see all people working in all classes of occupation. And, so, I figured that one way to do this was to be to have the jobs be jobs, and the people rotate through them, and gender wouldn't enter into it. So, I designed this work wheel thing. And it was just a circle with another circle, with a cut-out window. And there were like the jobs, and there were the people's names. And they rotated against each other. I think for awhile we rotated every week. We could rotate every day, it didn't really make any difference. But usually it looked like a week was good because the goats got used to one person milking them. And um, I made up work wheels with different numbers of people on them, because each -- if there were five people on the farm, we needed a five person work wheel, because the jobs had to be distributed differently. So I made whole series of these work wheels. And they were kept in an envelope tacked to the wall, um, and Peter and I kept our money in envelopes tacked to the wall, just like I had done at Tolstoy, um, and whenever, you know, at the beginning of the week, we'd figure out how many people were going to be

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there, and we'd get out that kind of a work wheel. I loved hand buttering on the weekend, that's just what I did. And um, that's how Equitable Farm work was done. And we, at that point, we began kind of advertising, in things like Communities Magazine. People would come by and visit us. We had lots of visitors. Disproportion number of visitors to the number of people that lived there. We were only on 20 acres. We figured the most people that could live there would be ten or twelve. We really couldn't support anymore, even though it was good soil and all. Um, we had a lot of apple trees. There was one big old apple tree that we didn't know the name of, and we called it the Josiah Warren apple tree. And we dried apples and sold them and stuff, but there really wasn't much money to be made off the place. We were pretty much using it all up, um, with the number of people we had. So, my grandmother had died, and had left me some money. So I took the money and we bought 80 acres in Missouri. And we moved there in . . . we bought the place in January of '72, or December of '71. I think it was probably in October of '71. And um, we moved there May of '72. Previously to that, we had gone up to Idaho looking for land, because I remembered, very fondly, living at Tolstoy. And, but, it was really very cold. And we ran into a bunch of right-wing, Mormon, back to the landers. This was all through ads in Communities Magazine and Mother Earth News. And um, so we decided not to go there, it was really too cold. And, we picked Missouri by going through the Scientific American census report for 1970 had come out, and there was a county by county map of the entire United States, showing which counties had lost population and gained population since 1900. And, this south-central area of Missouri had lost population steadily since 1900. Oregon County, Howell County. And so we wanted a place with 120 -- we had a whole list of criteria. We wanted a place that was not too near a nuclear power plant, with no missile silos around it, you know, just a whole set of ecological and environmental and agricultural considerations. So with my friend Barry, we took off across country, and we started looking in Tennessee, and Kentucky, and eventually we got to Missouri, and there was a guy who advertised in the Mother Earth News, and we stayed with him, a guy named Johnny Ray Walt. And uh, we decided that that area was pretty good. Although I had grave doubts about it. I didn't want to live that far away from the coast. But um, Peter promised me that if we lived there 5 years and we didn't like it, I didn't like it, then I would get to choose where we lived the next five years. And so, we got there, and we began writing letters and writing letters to other magazines on communities, just all types of -- and people started showing up. And um, it was never a large commune, and we were not into being charismatic leaders. And there was no, um, what I call "special philosophy." The communes I've lived in have been small ones, because none of them have had a special philosophy, there's no guru. There's no special use of language -- there's none of those things that make for large communities. So, um, the first people who moved in were Johnny Ray Walt and his girlfriend Lelane, whom he'd met through um, the Mother Earth News. He'd advertised he wanted a mate, and she wanted to be mated. She was from Kansas. Have you interviewed her?

**Q:** Who?

**A:** Lelane Lorenzo?

**Q:** Oh, Lelane. She's on my list. I actually know her brother quite well. Jule, yeah, you know Jule?

**A:** Yeah sure. Well, Lelane can tell you this better than I can, but her dad believed that there would be a nuclear war in 1974, and he wanted her to be mated and have produced a child before mutations that

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would be caused by the war. And he drove her to Missouri, and more or less said, "I'll take you around to a couple of these places, but you better pick one quickly before we get to Kansas!" And she ended up with Johnny Ray Walton [?], who was from Kirkwood [?], California, which is in Southern California, and he was from a dustbowl Ozark refugee family, then gone to California. He'd gone back to look at the Ozarks, and he decided to stay. And um, they -- we married them in a broomstick jumping ceremony, and they moved on to the place, because Johnny Ray Walton really didn't want to live out north of Mountain View and be lonely. And he was very cruel to Lelane, I'm sure she'll explain it all, and he left. And so she stayed on with us. At that point, my ex-step-ex-brother-in-law, Tim, was single. My stepsister Holly had left him. And I contacted him and I said, "You know, you're a vegetarian, she's a vegetarian, why don't you come out and say hi to this woman?" And she's very tall. She's um, 5'11". She said the only criteria that she had was that he was a vegetarian guy, and he couldn't be shorter than her. And I told Tim, "Wear your cowboy boots," because he's 5'10 ½". And he did. And he moved in, immediately. And then gradually people acceded [?], people left. It was run in such a way that um, . . . kind of like at Tolstoy, when money was needed, there were envelopes nailed to the wall, tacked to the wall, thumbtacks, and everyone had to sit down and basically, "Dig into your pockets, this is what we need. And we'll divide it up this way." Nobody was forced to give all of their income. Tim, we found out after he left, had had a secret bank account, and left his bank book on his table when he left. And I was horrified, because he had hundreds of dollars in it, and I was very angry. But basically, I gave everything I had, and so did Peter. And my mom, at that point, was giving me \$35 a month. She had received \$35 a month from her mother, through her college years, and she was renting out that house in town, and the big half, the half she now lives in, that money she put aside for Latisha, for college. And the little half, she gave the money to me, the \$35 a month. She got more than that in rent, but that was where the \$35 came from. So there were many times that I lived just on that money, that was it. But um, Peter and I supplemented our income, the whole farm supplemented its income by hauling hay. We couldn't pick fruit because it wasn't a fruit-growing area. Um, we did odd jobs for the local farmers, and -- like cleaning house and carrying out trash, things like that. We pruned apples trees, pruned people's home fruit orchards in the winter. Peter was very good at pruning, and so was Tim. Um, . . . and we made crafts and sold them. We tanned killed animals, hides, and we made quilts, Lelane was a really great seamstress, and I was pretty good at it too. Um, I had this old [unintelligible] sewing machine, which I still have, and we'd design quilts. And in our attempts to be nonsexist, of course, we got the guys involved in sewing too. And we would let people pick their own colors and we would make a custom made quilt to order. So that's how we earned our living, and that was really good. There were other communes when we got there, more after we got there. And, . . . the name, The Garden of Joy Blues, came from an old blues song. And it's called "The Garden of Joy" blues. And, um, I had heard of this commune, it was called The Garden of Eden. I was so ticked off at all these Jethro Claus back to Eden folks anyway, I just thought, "How presumptuous of them!" And so Joy Blues sounded better to me. So, it's a song, you know, it goes, "Here comes a man that you must meet, his name is Willy McCoy. He goes down to meet the boys, down at the Garden of Joy. Oh he's a man who should not lend it, 'cause he's got nothing but money to spend. He can't be beat, he's not a cheat, he's just a man that you ought to meet. Oh hey take me down and have one more time. Oh please, oh I feel like I'm blowing breeze. Oh take me down and have a time, all I need is some more wine. Please take me to the Garden of Joy Blues." And it's just an anomalous thing that the word "blues" is tacked on the end of it. I just



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thought it was really cool. And Peter and I just loved old jug band music and shit like that, so. The Garden of Joy Blues, that was it. And um, . . . and, . . . I don't know. It was more of an aesthetic choice in some ways than a philosophical choice, what was going on at the Garden of Joy Blues. Um, we did a lot. We sang a lot. We played a lot of music -- Lelane was very musical. We would do these crazy things. We had, we had goats, we had sheep, uh, we were into spinning wool and stuff. I'd gotten into raising sheep and spinning wool, actually, at Equitable Farm. And uh, had also gotten into quilt-making when I was at Equitable Farm. But we'd go and do, you know, spin yarn and stuff like that, and sell it to people who wanted to have, you know, [unintelligible] . . . kind of novelty at the time. I'd design little labels for them, the name of the sheep that it came from. I was into vegetable dying and stuff. So we were really trying to do a very craft-oriented way of running the land. Um, Lelane kept up with that too afterwards. She had a knitting business for awhile. It's just something that we were all into. We were really good with our hands and our minds. There was a woman named Nancy Spader who lived there for awhile who made puppets. And um, and her husband, Nick Spader, who was a fine cabinet maker, they both of them still live in Springfield, Missouri, they have two kids. There was a guy named Arol [?] Ross and his wife, Vicky, over there briefly. Um, actually his name was Olbert [?] when he arrived, later he became Arol. They ended up moving to another commune called Seven Springs, which was more of a corporate housing than a commune. Um, and so did the Spaders, they moved to Seven Springs. Um, . . . it was around that time that I again saw this whole thing of class and wealth, because the people that had enough money didn't need to stay at the Garden of Joy Blues. They could buy a share of Seven Springs. Whereas people who had no money couldn't buy a share of anything, and lived at the Garden of Joy Blues. There was a guy named Stan Huntleman [?], who's father was a sheet metal worker, and he was a sheet metal worker, and he wanted to join the Peace Corp, and he lived with us until his Peace Corp papers came through. And uh, --

**Q:** Could you just show up?

**A:** Yeah. Well, write ahead, you know. Yeah, basically it was open. My feeling, I guess I don't want to sound like I was um, queen bee, but I was kind of the philosophical arbiter there, with Peter. And um, I wanted it to be more like Tolstoy than Equitable had been like. I wanted it to be open to . . . to everybody. Um, but I was, I knew that if a guy came out with a 3016, I'd be willing to kick him out, I knew about that. We experimented a lot with politics. The new left and the old left. Actually, at Equitable Farm, there was a lot of that political thought too. I still put my eggs in my egg cartons when I collect eggs from chickens. With the new ones on the left. So if you ever want new eggs it's on the left. When you open the feed bag, that's one of those sewn shut feed bag, there's two sides to it, there's the side that's got straight stitches, and the side with the little curled stitches. And in order to open it from one end but you can't open it from the other. It's the straight left and the kinky right. Um, and this was in reference to the right being so . . . righteous, but they were actually having kinky, perverted sex practices, whereas the left were all true-blue, straight people. And I don't mean straight versus gay, 'cause that terminology did not exist then. At least not to my knowledge. Um, so yeah, the new left, we always put the eggs in on the new left, and we would experiment with these different, um, we had work wheels, the same kind of work wheels that we had at Equitable Farm, and in fact, I got, I mean, my work wheel stuff was so elaborate, I was like, work-wheel city. I just, and Lelane kind of got into them, she made a few too. You know, you could make a zillion -- every time a new group of people showed up,

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you'd just make a new work wheel, you just sit there, it's like a little craft project. And I loved it. And uh, we had a lot of kids, and uh, at various times, different people taught them different things. Nancy, who at that time was sometimes being known as "Nancy Puppet-Lady," uh, put on puppet shows and taught the kids how to do things like that. Um, I was really into teaching kids to read. And it turned out I was pretty gifted at it, and it's a shame, I never had to make a career of it, because it really was something I was better at than most other people there were. Um, I wrote little books, rather than, I mean I wrote books for the kids and drew the pictures as I went, so that the connection between the idea and the word and the letters were there. I still have some of that stuff, a book I made called um, Ice is Nice. "Mice eat ice," and then I would always through in a ringer, "Peter eats rice." They wanted to know the word Peter, because of course they knew Peter, it was a new word, keep them going like that. Um, and I still have some of that stuff in a box somewhere. And uh, I taught Althea to read basically by the age of three. So that was pretty good. She's a real bright kid. And um ... um, ... anyway. What can I say? Peter and I broke up over uh, personal problems. Basically, he cheated on me, and I found out, and while I was still mad at him over that and trying to figure out what to do next -- we were being monogamous on his direction, he was the one who said, "I want to be monogamous with you." And I said, "Okay." This was in Berkeley still. So I thought we'd been monogamous the whole time, turned out we had not. Um, he had not. And um, I was still mad at him, when I found out that he'd been screwing around with these other women, and then -- who were passers by through the commune -- and then he went off with Lelane. And. . . I can't say I forgive them, either of them. She, I was her best friend, she was like my younger sister, she should never have done it. And it just lead to so much anger and hostility, and there was a big physical fight, um, I went after Peter with a knife, screaming, "I never got to fuck with Barry Carol, and now it's too late!" because Barry was married. And Peter was like, "Well, sure you did!" and I was like, "No I didn't! I was --" it turned out Peter thought I was cheating on him too. He thought we were just going to pretend to be monogamous and lie about it, and I was like, "No, that's not what I was doing." Um, . . . he won't like hearing this being in an archive, but it's all true. And uh, and then Tim showed up, Lelane in tow, like, "This slut, God I'm going to leave her," he was dramatizing all to hell and gone, and then he was like, "How about you and I fuck on the floor and make them watch and then it'll be even," and I'm like, "No, I don't want to fuck with you, Tim." Anyway, and there was another couple living there at the time, the Buffams [?], Larry and Laura Buffam, and they were horrified by this. They were on the verge, in fact, had already dug a cistern for their house, and were lining it with concrete, and they were like, they moved right out! I mean, they were like, "Whoa, we're not living around this shit!" Um, I moved out, took Althea with me, moved back in, and I said, "I can't live around Lelane, I just can't do it, I'm just so angry." Tim was like, "Well, you're anarchist, what are you do? Call the sheriff?" And I said, "I don't care what the fuck I have to do. If I have kill you or call the sheriff, you're getting out. I own the property, get the fuck out!" And that was really the end of the Garden of Joy Blues as a commune. I flipped out, and I was, felt so wronged, that I ended up living in what had been Johnny Ray Walton's cabin, which had become Lelane's cabin, then had been Tim and Lelane's cabin. I ended up living in that cabin by myself. And Peter moved his new girlfriend, Sue Ferguson, in. Everybody else [unintelligible].

**Q:** Oh, so Peter didn't go off with Lelane?

**A:** It was a one-night stand.

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**Q:** Oh, I see, okay.

**A:** They were on the magic work wheel to milk the goats that night, and he didn't come back. You don't know several details, but it is pretty sordid, it is bad.

**Q:** I thought that they went off together.

**A:** No, the screwed right in front of Tim's cabin, Tim and Lelane's cabin. That's why Tim came out the next morning dragging her by the hair, screaming and hitting her. We're talking major psycho-drama here. And everybody left. It's like, nobody's going to live under conditions like that. Peter -- and finally I had to leave too because Sue Ferguson, then it degenerated, okay. Then this guy Mark Purkell also was there, and he's a computer guy in Springfield. We went then through sort of the false calm after the storm. After Tim and Lelane left, I calmed down. And um, . . . but I didn't consider myself being with Peter. And I had another lover, a guy named David Hanke, who lived on another commune called Edge City. David Hanke and I were lovers. This was before he was fat. And he was a slender guy. And he and I -- but bald -- and he and I had a very powerful love affair, based around Alice Bunker Stock and the tantric sex. In fact, we read an article on Alice Bunker Stock, and for New Age journal, together. And, we commuted between our two communes, because he had a daughter at Edge City, and I had a daughter at the Garden of Joy Blues. And for a while, he worked on the railroad, as a gandy [?] dancer, and I tried to, I'd go up and live with him, I'd live in a motel, and I took his daughter and my daughter up there with me, we tried that out for a while. He was a very Midwestern sort of guy, and he didn't understand that children had equal rights to adults, and he wanted to buy the children margarine while the adults could have butter, and we had huge fights over things like that. He was always withholding food from the children. And, I should have seen the fatness coming. And Althea, who was a very outspoken little girl by that point, four years old, was like, "This is unfair! Children should be able to have butter just like adults! We have even more highly developed taste buds!" Which is true. And she learned that stuff from me, and it was true. And like, he was like, "Well, but you guys don't appreciate it." And she was like, "Yes we do, we appreciate it a great deal!" And um, so . . . anyway. I wasn't getting along at Garden of Joy Blues, I couldn't move into Edge City, because I couldn't leave Althea, Peter wouldn't give her up. I couldn't um, we used to talk sometimes, we'd get together, we'd live together when our kids were 18. That was going to be a long time from them, you know! It became very tempestuous between us. Also, he did cocaine and things like that at parties, and uh, and MDMA, you know, the precursor to ecstasy, and things like that. And I didn't like that kind of drug use. And um, we had fights over that. Um, he slept around, I slept around. I finally did have an affair with Barry Carol, after ten years, with his wife's approval, which was sort of interesting. But what happened sociopolitically at Garden of Joy Blues was a new phase was entered. And instead of all this fun stuff where we would do this anti-sexism, like have the Friendly Helpful Neighbor's Club, where everyone had to be a woman, in imitation of this Kansas club that Lelane's mother belonged to. And all the women, including the men, who were women, all had to be hostesses, and we had to give each other hostess gifts, and have the prayer, and we'd have the hymn, you know, we would do these -- see for me again, it was always this Society for Creative Anachronism kind -- by the way, Peter and I had been in the Society for Creative Anachronism. And it was this kind of, SCA, like, "Let's do the Midwest as if it were an SCA event!" Um, "Let's be Middle America from 1930, from the Great Depression," you know, as if it was an SCA event. So we had the Friendly Helpful Neighbors Club, and we also had, um, Wolf Man Jack

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Day, because Tim and I had grown up in California listening to Wolf Man Jack, out of XERB, "Over Los Aaanngesles!" But we would do this thing where all day long you had to, you could talk unless you talked like Wolf Man Jack. So that's what it was like before the big psycho-drama. Afterwards, we were sitting around having Maoist mutual criticism sessions, and discussing our failings, and Sue Ferguson, I mean, she's still around, she's a human being, God knows she's changed too, but I cannot forget some of those meetings, where people would be just torn apart, and they were supposed to confess. And when I say Maoist, I mean, seriously, we were subscribing to China Reconstructs magazine. And um, which had been my idea of fun. See I always flirted with the forbidden areas of leftism, and at that time, to get China Reconstructs magazine, and have it come through the Birchtree post office, was a little on the wacky side. And I loved that kind of flirting around with uh, assholes who would be monitoring this. And um, and of course, they didn't know what to make of us at all. But, and we would read aloud, and the cultural revolution was going, and we thought it was the most hysterical thing, you know. We didn't know how many people were being killed, I mean, nobody knew at that time in America. We were reading China Reconstructs, and it was all about "We must never forget the long march! We must put an end to capitalist roadism!" And you read this thing just laughing your ass off. Well, suddenly it turned ugly, and we actually had the cultural revolution at the Garden of Joy Blues. And I still have also, in my box of things, a note that I wrote, unless I've tossed it, that I -- I got up, I wrote the note on a piece of scrap printer's paper, it was a long narrow piece of index tag. And I left the note in my place in the circle. And the only thing I remember of it is, "I'm not going to partake of your therapy session." And it was signed, as if it was a Dear Abby letter, it was signed "Disgruntled in the Ozarks." That was it. I'd had it. And um, I was just really angry, really angry at what had happened to the place, and I was still very angry at Peter for personal reasons. I mean, we'd been together almost ten years. And that was it. And um, he moved Sue and her school bus and her two kids in. Then it was obvious I would never get him back. So, David Hanke said, "Okay, I'm willing to leave Edge City if you'll leave the Garden of Joy Blues." And I said, "Okay, I'm taking Althea with me." Peter flipped, "You can't take my child!" I said, "Yeah, I'm taking your child. I'm going." So I moved, I thought, with David Hanke, to Mountain Grove, Missouri, actually closer to Caboule [?], much closer to Caboule, but the school district and the post office was uh -- actually no, the school district was Caboule, the post office was Mountain Grove. And David Hanke . . . another guy who lived on the commune part of the time, named Rick Bruchetto [?], he was kind of a drop-in. He had a job for a saw sharpening place for sawmills, and he would come and stay at the Garden of Joy Blues, and then leave, drive the saws around, he lived in St. Louis. He had a pick up truck, and he helped me take a load of my stuff out. And I got there and David Hanke showed up and said he'd changed his mind. And . . . I burned all my bridges! And I was a very prideful person, and I would not go back to take part in Maoist self-criticism anymore, I couldn't do it. And . . . um, I was tired of being told that I was possessive of my daughter, and that I thought my daughter was smarter than other people's daughters -- fucking-A my daughter was smarter than the two Ferguson's fucking kids, I'm sorry, she fucking was. And that was that. And David Hanke abandoned me. And uh, I ended up living in this place called Little Creek, which was where we were renting this house -- it was free, it was no rent actually, the guy was an old farmer, not old, middle age farmer, who let me live there for no money, just to keep the cows from falling into the floorboards [tape ends] . . . no money. Peter refused to pay child support, he said he was an anarchist. And uh, I had to go on welfare, and the only person who held me together was my friend Barry Carol, who would drive up from Austin Texas. He bought used furniture for me, and

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brought it up. He brought paint, and painted the house. He bought plastic, because I didn't have enough money to reroof it, but he bought plastic to keep the water from coming in. And um, . . . he was my friend. And Peter kept on coming around saying, "Please come back, come back." But by then the commune was gone. And um, . . . Sue Ferguson and he broke up, and he went off to Trinidad, never sent any child support money. Um, . . . and uh, eventually, he got together with Paula Johnson, and I got together with Paula's brother, Dennis, sort of on a part time basis. And then I met Dean, and Dean didn't like communes at all, and I never lived on a commune again. Dean was a total straight neck from New York City, and had this business making comic books. We lived together for 12 years, and divorced, two and a half, three years ago. So that's it, that's my commune life.

**Q:** Well, have you drawn any sort of conclusions about communal living? I mean, do you think now that it can't work, or --?

**A:** Oh no. I think it works if people are extremely poor. I was always poor. I always was one of the poorest people. I didn't realize, when Nick Spader's father died, his father had been a lawyer, and all of a sudden Nick Spader had, you know, multiple thousands, tens of thousands, 120 thousand, I have no sense -- vast amounts of money! When my grandmother died I got \$6,000, and the Garden of Joy Blues cost \$6,800. And, um, . . . and Peter cashed in some savings bonds that had been bought for him when he was a child. Um, we were always poor. And, I didn't understand what, you know, Arol Ross, was married to Vicky, and these two kids, Michael and Rainbow. Um, his mother was like in the Danish Parliament. Um, he didn't ever have to work in his life. He had a, these round the world trips. Sure, those people don't need to be living in a commune. The people who need it are often the most economically disadvantaged. And, will put themselves into it, or those who have made a voluntary choice to be economically disadvantaged. But sometimes when the chips are down, they bail. But not always. Um, but . . . the things I didn't like about it, I didn't -- I like pretty stuff, and this will not go on the tape, but I should describe it. I collect popular culture, mass produced items made between WWI and WWII primarily. If you look around to see Roseville pottery, labels, uh, fruit crate art, lots of books. In the other room there's Fiesta pottery, McCoy pottery, pretty things, most of them having the color range of yellow through . . . yellow green on the one side, and then yellow, orange, orange[sic], and turquoise blue, and navy blue. This is sort of the color scheme you'll see, almost everything I've got is in those colors. There's a few warm pinks, and there's a few maroon, to offset some of those other colors. But, it's a certain stuff, I've always collected stuff in this color range, I've collected labels since I was 12 years old. Living at Tolstoy, I had a room that I shared with Tom, and we wallpapered it with gift wrapping paper. This was before any reproduction Victorian, uh, like Bradbury and Bradbury wallpaper came out. But somebody had made a reproduction of Victorian wallpaper on giftwrapping paper. I think it was the Metropolitan Museum of Art. And I blew every cent I had on this stuff, and we glued it to the ceiling and made this sort of hippie -- it was navy blue with gold and yellow. It was very authentic, beautiful Victorian pattern. That was it, that was our bit of stuff. Everything else was communal. At Equitable Farm, we all had little homes, so I began to accumulate this little stash of things that were mine. At the Garden of Joy Blues, all that got wiped out again. At that time, I was collecting only pottery that had cobalt blue in it somewhere. And people would just break them. "Oh, I broke that one." They wouldn't say, they'd say, "Oh, I've got some plastic plates out in the car," and it was like, "No, I want, I want something pretty." There's something -- I ended up being a graphic designer, there's

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a reason for this, right? I was always interested in aesthetics. And if I lived communally now, I really would want to keep my things. Uh, it's not a sense of possessiveness, but a sense of "I don't want to visually subject myself to jarring, jangling, ugliness." Now right now, looking at my house, you see this pile of boxes over there, and that's pretty jarring, jangling ugliness to me. But that's part of Kay moving in. Um, most of this time, this house looks dirty, because I don't clean, I have very bad eye sight, and I don't dust, and I don't clean, and I don't get rid of cobwebs. But if you dusted everything, it would be a little museum. That's you know, and it's a little museum, because I like little museums. That's what I like to live like. And um, I don't think I could live in a big communal place, unless at least I had a room that I could decorate out as my museum, my collections. Um, and again I say "my" not because of like, "I must own it," but because I must be surrounded with it, visually. Because my life is not happy if I don't have the right colors around me. And uh, that's why -- I live on two acres here. It's in a town, because I'm too nearsighted to get a driver's license, so I have to live in a town so I can walk to the post office, and doctor and bank or whatever I need. But I need to have it so that everywhere I look is green. Because I can't live where I would see other houses, I just can't. Um, I would love to be, you know, with a partner again and have 80 acres again. And I wouldn't mind if it was a commune, if other people lived on it. But I would want to be able to have my own things, my own pretty things, around me. So, why do I think communes don't work? Um, economics. For me, it always was economics, followed by sexual turmoil. Not just at the Garden of Joy Blues. Tolstoy Farm didn't have a lot of sexual turmoil. There was a lot of sleeping around and non-monogamy, but no big fights over it, except for that big fight with this guy Lee, he thought that Carly was flirting with his girlfriend, so there you go. It wasn't really happening, he was crazy, but that's what he thought. So, sexual schisms, look at Dragon Wagon -- there was a perfectly functional commune, when the men come home, and the women have kicked them out. Well, they continued then as a lesbian commune, but still, that was not fun for the guys. They were not happy with that. Edge City, where David Hanke lived, same thing: marriages broke up, everything fell apart. Some people were wealthier than others. Um, . . . it's money, it's love and money, is what I see are the pressures that tend to separate things. And especially at a certain age, when you get to the point where a lot of your age cohorts are having the inheritance come in, those people leave the commune. They don't put there -- because that's their one shot at independence, that \$100,000 inheritance, you know? \$50,000, \$500,000, whatever that is, that's their grub stake, they're going to get out of the commune. And I've seen it happen, not just where I lived, but at other places too. And the people who will never have that grub state, um, . . . they don't do that. They don't leave for that reason, there may be other reasons.

**Q:** It seems like inheritance has either built communes or destroyed them.

**A:** Well, now there you're right, it has built some communes. And um, . . . and that's a good point. Equitable Farm was built on an inheritance. Um, and mother died, and her Uncle Bruno had died, and various, and she various she went from being a very poor bohemian, from being very broke, she all of a sudden was a well-to-do middle class woman. Never rich like she had been as a child, but, yeah. So they bought Equitable Farm.

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**Q:** And that was the money that went into Garden of Joy Blues, too, wasn't it?

**A:** That was the same inheritance, yes, although it took longer for me to get my whole \$6,000. She got many, many thousands. I mean, what I got was a little savings account that had been started when I was a child, that nothing had been added to. Um, what she got was half of my grandmother's money.

**Q:** So did you guys eventually sell the land?

**A:** Yes, um, . . . Peter continued to live at the Garden of Joy Blues, and I was enough of an anarchist, although I was furious, because I was now homeless, right? And I was on welfare, and he had the land. Um, and . . . Paula and her three children from her first marriage moved in with him. And um, . . . they burned the house down, accidentally, the children. Aaron, her son Aaron was playing with matches upstairs in the loft, and he set it on fire and it burned the place down. Killed our gray cat, and um, destroyed almost everything -- see I had only moved out that one pick-up truck load. It burned down relatively soon after I left. I still, all my stuff was in storage in the loft. Um, the books, my books and everything. Peter and I had agreed that we would divide this up when I got a bigger house, where it didn't rain into the house, I could have my books back, you know. So, we were being civilized about it. So all my stuff was lost there too. Um, so then all that was left was this big hole in the ground where the cistern had been -- actually two holes in the ground, one where the cistern for Larry and Laura had been, and one for the cistern for the big house, which was never finished. And the barn -- we had designed this very cute little octagonal barn. I was always into architecture shit, I designed this really crazy great little barn that had little built-in, oh, everything was in these wedge shaped things with this central core where the feed was stored, so that you could only -- and one of the wedges was open, so you could drive in, and put the hay and grain in the center of the thing. And then you could open any door, and you were equidistant from all the places to take the feed to the sheep the goat, the rabbits, the chickens, each one had their own wedge. It was a wonderful design, it was great, and I'm very proud if it.

**Q:** Is that sort of like a Shaker round-barn but it's --

**A:** Yeah it was based on --actually, what it was based on was an, here, in Santa Rosa, there's a place called Fountain Grove. Thomas Lake Harris.

**Q:** Yeah, and there's the barn there!

**A:** The round barn. Yes. That still exists.

**Q:** That's what you based it on? Oh, that's so cool!

**A:** Oh yeah, see, I was also real interested in Thomas Lake Harris, because Thomas Lake Harris was also a, uh, had some form of -- and I'm not sure, I'm still trying to research this -- whether he practiced caretza [?], Alice Bunker Stockholm's caretza, or whether he simply mentioned it in conversation to people. Um, there's some controversy about that. A woman named Mary K. Greer [?] wrote a book called The Women of the Golden Dawn, about the occult movement, the Golden Dawn, around the turn of the century. She believed that Harris had invented the term "caretza." That's not true. Um, in her book -- I've been corresponding with her by e-mail -- she's now saying that she may be wrong, and that, um, in going back to some of her sources, it may be that Harris only mentioned caretza. But he

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would've been in communication with people like Stockholm, Tolstoy, and that whole crew of idealist from that time period. Anyway, yeah, so the round barn, when Peter and I lived in Forestville, the round barn and Thomas Lake Harris' Fountain Grove were real important stuff for us to study. There were some books that were put out on the '60's on utopian communities. I'm sure you know the stuff I'm talking about. And Harris was written --

**Q:** Well there's one with Fountain Grove on the front of it.

**A:** Yeah, so that's where I got the idea for it. And his round barn is 12 sided, I believe. It's not really round. You can't make it round. It's too much work.

**Q:** Well I went to this barn in, at a Shaker community, it was New Hampshire or Massachusetts or someplace that seemed pretty round.

**A:** I've seen some that are 20-sided, but to make it really round, you've got to cut the joists on the curve, and who's going to do that? You could, sure. It's not impossible to make a round barn, it's just like an extreme waste of time. But 20-sided is pretty good.

**Q:** Yeah but the concept, I mean, even getting it somewhat round though, is certainly, it's efficient.

**A:** Yeah, it's much more efficient. And the 8-sided one, see, then what you do is, some of the wedges, like the goats and sheep, had two wedges. You don't give them just one wedge, rabbits the same amount of space as goats. But when you have the wall between them, you can separate the kids from the mother goats. We were into, um, trying to raise our animals as naturally as possible, so rather than take the kids away and uh, . . . bottle feed them on formula, we would, um, keep the kids . . . with the mothers all day while they were out on the pasture, so that they would learn the socialization of being with other goats in the proper way. But at night we would close the kids away so they couldn't nurse all night, so we got half the milk. We got the morning's milk. And after a few days of screaming, everyone, they got used to. It was like, they realized they were not going to be able to nurse at night, and they'd scream for awhile and go to sleep. But that way you need to have twice as many goats, um, but on the other hand, you're less oppressive to the goats, you're raising them in a more natural manner. And we did the same thing with the rabbits. We let the rabbits stay with their babies longer and try to, we had read Watership Down, and although we had rabbit cages, we didn't have a big rabbit run. Um, they had an indoor and an outdoor -- each cage had an indoor and an outdoor section. And rabbits are very tidy, and they will crap outdoors, so that the run outdoors had a wire floor outdoors where there was a gathering place, and all the crap was out there. They never crapped inside, they always crapped outside. And the nest boxes were inside so the babies were kept warm and stuff, and um, in the winter -- that worked really well in California. In fact, in Country Women[?], there's a book on that, Country Women magazine gave rights to a book called Country Women. And my rabbit hutch design is in there. But in the Ozarks we had to make it a little, we had to close it off in the winter, because it was a little cold. You know you close the outside with a door. Anyway, yeah, so I was always into designing and architecture. I love it. When I designed a hexagonal [?] house, which I'd about half finished, that was right before I left the Garden of Joy Blues. It was a stone floor, king pin design . Um, stone floor and stone walls up to the bottom of the window. And then the whole thing was logs. Real clutter king pin design. It was very small, very small cabin. Only big enough for me and David Hanke. Because both of



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us were under 5'6", and uh, anybody over -- well a 6 foot tall person couldn't have stood up in it. Um, but I never finished that one. I left instead. Although I got as far as planting crocuses around it, and a whole path from the main house of the Garden of Joy Blues down to it. But I got out, couldn't take it.

**Q:** I don't want to keep you any longer, but I do have one more questions. And that's that, I'm curious if, you know, you were so into 19th century utopian communities and you studied them, and had deliberately taken some things from there, applied them. Were you unique in that?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** Okay.

**A:** Not "unique." Peter -- as soon as I explained it all to Peter, like, Peter's a sharp study, took 30 seconds, it's like, "This has been done before, pre-Civil War," he's like, "Where are the books?" And so he and I immediately got on the same wavelength. Lola and Bill, my mother and step-father, I have to credit them, especially Bill, with having researched -- they had a bookstore. Researched all this. But they researched it because I was already at Tolstoy Farm. Um, yeah, that's what I was trying to say, our friends, if you had interviewed the other people who lived in the Ozarks, the other communes, they'll say, "Peter and Cat were crazy! They were nuts!" But, . . . alright, it's going to sound like bragging -- we were better educated, and we were more intelligent than a lot of people who were involved in communes.

**Q:** They never said you were nuts. I mean, I interviewed a lot of them.

**A:** Well did they say we were extremists?

**Q:** No, they said that you were intelligent and read a lot, and talked a lot about what you read, you were intellectuals. That's what they said.

**A:** Okay. At the time, a lot of people, I mean, they may have been being polite, but we were considered real extremists.

**Q:** Well they said you guys were kind of extreme about like, power tools, or something, that you didn't even chainsaws.

**A:** Of course not! Of course not, no. Oh, I figured maybe Peter already told you all that. No, no -- we had, we were into treadle [?] technology, we were into cast-iron technology, pre-TVA. We figured, this farmland we were living on, at Garden of Joy Blues, it didn't have any electricity. We didn't like turn off the electricity, it just never had it. And, um, there were reasons to be in the Ozarks. We just sort of picked up where the last people, the Rosenblooms, had left off. And, um, yeah, Peter had a beautiful, um, drill press, a beautiful cast-iron champion drill press, um, he had um, a treadle leather sewing machine. My treadle sewing machine is Singer, 1909. I bought that when I lived at Tolstoy, which had no electricity either, and I've been carrying that treadle sewing machine around since 1966. And I still use a treadle sewing machine, why do you need electricity, it's stupid, like electric can-openers, I mean, treadle is so simple! Um, we had battery powered tape recorders, and when Mark Purkel moved down, he was an electronics wiz, he worked out this whole system with the truck batteries. And we'd had limited battery stuff before, but Purkel really got it together for us, Mark really made it happen, and um,

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you couldn't run a record player of a draw switch current, to run that big turntable, but you could run a taper off of it. So we took all of our records and we had them taped. And um, gosh, I mean, I left the records mostly at Equitable Farm, and when I came back, later, my mother informed me that some other people had moved into the house and had simply taken them away with them. It's like, "My records?" They're gone. Um, my mother has a real bad history with my records. She's destroyed my collection of 70's, and my collection of '45, and my collection of LP's, inadvertently twice, and on purpose on the 45's, so, whatever. She always did like classical music then. She gave me that Lead Belly record, but she wasn't prepared for what it would do to me. So we had a lot of music, so we were not like low-tech. I ought to explain one other thing, and this is very personal, again, it sounds very crack potty [?]. In 1965 I moved to Tolstoy, and I took acid for the last time at Tolstoy Farm. Um, in either '65 or '66. You can check it because the album, The Beatles' Revolver had just come out, in '65. I was in the heart house, I was across the table, and there was this wall in the kitchen, it was like over there, the living room was there, and my bedroom and Tom's was over there, and it was in front of it. And I was staring at this wall, and there was nothing on the wall, it was this white wall, and all of a sudden I had this hallucinatory vision of . . . what I now know to be a computer terminal. At the time I thought it was a television set. It was a television set in the wall, and coming out of it was a typewriter keyboard. And next to it was a little slot where paper could come out. Now remember I was a science fiction fan, so this was not like coming out of nowhere. And particular I read a lot of Phillip K. Dick. And Phillip K. Dick had talked about, uh, something in one of his novels, called a homeotape: it was your newspaper that was delivered to you in your home. Okay, and I had also been reading Phil Dick. So he'd had this whole thing with the idea that you would get, what essentially would be a faxed newspaper is what he was talking about, although I don't think faxes existed at that time either. So, what the vision was, was that I would be able to go to this computer -- now, in my vision, because personal computers did not exist, but I knew what mainframes were -- in my vision, this terminal, which I didn't know to call a terminal, I called it a TV set -- the TV set was connected with wires to a mainframe, to an enyac, or brainiac, or Univac kind of machine, which would generally be as far away from me as a telephone exchange would be. So I sort envisioned these giant mainframes with these personal computer terminals. And in my hallucinatory state, I realized that I would be able to type into the keyboard, it would show up on the screen, I would type that I wanted, say for instance, the weather, and it would give me a list of countries, and I would click off, Tasmania, and I would see . . . a weather map of the weather of Tasmania. Now this was before radar weather maps were also [unintelligible], so what I was envisioning also was a radar weather map. Basically, what I was envisioning is exactly what we have right now on the world wide web. Um, and -- but I had no names for it. I had no idea what it was. I just saw it, and it was like very startling, and I told everybody at Tolstoy Farm. I was like, like, "We could all have computers!" And they were -- these people were not so much anti-technological as they simply were non-technological. Peter and I were anti-technological except for one thing -- we were really believed in electronics. And um, . . . I was, very early-on bought a personal computer -- not one of the earliest people. I didn't build one out of a heath kit. But Mark Purkell who lived at the Garden of Joy Blues, built a, a uh, computer out of parts, that was so big, he had to transport it around in his car. And it would calculate the day of the week . . . um, . . . for every date in history. And um, that was when he was in his Lone Wolf commune phase, Lone Wolf commune, population one, that was after he left the Garden of Joy Blues. So I've always been interested in that kind of technology. But I hate internal combustion

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engines. I mean, I hate that stuff! I would want to never have -- I think everyone should bicycle. And if necessary, they should have bicycles that they can bicycles and run their computers off. Because computers draw relatively low [unintelligible]. Um, or, we should have what these dumb terminals that I was envisioning -- only this year, they finally started talking about, Steve Job started talking about dumb terminals, and that was my vision! That was it, that's what it was. Because computing power -- I mean why have your own PC, it makes no sense. One person has a better one than another one -- if everyone had a dumb terminal and went to a power station type situation with a big cray [?] or something in it, it would be very fast . It would be faster than what we've got now for the web. And the web right now can be, if you've got a good ISP, you could get them pretty fast. It's speeding up all the time, with these faster modems. And I'm just seeing it, yeah, we could run everything off of Netscape, you know what I mean? Anyway, don't get me started . But um, we could run everything off of Netscape, that's all. You heard it here first . Um, so, I've always been interested in technology, but always in a kind of weird way, because I didn't, yeah, we didn't have chainsaws. Why would you want to have this horrible, ghastly . . . petrol-chemical device, when you could have a horse? And, and, four hand saws for two people.

**Q:** I think it was Glen Vaughn that I talked to, just said it was hard not having one, that's all.

**A:** Yeah, and wasn't he a strong healthy kid? He smoked cigarettes though, he was out of breath a lot.

**Q:** He still does.

**A:** Yeah, well you see, it was hard for him. You've got to think too, about -- you see, I end up being like a moralizer when I get off on this. Glen was always -- Glen would die of lung cancer. He was out of breath at the age of 18. Well, that's not right, 18 year olds shouldn't , he was a lot younger than me. I wasn't stronger than him. I didn't have more muscle mass. And I didn't have the leverage from long bones, but I sure had more endurance than Glen Vaughn had. I mean, Denise probably has more endurance than he does. Yeah, it was tough. And we didn't use paper diapers. They had just been invented recently. Althea, we boiled all the diapers. And it was tough. Me and Peter had to do that, and Lelane helped. She was like a sister to me. She cooked some diapers too, you know. You spend hours and hours and hours caring for your well-being and livelihood, but you also learned pretty fast, if you wanted to spend fewer hours doing that, you could give up some of the things you thought were essential and have more free time. Did you need to have white clothes for instance? Wouldn't blue clothes be better, they show dirt less. Wouldn't blue cotton clothes be better than white rayon or white silk? I look at those white silk clothes that people wear now, rayon and things, and I have clothes like that too. And I call them princess clothes. Because, either you have to be a princess and have servants to take care of them, or you have to have the petrol-chemical industry, in this case, the dry-cleaning industry, the car to drive you to the dry cleaners. It's, how many calories are you going to use? Like I said, don't get me started on this, because I still feel all of this extremely strongly. And that has something to do with why I wanted to live in communes, because it's more efficient calorically, but still -- I'm still trying to live efficiently calorically. Obviously I have electric lights here. This house came with them. And what are my alternatives? Kerosene. I don't know, that's not that great either . Stinks up the place, it's not that good. Electricity's okay. I don't mind it the way I used to. Um, . . . at Tolstoy we

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made our own candles. We -- this was before the big petrol-chemical crisis, and the Catholic Church burned each candle only once, and they threw it away.

**Q:** Oh, so you'd take their candles?

**A:** We'd go down to the St. Vincent dePaul, which is the Catholic charity, and you could buy their halfburned candles by the pound in bags. And we took them home -- but we were so aesthetic hippies. We didn't just burn those candles -- they were white, and they were Catholic. No, we melted those candles down, and we dipped new candles that we colored with crayons, and made pretty colors. And we sold the dipped candles in pairs. That guy Cory Ell, the nutter who believed that the UFO's were going to come and get him, he had a cyst in his ear, and he believed it was a radio implant from the "gray aliens" or the "Zadernarticulans", or whatever, actually in those days they didn't call them Zadernarticulans, they came from Cyrius or someplace. He believed he was in communication with them. Anyway, he taught me how to make candles. He had learned it at some far-out theosophist commune in Southern California, years before.

**Q:** Yeah, there was a pretty neat Theosophist --

**A:** In Ohio?

**Q:** Yeah, but there was also one in San Diego too. Point Loma.

**A:** Yes, that's right. He had been, I think he was in Ohio. He also had been, he had traveled around. See, there's a connection here between this type of stuff that I was into and Kay brought, when she was moving in, she brought me this little pamphlet she'd found in her stuff -- the Lemurian Society, 1967, she showed up down there. They were somewhere by the grapevine, the pass that was into LA. Um, they were, some nut-cult offshoot, you know, Atlantians, Lemurians, the civilization of Moo, reincarnation, blah blah blah blah -- they've been around since the 'teens or '20's. And they also have a communal situation, or had a communal situation. She at the time was with the Hog Farm, --

**Q:** Kay?

**A:** Yes, and with Wavy Gravy -- she's wandering around in a school bus, and they run upon the Lemurians, right? The Lemurians look real successful to them. They had a little industry, cast lucite, actually, architectural switch-plates and door knobs and things with precious malacite and crusted things inside, you know, and coral, and it sounds very '50's, if you ask me. Artistic, but wacky, lucite doorknobs with pieces of abalone shell. But they were doing stuff, whereas Kay was, they were all scrounging on food stamps, you know. I mean, the hippies that went into the communal world actually did not find themselves having the blaze an entirely new path. There were all of these weird forerunners -- the religious ones, the Christians. After all, there was all this Seventh Day Adventists stuff. And for people like me who were more intellectual and wanted to read about the history of it and devise our own, we had even more to choose from. Peter and I used to, we used to give these lectures to people, and people would show up. And every time someone new would show up -- both of us have a school teacher streak, and we would start in with um, you know, John Humphrey Noise[?], and did the whole bit. Another, an influence was Alice Bunker Stockholm, who never had a commune, she was just

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this sex reformer, but I consider her important for what she brought to some of these occult nutter groups.

**Q:** So she influenced Noise and Oneida?

**A:** No, the other way around. Noise influenced her. She was a gynecologist, she read Noise's book –

**Q:** 'Cause she was later.

**A:** By ten years. And she -- uh, she wrote a rebuttal to Noise. See Noise's system was called "male continence[?]." And she said that that was unfair to the woman. Because if the woman had an orgasm, and the man did not, the woman would be drained of her essential electromagnetic fluid, right? And in a moment's pleasure, she would destroy her spiritual benefit. And the man, looking upon her as a drained vessel, would come to have contempt for her, and she would see the man as the person who stole her spiritual power, and that male continence in the end, would lead to divorce. She was serious, this woman was serious. The only thing that would work would be if both parties were continent, both had orgasm. She said it was okay to have orgasm if you do it two weeks to every month. And that's why she went to India to learn about cultures and civilizations in which women had power. What she found was in Southern India, Tantra, the women were considered simply the shatki, or "the power" of the man, but it was again, the male's control of his orgasm was what was at stake, and his raising his kundolini [?] of his spine, and all of that, was the object of the exercise. The woman was simply the manifestation of the Goddess, and it was either very sexist anti -women "Well they couldn't be trained anyway," or, "Oh they're so holy and sacred anyway, we don't need to train them." So that's why she wrote Caretza. She was, she started off, in her book Tacology, which is a book on midwifery, she mentions Noise. But by the time she wrote her first little pamphlet, "The Wedding Night," off with Noise. By the time she wrote Caretza, she was anti-Noise. And she had followers, and he followers were a guy named A. E. Newton, who also wrote the monographs, biographies on poets and philosophers. He wrote a book on Emerson, he wrote a book on Wordsworth, just different little books like that. But he wrote a book called The Better Way, based on, meaning "better than male continence" based on her stuff. And she had another disciple named William Lloyd who wrote a book called Magnetation. And it was a combination of magnetism and meditation. And uh, and they . . . influence a whole -- we're going up to WWI. World War I, the whole thing breaks down, all gone. But those people, if you look at the theocity of culto [?], churchward, Moo, Atlantian people, those people take from that little string, although I would say that Stockholm herself is pretty -- I mean, she was a follower, disciple of Tolstoy. She was a little on the off side. I've got to say one more thing about her, because she has nothing about communes, but she's fascinating to me. She believed that prostitution was an evil that was forced on women and men, and that um, women who's husbands had died were often forced into prostitution, um, and that women who had children illegitimately, because there was no contraception, who were prostitutes were in a particularly bad situation, because now they had to stay prostitutes, because they had a child to raise. So she wanted to help women. There was no welfare system. She wrote the book Tacology, which was a book on midwifery, and she printed it up herself, at her office in the south street in Chicago, and she gave the book at cost to women who wanted to get off the streets, to sell. And they sold the book, I think it was for a dollar and a half. And bound in the back of the book was a coupon that entitled you to a free gynecological exam if you were in Chicago, or one question answered by mail if

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you were elsewhere, by her. So, I have one of those with the coupon still in it. I used to have a copy without the coupon, someone had used the coupon, I was like, "What was this coupon?" I finally found one with a coupon, I was amazed. Just amazed, yeah. So she put her money where her mouth is. She must have done hundreds, thousands of these exams for free, to help these prostitutes. Anyway, a real interesting pioneer. And she said, "I am a temperance woman, and much as I think that evil is done by drink, I think far worse evil has been done by the corset." Anyway, but so, that whole . . . okay. My friend Barry Carol and I were into the um, not theosophy, because theosophy was too common, they had that printing press at Point Loma, I mean they printed and printed and printed, and then they had another printing press in India. And they just were like print nuts. But my friend Barry and I have collected obscure occult literature from the pre-WWII era. And um, and Peter and I were collecting stuff on utopian socialism. Dean, my ex-husband, was interested in, um, . . . between WWI and WWII, the Bolis [?] army, the Risgald [?] administration and the New Deal, that was his hobby. And when you put them all together though, like I have, they all entwine. There's this, there's people like the guy who had the Garden of Eden in Lucas, Kansas, have you heard of that? He's a socialist, he's a Mason, a Free Mason, which at that time means a believer in democracy. He's got this strange kind of anti-religious free masonry, look at the symbolism of all the stuff that he's got there. And he's got this whole thing about the ballot, the crucifixion of Christ with the banker, the lawyer, the doctor and the priest, crucifying Christ, but Christ is called "labor." Um that world, is like the crossroads world, right there, the Garden of Eden. And it's called the Garden of Eden. It's like, I suppose, had I lived then, I would've been one of those people, I would've been someone like, what's his name, S.P. Dinsmore, with the Garden of Eden, I would've been much like him. Coming along later, I had my choices. As it is now, I don't consider that I'm done with communal life or with making some sort of philosophical statement. What it's going to be, what form it's going to take now is going to be very different than I thought when I was with Dean. We published a lot of books on politics. We were a comic book company, but we published the only comic book about the CIA's involvement in the Iran-Contra scandal, called "Brought to Lie." Um, we published trading cards, like baseball cards, the Iran-Contra scandal trading cards, the JFK Assassination trading cards. So, Dean allowed me, who was much more political than him, to use popular culture that his company was generating, to express my political views, and I had a great time. We did the Savings and Loan Scandal trading cards, just trade bankers back and forth. We did AIDS awareness trading cards, and uh, so . . . that was kind of one way of getting, you know, just trying to get in there and change a few minds, get a few people thinking. I don't know. Like I said, I myself am in a really odd position in my life, that having come to an end, and here I am. And I'm 49 years old, and I still have quite a bit of energy, and I'm ending up writing garden books for tailor publishing. California Garden Book of Lists, and editing comic books, which is a holdover from my comic book sojourn. And um, when I go to places like Harven Hotsprings, these "healing communities," and these angel, guardian, blah-blah, nutcase, New Age people, that are more like the Lemurian society, I can't get into them. They're braindead. They're all . . . touchy-feely, goey, goshy, the Virgin Mary is coming, the aliens from outer space are coming, blue-green algae, you know? They're fucking nutters! And I hate to think that that's what happened to the hippie communes movement, that it's turned into a bunch of nutters, but there's a lot of those guys out there. And um, I worked on a book that never got published, I was ghost writing a book, and it came apart due to corporate politics of the corporation that was hiring me to do it. But I was sent around the world to interview organic and sustainable agricultural [unintelligible] for

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gardeners and farmers. I went to Australia and Japan, and up to Oregon and Northern California. That's as far as we got and then it blew up. Um, and I was very happy to see that there were, to be in Australia and see the Lets program, the workers on organic farming, to see that that's still going on. I almost decided to blow off my whole life and move to Australia to get away from what I see going on here. So I don't know. I don't have any answers for anybody. Uh, life is so arbitrary, the things that happen to you are so arbitrary. Why did Peter and I break up? If Peter and I hadn't broken up, things would be very different. I don't know if he would say that. Um, my goal was to be with Peter and be the Helen and Scott Narring [?] of our generation. Um, you know, too bad it all fell apart over where he had to put his cot. So, my friend Barry Carol wanted to do um, . . . sacred architecture. He wanted to um, to revive some of these forms of buildings of the Mayans and the ancient Cambodians and Thai's were using, and just do some sort of a giant Earth Mystery Theme Park, without the "belief" in it. I was willing to help him with that, but he's never done that, he's running a furniture store in Austin, Texas. Peter's assessing air pollution. Um, David Hankie, you know, he goes around and talks to theological groups, preaching to the choir, and um, . . . Glen is in construction. The list goes on. Lelane is um, working in an academic setting in a care taking position, she's not a teacher, but her husband's a professor, and she's doing world wide web stuff for the University of Kansas. She wouldn't even eat white sugar or white flour. Time's change. She eats meat now, she was a vegetarian. Holly is working for the county of Sacramento. A lot of people have ended up in bureaucratic jobs, because we're all smart. We could all take the civil service exam and pass it. Holly works for the county of Sacramento in their sewage department, but what she does is she's an analyst for where they need hookups, she's a sewage analyst, she doesn't go out and actually hook up sewers. She sends the crews out where they need to be. Um, I'm trying to think of what some of the other people have done. Stan Huntsleman came back from the Peace Corp and went into doing sculpture. I heard about him a couple times since then. There was a guy named Guyon Jordan. He's living in Philadelphia, but I don't know anything more about him. He was at the Garden of Joy Blues briefly. Um, Tim is a total drop out. Last I heard, he was in Costa Rica living with Elaine and Sara. Prior to that he was trying to be a respiratory therapist in Kansas to be near his daughter, but he didn't make it. He's lived a real marginal life and never has fit in. Joe Green, I don't know what he's doing. Kitrin, as I said, has a Ph.D. in palmology and is at UC Davis now working with native grasses, because that's the in-thing. I'm a free lance writer. Russ Nobs is a wholesale jeweler . I don't know what happened to any of the other people in Tolstoy, except for Tom Hall -- Tom Hall became a scientologist, and a travel-agent for scientologists who wanted to go to St. Hill, an English thing. I don't know what he's done since [tape ends] . . . there too. When Peter and I first moved onto that land, the Garden of Joy Blues, um, and Lelane and Johnny Ray moved in very shortly thereafter, within a couple of weeks, Virgil Ezreck showed up in this white pick-up truck with this quarter of a hog in it, and that was like our welcome wagon , our housewarming present or whatever. And he said, "I brought you this hog, Mary Lou, " he didn't even explain who Mary Lou was, we had to leap to the inference that it was his wife, "Mary Lou's got arthritis real bad, and messing around with the cold meat makes her hands hurt." Which was his way of saying, "This isn't charity." And I'm like, "Well that's great, and Peter and I certainly know how to butcher a hog, but we don't have a freezer." And he goes, "You don't have a freezer?" I said, "No, we don't have electricity, there's no electricity down here." And he goes, "Well, alright, I guess I'll have to give you space in one of my freezers." He goes, "Damn hippies. I bet you don't even have any freezer paper." I said, "No, we don't, we don't have nothing! We

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don't even have magic markers to mark them!" And so we all got into this truck and went back to his place, which was about two miles away. And him and Mary Lou and one of their kids, Brian, ended up helping us. We -- and even Lelane, who was a vegetarian, ended up cutting up the meat, and we packed it, and they gave us, eventually, an entire freezer, a chest -- they had a whole bank of chest freezers. They had a big dairy farm. There was a chest freezer, and he would refer to it as the "hippie freezer," and on the meat, he made us write, "hippie meat." And so the packages would say, "hippie leg of lamb." So, um, but he was so nice, he paid the electricity, there was never a question that we were ever going to give him money for the electricity, and we would butcher our own animals and take them down to Virgil's freezer and put them in the freezer, rather than rent a locker in town, which we could've done, I suppose, but he'd given us the hippie freezer. And um, he was the one who hired us to haul hay. And he . . . he and Mary Lou hired us, Mary Lou hired us to clean their house. But then she was so, she didn't know how to have a servant. We cleaned her house, and then she had us for dinner! She made dinner for us, because she didn't know how to, you know, how to say, "Here's your money, go home!" And this was all during the Watergate scandal, and they'd talk with us, the Ezricks, and also there was this other family, Jim and Penny Clipper. And they'd, you know, they were like, "Bet you guys are laughing now!" And I said, "Yeah, I didn't vote for him!" We became more acceptable, because at that point, the Watergate scandal, even the most conservative people saw that there was something wrong with the government, you know? Um, but a lot of these people were FDR democrats, so they were anti-Nixon anyway, although Mary Lou, whose father um, uh, Earl Weaver, had been a democratic national delegate from Missouri, several times, and was part of the Missouri , the state delegation, and , she had voted for Nixon. And Virgil and her father just would not let that be, "There's your president! There's your president! They're going to impeach your president!" But Virgil was particularly interested in us. He would say things like uh, "I'm a heathen Polac!" Now his name was Ezrick, which is a German name, and I think his family had probably come to America in the 19th century, but it might have been what had become part of Poland, I don't really know why he called himself a heathen Polac. He wouldn't go to church, he drank a lot, but he was not an alcoholic, but Jim Clipper, his friend, was. And they were both WWII veterans. And they belonged to the VFW. And um Jim Clipper was much less inhibited. He would say things like, "I bet you hippies run around naked!" And I'd say, "Yeah, we do." And he goes, "Well, can I watch?" I'd say, "No, because you'd tell people about it in town and they'd get upset." "Well some day I'm going to come down here and watch!" And uh, and . . . uh, Jim Clipper had been a logger. And uh, he had been pretty severely wounded in WWII, and he couldn't have kids. He'd worked on a radar thing and had been sterilized by some early radar installation during the war. But um, Penny had kids, but they were grown up, from her first marriage. Her husband had died. In fact I think he had died in WWII, and she married Jim when he came home. And um, she had emphysema. She smoked all the time. And Jim Clipper ended up committing suicide, mainly because he had a lot of pain. But those people lived down the road from us, between the Garden of Joy Blues and where our mailbox was on the highway, Route T. So we had to pass their place every day. And they always would invite us in, um, Tim would drink with them. I wouldn't. I think Peter might have had a beer with them. And Virgil always tried to get us drunk, " You hippies just don't drink enough beer!" And um, he would buy these, they made a little, for awhile they were making what they called pony beers, little tiny beers, and he would buy pony beers for me, because I would say, "I can't drink a whole beer." And he'd say, "Look, I bought you a pony beer." So they were like so nice. And all of the stereotype, like the movie, Easy



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Rider, you know these rednecks who hate hippies and they'll shoot them -- that was completely untrue. I mean those people, they gave us so much! We couldn't have survived down there without them. Also there was another, an old guy, and I don't remember his name, but Peter might. He lived closer to Mountain View. And he was sort of an herbalist, an old codger. He would go down to the livestock auctions and he would buy horses that were no good, or goats that were not milking, just, cheap billie goats, and he would take them out in the middle of the field and shoot them, so his dogs could eat them. And his dogs would like live on this carrion until it ran out, and then he would go out to the livestock auction and buy another one, take it out there and shoot it and let his dogs eat it. And they would live on it for two or three weeks. He was pretty wacko. I wish I could remember his name. But he knew a lot about herbs. He told us all -- and I was real interested in all this folkloristic stuff. But his attitude toward us was very odd. He didn't get us at all. And when we first met him, I was wearing a bandana on my head, and he says, "Um, are you a Mennonite?" And I said, "No, " -- at Tolstoy Farm, right next door to us was a Hutterite Farm, and so I knew what the Mennonites and the Hutterites and the Amish were. And I said, "No, I'm not a Mennonite, and I'm not a Hutterite either." He goes, "Well why are you wearing a head covering?" And I said, "Oh, I'm just, got my hair tied back, it's just a bandana put on my head." And he goes, "Well don't you have to wear a head covering if you're married?" And I said, "Oh, no, no. I could take it right off if I wanted to." And he goes, "Are you from this country?" And I said, "Sure I am!" And he goes, "Where?" And I said, "San Francisco, I was born in San Francisco," and he goes, "No I said are you from this country?" I guess what he meant was, was I from the Ozarks? We hung out with him a bunch. I mean he was a little scary with the shooting of the horses and the dogs. He had lots of dogs, 10 or 15 dogs. But it was neat. I mean, he taught us all about Sassafras, and all of these things that didn't grow in California or New York, so neither Peter nor I knew about them. So I can't think -- so I'll tell you another story too, about the Christian -- see, we were, both Peter and I were ethnically Jewish, and look obviously not like people from the Ozarks. And I'm sure they noticed this. And we were, in Mountain View, there was a Mountain View pioneer days picnic thing. This was right, two or three months after we'd moved there. I remember Lelane had already moved in, and Johnny Ray had moved out. Maybe Tim. Maybe it was six months. So '72, in the summer of '72. It could've been '73. Anyway, we were there at this picnic, and uh, it's got to have been '72 because Althea was a little baby. I was playing with Althea, we were sitting on a blanket. I was sort of having this, "I'm having an experience, much like an experience from a movie about small-town life in the 1930's." It was like really, the first time I had been at a town picnic. We didn't have town picnics in Berkeley. There was water [unintelligible], there was, there were the VFW's were cooking meat, and the women had pies, and you could buy them, and the church had this -- it was like, it was like, I was like, "Wow, it's not just what you read about in books, it's really happening!" It was an SCA event for me. It's like, "Wow." This woman comes over to me, and she introduced herself to me as Violet something or other, and she goes, "Hi, my name is Violet So-and-so," and she goes, "We've noticed that you have moved into town, and we want to know what church you go to?" And I took the easy way out, I said, "I'm Jewish." Which was not true, but true. I said, "I'm Jewish." And she grabbed my hand, she goes, "I have never met one of your peoples! Have you been to the holy land?" And I was like, "No. I've never been to the holy land. We're pretty much people just like you." And she goes, "But when the rapture comes, you'll be spared. We don't get to heaven automatically. We've got to accept Jesus Christ. But you're the chosen people!" I guess she belonged to some very primitive, fundamentalist cult, you

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know? But I was just completely dumbfounded. It was like, and she was so nice! Then she goes away, she comes back with her friends, "Look, there's Jews here, Mabel!"

**Q:** I'm wondering if it could have been someone from Zion's Order. Did you ever hear about Zion's Order?

**A:** No.

**Q:** They're actually some sort of sect of Mormon, but I don't know, I'll have to ask Tim if that's the way they feel about Jews or not.

**A:** Well she gave me, I mean, the rap was, I actually had run into this rap one other time, at the Boonville County Fair here in California, when we were living in Equitable Farm, a very similar thing happened to me and Peter, a guy who looked Jehovah's Witness-like, but he, he was dressed very neatly, out of character, we were there at the livestock auction, you know it was a county fair, and there were these sheep dog trials, which was what we'd gone down for. And he was handing out pamphlets, and I collect every pamphlet, I just want to know what all the nut cases think, I love it. It's my hobby, I don't watch TV. So I took his pamphlet, and I'm like, "Oh, this is cool." And he was talking about how the world was going to end in 1975, or maybe 1985, so this would've been around '69 or so. And I said, "Wow." And he goes, "Yes, have you been saved?" And I said, "Well, no actually, I don't believe in salvation, I'm Jewish." And he said the same thing. He goes, "I don't need to give you a pamphlet, because you're already right with God." And I went, "Oh, that's really good to know." Because when I grew up in school, the little Christian kids would beat me up. "You killed Jesus Christ!" And I, all of a sudden I ran into this vein of Christians who thought I was totally cool with God. But, so that was really interesting, down in the Ozarks. Also, down where we were, there was this group of . . . something Brethren -- Pilgrim Brethren? They wear, the women won't wear a sleeveless shirt, they have to have it down to the elbow. They don't wear makeup I think. It's the same church that Garrison Keeler [?] was raised in, although he claims to have been a Lutheran. And on his show, Pray [unintelligible], he always says he was a Lutheran. Sometimes when he talks about his real childhood, I think it was called the Pilgrim Brethren. Anyway they have a church down there in either Oregon or Shannon [?] County, and they had had a split, and there was another church at what was called County Line, between the Shannon and Oregon counties. They had a county line grocery and gas station. And they were this fundamentalist group. They weren't as friendly to us as the Baptists and the Assembly of God people, but they also were very friendly to us, and very interested in us, because they thought us to be a sign -- everything was a sign -- of the coming catastrophe, apocalypse, whatever you call it. Leland Orenzon [?], who narrowly escapes from being one of those people, Leland's father, he believed that the people who were shot at Kent State were the witnesses mentioned in the book of Daniel, who lay in the street for seven days -- I don't read the book of Daniel. But Leland would spout this whole thing, thereby, counting from Kent State, that's why there was going to be a third war in '74.

**Q:** So was Leland a big Christian then?

**A:** Oh God! Yes! Oh my God, yes! But he thought that Revelations might not have had the right answer, it's Daniel, you've got to read Daniel. He would just spout endlessly about this!

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**Q:** Is he still alive?

**A:** Oh yeah, and a gifted car guy. He would take cars and chop them up and make these little weird custom cars out of Nashes and Volkswagens. Oh, he's a crazy one. Yeah, and his wife Bernice, and um, and he built this fallout shelter -- Lelane didn't tell you about the fallout shelter?

**Q:** I haven't interviewed her yet.

**A:** Oh, okay. She was raised in a fallout shelter in the shape of a fish, so that if God looked down from above, he'd see the shape of a fish and know that Christians lived there. It was like here, let me draw this. It was a house. He built this thing. This guy was talented. It was a house that was shaped like this. And it had windows along here, and a door, and there was a wall here with a door, and this part, the tail, was a fallout shelter. He had hand-dug a well in here, and he had cement, um, oh you know those kind of tornado windows from a school?

**Q:** I just can't believe this!

**A:** Oh this is all true!

**Q:** I know it's true, it's just so outrageous!

**A:** He had two wells, they have such a high water table in Kansas you know. He had two wells -- they lived between Galvin and Kenton [?]. One in the body of the fish and one in the tail of the fish. The whole tail of the fish could be sealed off. He had a year's supply of food. He believed that he would be able to go out while there was fallout on the ground, that he was going to be able to go to the grain silos and live on grain. But, that Lelane had to get pregnant before the nuclear war, or she might have mutated children. And this house that he built was built on the side of the hill, and then covered over, with grass, so you couldn't see it at all, all you saw was this little bank of concrete and these windows. But God could look down and see the shape of a fish, and know that Christians lived inside. Really, Leland is a case, he is a case. And it's interesting to me that Jule and Lelane and April ended up the way they did. I mean, Leland, he got so that he couldn't stand to live in the house anymore, because it had been prideful of him to built it. And so he built this little cabin -- see he was one of those voluntary poverty guys like Ken Meister, the mortification of the flesh. You know, they should've been a Trappist monk. And he lived in this little cabin. At one point he didn't want to grow a garden anymore, because that was prideful, because it was such a good garden. Very much like my stepfather, Bill, who went off and became a Buddhist monk, because he was such a good gardener, and he also thought he was succumbing to the sin of pride. These wacko men with their midlife crises, you know. They want to mortify the flesh. But Leland was an auto didact. He really had never read any book but the Bible, because he believed that the Bible contained all the answers, that's what he'd been told. So, if you just studied the Bible through and through and through and through, you'd get the answers, right? It was all there. And, but then when he started meeting people like Wendel Barry, all of a sudden -- actually I think when he met some of the communairds, and he got to be -- Rick Brucetto became his disciple, Tim became his disciple --

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**Q:** And Wess Jackson too, if you know him.

**A:** Yes, right. And Leland is very charismatic. But he never converted me, because I could tell that he wasn't well-read. He's very intelligent, brilliant, brilliant person, and a real argument for what's wrong with the class society, because this man should've risen like cream to the top of society, and instead he was teaching auto-mechanics and he didn't even have a teaching certificate, but he was just so good at it they let him do it. In Galva Kansas, population 500. I mean, he really is, he's a genius, he's a brilliant genius, but the limitation forced by the public school system that he was forced into, and growing up in the depression, and really having no advantages, and growing up in this fundamentalist, ghastly Christian Midwest, um, . . . he ended up not looking much different than a paranoid schizophrenic. Because nuclear war in '74, and build a house in the shape of a fish -- but the engineering that went into building that house was brilliant. You should see what he's done with these cars and these mopeds. I mean, he's something else, he really is something else. And Leland is also brilliant, but . . . always hid her light under a bushel, why? Because Leland believed that men were the head of the family, and it was this awful -- she followed Johnny Ray Walton when he was cruel to her. He'd beat her up. But she had been married to him, you see, by her father. Her father had given her away, her father said, "Now you're married to Johnny Ray Walton" -- a total stranger! She did it. "Now I'm married to Johnny Ray Walton." And . . . um, she was naive, but it was not hard to break her loose from that, just by saying to her, "This is insanity. Johnny Ray Walton is nuts, and we'll take care of you until you find something better." And so, that was really the beginning of the Garden of Joy Blues as a commune, it's like Leland was, "What am I going to do?" "You're here, we'll take care of you. Stay here." I mean, we had intended to have people come out there, but she was the first one to start. That's why it hurt me so much that she would go to bed with Peter. It pissed me off. Anyway. But she, she was horrified that we had a wind-up alarm clock. Okay, now we didn't keep this clock wound all the time, but if we needed to get to town at a certain time, we would listen to the radio and get a time check off the radio, wind the clock, and set the alarm. When she saw that clock, she was like, and I quote, "How can you call yourself hippies? You've got a clock!" That's how naive she was. Her father had told her that hippies are God's chosen people, you must marry a hippie and have a hippie child with them and then come back and live in a fall out shelter, and um, . . . they don't have clocks. I mean, you know, she saw that we had white flour, and she said, "How can you use that? We only use whole wheat." We also ground our own flour . . . actually we didn't have white flour, it was white sugar that we had. And then she confessed that she had made prizewinning butterscotch prize for the 4H club, for the county fairs, she had won prizes for these butterscotch pies, and I said, "Oh, that's really great, I love sweet things. That would be fun." And she said, "I can make a butterscotch pie, but I think I need white flour." It was like this, "Oh my God!" and Peter and I actually thought about that for a moment too. It was like, well, we hadn't bought flour. Even if we bought wheat, at least we bought wheat and ground our own flour. We weren't -- take something off that list of 400 right? And better yet, if you bought the wheat at a feed store where you bought animal feed, because you weren't buying all this excess packaging going through a health food store. So the idea was a one stop shopping, use less petrol-chemicals. Just try to cut it down. I remember she made a butterscotch pie with whole wheat crust, and then she went and bought white flour at the M.F.A., the Missouri Farmer's Association co-op, and she brought it home and she made butterscotch pie with a white flour crust. It was fucking great, it was really great. But boy, that was for her, that was like, the devil, the sin, the temptation. I guess she fit right in with us. We

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were all really cranky. We were really odd. Anyway, to get back to the local people though, the other person who was very kind to us was a woman named Mary Gun. And she was the librarian of the town of Thomasville, which had a population of 800. And she was a retired school teacher or school librarian. And she loved it when the hippies moved in, because they checked out books! She had this beautiful little supply of children's books, and nobody came and got them. And our kids just couldn't wait. We would bring whole truckloads of children -- we had a lot of kids at the Garden of Joy Blues -- we'd bring truckloads of kids down, and I remember once when Althea wanted to take out more books than she was allowed, each child was allowed three books, and Althea had picked up 8 books. And Mary Gun said, "You can only have three books." And Althea said, "But I'll be done with them too quick." And she goes, "No, I can only give you three. You have to pick the three you want." And Althea said, "I could sign a note." And so, Mary Gun said, "Alright, you can take out 8 books, but don't tell anybody else I let you!" Which is really nice. And then Althea said, "I want to learn how you stamp it!" And so Althea stamped out her own discharge cards, and Mary Gun said, "Stamp it more gently honey, you're going to wear out the stamp pad." She loved it. And this woman was so nice to us. I mean, she really -- she would also get us books in interlibrary loan that we wanted to read, but um, we'd go down to the library, and there was nobody there. She was this old, I would say she was in her 80's. This old 80 year old that was basically volunteering in this little town library in this [unintelligible] town, that had once been the county seat a long time ago, had once been a very populous town, and had completely fallen apart after WWII. It had 80 people, it had been a town of 800 people, and it had 80 people left. It just was nothing. It used to be known for its big fish fries, it was a bustling town -- it was just a ghost town. Anyway so she was very good to us. And another thing about the Ozarks that I remember too. The house we lived in had been owned by the Rosenbaums. Well they had sold it to this realtor, this land guy. You couldn't call him a realtor, he was just a guy who bought and sold land. And we bought it from him. The name Rosenbaum is a corruption of Rosenbam [?], which is a German-Jewish name. And, the Rosenbaums were still living in the area. They had built the house in the '20's and '30's, and they had lived there. And we looked them up. Larry Rosenbaum was the guy's name. He was a blacksmith. And we went down there, and he was the spitting image of a friend of ours named Roy Needle [?], who was also an American of German-Jewish descent, and it was very obvious that Larry Rosenbaum was Jewish. I mean the guy looked 100% Jewish, German-Jewish. And he was like, "Oh you're living in our old house," and it was, this old house was a shack. These people had been really poor, really poor. And um, they hadn't lived there in quite awhile, not since the '40's or '50's. And it had been abandoned. The walls were lined with newspapers with Amelia Earhart -- "'Why the Mothers of America Have Something I Can Never Have,' Says Amelia Earhart" -- meaning children. But there was also glued to the wall, "The Death of Will Rogers" in Wilely[?] Post. That was 1935. They were too poor to have wallpaper, just newspapers. Lots of Will Roger's columns glued up all over the place. Um, so I asked, um, Larry Rosenbaum, I said, "Are you guys Jewish?" He goes, "Oh no, we're Baptists." And I said, "Oh really?" I said, "How long have your family been in America? Did they come from Germany?" "Oh yeah, they're from the Old Country." "Well, which one, what generation came over? Your parents?" "Oh no, my grandad." "Uh-huh. Where did he live?" "Oh well he settled in St. Louis, and then he wanted to get out." "Well what did he do?" "Well he was a tailor." And I was like, "Yeah, he was Jewish." They just, they lied. He just said, "Oh, I'm here, I'm a Baptist, I'm in the Ozarks." And I never disillusioned this guy, I never said, "No, you are genetically, ethnically Jewish." I don't even know if his mother knew. She was

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very old, I only talked to her a few times. So that was also real strange, to see how people just came and kind of remade themselves into Christians because they were there. Um, I saw some hippies do that. But I didn't. There were no Blacks in that part of the country. There never have been. They had been too poor to have had slaves. There were a few Blacks down by West Plains, and there was a, you know there were little pockets here and there, but not many. Virgil -- there were these limestone rocks that were round, they were limestone forming pockets in the caves, they're all washed out and you get these limestone spheres. They were called "nigger-heads." And I asked them, there was a road called Niggerhead Road. "Why was that called Niggerhead Road?" "Well you know, when they were blasting out the road, they found all these niggerheads in it." "Well, what are niggerheads?" "Those are those rocks." I said, "Why are they called 'niggerheads?'" "Well, a nigger's head is hard." "Well, Virgil, have you ever seen any niggers?" "Well, yeah, when I was in the army." And I thought, this is so weird. It's like they had some of the culture of the South, but they had no Blacks to apply it to. There was also a kind of echenatiae [?], which is known as purple cone flower. Universally called "nigger titties." Everybody called them nigger titties. And I said same thing, I said, "So Virgil, these nigger titties," I said, "who calls them nigger titties?" "Oh, everyone calls them nigger titties." "Well, have you ever seen a nigger titty?" "No, but I guess they'd look about like that." It was real strange to me. I wanted to hate them. Peter and I had made a decision not to move south of the Mason Dixon line. And um, I wanted to hate them for being like that, but on the other hand, in some way they were so stupid! They were, you know, Jews are the chosen people, and these round rocks are "niggerheads." They were living in a vacuum, really, they weren't connected. And . . . their idea of Christianity was sort of Pentecostal, there were a lot of Pentecostals around there and stuff. God knows what they thought of things like lesbians communes, they probably couldn't believe it. But they were always nice to us, they were always good to us, and they always referred to us as "the hippies." Sometimes a bunch of them would come down and drink beer with us. One time Jim Clipper came down and said he wanted to see my pubic hair. He said, it was Mother's Day, and he said, "Virgil says you've got pubic hair as long and black as a skunks!" And I said, "How did Virgil know that?" And he goes, "He saw it at the VFW camp." Now they'd invited us all to the VFW camp, and none of us had bathing suits, so we had made bathing suits out of tying bandanas together. And um, which works. And uh, and I said, "How did Virgil see my pubic hair?" He said, "He saw at the VFW camp." I said, "Well, I didn't show it to him." He goes, "Well, you may not have shown it to him, but he saw it!" And he goes, "He said it was as long and black as a skunks," and he goes, "and I want to see it too." And I said, "Well, I couldn't show you that," I said, "you know, you'd just tell all your friends." "Nah, I'll only tell Virgil." And I said, "Okay." And he had brought beer, and he goes, "Drink this beer. It's Mother's Day. You're a mother." And I go, "I don't like beer." Everyone knew I didn't like alcohol. I said, "Alright, I'll drink some of this." I got drunk really quick, I mean three or four sips is enough for me to get drunk. And I said, "Okay. You want to see my pubic hair? Okay." Because I had only put clothes on because he had come down the road. We were always naked, we were all naked all the time. And uh, I said, "Okay, I'll show you my pubic hair." So I pull up my skirt, and he looks at it, and he goes, "Hot damn! Virgil's right! It's as long and black as a skunk's!" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "I thought Virgil was lying. He was telling the truth." I said, "Well, yeah." He goes, "Well, that's something. I'm going to tell Virgil I've seen it." And I said, "Now you've both seen it." And he goes, "Yeah, but I saw it up close." So, I don't know. We got a long with him in a weird -- but we got a long with weird people. Jim Clipper was on the edges of society. But he shot himself. Um, they had a

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21 gun salute for him, the VFW all came out and they did this whole thing. And the county line church. Virgil refused to go into the ceremony. He had a tailgate party. He put his truck up, and he put the tailgate down, and he had a keg and he had a peppermint schnapps, which was what Jim Clipper drank when he really seriously wanted to get drunk. And um, and he made this little altar -- Jim Clipper was a logger, and so he had this big round with an axe that he used for splitting his own firewood, and when we got home from the service, Virgil had put a bottle of peppermint schnapps on the stump, it was like a little altar to Jim Clipper. Virgil was another one of those guys who was just brilliant, genius, should never have been stuck in Birch Tree, Missouri. The first time he ever left home was when he was drafted and went to West Plains to get his physical. I mean, that's as far as he'd gone, Birch Tree to West Plains, and that's the first time he'd left the county, to go to Howell County. So I said, "So what happened to you next?" He goes, "Well then they sent me to Japan." Oh, yeah, what a shock. Wonderful guy, I miss him a lot, I really liked him. He was so good to everybody, and funny, huge sense of humor, and so did Mary Lou. She was bright. And uh, they were down to their last kid, all their other kids had grown up, so yeah, we were sort of their surrogate children. Anyway. So I . . . I think about all that. I mean the people at the M.F.A., the people at the M.F.A. -- there was another one. They had Mountain View Pioneer Days.

**Q:** What's M.F.A.?

**A:** Missouri Farmer's Association, it was a co-op. They --

**Q:** This was an agricultural co-op?

**A:** Agricultural co-op, they had little shields. They sold seeds, you know, garden seeds. They had their own labels of staples, which they got from the Springfield grocer's association, they repackaged them as M.F.A.. But they also sold feed. And you got a dividend at the end of the year of you bought a lot of feed from them. Anyways the M.F.A. store in Mountain View was the best it was a grocery store and a feed store, so we always shopped there. And they had Mountain View Pioneer days. And um, the first year we were there we didn't know about it. But the contest that they had, the second year, it turned out they had this contest. Starting whatever day it was, like May Day, or something like this, all the men that wanted to enter the contest had to put in \$50 and not shave. And when pioneer days came which was like in June or July, the man with the longest beard, the one with the biggest beard, the one with the prettiest beard -- the money was split up as prize money. And this guy who was a clerk at the grocery store was one of the people who always entered the beard-growing contest. I think it ran for 30 days or 2 months. It was two months. And um, . . . and he had a beautiful beard. His beard was an incredible, beautiful, chestnut red beard. This totally straight guy, and whoa, with his beard man, he looks just like one of us! Peter, also at that time, now Peter's gray, but at the time, Peter also had this bright red beard. And it was like, we went into this, like, "Have you just not shaved or what?" And he's like, "No, I'm growing a beard for Pioneer days." And Peter asked, "Well can I join the contest?" And he's like, "No, 'cause you had a head start. You had to have shaved to start." And he was like, "No, you'd be a ringer, you can't come into the contest." It was really funny, this guy ended up looking like a 19th century guy, just like all the hippies. A lot of other guys in town did too, that one clerk man, he looked like he could've been one of us, or he could've been Laura Engle Wilder's Pa, you know, and he had this

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great beard. And I was like, "Why don't you run away and live with us? Why don't you run away and join us?" And we all would joke about it. It was like we were all real good natured about it.

**Q:** Did he shave it off afterwards?

**A:** Of course he shaved it off! Next year he grew it again. This guy always won the prize, and this guy had the best beard! It was gorgeous. But it was funny to me, because to him, it was like, "That's Pioneer Days. That would be a sin or a shame or wrong of me to actually wear a beard." But he could laugh, we all laughed, there was always something good-natured going on, even though they knew we were weird, they knew we were different than they were. Oh -- has anyone told you how we took over the Caboule [?] State Theater? Okay, we started this thing called, um, well there was two parts of it, it was the Ozark area congress, but it started out as this non-profit -- we had this nonprofit, which was an educational thing. And one of the things that we did, there was a guy named Ron Faus [?] that lived down there, he was not on the commune -- Edge City commune, David Hanke and that crew, and Garden of Joy Blues, and a couple of other people who were not on communes, decided we were tired of not being able to see art films. And so we went to the Caboule State Theater, the guy who owned the Caboule State Theater, and asked him, "What's your worst day of the week?" And he said, "Wednesday, don't hardly get any money at all, it's not even worth opening in the winter to keep the heat on!" And we, as a nonprofit, educational group, we would get together and vote on what films we were going to show, and we would rent these films at \$35 a shot, up to \$50, for things like Casablanca, or Marx Brothers, or, you know, the kind of things, classic films, also foreign films, Seventh Samurai, I remember we showed that. Uh, we all came from this art film background, you know, Smiles of a Summer Night, and Wild Strawberries, and all this stuff, you know, Rashimone [?], and um, we . . . had little flyers, and Ron Faus put out this thing, The Express, Your Time's Express, this fanzine, he had been a science fiction fan, he came out to the Ozarks because he knew we were science fiction fans, so he put out these little flyers, fanzines, that would say what was showing at the Caboule, and we'd all go there, and the whole theater was filled with hippies! And um, and there we were, paying this guy to do great business with us. After awhile, he decided his next worse day was Thursday, and he decided if we could do it, he could do it, so he started running Marx Brothers and stuff. He was like, "I didn't know you could even get these films anymore! I remember this when I was a kid!" He wanted to play all the old films that he liked as a kid, and it was really a kind of a neat, um, it was neat. And like we'd show up by the truckload, we'd come and just bring vanloads of people, plus all the singles and couples that were living down there. And again, we were good for them because we brought some money in. They were very good friends with us. And by those days, we were no longer like at the point I was at Tolstoy like selling pot or something. They knew more about what pot was. So, that's it, that was the relations with the locals. Anyway, I want to get to a couple of things, see if I've got them upstairs . .