



Colleges, Communes & Co-ops in the 1970s: Their Contribution to Vermont's Organic Food Movement.

Excerpts from the 175th Annual Meeting of the Vermont Historical Society, September 21, 2013.

The movements that developed out of the 1960s here in Vermont played an important role in the transformation of Vermont. But more than that, the experiments that go on here, though they may be small scale and affect a fairly small number of people, tend to have an impact that ripples out into the larger world in ways that are quite significant.

BY DAN CHODORKOFF, JAKE GUEST, ROZ PAYNE, ROGER FOX,
GRACE GERSHUNY, JIM HIGGINS, LIZ GUEST, LARRY KUPFERMAN

Introduction by JACQUELINE CALDER

Transcribed, edited, and annotated by MICHAEL SHERMAN

(Editor's note: The text that follows is based closely on the introduction, panel presentations, and audience questions and comments that were part of the 175th annual meeting and fall conference of the Vermont Historical Society, September 21, 2013, in Montpelier, Vermont. Rick McMahon, Orca Media Production of Montpelier, Vermont, videotaped and prepared DVDs of the entire conference. I transcribed the panel presentations and audience comments from the DVDs and edited them to make them accessible to readers, eliminate redundancies and digressions, and provide information in endnotes or in brackets about individuals, institutions, and events that speakers mentioned and that are not common knowledge. The speakers have reviewed, corrected, and in a few places revised the texts slightly to make them more accurate and more accessible to readers and researchers. The complete set of conference videos is available at the Vermont Historical Society; call number: Video C-426.)

.....
Vermont History Vol. 82, No. 2 (Summer/Fall 2014): 106–142.

© 2014 by the Vermont Historical Society. ISSN: 0042-4161; on-line ISSN: 1544-3043

I. INTRODUCTION

By JACQUELINE CALDER, *VHS Museum Curator*

In 2010 I wanted to do a small exhibit for the Vermont History Expo to tell the story of Vermont co-ops. Easier said than done. Most co-ops that still survive in Vermont were founded in the 1970s and many of them hadn't really started to think of themselves in historical terms; so documenting their past wasn't a priority for them. Most depended on their original members when questions came up. So that's who I turned to.

I spoke with Jim Higgins and Craig Neal about the Winooski Valley Co-op in Plainfield and Andrea Serota and Caroline Shapiro about Hunger Mountain Co-op in Montpelier. I learned about the connections between Plainfield and Montpelier but also their relationship with Buffalo Mountain Co-op in Hardwick, Onion River Co-op in Burlington, and the Northeast Kingdom Co-op in Barton. Jim and Craig, both members of communes, made it clear that their involvement with co-ops was part of their community activism.

Leslie Rowell, a volunteer at VHS, also told me about Goddard College, where she was a student in the 1970s, and the Institute for Social Ecology, the influence of Murray Bookchin, and the relationship between consumer co-ops, producer co-ops, and farmers markets during the 1970s. At that point I had to stop and just put together my small exhibit—basically a chronology with brief histories of each co-op.

Leslie and I continued our long conversations, and the lists of people to interview and books to read continued to grow. We talked about possible projects on the topic and how to gather information and documentation. She started to interview people in the greater Hardwick community and picked up a few choice donations for the VHS.

In 2012 Susan Harlow and John Nopper approached VHS to see if we'd be interested in hanging their exhibit, *Plowing Old Ground: Vermont's Original Organic Farming Pioneers*, a combination of John's beautiful black and white photographs and excerpts from the many hours of oral histories Susan did with the farmers. Reading the labels for the exhibit again piqued my interest in the relationship between commune members, food and consumer co-ops, and the Vermont organic food movement in the 1970s. A well-attended opening and ongoing viewer interest in the exhibit also proved that the public also found the topic interesting.

Further research turned up the continually-cited 1970s works of George Burill and James Nolfi at the Center for Food Self-Sufficiency

at the Vermont Institute of Community Involvement (which was the precursor of Burlington College) particularly their study titled *Land, Bread, and History: A Research Report on the Potential for Food Self-sufficiency in Vermont* (1976). George Burrill is the husband of a VHS board member, so his name was familiar to me, but not this early work. When I spoke with him, he shared other studies the institute had done on Vermont farmers markets, vegetarianism, and energy utilization in agriculture. Unfortunately, James Nolfi had died; but I learned that he been a commune member, the co-founder of Earthworks or the Franklin Commune, had taught at UVM but had been fired because of his political activism in the early 1970s, and finished his career at Goddard, where he continued his research on food sustainability.

I talked about these various interconnected subjects to anyone who would listen and said I hoped VHS would do an exhibit and other public programs on the topic in the future. When the VHS Public Programs Coordinator Amanda Guskin, Executive Director Mark Hudson, and I discussed a topic for annual meeting, we decided on *Colleges, Communes, and Co-ops*. Luckily, Vermont just happens to have a leading scholar on the back to the land movement in America [Dona Brown, Professor of History at the University of Vermont, who gave the keynote address for the conference]; and the other program participants who lived and participated in the movement during the 1970s were gracious enough to agree to share their stories.

Much of the original material that documents this era still remains to be collected. Many oral histories as well as written memoirs still need to be done. Some institutions, such as the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, have been collecting materials from members of southern Vermont communes; and I believe the Northeast Organic Farmer's Association (NOFA) has been sending their archives there. Some co-ops have been doing a better job with archives, and private collectors have saved important materials. VHS has some materials but would be thrilled to accept more. Much of what was created was ephemeral, such as candid photographs, mimeographed newspapers and flyers, and the graphically strong silkscreen posters, banners, and tee shirts used in protests or to advertise. Please spread the word about the importance of saving these materials so we can use them to tell the stories of this important era in Vermont's history.

II. PANEL PRESENTATIONS

COLLEGES AND COMMUNES

DAN CHODORKOFF

This is an important gathering, because to my mind the movements that developed out of the 1960s here in Vermont played an important role in the transformation of Vermont. It was a very different place when I moved here in 1967. But I think more than that, Vermont has served as an outpost of experimentation and has shown the way and continues to show the way to a lot of the rest of the country. So the experiments that go on here, though they may be small scale and affect a fairly small number of people, tend to have an impact that ripples out into the larger world in ways that are quite significant.

In 1967 I was an undergraduate at Goddard College in Plainfield, which was a pretty wild place in those days. It was one of the centers of the counter culture, at least on the east coast. In fact, I remember seeing a famous poster that showed the counter culture outposts on a map of the United States. And there was New York, and there was San Francisco, and Berkeley, and Plainfield, Vermont.

Vermont was going through a lot of changes at that point. It had just [re-]elected its first Democratic governor that year or the next year.¹ Vermont was a place that attracted a lot of young people looking for alternatives. There was a famous article that ran in *Playboy Magazine* about how all the hippies should move to Vermont and take the state over.² So there was a lot of activity and there was a lot of activity around Goddard and Plainfield.

The '60s, of course, was also a time of very profound political change, and that was what I was caught up in. I had been an anti-war activist in high school. When I came to Vermont, Goddard was seething with anti-war activity. We had a very active SDS [Students for a Democratic Society] chapter there; a little later in the '60s there was a big Weatherman presence. I was involved in all of that. And then, in the late '60s, after my experience with the dissolution of SDS, I became disillusioned with a Marxist approach to politics, started reading about anarchism, and met a man by the name of Murray Bookchin, who had just moved to Burlington. Murray was a philosopher and social theorist. I asked him to come to Goddard and work there—I was a graduate student at that time at Goddard and had a teaching

fellowship. A position opened up, I brought Murray in to fill the position, and we started collaborating. And then in 1974 we began something called the Institute for Social Ecology at Goddard College.³

The idea behind the Institute was to create an alternative school that focused specifically on ideas related to radical change: radical democracy, direct democracy, decentralization, and ecological approaches to energy production and food production. We started offering courses, initially through a summer program at Goddard that studied topics such as organic agriculture, solar energy, wind power, and aquaculture. These were practical, pragmatic applications of the ideas that we were concerned with.

We were concerned with them not simply because they were ecologically sound, but because we saw that they had the potential to create a material basis for decentralized democratic society. And that was really our motivation. This was 1974; people thought we were crazy. The standard response was “solar energy: that can’t happen for Vermont; that will never work; wind power doesn’t work; you could never feed the world with organic agriculture.” There was a lot of skepticism, but obviously the ideas had some staying power.

It’s rather ironic for me to see that what began as a social movement has become an industry. It speaks to me about the power of capitalism to co-opt even the most radical ideas, if there is any economic benefit to be gained.

At the same time, I would say that many of those concepts—and we see this especially in the food realm, around the ideas of food justice and local self reliance, localvore movements, etc.—really do have very radical potential still to help transform some of the larger patterns of our society, not in and of themselves, but as part of a social movement that sees the creation of that material basis for self reliance as an important part of a larger process of political change. That’s where I was coming from in the ’70s; it’s where I’m still coming from.

Obviously, many elements of those approaches we were looking at—such as solar energy and wind power—have become corporatized and industrialized; and one can argue that as a result they haven’t actualized the full potential that those technologies have to act in a liberating way. But they’re certainly still better than coal-fired electrical generators, nuclear plants, or any of the more traditional means of generating energy.

The same can be said for the organic food movement in Vermont at that time. We had a very idealistic vision when we began that organic farms would somehow be part of the “moral economy”—a larger economic shift in which communities would control their own resources

and people would have the ability to directly involve themselves in decisions that affect their lives in basic ways. That full potential, I think, has not been realized. At the same time, many people have been able to learn the skills and take the techniques of organic agriculture and earn a living for themselves in a way that is perhaps more in tune with the kinds of ethics that we were putting forward in social ecology than they are with more traditional kinds of capitalist ethics.

I don't want to overstate the role of the Institute in all of this, but we did work with thousands of students from all around the world. Next year [2014] will be our fortieth year of existence. We still offer a combination of formal degree programs and different forms of popular education. We devoted a lot of energy last year working with the "Occupy" movement in New York and other areas. We're still connected with a movement that's out there—perhaps not as visible as it was in the '60s, but still exists—that has a vision of an ecological society and tries to consider the ways in which we need to transform what is to what should be and what could be.

I'm an anthropologist and part of my background is the study of utopian societies. This is interesting to me because obviously utopia doesn't exist, so how can you study something that doesn't exist. Well, you can study various social movements that have oriented themselves toward a utopian framework. I know that that's a strange concept, that "utopia" is used today as a dismissive [word]: it's impossible, it's cloud cuckoo land, or it's something negative where an individual is forcing his or her vision on everyone else. And certainly there are elements of those tendencies in the utopian tradition; but the term was coined by Sir Thomas More in 1516. He was a punster. He claimed that the word had two roots, both from the ancient Greek: The first from the words *ou topos*, which means "no place"; and second from the words *eu topos*, which means "good place." Those are two conflicting visions of utopia—utopia as cloud cuckoo land and utopia as rooted in existing potentialities that might improve our lives. It's in that second sense that I've been concerned with utopia and that the Institute was concerned with utopia.

As I said, we worked with thousands of students around the world, many of whom chose to settle here in Vermont and went on to work in alternative technology and food production. For example, Food Works, in Montpelier began as a project at the Institute for Social Ecology.⁴ Our students have started organic farms and organic seed companies. Grace Gershuny, who will be on the panel this afternoon, one of the founders of NOFA [Northeast Organic Farmers Association], worked with us for many years. Joey Klein⁵ was a student of ours, though he

was certainly an accomplished farmer before he ever set foot in one of our programs, and I learned a lot from working with Joey. There are many others I could mention as well. So you may not have heard of the Institute, but we've been here for a long time and I like to think that we've had an influence.

JAKE GUEST

I was introduced as a founder [of The Wooden Shoe Commune]—there was no founder. You don't found communes. The Wooden Shoe was located in New Hampshire, not in Vermont; it started at Dartmouth College. It started with anti-war activity there.

I had been a very unsuccessful student at Dartmouth a couple of different times. I got kicked out once, went into the Army, came back, got kicked out again for spending too much time in politics. I was actually working for Dartmouth College when the anti-war activity at Dartmouth came to a head with an anti-ROTC campaign that really consumed the whole campus and several of us. There was an SDS chapter at Dartmouth that was a fantastic organization. It turned nasty later but at first it was great: The brightest and best were there and they really were committed. We wanted to get ROTC out of Dartmouth. We tried and tried; we had meetings and eventually we took over the administration building and we found out what an injunction is. We were split up and dragged off to eighteen different jails in the state of New Hampshire at midnight by a sheriff, H. Ash—"Sheriff Hash"—and they threw us all in jail. There was a lot of adrenalin and a lot of excitement and we finally got out of jail thirty days later and came back into Hanover and didn't know what to do. I was from Hanover, so I rented a house in Hartland, Vermont, and a whole bunch of us moved into this house; and that was the beginning.

We had great political aspirations. We had a printing press, and it was called The Wooden Shoe Press, because the guy who gave us this press was an anarchist—the wooden shoe comes from the nineteenth-century workers who threw their wooden shoes into the machinery—sabots, sabotage, etc. We had this idea that we would print political and anti-war material and that we would be a refuge for the brothers and sisters who were struggling in the cities. We all moved into a house and very rapidly realized that we had to live together and became consumed with the minutiae of roles, and money, and sexual relationships, and priorities. Some people left; but a bunch of us stayed through the very hard winter of 1969-70. And we decided that we wanted to keep living together.

Right off the bat we decided to pool all our money; we took turns with all of the chores; we shared cooking; we shared all the different chores we had to do. We didn't have any jobs, so we set up—actually I set this up—the Wooden Shoe Labor Force. We put ads in the *Valley News*, hired ourselves out for odd jobs, and got a lot of response. People called up, especially from the Hanover area, and we would jump in our Volkswagen bus and show up at somebody's house—six hippies, or whatever we thought we were (we didn't think we were hippies; we thought that we were radicals). We did all kinds of odd jobs. And it was very popular. We got a lot of work.

After we decided we wanted to live together we sent out search parties all over Vermont and New Hampshire looking for land. We found a beat up, totally abandoned farmhouse at the end of Abbott Road in Canaan, New Hampshire. I got my parents, who lived in Hanover (my father was a professor at Dartmouth), to loan us \$10,000 and we bought this ten-acre farm and began in March to move piecemeal out to this shell of a house. There were about twelve of us at that time; people came, people went. We had one child that was born just about the time that we moved out there.

We had ten acres of abandoned farm and house, no running water, no phone, no electricity, ten to twenty people, no central heat, no windows, not much of a roof, a fallen down barn, no farming experience, no building experience, and no jobs. But we had this Wooden Shoe Labor Force thing going, and right off the bat we kept doing this. We found neighbors who we did some work for, and then we got to use their telephone in the sense that we would put an ad in the paper, people would call the Browns' house, we would walk down to the Browns' house to get the messages and call the people back. It was really a wonderful experience and it had many ramifications. A typical person who would employ us would be a widow in her late seventies who lived in a great big farm house that she didn't want to leave and was determined to die there; but she had nobody to change the storm windows, nobody to rake the yard, nobody to fix the broken steps, nobody to fix the roof, nobody to bring the wood in, and no way of getting anybody. There weren't many people with pickup trucks back then who drove around saying that they did odd jobs. We would come in with a crew of eight people—well educated, articulate, ex-Dartmouth students. What you learn at a place like Dartmouth is how to be socially adept at being nice and paying attention to people. So we would have these really good relationships; we would end up being invited to tea and long talks about family. We had a couple of places where they gave us all the husband's tools.

One of the jobs we did was for the chief of police, Ernie Smith. Right

off, he took a liking to us, so he was always in our corner for the rest of the six or seven years we were there.

We raised almost all our own food. We used to joke about how long we could stay there if the world came to an end, and we figured out that we could stay there for at least a month or so, without any contact. We did buy things like brown rice and cigarettes—we all smoked cigarettes back then. But we had a really interesting relationship with our neighbors, unlike a lot of communes. In the town of Canaan, people would say, you got those god-damned hippies up on the hill there, and people would say, “Well, they’re our hippies.” It was great; they would say all kinds of bad things about hippies, but not about “our hippies.”

We learned a lot. We learned about canning; we had our own animals; we grew all our own vegetables; we grew all our own meat—we had chickens and cows; we made our own cheese. We shared all our money. We had a common fund: Any money we earned from these jobs would go in the common fund—a cash fund. We had no bank account. We had a medical fund—10 percent of all our income. It paid for any medical expenses we had, including births, of which there were a couple. And we shared all the work. Two people each day would take care of the kids, and they, not the parents of the kids, would take care of the kids. That caused tension later on. Later on, when I had my own kids, I knew how to change diapers; I knew what rashes were all about.

Each week we had a meeting that would last usually all day long and would include everything from who’s going to milk the cows to sexual conflict—what’s going on between these three people over here. We’d talk about other peoples’ sex life as though it was everybody’s business—and it was. We all lived together, we had no walls. But we tried—we really tried—to break down roles and stereotypes. The roofing crew was run by a woman; in a lot of the work we shared there was no differentiation.

It lasted for five or six years and eventually people drifted away. A lot of people came and went. We were open to anybody, but we were very quick to throw people out who, for instance, were just there to get high—that was out—or wanted us to buy explosives so they could blow up the cities. Anybody who didn’t fully accept the rules we had we got rid of, but we were pretty open to people coming in. I’m proud to say that most of the people who left took away a lot more than they brought. A lot of people went on to do what I call “moral work”: teaching school in the Bronx; running a senior center; organic farming—I’m a farmer, that’s a moral occupation, I don’t have to be ashamed of that.

To me it was a wonderful experience; I don’t regret any of it; I think it made me a better person; and I can sit through a meeting—any kind

of meeting. You know, people will say “this meeting has gone on too long” and I’ll say, “you’ve got to be kidding; we’ve only been here about four hours.” It was a wonderful experience; I don’t regret it; and I’m happy it happened.

ROZ PAYNE

I knew my commune people before I came to Vermont, because I was in a film group in New York in 1967, called News World. We were making political films about everything that was happening in the United States: the Vietnam War; we made the first women’s films; demonstrations at the Miss America pageant. There were about fifty of us in the group; and to be a film maker, you had to have money, because you had to have film and you had to have a camera. So we had a lot of wealthy people in our group who could pay rent on a space. I had been teaching elementary school in New Jersey and was looking at apartments [in New York City] and saw this sign that said “For Rent.” I went up and this young man was saying, “I have to leave right now; I’m going to France; I’m going to work with [Jean-Luc] Godard on a film and I’m leaving everything. If you want it, you can have it.” So he left this whole jar with money—change; he also left two cameras there. I decided that I did not want a fifth-floor walk-up, so I took the cameras and left. He had already left. As I walked down the street I met Marvin Fishman, who now lives in Charlotte.⁶ He looked at me with this camera and said, “There’s a meeting happening right now, right across the street. It’s the first meeting of a newsreel film collective, so you’ve got to get over there.” We crossed the street and encountered Melvin Margolis, who was also going to the meeting and urged me to go. So I walked into this room and there were about as many people as there are in this room. I saw the most beautiful people I’d ever seen in my life. They all seemed like they were my people. I wanted to hang out with them; I wanted to be with them. And that was the first meeting of New York Newsreel, which opened up groups in San Francisco, Los Angeles, St. Louis, Boston, and Chicago. We had lots of newsreel groups making films of whatever was happening radically in the United States and in their neighborhoods.⁷

I quit teaching elementary school. [Later] I taught college, which I loved. I like teaching radical history of the United States, unfinished revolution, racism. I found my thing and I’ve been doing that forever. I really love it.

I came out of a very radical group of people. My mother was Jewish Polish; my father was Italian Catholic. Both of them were atheists, I might add. In my school, there were a lot of Jewish kids, a lot of Catho-

lic kids, and a lot of Baptist kids. So I used to go wherever the kids went. I liked the arts and crafts programs after the religious part of it and I had this very large, diverse group of friends. My parents were always active in civil rights things; they were always on picket lines and demonstrations. My mother in 1934 got arrested in Lawrence, Massachusetts, for participating in the textile workers strike. And she ended up spending almost a year in jail for leading that strike.⁸

So I grew up being a radical person. I didn't have any choice. I grew up in Los Angeles, I went to UCLA, I hung out at Venice Beach, I married Arnold Payne, who got a job teaching in the East, at Brooklyn College; and that's how I came east.

After I quit my teaching job, I began working in the Newsreel office. All the films were around me; and I made copies after I left of everything, so I have the total selection of all the Newsreel films.⁹

I was working in Newsreel and I met John Douglas, Jane Kramer, and Robert Kramer. John had a house in Putney, Vermont—"Red Clover." Our commune was called "Green Mountain Red." There were piles of communes in those days and once a year we would have commune reunions. For example, at the Franklin [Vermont] Commune, we all gathered when they were going to pick animal feed corn. It was hilarious. They gave us bags to put on to pick the corn. All the community in Franklin was along the road looking at us. We went up and down the rows picking corn and throwing them into the bags. These people are still my friends. I stay at their houses when I travel. We still have reunions. We didn't all agree.

Now I live in Richmond, Vermont. My best friends are Jane Kramer and John Douglas, whose commune we lived in, in Putney. We are like family. We are like these ex-political people—we're still political.

ROGER FOX

I have a different story than these folks, but still associated with communes and to some extent with agriculture. A few of my old friends who had some involvement in the early days observed to me that anybody here who provides a detailed account of their experiences in the 1960s and '70s may not be considered a reliable witness. So at some risk, I will attempt to provide some details of what I was doing during that time.

Unlike these other people, I got politically engaged and radicalized when I was in college and shortly after I got out of college. It wasn't something that I grew up with—it just happened. I think it had a fair amount to do with the Vietnam era; and one of the things that has

struck me is how difficult it must be for a younger person in our society these days to understand what it was like to be a young male during the Vietnam era, when you could get snatched out of whatever you were doing and sent to the army and sent to wherever, inside of a relatively short period of time, and there were only limited options that you had at that point.

I graduated from college, I presumably would have been classified as 1-A. The only deferrable job I could find at that time was working on the Apollo program at the Kennedy Space Center. That didn't involve making weapons of mass destruction; so I tried doing that. I got the deferment for that job, went down to Florida, couldn't stand it, came back to Boston, and got a job. I had to lower my moral concerns somewhat and got a job working on inertial guidance systems for ballistic missiles that, I rationalized, were never going to get used. Fortunately, I was right.

I was sharing an apartment with a fellow who had lived in the same dorm as me at college who was more politically aware than I was at that point. In late 1969 and early 1970 there was a significant amount of social unrest going on in the Northeast. We went to the riots in Harvard Square in 1970; got tear gassed; took a trip down to New Haven; got tear gassed there. Fortunately, we weren't throwing bricks at plate-glass windows, but it was an interesting time and a disconcerting time in urban society at that point.

[My friend] happened to have a former girl friend that he was on good terms with who was going to Goddard, of all places. And she told him there's cheap land in the Northeast Kingdom. My vague recollection of that era is that Vermont was the place to go if you wanted to drop out and try doing something more utopian. It wasn't as though there weren't any other states to consider; that's just how it was done. And it may have to do with some of the influences that have already been mentioned here. But for us, it was just kind of "in the air" that Vermont was the place to go.

We decided that we were going to stop doing the work that we were doing at high-tech facilities outside of Boston and form a group, which I guess you could call a commune—we weren't specifically thinking about forming a commune, just doing a group effort to learn how to be self sufficient in terms of providing shelter and food for ourselves. I'd never been to Vermont before, but I'd gone to a summer camp at Lake Sunapee, New Hampshire, and I'd also gone to a camp on the west side of Lake George, at Bolton Landing, interestingly called "Camp Walden." So when we ran across this piece of land in Walden, Vermont, it seemed like it was cosmic.

The person who brought this piece of land to our attention was a friend of the former girl friend who was going to Goddard, whose name is Hope Alswang—she used to be the director of the Shelburne Museum and is now the director of the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Florida. But at that time, she was living in an old farm house on a dead end road in Cabot. She happened to see this notice that was posted on the window of the Cabot General Store about this piece of land that was for sale in Walden, mentioned it to us, and we ended up buying it.

We knew nothing about owning land, and we knew nothing about owning land in the Northeast Kingdom, and we knew nothing about owning a piece of land that was at about 1,800 feet of elevation in the Northeast Kingdom, and had a pretty high water table. What we saw was 80 acres for \$6,500.

Three of us were involved financially in this project: my apartment mate and myself both had decent paying engineering jobs, so we had some money; and he had a friend who was a chemist in a yeast factory in Passaic, New Jersey, who also had some spare money. So we bought the piece of land between the three of us and then we proceeded to try to assemble a sort of collaborative, if I can call it that, or commune, of people who were interested in learning how to build a house and grow some vegetables and work the land.

That was in the fall of 1970. We were crashing at a house that some college friends of ours were renting in Newton, Massachusetts, the next spring, and there was a fellow who was running a custom photo processing lab in the laundry room in the basement of this place, who decided that he was interested in coming along and joining us for the adventure. His name is Brian Henehan, and he later turned out to be the founder of Vermont Northern Growers Co-op [in East Hardwick].

A lot of this reminds me of the “butterfly effect” that is mentioned in meteorology, which is: one thing happens in one place and ends up creating unpredictable but significant effects somewhere else. It’s interesting to me about some of the people we ran into who subsequently have had some notable impact on northern Vermont society or agricultural efforts.

I don’t remember exactly how this happened, but we also ran into a couple of women who had just graduated from Wellesley and a friend of theirs who came along with us; so we had this gender-balanced group of six people who formed this work commune. We moved to Walden in the spring of 1971. Many years later I found that the winter of 1970-71 had one of the highest snowfalls in Vermont’s recorded history, so it was nearly summer before we could finally set foot on our land, and we pro-

ceeded to find out some of the things we had come to find out about. We had a lot of friends who were still involved in the technical/professional area down in Boston who used to come visit us on weekends. On the Fourth of July holiday, we had two dozen people who came up from Boston to hang out and help us swing hammers and just have a good time in the country. So there was still a lot of interest in the city at that time about what people were doing along the lines of what we were doing in the country.

We got the house more or less closed in and everybody but me bailed out. That was the end of that commune. I stayed there part of the winter; hitchhiked down to visit my parents on Long Island [N.Y.]; and got picked up by a guy on I-95 in New Haven. His name was Michael Levine. He'd never been to Vermont. He was finishing his senior year at the University of Pennsylvania and came up to visit us the next summer.¹⁰ And that's just another example of somebody you just come across and they end up becoming a member of the local community.

One of the things I did during that winter of isolation was to put ads in magazines like *Mother Earth News* advertising for people to come join a commune in rural Vermont. The aftermath of that initiative was finding out more about what Jake Guest mentioned about the challenges of trying to actually share a living space with other people.¹¹ I still have the collection of what I call "The Apocalypse Farms Letters," people who responded to those ads. The one I remember specifically was somebody who wrote about how they wanted to move to Vermont, plant winter rye, and live the good life. They were pretty uniformly naive. Then there were the ones who were the fans of H. P. Lovecraft, who wanted to go out and shoot squirrels. It was a surreal experience.

We tried continuing the commune concept for the second summer, but it really didn't take and at that I point I was in a relationship with one of the people I'd met through that process and it seemed less compelling to us to be trying to live in a communal environment. So things wound down in terms of the communal aspect of it.

One of the experiences I had in doing this project, which was very formative for me, had to do with obtaining electric service. We happened to have plunked ourselves down in a town that was served by Washington Electric Co-op, and when we inquired about getting electricity in the spring of 1971, we were told what we had to do in order to qualify to do that. Back then, they were still willing to hook you up almost regardless of how far you were from the system. That changed about two years later, when too many people were taking advantage of that in Vermont and it was threatening to create suburban sprawl. But I was intrigued by the concept of a co-operative that provided electricity,

and the rest of that is history. A couple of years after that I started getting involved with Washington Electric Co-op politically, and for the last twenty-two years I've been on the board of directors. Whereas that's not directly related to agriculture, certainly a community initiative to provide electricity to agricultural operations in Vermont was an essential element in maintaining the economic sustainability of the agriculture infrastructure, and I'm pleased and I'm not surprised that was a direction that I was drawn to, given my technical background.

I want to mention something about some of the food co-ops that we got involved in during our early days. The first one that I recall was a pre-order co-op, which I think may have been called The Passumpsic Food Co-op. One of the facilitators of that effort was a woman named Marge Hoyt, from Passumpsic. That was an offshoot of an outfit that I think was called the Ompompanoosic Co-op. These were pre-order co-ops, in which people would be given an order list and would specify how much of what products they wanted to get on a monthly basis, or it could have been twice a month. Volunteers would assemble all that information into a bulk order, which they would get from I don't recall where, although if Erewhon was in existence back then, it could have been from them.¹² But there were other suppliers of "natural foods" in bulk that supplied these various co-ops. Then we switched over to the Plainfield Pre-order Co-op, which got organized subsequently to that. I remember sticking with the Plainfield Co-op for a while after the Buffalo Mountain Co-op got organized in Hardwick [1975], because the idea of having a storefront food co-op just seemed too new-fangled and radical to us. But eventually we caved in and got involved with them.

It was an interesting experience and I've continued to do work on the side supporting agricultural efforts in Vermont as a graphic artist and as somebody who is involved in policy formulation.

COLLEGES AND COMMUNES: QUESTION PERIOD

Bill Doyle: Would you comment on the impact of Tim Pitkin, president of Goddard College, and the impact of Goddard College on the surrounding area of Washington County.

Chodorkoff: Tim [Royce S. Pitkin] was the founding president.¹³ He was a local Marshfield boy who went off to Columbia University, studied with William Heard Kilpatrick and indirectly—and maybe directly—with John Dewey, and became an advocate of Dewey's philosophy of progressive education. He took over the Barre Seminary in 1935, turned it into Goddard College, moved it to Plainfield, and based the whole educational approach on Dewey's philosophy in a pretty rigorous way.

Dewey's progressivism revolved around a combination of student-centered inquiry, where students identified for themselves what it was they wanted to study and how they might go about studying it with the help of a faculty member who provided resources and a degree of guidance. In Dewey there is a tension between this very strong individualism and the individual on the one hand, and community on the other hand, so that Goddard was founded, for example, on the basis of a community meeting, modeled on the Vermont town meeting as its basic form of governance. And Goddard had a work program where all students were expected to work for four hours a week at something that benefited the larger college community. Goddard over the years attracted a lot of very progressive people to Vermont, some of whom stayed, and certainly had a big influence on both the social milieu and the sensibility of the times. We saw this particularly in the 1960s when Goddard was a center for "counter culture" and radical experimentation.

I think Goddard also had an impact on the politics of Vermont. A lot of Goddard people got involved in state administration and state politics; and arguably, a lot of the success of the Democratic Party in Vermont can be traced back to Goddard.

Jay Moore: It's important to come to the realization that this history is still happening. There is a new wave of "back to the landers" thirty-somethings. I know this because my wife and I run a bed and breakfast on what was an old '60s commune, "Pie in the Sky Commune" in Marshfield, and their parents come here to check up on them and stay at our bed and breakfast. Also, there are still some ongoing communes, like Quarry Hill in Rochester, and New Hamburger, where my wife and I met, in Plainfield. But there are new communes, too: in Marshfield, there is Neruda, which has been around for just a couple of years and is named after Pablo Neruda, the great Chilean communist poet.¹⁴ So this kind of history is continuing here in Vermont. We have Occupy Wall Street in Vermont that I'm involved with through the local chapter in the Barre-Montpelier area. There's "Rising Tide," which is a more youthful organization doing direct action to try to stop global warming.¹⁵ When I went down to Wall Street to Zuccotti Park last year [2011] to check that scene out, who did I run into but some other Vermonters, including a guy who grew up in St. Johnsbury, who was the tactician for the street actions at Zuccotti Park. The heritage is a very outstanding one and it's an ongoing history; it's not by any means a closed book.

Comment: I wanted to thank Roz for the work she did on the Black Panthers, which was credited in the series, *Eyes on the Prize*.¹⁶

Payne: I went after the FBI agents that went after the Panthers. I got

UVM to invite one of them up because I wanted to get into his head. He gave his lecture, and we put him up in a hotel. I brought in John Douglas and we talked with him for hours and hours. He was so happy that we were interested in him and what he considered his great work in destroying the Black Panther Party. I made a DVD with another FBI agent and did a similar thing with him; but I went to his house in Oakland and did another three-hour interview. I've been making these DVDs so that people can see them, and if anybody's interested, just let me know. It's distributed by AK Press in San Francisco, but I have copies of everything. I love doing this sneaky stuff because I grew up with FBI agents following my mother and my life was miserable as a kid and I feel like this is my pay back, even though I liked both of these FBI agents a lot. They were nice people.

Comment: I just wanted to speak briefly about the scene in Southern Vermont. I came to Marlboro College in January of 1968 and it was 25 below zero and there was three or four feet of snow—it was a great winter. From Marlboro College many people moved into the surrounding communities and met the tide of young people who were just coming into the Brattleboro area because they had a friend there, and their friends would have friends. People weren't necessarily forming formal communes as much as they were gathering in cheap households to be able to share expenses and flow back and forth very easily. The village of Williamsville, for example, just north of Brattleboro, had half a dozen small households that filled up where people had bought houses cheaply in a falling down village and quickly revitalized the whole place, filled it full of life and artistic activity. There were lots of people who were sort of beat up from the anti-war movement and were looking for an alternative approach to doing something short of heads-on confrontation with the beast and living together and trying to sort out our interpersonal politics and work on some back to the land projects of raising animals and raising food. We even grew grain in the Brattleboro area. There were enough folks around that that kind of synergy sort of kicked in. It was a very exciting period of time. Eventually it dissipated, but I think as it spread out, its influence spread out with it.

Paul Carnahan: I'd like to get the panelists' thoughts on whether there was something about the Vermont ethos that made these movements happen here, or was it simply the economics—that there was a lot of cheap land, so it was accommodating for people getting together to buy a piece of property.

Payne: I think it happened all over the country. You go to New Mexico; you go to certain places in California; you go to Oregon; you go to Washington [State]. It's different in Vermont because the weather is

different and the land is different. I think it was political because most of [the communes in other states] were against the war in Vietnam; they were against the racism in the United States; they were for the things that we were for. So I think it was a common thing that was happening in the United States. Some of them were really poor—the New Mexico people were really poor. Everybody had their limits of what they would do. I'm sure there were Weatherpeople underground who were doing things that I would never do, because I'm too chicken to do probably, or I don't believe in doing it. But it was so diverse. I think that the diversity is what made the whole movement very strong. We weren't all the same people. We weren't in the same landscape, or anything.

Chodorkoff: I think that's true, but I also think there was a confluence of cheap land and something in the Vermont ethos or at least the mythology of the Vermont ethos that attracted people. I lived in a commune in Woodbury and Harry Thompson, who died about three weeks ago [September 3, 2013], was sort of like the patron saint of the hippies—the guy was 98 years old when he died.¹⁷ But Harry had a barn full of antiques and agricultural implements and tools, and any time you needed building supplies, whatever you needed, you could go see Harry and he'd help you out. At the same time in Plainfield, there were a couple of people who went up on the railroad bed where some hippies were living and burned them out, so I think the ethos cut both ways. But the mythology certainly was that Vermont was this place of tolerance and self-reliance and local democracy. And of course, that's also the reality, but there was an underbelly to that as well.

Jake Guest: I'm more cynical. I think it was a sort of self-generating ethos. You know, somebody's up here, and has a friend in the city, and the friend comes up and now you've got two people, and they've got friends. People would go where they heard you go. But the reason that they went was because somebody else went. I don't think it had to do with anything that was inherent in Vermont. There were a lot of communes in New Hampshire and they were pretty diverse. Erewhon people had a commune down in Unity; then Samuel Kaymen lived in Unity;¹⁸ there were some Christian communities over in the lake district area. Vermont just gets good PR. I live in Vermont now, and I'm glad I do.

Bill Doyle: Vermont was the first state to write its own constitution, to abolish slavery; it maintained a town meeting. I think that had something to do with it.

Chodorkoff: I think it did. Those experiences around the country were different. But I think Vermont did have something extra. I think

the Free Vermont movement was an attempt to connect with that ethos as well.

Payne: We [our group] were political organizers. We weren't out there to farm and have gardens. We were into radicalizing people in the area about poor people, racism, women's rights. We came out of heavy 1968 political movements, like Columbia University. A lot of us had that thing about left-wing politics, and still do.

Fox: I agree with Jay's assessment that the blooming of the communes may not have had much to do with the ethos of Vermont initially, but it seems to me that at least in our experience, there was a significant degree of social tolerance locally that allowed the communes and their aftermath to continue and to integrate into the society. So there was something there that provided fertile soil.

Guest: Except that in Canaan, New Hampshire, where we were, was about as right-wing as you can get, and yet we were able to work that out. I don't know; it's easy to label that sort of thing after the fact.

CO-OPERATIVES

GRACE GERSHUNY

It's true that we're all one big incestuous bunch of people whose paths have crossed in many interesting ways. I didn't grow up in a particularly political family, but I did grow up in New York [City], in the 1960s, and I later learned that my father had been a follower in the 1930s and 1940s of people like Ralph Borsodi, and was associated with Bob Swann.¹⁹ These were people who were early radicals, socialists who developed these rural communities at that time—and I didn't know anything about this. But after graduating from Queens College [N.Y.], all I wanted to do was to get out of New York and ended up moving to Montreal to live with some people who I had met at a party up there, and became part of an urban commune. We all had this idea of going back to the land, but I'm the only one out of the group who actually ended up living some kind of farm lifestyle.

The first co-op I got involved with was the Montreal Natural Foods Co-op, where I worked as a volunteer manager and went out to the organic farms in the countryside to get food. For the first time I began learning about diet, nutrition, and health and also started reading things like *Diet for a Small Planet* [1971] by Frances Moore Lappé. And I really began to see the connections—the political connections—as well. I had participated in some actions in college—it was the '60s—

but I had to support myself while I was going to school; I didn't have time to go to meetings. So I had a very different orientation. One of my housemates in Montreal was a Cuban fellow whose parents had moved to New York after the revolution, who were not supporters of Castro; and he was a draft dodger, who moved to Canada to avoid the draft. There were a number of folks like that in our group.

I ended up moving to Vermont in 1973, following a guy, and moved into the town of West Charleston, up near Newport. My neighbors were communards in East Charleston, including Frog Run Farm. Mary Mathias is here in the audience and was one of the founders of Frog Run Farm. There was also Mad Brook Farm in East Charleston, where there were more of the artsy type people. Frog Run was more of a serious farm. Robert Houriet, who was Mary's husband at the time, was one of the founders of NOFA [Northeast Organic Farmers Association]. He soon began proselytizing me because I had my first garden right on the road. Everybody could see how bountiful this garden was. It was pure luck. He ended up recruiting me to start a farmers' market.²⁰ NOFA got a little grant to start a farmers' market. So I got my first taste of community organizing and the whole idea began really to make sense to me.

I tell the story about how in my first garden I was reading the Rodale *Organic Gardening* book²¹ while I was out there planting, and I planted radishes around every hill of squash because they told me that's how you repel the squash pests. I ended up with many pounds of radishes, and I didn't know what to do with them. I would take them to the local general store and they'd see me coming and say, "We don't need any more radishes, thank you." So I thought that having a local farmers' market made a lot of sense because there wasn't a lot of local food available anywhere. One of the early ideas of NOFA, after we gave up on bringing the organic food down to the cities and practically giving it away at the city co-ops, was to develop a more diversified local food economy and to emphasize organizing farmers' markets as one way to do that. That was a really amazing experience. I'm really proud of the fact that the Newport Farmers' Market is still thriving.

I should not skip over the food co-op issues. We started buying through a buying club, the Northeast Kingdom Food Co-op, which was based in Barton. We would do the order and breakdown once a month, and we made a decision to move the co-op to a store front in Newport. That didn't work too well. It was losing money; there were various problems with management not really knowing what they were doing. It ended up being sold to some very close friends of mine, who ran it as a private enterprise for many years; and it's still going—they sold it a few

years ago—as Newport Natural Foods. I think that it was a good thing that the co-op decided to sell it, and that it was run as a business—but it still never made any money.

The other co-operative food-related venture that I was very deeply involved with was the Northeast Kingdom Co-operative Cannery, which started as a grant-funded project to set up community canneries in three places in Vermont. There was one in Barre, on the Barre-Montpelier Road; ours was in Barton; and there was one down in Rutland. We were supposed to be developing some kind of self-sustaining enterprise that would make value-added products, as they're known now; to be able to provide a facility for low-income people to bring their own garden produce and can them safely and with good equipment. It was a federally funded program. I was hired to run the garden where we grew beans and beets; and we made dilly beans and pickled beets. We drove around the back roads looking for wild apples and we made wild apple rose hip butter. We labeled it “organic”; we didn't use any bad stuff and it was wild apples and wild rose hips. But it really got me thinking, what does that mean, to put “organic” on a label?

By this time I was reading a lot about soil management and trying to understand what was ecologically “good” about agriculture. That, of course, took me down the very deep wormhole, which I have never emerged from. The thing that really bothered me was that in order to build up the field where we grew our beans, we had a local chicken farmer come and dump a huge load of raw chicken manure on the field and tilled it in and went ahead with it. I just knew that raw chicken manure was every bit as bad as chemical fertilizer for the soil, and I didn't understand why just because it was “natural” it should be called “organic farming,” because I thought it was terrible.

The next year, in 1977, I answered an ad in the NOFA newsletter asking for a volunteer to help the organic certification program. Jake and Liz [Guest] had been involved in discussions about what should the standards for “organic” be. So I, in my young naiveté, took on that job. I had worked as a legal secretary the year before, so I figured I knew something about dealing with bureaucrats and legalistic things. I went around Vermont and New Hampshire talking to all of the knowledgeable people, like Samuel Kaymen; I went out to Maine and met with the guys at the Woods End soil lab²² and various places like that, and pulled a committee together. That was the first year, and I think there were two certified organic farmers that year. Now Vermont Organic Farmers has 563 certified organic farms; about 40 percent of them are dairy farms.

To get into the question of how much influence has this movement had, I think it has had an enormous amount of influence. The local food

movement is just exploding and I think that the foundation was laid by the work we did. I'm very proud of the organic standards and even the "industry" as it has evolved.

I taught in the Institute for Social Ecology for twenty years and am still on the board and the faculty. But the certification work became what I call "the gum that got stuck to the bottom of my shoe." Every time I tried to scrape it off someone would come along with another project that demanded the kind of knowledge and connections I'd built up and I ended up in 1994 going to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to write the national organic standards; and that story is one of the centerpieces of my memoir that I'm working on.

JIM HIGGINS

I arrived in Vermont during a blizzard in March 1968 a few miles ahead of my New Jersey draft board. Prior to that winter landing, I made an abortive Viet Nam War - related trip to Canada and then to California. In Vermont I rejoined a childhood friend and his wife and kid who were helping organize the Maple Hill Commune in Marshfield. After a year or so of the commune life and another six-month California adventure, I returned to Vermont with a clear goal of becoming politically useful, so I became a community organizer. My first few projects were semi-successful: a recycling center, an anti-heroin campaign, and a joint project with Goddard College and communes around the state to organize a response to the much hyped "hippie invasion" of Vermont in the summer of 1970. The invasion never happened, but it sure brought out a record crowd for the annual meeting of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. A group later was determined to be the source of the scare.

My next project was launched in November 1971 and its success is why I am here today. At the time the nascent New England People's Co-op (NEPCOOP) was taking root in Burlington and in the border town of West Lebanon, New Hampshire. There was nothing in central Vermont, although dormitory students at Goddard had sporadically connected with NEPCOOP previously for a few bulk shipments of grains and beans. But central Vermont had a critical mass of potential co-op members: from the commune/back-to-the-land migration, to faculty and staff from Goddard and especially nearby U-32 High School, which was just getting started and attracted a great number of progressive teachers and administrators.²³ After consulting with dozens of community folks, I decided — and shortly thereafter was joined by Liz [Guest] — to get this thing rolling. In November 1971 the Plainfield Co-op officially began

with a seat-of-the-pants effort that tied into NEPCOOP and served about 100 people eager to participate in a new community co-operative venture. The Plainfield Co-op (still going strong) grew to about 400 members very quickly and gave birth five years later to what is now the Hunger Mountain Co-op in Montpelier, which is about 7,000 members strong.

Organizers of this panel discussion asked us to address the following questions: “Why did you decide to start or get involved in a co-op? Community activism? Did you see the development of a co-op as subversive? Altruistic? Or a means to buy better food?” For all of us involved at the organizing level, in regards to motivation, there was no “or” placed between those motivations of community activism, economic subversion, altruism, or better food. For the key organizers, our motivations included all four in equal amounts. For the rank and file, it varied somewhat.

More specifically, you bet we were all community activists, but within a year we had five pretty solid organizers, starting with Liz and myself, and we were very much connected to the community: We worked in the community and knew hundreds of people. Prior to the co-op, there was no centralizing focus to this large collection of immigrants in central Vermont. We were also all committed antiwar activists and we knew that we were surrounded by hundreds of like-minded souls. So the co-op became a centralizing point for many issues, but especially for promoting community activism and for manifesting a collective community spirit that was previously spread thin through the six or seven towns of central Vermont that housed most of the new arrivals.

Did we see ourselves and the new Plainfield Co-op as subversive? Absolutely! Especially vis a vis the food industry. We certainly had read the voluminous Rodale [Institute] texts,²⁴ we read *Diet for a Small Planet*, and many other progressive books and journals. We were well informed at that point — not nearly as informed as we thought we were, of course, but we were well aware of the corporatization of agriculture in the country, and we wanted to subvert that. Our dreams were somewhat ahead of our reality there, but we did manage a few brilliant acts of economic subversion, (more like simple end runs around traditional distribution systems) and you can read about some of them in the collection of articles I wrote for the Plainfield Co-op Newsletter, last year.²⁵

Were we a means to buy better food? Absolutely. Once you got hooked on the ideas of Robert Rodale there was no going back. Perhaps 60 percent of the fifty items on our first pre-order food lists were organic: from grocery items to grains and beans from pioneering farmers out of Texas, such as Arrowhead Mills, and Deaf Smith.²⁶

Yes, we were pure amateurs. Our links to the organic food growing movement were at first pretty sketchy. The [Northeast] Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) was going strong at the time (and still is) and its founder, Sam Kaymen, was running it with an iron fist, as I recall. From the very beginning, we were attached to the idea that more of our products need to be locally sourced. One of our first efforts was to form one of those growers' co-ops that Grace was just talking about, and this was about a year into buying the Grange building and having meteoric success as a strictly consumer co-op. So we expanded to include a growers' co-op with hopes to be as successful as our consumer co-op. So we reached out to all of our members and got pre-orders for roughly a ton of carrots, a ton of beets, potatoes, and so forth. Then we went out and found growers. Now this was before people really knew what the hell they were doing in organic farming. But the organic gardeners who were wannabe organic farmers said, "Yeah, I could grow, you know, a couple hundred pounds of radishes, a couple hundred pounds of that and that —no problem." And we finally discovered Ken Fowler in Adamant who was actually the real deal. He'd been a large scale organic grower for perhaps fifty years by the time we stumbled on him. And he said, "Sure, I can grow a ton of carrots for you." And surprise, surprise, by the time the harvest season came around, very little came through. Poor Ken Fowler, when I went to him and asked, "How's it going; we're ready." He said, "Oh, I've been meaning to call you. I haven't been able to get out to my carrot patch; it was too wet this year. I lost my carrots." So it was a stumbling effort, maybe one ton of various locally grown foods were distributed. But then NOFA's Sam Kaymen got wind of us and sent word up to the Plainfield Co-op that (in no uncertain terms) we should let them handle the growing side of things. We agreed. So, as you can see, not every thing we touched turned to gold, but as a consumer co-op, we did pretty darn good.

The early financial underpinnings of this operation were so nonsensical that it's amazing we survived. We had five managers working for free. We had no professional background in management, much less running what soon became a small supermarket-sized storefront, but we were awfully good organizers. Here's an excerpt from my Co-op history that describes that first year:

The first group of co-op managers thirty-six years ago were expert flyers. We were positively brilliant at flying by the seat of our pants. On our good days we channeled Baron von Richthofen, soaring with an aggressive can do attitude that produced among other things a growth trajectory rivaling present day Google.²⁷ (Slightly overstated there, but you get the picture). Our less good days channeled Snoopy's version of the Red Baron. We flew through a fantasy land

where every hare-brained idea was plausible, every new product suggestion actionable. We mostly got away with our suspect business practices because the conspiratorial apocalyptic spirit of the times demanded bold behavior, and our growing army of co-op members, however loosely defined, forgave our bone-headed excesses. Remember, we're talking here of the grim Nixon years—think Kent State and the 1972 Christmas bombing of North Vietnam.²⁸

Let me just pass on this final thought, which comes right from the [VHS 2013 annual meeting] brochure [which refers to]: “the co-ops that brought like-minded producers and consumers together.” I think that’s probably our best legacy. Forty years later, the Vermont co-op movement has built a very tight bond between a very large group of highly aware consumers and a critical mass of organic growers, some of whom are actually flourishing.

LIZ GUEST

What my husband Jake and I have done for the past thirty or so years is to have an organic vegetable farm in Norwich, Vermont. I met Jake when he came to one of the regional co-op meetings at the Plainfield Co-op—in the Grange hall; in the winter. We met down stairs. The co-op had bought the building then, but the Grange still had the upstairs to hold their meetings, and had all their chairs and insignias and so on upstairs; so we met downstairs. It must have been some time after that when we did end up, as the Plainfield Co-op, getting some sort of successful crop of carrots and cabbage from Jake, I think, that we had arranged to store with a local farmer, Walter Smith. He was a wonderful guy; he sugared with oxen at the time; and had been there for many years in Plainfield. We found out that he had an unused root cellar that you entered from outside. From what I remember, you entered it through his pig yard. We got there, Jake with his truck, with these tons of carrots and cabbage which we had arranged to store in the root cellar; and there were all these pigs. I also remember the bread wrappers that filled the pig pen, because he [Smith] would pick up [the bread] from the “day-old” or “week-old” bakery, and that’s what he fed the pigs. But they didn’t eat the wrappers. So this is what I remember: the yard full of pig shit and bread wrappers, through which we tramped in order to lug the carrots and cabbages into the root cellar. I don’t remember exactly how we got them out again; but we did, and delivered the veggies to our members. That was one of our semi-successful enterprises.

It also brings to mind that in Plainfield we were quite successful in working with the local people, including the people of the local Grange

who were actually happy to have us. The Grange had been dwindling; there weren't many farmers left to be members; and they couldn't afford to keep the building; so they were happy to have us buy it and to have a going concern in the building; and they could still be there. So I do feel that we worked with a lot of local people, who seemed to feel we were OK after a while—after some time, I should say.

I'm amazed at the common threads I hear. I heard both Dan Chodoroff and Grace Gershuny mention Murray Bookchin. When I was a teenager I went to a summer camp whose head counselor was Bob Bookchin, who I believe was Murray's older brother. He and his wife were the head counselors.

One of the reasons I heard about Goddard was that Stewart Meacham was a counselor at this camp.²⁹ And when it got time for me to apply to college, I knew that he was at Goddard College, and I thought he was really cool. So I came up to visit Goddard, because Stewart Meacham was somebody I knew, and ended up going to school at Goddard. So I'm really glad that you brought up colleges and I really have to give kudos to Goddard College. When I first came to Goddard, Tim Pitkin was very much the president and very much in control, and it just impressed me and my family so much that the Pitkin family had been in Marshfield for 200 years. There was a huge ethos at the time at Goddard of being part of the local community, and there were several professors aside from Tim who were local people.

The other legacy was the emphasis on community decision making at Goddard, and town meeting, and endless meetings of the whole community in which issues were discussed. In retrospect, I think it was a really good model for working in groups of people and community organizing, where you tried to listen. It didn't work too well, I have to say, with the students; but you tried to listen to each person. It was a good model for working within a community of people who didn't most of the time agree with you.

Some time in my time at Goddard Phil Hoff was running and was elected the first Democratic governor of Vermont and a lot of the students were involved. We had "election central" in the Hay Barn; we had all kinds of phones and all kinds of tally sheets, and we all went out to different towns to get the election results. A lot of people worked pretty hard on his campaign. When I think back, that really had a big effect on me. We changed something in Vermont. We felt like we were a big part in changing something.

Another irony of that time is that Governor Hoff's Secretary of State was Harry Cooley, a local Democrat. And on our vegetable farm today for the last fifteen or so years we have Charles Cooley working, who is

Harry Cooley's son. He's now 86 and he does a lot of our tractor work and he's the most political, savvy, and intelligent tractor driver, and incredibly competent, you could wish for. He had taught at Vermont Technical College and is retired, and he had farmed. And that's another example of going around in a full circle.

Another thread in my life was that somehow I became interested in macrobiotics and healthy food. I don't really know how this happened, but I do remember that I read all sorts of books by George Oshawa and Michio Kushi³⁰ about macrobiotics. And I remember going home and telling my mother that I would only eat brown rice, and bless her soul, she actually cooked brown rice for me instead of the Minute Rice that we were used to eating. Then I began an interest in whole foods. That combined with this interest in community led me to the co-op. When I came back to Plainfield, I would go to the Grand Union in Montpelier and look for whole foods and I found "Ak-Mak Crackers." They were made from whole wheat—there was never anything made from whole wheat. I was interested in whole unprocessed food as part of my focus on an alternative lifestyle, and "back to the land" philosophy. We were all at the time interested in alternative outlooks to conventional society. During my time in New York City after Goddard, I found a grocery on Second Avenue: Greenberg's Delicatessen. He would send me bags of brown rice and whole wheat flour on the bus to Montpelier, and that was the only way I could get the brown rice up here. Then I found out about Hatches in St. Johnsbury.³¹ But that was the first "buying in bulk" episode that I had. So I came with a little bit of expertise to the food side of the Plainfield Co-op and the whole macrobiotic thing. We used to take the trucks down to Boston and get the bags of whole grains and whole wheat flour from Erewhon in Boston and we developed a connection with them. I for one was very proud of that. We were considered important enough for Paul Hawken, the manager of Erewhon, to come out and talk to us and take pictures of our broken-down truck.³² I remember sleeping in the back of one of these trucks outside of Erewhon, which is in the warehouse district of Boston, because we had to be there early in the morning and we'd go down late at night and sleep in the cold truck.

When Jim talked about the founders of the Plainfield Co-op and you had a question about people who we'd like to mention, I'd like to mention Susan Meacham. She was a good friend of mine and an incredible, tireless organizing force, starting out with the Mount Philo Commune, and some co-ops in Burlington and then when she lived here (she had grown up in Plainfield and her parents taught at Goddard and she had gone to high school in Plainfield, and she knew so many people). She

was indefatigable, even tempered, analytical, practical, and did a huge amount of working with the co-ops, and working with NOFA.³³

Another person who helped us amateurs at the Plainfield Co-op was Bill Halvosa, who was an accountant for Rock of Ages Granite Corporation, and he lived in Graniteville.³⁴ I believe he had retired as their accountant and he started ordering food through our Barre group. But then he saw that our record keeping was dismal, to say the least, and he volunteered to set our books in order, and would come in his suit and tie and overcoat once a week or something like that and would go over our books and pay our bills, and get it all straightened out. He was another local person who helped us out.

LARRY KUPFERMAN

I moved to Vermont in 1970. The context for me was certainly the war in Vietnam—the antiwar movement and coming to Vermont to do alternative service at a Shaker Mountain School, an A. S. Neill-based “free school”;³⁵ and meeting Susan Meacham. You can’t really say enough about this history without calling attention to her role in not only the organization of the food co-ops but also the antiwar movement.

The Onion River Co-op in Burlington is about to celebrate its fortieth anniversary, based on the fact that in 1973 the Onion River Co-op was incorporated. But before that it was known as “Babipa.” We haven’t yet found out who made up that name or where it came from, but on North Winooski Avenue, Babipa was a store front that had a library and as I recall, it had a big picture of Che Guevara; it was a very radical group. And the food would come in the back and be redistributed. But the origins of this group was one buying club. Betsy Gentile—she’s in Brattleboro [now] and is very much involved in the formation of the Brattleboro Food Co-op—was the original coordinator of this buying group, primarily people who had recently graduated from UVM around 1970-1971. So the co-op existed for two years as a buying group and that buying group just kept growing. And by the time [my wife] Susan and I worked in the co-op—we were there through 1977—there were approximately 100 buying groups.

We had no money; there was never any capital; there was never any startup money. The whole basis was that people would pre-order, and we would use that to buy. We would pay cash and we would go to New York City and Boston and pick up all of these things. Erewhon was one, and Bazzini—they’re the nut provider for the [New York] Yankees—Zaloom, and Beans and Grains.³⁶ We’d go to Boston and get all of this. As I recall, the connection for organic food and farms was less than in [the other co-ops] because this was more of an urban group. But it was throughout

Chittenden County. The Middlebury Food Co-op was started as I recall by a group of people that came out of the hills of Goshen [Vt.].

The Onion River Co-op was a huge group of people. I remember that one year we tallied it up and it was a million dollars in sales. How did we do that? We had absolutely no capital—there was nothing. But somehow we bought this property on Archibald Street, which was where Earl’s Schwinn Cyclery had their beginnings. Earl was a great guy. He had two properties for sale, we could only buy one—much to our chagrin; we really wanted both.

There are just two strands that I want to talk about as we go through this: the people and the food. The food was what it was all about. And I agree with Jim: There was a group that was trying to subvert something. We were building an alternative economy, but based on nothing. A lot of the direction came out of this loose group of commune folks, Susan [Meacham] in particular, in terms of the food selection, in terms of the list—it was beans and grains. Frances Moore Lappé’s two books were the key to this, they were the bibles: *Recipes for a Small Planet*; *Diet for a Small Planet*.³⁷ Beans and grains—complimentary proteins; a lot of cheese. King Arthur Flour was the white flour that we sold. Sands, Taylor, and Wood, the same.³⁸ The tractor trailer would arrive; we’d have to haul the stuff up in 100 pound bags. Health food was non-existent, except for Hatch’s. Who were the Hatches? They were in St. Johnsbury; they had an old house with a store in it—it was a health food store.³⁹ Walnut Acres was a place where you could send away and buy organic things, but you couldn’t afford that; it was too expensive.⁴⁰ And of course, again, Rodale was the bible and some of the origin of where this was coming from. Lundberg Farms in California—the Lundberg brothers were growing brown rice.⁴¹ Golden Temple, which was a group of Sikhs from Oregon who had incredible products, including a lot of “personal care products”—they were animal-cruelty free. Everything was bulk because it was preordered and you buy a gallon of this or two gallons of that. Jarlsburg cheese—hundreds and hundreds of wheels of it. So the Onion River Co-op became a cash cow for the co-op movement.

The membership was not subversive. The membership was primarily made up of middleclass housewives who wanted the food; who didn’t care about the politics. We’d try every now and again to have something political happen at the meeting and they’d say “yeah, yeah, yeah, let’s get to the list.” And the whole attempt at having food distribution as part of a political arm may or may not have worked. (*Payne*: Some of us were subversive; you may have missed it. *LK*: That’s right!).

But there were some wonderful people who were the mainstay of

their community or their neighborhood organization and they became community organizers in a sense by organizing their neighbors to buy a 100-pound bag of flour and splitting it up. That worked in a certain sense and there was always that community spirit that became part of [what we were doing]. For Onion River Co-op it was Chittenden County: We had the Hudak family in St. Albans—the family farm is still there.⁴² And the St. Albans co-op came and they [the Hudaks] were instrumental in that, but that didn't stay in business.

The other piece that I want to mention is that building the alternative economy meant three things from the commune movement that I was aware of through Susan [Meacham]. The people's free clinic started; they're celebrating their fortieth year—that's the Community Health Center in Burlington. When you go to their new building on Riverside Avenue, they actively celebrate their origins as the People's Free Clinic and it's wonderful to see. And there was the Children's Commune, and I never knew about the Children's Commune, except that they're having a reunion this year. (*Payne*: They were connected with the Mt. Philo Commune.)

So there was a three-pronged effort in the Burlington area for building this alternative society or economy, and certainly under Susan Meacham's leadership. She moved away to the middle of the state—to Central Vermont—"Pie in the Sky" was her house. And this loose group of communes or people in the central part of the state would sort of direct the buying; and the lists would come to us. There was also a trucking company that became part of the scene: Loaves and Fishes Trucking—Carl Gamba from Island Pond. And in these really old trucks, he would go off to places to bring citrus back from Florida, peaches from Pennsylvania. We did phosphate fertilizer by the trainload, and I broke my back unloading this trainload off the siding in Burlington. People would come and take thirty or fifty or a hundred bags away for their gardens. Jake Guest was the coordinator for that. And once there was a statewide purchase of Ashley stoves; [but] because none of these deals was ever licensed, the Ashley dealers squelched the sale because we were buying directly from the manufacturer. And that was the basis of the business, where you buy directly from the grower and the business and you sell it—you distribute it—it was a food distribution system.

(*Jake Guest*: We had a hardware co-op—remember that? We found a distributor on the other side of the state who didn't distribute to any of the Central Vermont [stores], so there wasn't a conflict).

LK: We started a fish co-op. Peter Huber started a fish co-op. People talk about governance in co-ops and we had no governance. We had

anarchy. Somebody had an idea; they made a connection with a wholesaler somewhere. Then of course, we had our vegetable co-op start, John Ment. Every two weeks we sent a truck to Boston, Chelsea Market. And from all of that disorganization came the New England People's Co-ops. We were talking about why it was called the New England co-op, since it seemed to be mostly from Vermont. I think the idea was to do more co-operative buying.

Liz Guest: another person we haven't mentioned is Ann Temple, who lived in Calais and had a farm and had trucks. She became the produce buyer for the co-ops and she would go to the Chelsea Market and buy specifically for the co-ops, and then the truck would go down and pick up what she had bought and bring it back.

LK: In our co-op we had this very active group of people—they were staff and they were paid, we generated enough cash. Susan Meacham and I were the first paid staff and we split \$100/month in 1972, or 1973. I lived upstairs from the co-op by the time it was bought—I don't know how I even paid for that. And we were a collective, we weren't a commune but we were called a collective and we did decision making by consensus. We didn't have a board of directors. We had the membership; we had a monthly membership meeting and it would vote on constantly questioning whether we should have sugar or not, and white flour—it was always King Arthur. And from that people would have ideas. Susan [Schoenfeld, wife of Larry Kupferman] had this idea: how do we get this food to senior citizens? We started having surplus food and we'd bring it to a senior center. Somebody else had the idea, why can't we sell canned goods and have more low-income people involved? and Gene Bergman started the canned goods co-op and we bought strictly from the Hanover [New Hampshire] Co-op. It wasn't very successful, and Gene started a group, People Acting for Change Together—PACT—which was a low-income advocacy group.⁴³ We did tofu—that wasn't in the co-op—who knew what tofu was? And miso. And yogurt—we used to buy hundreds and hundreds of cases of yogurt from Columbo. All those things meshed together. It was a food distribution system in the Burlington area and it was very successful. [But] as we filtered away and got real jobs and had children, everybody knew that the pre-order system was just not the way to do it; and the storefront started.

Now it's City Market and it's doing \$34 million/year in business and it's probably one of the biggest square foot/sales thing of its kind in the country. It's very successful.

Payne: It's very hard for low-income people to shop there. **Liz Guest:** When we started the preorder and buying in bulk, one of the chief driv-

ers was that I can get it for your wholesale. You buy in bulk and we all use our labor, which doesn't cost anything, to break it down, so you're able to offer these things at low prices—we probably were losing money. **LK:** The mantra at the time was “food for people, not for profit.”

CO-OPERATIVES: QUESTION PERIOD

Question: As one of that younger generation that is following pretty quickly and wanting to be farmers and other sort of things, I'd like to know if you think it was the place, or the people, or the time that made it possible.

Liz Guest: All of the above. As people mentioned before, you're tying it into colleges and I do think in retrospect that the colleges had a big effect.

Larry Kupferman: I think it was a certain lack of regulation that we thrived under. The only licensing we would come under was our weights and measures person, who would come by and check our scales; and he was a great guy—he loved us. As we got into wholesaling—which we didn't really do—that's when we got into distribution, too, like the Ashley Stove event, that interfered with other businesses that were also doing business. But I think the Vermont scale is what helps move, that helps build things, for sure.

Jim Higgins: The writer and visionary Paul Hawken, who was, back then, a co-executive director of Erewhon, one of our major distributors in Boston, used to speak and write about how a “Right Business” did not need to advertise. If you have the right product, at the right time, at the right place, Hawken loved to say, the product virtually sells itself. To put it simplistically, that's exactly what the co-op had: product, time, and place. We never advertised; it was all word of mouth. So that was our early secret. Those three components were in sync.

Grace Gershuny: The college connection was very important and it was important in my history as well. I taught at Goddard for ten years as part of the Social Ecology program. Fast forward to the present, I'm constantly inspired by the young people, the students I'm working with. I'm now teaching in the Masters of Sustainable Food Systems program at Green Mountain College [Poultney, Vt.] and I'm absolutely blown away by how far and wide and deeply ingrained this ethos that we were struggling to live with thirty/forty years ago has permeated the culture and people. Community gardens; alternative food systems all over the place who are just coming into this as though, “of course, it's what we have to do; we must do this.” It's incredible and I think an awful lot of it really did spring from the soil of Vermont and these people that you're looking at.

Jay Moore: I think this is an important accomplishment, but it seems to me that the radical subversive edge to this movement has been really been lost—a lot of it has. It has become more of a smorgasbord of the culture as a whole. What do you think?

Larry Kupferman: I think understanding the overall sense of where you are—our speaker [Dona Brown] talked about the 1930s and the Depression. That was defining for those generations. I think for our generation the war in Vietnam and the draft were defining. So what’s defining for your generation? Clean energy? Climate control? So how do you work within that defining issue that’s going to make things happen for you? For your generation it’s the innovation of the internet and all of this stuff that we don’t know how to use, that keeps changing. I think understanding that and knowing how to build from that and how to organize your “age,” and bring us along with you, because we need to know how to use it as well.

Jake Guest: I’m glad you said that because I’ve been sitting and thinking about what the common origins of our agenda was, with the exception of a few of us whose parents were communists and radicals and so on. I don’t think the young people can possibly imagine the impact of the Vietnam War on life as we knew it. Because life as we knew it came out of the 1950s: It was post-war; everything was ticky-tacky; America was “good” and Communism was “bad”; and this way of life was right, and our government was right, and big businesses were right, and we should do what they say and go to college. And this war came along and it was for some of us—I was in the army at the time, not in Vietnam—this realization that our country was fundamentally betraying us. This was heavy shit. And I think for all of us at that time, we thought, “well, if they’re wrong about that, maybe they’re wrong about racism; maybe [they’re wrong about] food; and energy. And everything else kind of fell apart because of the question that the Vietnam War presented us: the dilemma of the contradiction of the America that we thought we loved.

Grace Gershuny [responding to Jay Moore]: I disagree; I don’t think that the food movement is one thing; it never was. And I think there is a very subversive intent to it still, even among those who don’t realize it. I think that when you follow the chain of logic back to what’s happening to our health, what’s happening to our environment, what’s happening to the corporatization of all of this, ownership of the basic necessities of life, and how so many people are being squeezed out of even access to it—all of this is one of the primary gateways for people to become radicalized. That’s always been the theory on which I’ve based the teaching that I do: When you begin to realize what the system is doing to people

because of this very basic material necessity, you begin to question everything else and you begin to see the necessity of building some other way of securing the tools to provide it for yourself, to provide it for your own community, and to build community around it. That's really a process that is accessible to people who aren't from a background that says politics is important or believe in some kind of ideology. It's not ideologically driven; and I think that's a much more accessible and real way of connecting with people's reality.

Question: I'm a college student (Middlebury College). The question that I'm hoping to get some kind of answer to is that I think the legacy of the communes of the '70s is obvious, and this conference has shown that with the co-ops and farmers markets, new co-housing and intentional communities. But I think the commune as a discreet living experience has for the most part has dissipated, except for a couple that are [still] there. And while there are different kinds of housing communities that have come up, I think that a certain kind of commune has gone away and I'm wondering if people agree with that, maybe what the reason for that is, and if you disagree, what the explanation is.

Jay Moore: Well, people aren't trying to smash monogamy anymore; but if you go to the [intentional] communities directory on line, you'll find quite a few here in Vermont still, of different sorts, some secular, some religious.⁴⁴ People are still looking out for the intentionality of a community.

Roz Payne: And a lot of us are older now. Seniors are generally not into recreating that type of situation because we're stuck in our life style and our houses and our passions.

Jay Moore: But there's a post-sixties/seventies veterans co-housing project on East Avenue in Burlington that you might know about.⁴⁵ So, it's happening.

Jake Guest: I think one answer is that the powers of super-capitalism are so irresistible that it has really taken over the culture. The big corporations have found out that there is money to be made here. There are only two huge corporations that own all the natural food: One is Trader Joe's and the other is Whole Foods; Wal-Mart, too. They own thousands of small retail outlets; they control the whole thing. They recruit the smartest people our society is able to produce; the sharpest, greediest, most ambitious, creative people, and they say: "make us money."

Jay Moore: The organic movement was prescient enough to wall off and try to create a fire wall between small farms, co-operative farms, and agribusines. So now, the rubric of organic has largely been taken away from us and is in the hands of the kinds of entities that Jake mentioned.

Jake Guest: People are so used to corporate presence. We should never underestimate the influence that super-capitalism has on our life.

NOTES

¹ Philip Hoff, from Chittenden County, was the first Democrat elected governor since John S. Robinson, 1853-1854. Hoff was elected in November 1962, and reelected in 1964 and 1966.

² Richard Pollak, "Taking over Vermont," *Playboy* 19 (April 1972): 147, et seq.

³ Murray Bookchin (b. New York City, January 14, 1921; d. Burlington, Vermont, July 30, 2006) was a writer, teacher, social philosopher, early and persistent critic of the influence of capitalism and globalization of the economy on the environment, and a pioneer theorist of what he called "social ecology." The author of over two dozen books and numerous articles on ecology, history, politics, philosophy, and urban planning—some written under the pseudonym Lewis Herber—Bookchin at various times labeled himself and was labeled by others a Marxist, Communist, Anarchist, utopian, and communalist. In 1974 he co-founded with Dan Chodorkoff the Institute for Social Ecology at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vt., to implement a curriculum on social theory, ecophilosophy, and alternative technologies. See obituaries by: Douglas Martin, *New York Times*, 7 August 2006; Janet Biehl, *Institute for Social Ecology*, 31 July 2006 (<http://www.social-ecology.org/2006/07/murray-bookchin-obituary-by-janet-biehl/>); Mike Small, *The Guardian*, 7 August 2006 (<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/aug/08/guardianobituaries.usa>); Andy Price, *The Independent*, 19 August, 2006.

⁴ Food Works Vermont was founded in 1988 as "a grassroots organization committed to community-based solutions to the growing concerns of poor nutrition, diet, health, land use and declining food security." It operated out of the Two Rivers Farm in Montpelier until January 2014. See the website: <http://www.foodworksvermont.org/>.

⁵ Joey Klein is founder and co-owner with his wife Betsy of Littlewood Farm, Plainfield. See Sylvia Fagan, "A season so short but oh so sweet," *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*, 1 July 2008. <http://www.timesargus.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20080701/FEATURES17/807010331/1034/FEATURES17>.

⁶ Marvin Fishman worked as a journalist in Chicago and a filmmaker in New York City, where, in 1967, he founded Newsreel, a documentary film production, distribution, and political action organization. He moved to Vermont in 1971, and after a few years as an independent media producer became the director of UVM's media operations (1976-1984). He was a founder of the sister city program between Burlington, Vermont, and Puerto Cabezas, Nicaragua. From 2004-2012, he owned a company that acquired and rehabilitated old houses. He currently works full time as an artist in Charlotte, Vt. Marvin Fishman to Michael Sherman, email, 14 May 2014.

⁷ For more information, see Newsreel Film, Roz Payne's Archives, <http://www.newsreel.us>.

⁸ The General Textile Workers strike of 1934 was a national strike organized by the United Textile Workers (UTW) and included textile workers from New England, the Middle Atlantic, and Southern states. It began on September 1—Labor Day—and lasted twenty-two days. See Jeremy Brecher, "The US national textile workers' strike, 1934," <http://libcom.org/history/us-national-textile-workers-strike-1934-jeremy-brecher>; Jonathan Murray, "Textile strike of 1934," <http://www.northcarolinahistory.org/commentary/284/entry>.

⁹ See catalog and summaries at Newsreel Film, <http://www.newsreel.us/rozNR2.htm>.

¹⁰ Michael Levine now lives in Vermont and is the owner of Flywheel Communications, in Montpelier. He corrected the speaker's account by saying that he was a junior at the University of Pennsylvania and picked up Fox on I-91 in Hartford, Connecticut. He had visited Vermont previously. Telephone conversation with the editor, 2 December 2013.

¹¹ See above, page 114.

¹² "Erewhon was founded in April 1966 by Michio and Aveline Kushi as a tiny retail store in Boston, Massachusetts, selling macrobiotic and natural foods." William Shurtleff and Akiko Aoyagi, comps., *History of Erewhon—Natural Foods Pioneer in the United States (1966-2011): Extensively Annotated Bibliography and Sourcebook* (Lafayette, Calif.: Soyinfo Center, 2011), 8 (accessible online at <http://www.soyinfocenter.com/pdf/142/Erewhon2.pdf> =).

¹³ Royce Stanley "Tim" Pitkin (b. June 7, 1901, Marshfield, Vermont; d. May 3, 1986, Burlington, Vermont). Pitkin was appointed the director of Goddard Junior College (an outgrowth of the earlier Goddard Seminary in Barre) in 1935. In 1936 he became the president of Goddard Seminary and Junior College, which reorganized as Goddard College in 1938. Pitkin served as president until his retirement in 1969. See "Pitkin, Royce Stanley," in Frederik Ohles, Shirley M. Ohles, John G. Ramsay, *Biographical Dictionary of Modern American Educators* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), 256-257; "Royce S. Pitkin," Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royce_S

.....

[Pitkin#cite_note-Vermont_Historical_Society-1](#)); Royce Stanley Tim” Pitkin papers, 1912-1983, Vermont Historical Society (Barre, Vt.), Doc 351 (continued in Doc 352-365).

¹⁴ Neruda Intentional Community, Marshfield, Vt., See <http://neruda.editedu.us/>.

¹⁵ Rising Tide Vermont is a local chapter of Rising Tide North America, a network of organizations devoted to political action on environmental and social justice issues. See <http://www.risingtidevermont.org/>.

¹⁶ *Eyes on the Prize: America’s Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1985*, DVD, produced by Henry Hampton, Blackside (1987; Arlington, Va.: American Experience, Public Broadcasting Service, 2009).

¹⁷ See obituary for Harry A. Thompson, *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*, 10 September 2013, <http://www.timesargus.com/article/20130910/OBITUARIES/709109991/1005>.

¹⁸ Samuel Kaymen grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., and currently lives in Walpole, Maine. He studied biodynamic farming and served on the board of the Biodynamic Farming and Gardening Association. He founded the Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) in 1971 and served as its president for ten years. In 1979 he founded The Rural Education Center, an organic farming school; and in 1983 he founded Stonyfield Farm Yogurt. He is trustee emeritus of Sustainable Harvest International, a past trustee of Southern New Hampshire University, served on the board of overseers of the School of Community Economic Development, and served as the vice chair of EARTH University Foundation’s board of directors. He now serves as a board member of Focus on Agriculture in Rural Maine Schools (FARMS).

¹⁹ Ralph Borsodi (1886/7/8?-1977) was a theorist and practical experimenter of sustainable agriculture and self-sufficiency, especially interested in reviving homesteading practices during the Great Depression. His two most influential books were *This Ugly Civilization* (1929) and *Flight from the City* (1933). For a brief biography, see <http://www.library.unh.edu/special/index.php/ralph-borsodi>. Robert Swann (1918-2003) was a peace activist and influential figure in the decentralist and community economics movements in the U.S., and a founder of the Schumacher Society, with an interest in land trusts, community credit, worker co-operatives, and local currency—work that he did with Ralph Borsodi. See Stephanie Mills, “Bob Swann Obituary,” The Schumacher Center for a New Economics, (n.d. [January? 2003]), <http://centerforneweconomics.org/content/mills-swann-obituary>.

²⁰ Robert Houriet was founder of Frog Run Farm and the author of *Getting Back Together* (New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, 1971), an account of his visits to communes throughout the U.S. in the late 1960s and 1970s. He currently lives in East Albany, Vt. See Anon., “Getting Back Together: Interview with Robert Houriet” (n.d. [1987]), *The Twelve Tribes*, <http://twelvetribes.org/articles/getting-back-together>, accessed January 23, 2014. In an email to the editor, Houriet wrote that he was not a founder of NOFA, but “[i]n 1973, a year after it was organized, I became its primary organizer.” Robert Houriet to Michael Sherman, email, 4 May 2014.

²¹ J. I. Rodale, *Organic Gardening: How to Grow Healthy Vegetables, Fruits, and Flowers Using Nature’s Own Methods* (Garden City, N.Y.: Hanover House, 1955).

²² For Samuel Kaymen, see note 18, above. Woods End Laboratories, Mt. Vernon, Maine, was established in 1974 to conduct scientific research and provide consulting services on soil health and “the interaction of human industry [especially agriculture] with soil environments.” See <http://woodsend.org/>.

²³ U-32, officially known as Union High School District No. 32, in East Montpelier, is the regional middle and high school for Berlin, Calais, Middlesex, East Montpelier, and Worcester, and accepts high school students from Orange, Washington, and Roxbury. The school opened in 1971.

²⁴ Rodale Institute, Kutztown, Pennsylvania, <http://rodaleinstitute.org/>. See comments by Grace Gershuny, page 125 and note 21, above.

²⁵ Available online at <http://plainfieldco-op.com/NEWSLETTER.html>.

²⁶ “Arrowhead Mills was founded in 1960 by nutritionist Frank Ford in Hereford, the seat of Deaf Smith County in the southern Texas Panhandle west of Amarillo, Texas. Ford sought to sell corn and wheat free of pesticides. The grains were initially stone-ground and sold to local markets. Later, Ford built its current facility in Hereford and added other products such as beans, seeds, cereals, and baking mixes.” See “Arrowhead Mills,” Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arrowhead_Mills

²⁷ Google, launched in 1998, is presently ranked the world’s leading Internet search engine with 2012 assets listed as \$93.8 billion in their Annual Report, filing date January 29, 2013.

²⁸ Jim Higgins, “The Plainfield Co-op, 1971-1975, a seven-part series on the first five years.” Part I, *The Plainfield Co-op Newsletter* (February 2008). See note 25, above.

²⁹ Stewart Meacham (b. March 31, 1940, Birmingham, Alabama; d. March 30, 1993, Montpelier, Vt.) was an activist in the civil rights movement in the 1960s, the antiwar movement (Vietnam War) during the 1970s, and peace and social justice causes during the 1970s and 1980s. He was a student at Goddard College in the 1960s and returned to Goddard in the ’70s to serve as director of the college’s financial aid program. He and his first wife, Susan Mattuck (see page 132 and note 33, below), were founders of the Mt. Philo commune in North Ferrisburgh in 1970, then moved to Pie in the Sky commune in Marshfield in 1972. In 1976 Meacham served as a coordinator for Central Vermont Community Action and in 1977 he became director of Vermont Tomorrow. After Susan Mattuck Meacham

.....

died in 1979, Stewart and his family moved to Montpelier, where he married Janet Ressler. See obituaries in *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*, 1 April 1993; *Burlington Free Press* 3 April 1993.

³⁰ George Oshawa (born Yukikazo Sakurazawa, October 18, 1893-April 23, 1966) was the founder of the modern macrobiotic diet and philosophy and the author of over 300 books in Japanese and French. His book *Zen Macrobiotics: The Art of Rejuvenation and Longevity* was published in English in a mimeographed edition in 1960, and later republished in 1965 by the Oshawa Foundation, in California. Among his disciples was Michio Kushi, born in Japan, May 17, 1926, who introduced macrobiotic diet and cooking to the United States in the 1950s. Michio Kushi and his wife Aveline founded Erewhon Natural Foods in 1966. See Shurtleff and Aoyagi, *History of Erewhon*, 21-22.

³¹ The St. Johnsbury city directory listed David N. Hatch and his wife Carol P. Hatch as proprietors, and Ira A. Hatch (David Hatch's father) as an employee of a "Health Library (Loan and Sales)" at their home, 8 Pine Street, starting in 1966. The 1974 city directory listed Terri R. Hatch as David's wife. The 1977-78 city directory has a listing for Hatch's Natural Products, Bethesda, Maryland, at the same address in St. Johnsbury, Teri [sic] R. (Mrs. David N.) Hatch, proprietor. That is the last listing for the store.

³² Paul Hawken was general manager of Erewhon from 1967 to 1973. See Shurtleff and Aoyagi, *History of Erewhon*, 11.

³³ Susan Mattuck Meacham (b. January 18, 1941, Plainfield, Vt.; d. January 19, 1979, Hardwick, Vt.) was the daughter of Robert and Corinne Mattuck, professors at Goddard College. She grew up in Plainfield and became a social and antiwar activist and organizer during the 1960s and '70s. She organized Free Vermont, a coalition of radical groups that initiated projects modeling changes in education, health, and food distribution; food-buying groups in Burlington, Rutland, and Middlebury; and the New England Peoples Co-operative (NEPCOOP), a coalition of Vermont and western New Hampshire buying co-ops. In 1973 she became the NEPCOOP's first coordinator. She was also a founder of the Vermont Alliance, the Co-operative Fund for New England, and the Vermont Agricultural Fund. She lived at the Mt. Philo commune in Charlotte and Pie in the Sky in Marshfield before moving to her own farm in Hardwick in 1976. See her obituary in *The Hardwick Gazette*, 23 January 1979.

³⁴ William E. Halvosa (b. June 26, 1907, Barre, Vt.; d. September 11, 1989, Graniteville, Vt.) was a bookkeeper and accountant at Rock of Ages Corporation for forty-four years. He retired in 1969 as chief accountant. See his obituary, *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*, 14 September 1989.

³⁵ A. S. Neill (1883-1973) was a Scottish progressive educator, author, and founder of Summerhill School.

³⁶ Bazzini, wholesale nut dealer, now located in Allentown, Pa., <http://www.bazzininuts.com/index.html>; Zaloom, formerly F. Zaloom & Sons, founded 1906 at 51 Washington Street, New York City, now Zaloom Marketing Corp, South Hackensack, N.J., <http://www.zaloommarketing.com>; "Beans and Grains" was an effort at Onion River Co-op to encourage farmers in the Champlain Valley (New York and Vermont) to grow wheat, rye, and oats as they had been grown in the 1800s. Chereen Beauchamp-Nobbs coordinated that work, resulting in a granary and flour mill at the Plainfield Co-op that served other co-ops.

³⁷ Francis Moore Lappé, *Diet for a Small Planet* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971); Ellen Buchman Ewald, *Recipes for a Small Planet: The Art and Science of High Protein Vegetarian Cookery* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973).

³⁸ Sands, Taylor and Wood Company, a bakery supplier and wholesale flour and importer, founded in Boston, 1790, was distributor of King Arthur Flour, beginning in 1896. The company moved to Norwich, Vermont, in 1984. See <http://www.kingarthurfour.com/about/history.html>.

³⁹ See note 31 and comments by Liz Guest, page 132 above.

⁴⁰ See George DeVault, "What Became of Walnut Acres?" *The Natural Farmer* (Spring 2006), <http://www.nofa.org/tmf/2006spring/The%20Walnut%20Acres%20Story.pdf>.

⁴¹ Lundberg Family Farms, Richvale, Calif., founded 1937. See <http://www.lundberg.com/Info/Factsheet.aspx>.

⁴² Hudak Farm, St. Albans, Vt.. See <http://hudakfarm.com/>.

⁴³ Eugene Bergman did not start PACT but worked for the organization as a VISTA volunteer in 1973, organized the PACT food co-op, and was hired by the Onion River Co-op to work with it until 1978. He was a member of the Burlington City Council for three terms, 1986-1992, and is currently senior assistant city attorney for the City of Burlington. Eugene Bergman and Michael Sherman, telephone conversation, 23 January 2014.

⁴⁴ Fellowship for Intentional Community Communities Directory. The FIC directory lists twenty-one intentional communities in Vermont; see: http://directory.ic.org/intentional_communities_in_Vermont.

⁴⁵ Burlington Cohousing East Village; <http://bcoho.org/>.