

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Woodstock Music Festival Site

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Generally West Shore Rd, Hurd Rd. Best Rd, Perry Rd not for publication

city or town Bethel vicinity

state New York code NY county Sullivan code 105 zip code 12720

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet for additional comments.

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

| I hereby certify that this property is: | Signature of the Keeper | Date of Action |
|---|-------------------------|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register. <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register. | _____ | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> other, (explain:) _____ _____ _____ | _____ | _____ |

Woodstock Music Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 0 | | buildings |
| 7 | | sites |
| 1 | | structures |
| 1 | | objects |
| 9 | | Total |

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/fields, storage

RECREATION AND CULTURE/festival site

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

AGRICULTURE/fields, storage

RECREATION AND CULTURE/festival site; commemorative

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NA

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation NA

walls _____

roof _____

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Woodstock Music Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State

8 Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria considerations

(mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

social history

music

Period of Significance

August 15, 1969-August 18,1969; 1984

Significant Dates

August 15, 1969; August 16, 1969; August 17; 1989

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

na

Cultural Affiliation

YOUTH!

Architect/Builder

Mel Lawrence, site designer

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Museum at Bethel Woods

Woodstock Music Festival Site

Name of Property

Sullivan County, New York

County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approx. 600

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 18
Zone Easting Northing
2

3
Zone Easting Northing
4

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Kathleen LaFrank, National Register Coordinator
organization New York State Historic Preservation Office date November 2016
street & number Peebles Island State Park, Box 189 telephone 518-237-8643 x 3261
city or town Waterford state New York zip code 12188

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name _____
street & number _____ telephone _____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Woodstock Music Festival Site
Bethel Vicinity, Sullivan County, New York

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The Woodstock Music Festival Site is located just north of the hamlet of Bethel, Sullivan County, New York. Bethel is located near the center of Sullivan County and is bisected by NY 17B, the former Newburgh-Cochecton turnpike. Chartered in 1801, the turnpike was the first and most important east-west road through the county. East and west of Bethel, CR's 52, 55 and 42 are the major north-south routes through the county. The Mongaup Valley opens to the southwest of the hamlet, while views to the north take in the Catskill Mts. The festival site is set in a rural region amid farmland and agricultural buildings interspersed with residences and second homes. Several miles to the east, the hamlet of Kauneonga Lake (White Lake) retains its character as a small resort village typical of the Catskills in the early twentieth century.

The nominated site is spread 600 acres of flat land mixed with rolling hills. It is generally located between Best Road on the east and Perry Road on the west and is dispersed north and south of West Shore Road and east and west of Hurd Road. The intersection of Hurd Road (north-south) and West Shore Road (east-west) is the "heart" of the festival site, and the most important festival-related activities took place around it. Those two roads provided the only access to the concert in 1969 and they provide the access to the site today. The site has seen relatively little change in 47 years, and topography, views, tree lines, stone walls, field patterns, forests, open space, streams and ponds present in 1969 can be discerned in the landscape today. The landscape features and scenic components defined the character of the site historically and were used by festival planners to create spaces for specific activities. Some of these components were deliberately manipulated by festival planners to create spaces for specific activities: fields were mowed; campgrounds were prepared, pathways were laid through wooded areas and stone walls were breached. In addition to the designated spaces, several adjacent other outlying areas were incorporated into the festival site by concert-goers: at least two locations became popular for swimming and a large tree became a central location for meetings and messages. These landscape elements were instrumental in creating the environment in which the festival took place. They enabled activity, enhanced the ambiance desired for the festival, and affected the mood of festival guests and performers. They

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are essential to an understanding of the functional history of the site and the historic events that occurred here and they contribute directly to its significance.

Most of the structures built specifically for the festival itself were ephemeral, intended to survive only the length of the three-day concert. The site preparation was consistent with period outdoor rock festivals, which were never intended to be permanent concert sites. Because the unanticipated crowds completely overwhelmed planned survives, some of the structures did not survive even the duration of the concert. A temporary infrastructure system laid over the site included wells, water storage tanks and water distribution lines, electric lines, lighting, portable toilets and trash receptacles. Any of these features that survived were removed or demolished after the concert. Concert related “furniture” included the stage, performers’ bridge, performers’ pavilion, staff tents, and concession stands, all of which was also either removed or demolished immediately after the show. Rental equipment, such as trailers, sound and light equipment, were removed from the site as soon as the festival ended. All of the locations and designs of these temporary features are well documented through plans, drawings and photos. Although we cannot be absolutely sure that everything on the site was constructed according to plan, this documentation is remarkably consistent with photos and it enhances our interpretation of the site. In addition, some remnants of concert-related structures, such as concrete footings for the stage, have been found scattered on the site (not in original locations) and are being studied for interpretative purposes.

The nomination boundary was drawn to include all the land directly associated with the Woodstock Festival that retains sufficient integrity to illustrate the significant events that occurred there between August 15-August 18, 1969. It takes in the acreage leased and laid out by Woodstock Ventures for the concert itself, as well as adjacent areas that are directly associated with the festival because significant amounts of spontaneous concert-related activity occurred on them (parking, camping, swimming). The boundary was established based on a

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study of historic maps and drawings, historic accounts, and aerial photos showing the actual use of the land during the concert. Boundary lines were based on patterns of historic activity associated with the festival and followed property lines, tree lines, stone walls, farm roads, and/or water features wherever possible because those boundary markers also defined the extent of activity. The boundary excludes one area within the leased land that has lost integrity (museum site, see below), one immediately adjacent area that has lost integrity (Hurd Road Camping), and peripheral areas that are not contiguous to the site, that are a substantial distance from the site, and/or that were subject to incidental concert-related traffic jams, informal parking, and road closures. Instead, the boundary encompasses that land most closely associated with the Woodstock Festival: places where one could see or hear the concert, walk to it, socialize with other participants and, essentially, participate in the short-lived experimental community.

The Woodstock Music Festival Site can be divided into six distinctive areas. Each has a slightly different character and each served a slightly different function during the festival:

1. Main Field

The main field, the location of the stage and the primary seating for festival goers. As the location of the concert, it is the most important part of the site. The field is said to have held more than 400,000 people during the three days of the concert and offered a nearly unobstructed view of the main stage. The main field is a rectangular parcel defined by West Shore Road on the north, Hurd Road on the west, the former Gabriel Farm on the east and, originally, by a flat land at the crest of the hill on the south. The field is a natural, bowl-shaped amphitheater, sloping broadly from its lowest point near the location of the stage (at West Shore Road) to the south, rising to a crest where the Food for Love Concessions were originally located. There are some rock outcroppings near the outer edges, especially to the south. Once planted in alfalfa, the field was mowed for the concert, severely damaged during the concert, later replanted for agricultural use, and is now maintained as a

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meadow. Views to the north take in the stage location, Filippini Pond, and the Catskill Mountains beyond, as they did in 1969. Views to the northeast and northwest (of the mountains, pond and Best Road Campgrounds) survive to an exceptional degree. Due to the location of the stage and the slope of the hill, this is the direction most concert goers would have faced. Views to the south, from the lower points on the field and from the location of the stage into the “audience,” still show the majority of the field; however, they are now compromised by the Bethel Museum, which was constructed at the top of the crest (where the food for love concessions were). The site of Bethel Museum does not retain any integrity from 1969 and has been excluded from the boundary. The surviving field retains its original topography, except for a slightly flattened section to the west, which was created for a later concert.

Physical features planned, built and/or installed for the concert itself on the field included the original stage (a wood platform (planks of wood covered with two layers of plywood and fastened with nails) 18 feet off the ground and 80 feet wide surmounted by five wood roof trusses supported on telephone poles and surmounted by strips of canvas forming a canopy), six enormous sound and light towers (each 64 feet tall, built of metal scaffolding), a tall, vertical board wood fence enclosing and creating a buffer zone around the stage, a wood footbridge spanning Hurd Road, which connected the stage with the performers’ area on the north side of the road, 14 Food For Love Concessions (wood-pole structures with canvas coverings and colorful panels), three large water storage tanks at the south edge of the main field (water was pumped from Filippini Pond), a system of portable water lines (plastic piping and elbow joints laid across the entire site and connected to spigots for public access), pumps from the tanks that ran through the field, rows of port-a-johns near the southwest corner of Hurd and West Shore Roads, a trailer for Mel Lawrence, director of operations, tall poles supporting lights and electrical lines, and some chain link fencing lining the east, south, north and a portion of the west edges of the field (although set in concrete footings, not all of the fencing was finished and some was torn down by the audience). None of these features survive.

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There is one built feature that post-dates the festival, a concrete pad at the bottom of the bowl near West Shore Road that was built for a later concert. A path that cuts across the southwest portion of the site appears to be in the same location as an old farm road that was used to bring festival equipment and supplies to the site. There is also a later peace sign mowed into the grass that has been maintained.

One element introduced onto the main field after the concert has acquired significance in its own right. That is the Woodstock Monument, which was placed on the site in 1984. The monument is significant as a commemorative under Criteria Consideration F (see item 8). The stone is located on a rise near the corner of Hurd Road and West Shore Road with a view of the entire concert field. The monument is a 5.5 ton, flat rectangular concrete slab, 46"x74.25"x39.5" in size. Two original, painted iron plaques are embedded in the concrete. One notes this as the original site of Woodstock and the other is a high relief design showing the original bird on a guitar design by Arnold Skolnick. Two later plaques list the performers. The monument was designed and sculpted by local artist Wayne C. Seward installed on land owned by Ruth Gellish by local citizens? Although the monument presents an open view of the field, its setting is now slightly compromised by a grove of trees with flag planted behind it and the concealed path the visitor must traverse between the parking area and the monument. Although the entire monument site is now demarcated with a split rail fence, public access is not restricted.

The main field is now lined on three sides with split rail fences and dense plantings of Colorado blue spruce planted by the Gerry Foundation in what was formerly open land. Although screened from public view, it remains accessible to the public at all points. The field now has a somewhat manicured, "suburban" look. However, its most important features, its natural shape, amphitheater qualities, orientation to the stage location and views of the rural landscape are undiminished by later changes. The bowl stands out as an iconic, unmistakably recognizable feature that is symbolic of the festival itself. It is the most important character-

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defining feature on the festival site. Further, the fact that the original concert-related features are well documented in original plans and photos greatly enhance our ability to interpret it.

2. Performers' Area

The performers' area was specifically set apart from the main field for the use of performers and festival staff. It was protected by chain link fencing as well as by the bridge spanning West Shore Road that allowed performers and staff to pass from the restricted area directly to the stage without crossing the road. This area is located immediately north of the main field, on the north side of West Shore Road. It is defined by West Shore Road on the south, Filippini Pond on the north, and trees and property lines on the east. It extends slightly west of Hurd Road to take in the location of a helicopter pad, which became a crucial transportation center during the three days of the concert. The performers area is a flat site that slopes north toward Filippini Pond, where the shore is outlined with denser vegetation. The shoreline of Filippini Pond, the northern edge of this section, was the site of bathing and swimming during the festival and remains accessible. A semi-circular gravel access road was constructed from Hurd Road around the inside of the perimeter for the festival. Today, a paved road follows the same general path and continues on to exit on West Shore Road. Sited within the circle during the festival were a wooden performer's pavilion and a crew mess hall (later medical tent), numerous dressing room tents for performers, and a number of trailers for festival staff, security, lighting and sound staff, medical staff, provisioning staff, promotions staff, and staging staff, all arranged in a circle around the access road. The space was also used for informal vehicle parking. None of these ephemeral features survives except for the path itself. Four non-historic residences and a storage barn have been built within the performers area; however, there was at least one residence in the area when it was rented. The majority of the land inside the performers area is open, as it was historically; however, non-historic Colorado blue spruce ornamental trees have been planted along the access road. During the concert, the performers area was a working landscape in which important support functions for the stage took place. It retains its basic open and undistinguished character

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today. The helicopter pad is located on a parcel immediate across Hurd Road to the west and this site is also included.

3. Bindy Woods/Bindy Bazaar /Enchanted Woods

Bindy Woods (also called Bindy Bazaar or Enchanted Forest) is a general square-shaped parcel southwest of the intersection of West Shore Road and Hurd Road and north of the Gemplar Farm (a dry laid stone wall marks the farm property line). It is immediately west of the main field, across Hurd Road. During the festival it was supposed to bordered on the west and north by chain link fences. These were at least partially installed as photos document them being trampled down. There is no evidence of these fences today. The Bindy Woods area is flat and grassy around its borders and wooded in the center and generally retains the topography and division into spaces that it had at the time of the concert.

This area was specifically designed by festival planners for active uses (as opposed to the passive activity intended for the main field). The edges along West Shore Road were the location of security trailers and first aid tents. Further west, southwest of the tents, was a playground consisting of seesaws, swings, a maze and a latticework climber. In the grassy space along Hurd Road the "Indian Pavilion," a special pavilion constructed for a group of Hopi Indian artists who wished to remain independent of other craft artists, was constructed.¹ There was also a designated an art fair, which was installed on the fences that enclosed the northwest corner of the woods near the main gate and in the open pasture area beyond, and there were colorful signs, street signs, etc. throughout the space. The original main gate for the festival was located in the chain link fence along the west edge of Bindy Woods. The gate was approached via an access road from West Shore Road called Tricia's

¹ The pavilion was of wood construction but no historic photo has been found to document what it looked like. The planned installation was later cancelled due to the size of the crowd.

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Trace. The roadway can be identified today, but it is not passable via auto. There is no evidence indicating the exact location of the gates.

The largest portion of Bindy Woods is a wooded grove within which three east-west and two north-south paths were laid out and padded with wood chips, thus dividing the woods into six sections. The paths traversed two north-south dry-laid stone walls, which were interrupted to create passages. Several fanciful street signs were posted (Groovy Way, High Way, Gentle Path and Easy Street), and Christmas lights were strung through the treetops. Bindy Woods was intended to serve as a primary circulation route, first, for visitors entering the venue (from the main entrance, on its west side) and, second, for patrons moving between the main field and the main parking and camping area, which were laid out farther west. These paths also provided access to the Hog Farm, just west of the main gate, which became an important source of medical attention and food. The west edge of Bindy Woods, the location of the gate, was intended to be fenced with chain link. It is not clear if this fencing was completed.

Bindy Woods was also the location of the planned "Aquarian Crafts Bazaar," where participants were invited to sell memorabilia such as beads, moccasins, posters, T-shirts, etc., distribute reading material such as pamphlets, philosophical and political leaflets and underground newspapers, and dispense up to date festival information. By all accounts, the woods was also the most popular spot for the sale and purchase of drugs. Ten lightweight concession stands and booths were constructed, mostly of found materials, and horizontal ledges were buttressed into walls to hold the voluminous paper. Some small artifacts thought to be part of the artisan booths have been located on the site.

Bindy Woods retains a high degree of integrity of topography and vegetation with the same exceptions typical of other now manicured areas of the site. The eastern strip, along Hurd Road, is planted with ornamental grass and

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has narrow maintenance paths. One suburban type house with entrance drive has been constructed in the northwest quadrant of the area, within an area that was originally open; it is well screened from the road. The woods themselves are similar in size and density to what they were at the time of the concert and at least one of the two stone walls is extant, with its passages intact. Though overgrown, evidence of the paths has been documented as part of a cultural resource study.² A few remnants of the commercial booths, etc. have been identified by the landscape architects.³ The Bindy Woods area possesses the same natural features it had when it was chosen for the concert site; alterations to the landscape for the concert and the concert-related activity that occurred there are entirely understandable and interpretable. There is no trace of the fencing or the gate location today. However, due to the enormous crowds, the main gate quickly proved ineffective at screening ticketholders or controlling traffic. Vehicles arrived from all directions, primarily via Hurd and West Shore Roads. They were generally unable to reach designated parking areas, and most parked along roadsides wherever they could. Some patrons abandoned their cars miles away and walked to the site. Many concert goers remain unaware that there was a main gate; thus, the loss of the gate location is not significant.

A large red maple tree (information tree) at the corner of West Shore Road and Hurd Road, the tallest object in the festival landscape, became an unplanned but important landscape component. It is visible in many historic photos of the concert. Due to its central location and visibility, the tree became an important communication venue for concertgoers. It served as both a meeting place and a location for posted messages. Although in poor health, the tree survives and retains numerous staples and other remnants of concert related messages.

In addition to the space officially leased and planned for festival, two other areas adjacent to the Bindy Woods section of the site are also part of the festival landscape. These include a strip in the area between the woods and Hurd Road, which was appropriated for parking, and a large square parcel south of the stone wall marking

² Heritage Landscapes, *Woodstock Festival Grounds Historic Site Cultural Landscape Report*.

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off the Gambrel Farm, also appropriated for parking. Because these areas are part of the immediate festival site, associated with its significant themes and retain integrity, they have been included in the nomination. They are undeveloped grassy areas today. Some similar areas along the southern extent of Hurd Road were excluded because they have been developed as parking for the museum and no longer retain integrity.

4. Hog Farm and Main (Perry Road) Campsite

The Hog Farm and Main Campgrounds area is located west of Bindy Woods and extends to the far western edge of the site at Perry Road. This is a large, irregular area generally defined by Bindy Woods and the Gempler Farm on the east, West Shore Road on the north, Perry Road on the west, and the extent of cleared land on the south. None of the area west of Bindy Woods was fenced in by concert promoters for the festival. Stone walls interspersed with split rail fences enclose this area along West Shore Road; the Gempler Farm boundary is marked by a historic stone wall. Perry Road is open, while a tree line defines the southwest quadrant of the area. The land is flat and was primarily used as pasture at the time of the festival; agricultural fields still fill the east and west edges and a large wooded area defines the center. A pond (excluded) marks the northwest corner of this area.

This area was designated as the main parking area and campground by festival planners and both activities took place throughout it. The official campgrounds were mown and prepared for camping with water lines and supplied with electricity and lights supported on tall wooden polls. Christmas trees lights were hung in the trees. Additional, unauthorized camping occurred in two adjacent fields at the corner of West Shore Road and Perry Road; both of these fields were also owned by max Yasgur and it is not believed that they was prepared in any way. Both are included in the nomination because of their immediate proximity and related use. Circulation to this area was provided by two dirt roads: Jennie's Turnpike, a farm road that entered the grounds from Perry

³ Ibid.

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Road. A second road (constructed) provided an entrance from West Shore Road and led to the main gate. Both roads are quite clear on 1969 photos. The location of Jennie's turnpike is visible on the land today. Some parts of the road [Tricia's Trace] from West Shore Road remain; others have faded. The historic location and remaining fragments of this road can be identified using the festival photos.

In addition to the campgrounds, the other major elements of this space were the Hog Farm and the Free Stage. The Hog Farm, a communal group that had been hired to cook and serve free food, help with security, and deliver medical attention to people with drug problems, was immediately west of Bindy Woods. The Hog Farm encampment was primarily laid out followed a strong tree line that is still evident today. The large open space in the center was reserved for communal activities, such as kitchen preparation, food distribution tents, and medical tents. These took place in relatively large square tents and wooden booths. The medical tent was a tepee near the southern line. Just west of the Hog Farm area was the Free Stage, a small wooden platform erected as a secondary concert venue for smaller acts. Plans also show an "outdoor movie" area in the southwestern corner of the site; however, this does not seem to have been constructed.

This entire section retains a high level of integrity to the period of significance. A comparison of 1969 and current aerial photographs shows that field divisions, tree lines, water bodies and the extent of forest coverings remain almost identical today, enabling us to understand how the land was used during the festival. The only changes have been the addition or loss of buildings (but not an overall change in the density of development) and the diminishing of some of the circulation paths.

5. Stream and Waterfall

The stream and waterfall are located southeast of the intersection of West Shore Road and Hurd Road. The stream crosses West Shore Road at the former west boundary of the Gabriel Farm and runs east paralleling the

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road through a narrow wooded corridor for approx. ? feet to a point just east of Best Road, where it is impounded by a dam. This was not an official part of the festival site; however, the dam was the site of informal bathing and swimming that was captured in numerous photos of the festival. The activity at this site was recorded in numerous published photos and has become significantly associated with the festival itself.

6. Best Road Campsite

The Best Road Campsite is east of Filippini Pond, north of West Shore Road, and east and west of Best Road. Part of this land was rented as campgrounds by festival managers and the rest became the site of unplanned camping by concert goers. The site is characterized by flat cultivated fields divided by tree lines with forested edges. Camping occurred in the open fields bordered by the forested areas and excluded any land immediately surrounding domestic sites. The land uses and divisions remain the same as during the period of significance.

Not Included

The Hurd Road Campsite is a strip of land on both sides of Hurd Road along the west side of Filippini Pond, northwest of the performers' area, that was the site of unplanned camping during the festival. Although not rented by festival planners, aerial photos show this land as thickly covered with tents. Although still open, these parcels have seen extensive development and contain large non-historic homes set within suburban type landscapes that bear no resemblance to the agricultural landscape present in 1969. The Hurd Road campsites have been excluded from the historic district.

Site Integrity

Overall, the Woodstock Festival Site retains substantial integrity from 1969. The site's only significant change occurred in 2008 with the development of the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts on the adjacent Gabriel Farm and the Museum at Bethel Woods on the Woodstock Festival Site. Both involved significant construction and

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land manipulation. The center for the arts, an open-air performing arts venue, was built on farmland adjacent to the site to the east that was never associated with the Woodstock Festival and was not used for any concert-related activities. The center cannot be seen from the site and does not affect its integrity. The museum, however, was built on the concert site itself. It was constructed on south end of the main field, on the crest at the top of the bowl. During the concert this was the location of the Food for Love Vendors. The sprawling wood and glass museum complex and its extensive landscaping can be seen from the location of the stage and from other areas of the festival grounds and is an intrusive element. Nevertheless, it should be noted that most concert patrons would have been looking in the opposite direction, toward the stage and the landscape beyond. Thus, the view to the south, toward the museum site, should be considered a secondary view. The museum site and related features such as such as parking lots and lighting on Hurd Road, which also compromised the rural character of the site in this direction, have been eliminated from the nomination boundary

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Minor changes to the site as a whole include overgrown paths, paving of roads that were once dirt (but retain their original size and scale), tree growth and/or loss (expected and documented), construction/loss of residential stock that was unrelated to the festival, and changes in landscape use (exceptionally few). In general, the overall topography of the site, the use of the land, the functional divisions into spaces, the location and integrity of historic stone walls, tree lines, hedge rows, wooded areas, cultivated fields, and water features retain a high degree of integrity to the period of significance. These features are all significant to an understanding of how the site was used during the concert. Due to the enormous size, remote location, outdoor and temporary nature of the event, the way in which organizers prepared the site and the ways in which participants adapted it, especially after isolation, inclement weather and shortages of food compromised the meticulous planing of organizers, are significant in illustrating how a small community formed here and adapted to change. As a whole, the Woodstock Festival Site retains an exceptionally high level ability to illustrate the events of August

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1969. Further, the survival of original, meticulously drawn site plans and the wealth of original photography significantly enhances our ability to interpret the significant events documented in this nomination.

Contributing Features:

- 1 site – Woodstock Festival Site as a whole
- 1 site – Concert Field
- 1 site – Performers Area, Heliport Site and Filippini Pond Swimming Site
- 1 site – Bindy Woods
- 1 site – Hog Farm and Perry Road Campgrounds
- 1 site - Information Tree
- 1 object – Woodstock Monument
- 1 site – Best Road Campgrounds
- 1 structure – West Shore Road Dam

Non-Contributing Features:

To be counted – each non-historic contemporary residence built on the ; some were there during the festival and some have been constructed since – as a group they do not detract from integrity because this was farmland and there were houses on it -

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Summary

The Woodstock Music Festival Site is nationally significant in social history as the site of one of the most important cultural and social events of the second half of the twentieth century. The three-day music and art festival, which took place on 600 acres of rolling farmland in rural Sullivan County, was the seminal expression of the musical, cultural and political idealism of the 1960s and embodied the ethos of the post-world World War II generation. The 1960s was the decade in which the baby boom generation formally broke with the past and established its own cultural references. This generation, born after the war, was shaped by the major themes of America's post-war history: prosperity, affluence, the decentralization of cities and the shift to suburban living, the promise of higher education, and the security of a world at peace. However, the prosperity that fostered its lifestyle also allowed this generation to see the stark contrast of their lives with the lives of those who did not enjoy the same advantages and instilled in its members a strong sense of responsibility; thus, they were troubled by poverty and injustice and eager to work towards civil rights, lesbian and gay rights, the elimination of poverty, women's rights, and universal voting rights. Brought up to believe that World War II was justly fought to free the world from madness and usher in world peace, those who came of age in the 1960s were profoundly affected by the indeterminate threat of atomic warfare and the country's deepening involvement in the Vietnam War, which gradually revealed itself to be a near meaningless political operation to be fed by the lives of American youth, many of whom could not even vote. This radical break with trust in authority led the 60s generation to question all aspects of the establishment and to experiment with personal freedoms such as sex, birth control, unconventional religions, drugs and, of course, new music, such as rock and roll, an art form expressed in a language that seemed radically eccentric to their parents' generation but through which they formed strong emotional bonds and attained lasting comfort. By the late 1960s a strong counterculture had emerged that challenged some of the moral and political foundations of the establishment. Its supporters expressed themselves variously in leftist student political organizations that protested American involvement in the war and Hippie communities, which focused on a more liberal lifestyle. In 1967, thousands of the latter

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came together in San Francisco for the so-called “Summer of Love,” an exercise in a lifestyle of unparalleled freedoms, nurtured by drugs, sex, and the developing San Francisco music scene music. The year 1968, marked by a major escalation of the war in Vietnam, the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (April) and Robert F. Kennedy (June), riots in major urban areas, the collapse of the anti-war presidential campaign of Eugene McCarthy, anti-war protests and unheard of violence by authorities at the Democratic National Convention in August, and the election of Richard Nixon as president in November, has been called the “most turbulent twelve months of the postwar period and one of the most disturbing intervals we have lived through since the Civil War”¹ However, the following summer was marked by three extraordinary cultural events: In June, the Stonewall Riots marked the beginning of the struggle for Civil Rights by lesbian and gay Americans.² In July, the Apollo moon landing awed Americans and provided the entire country with a dose of measured optimism, and in August, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, a three-day gathering of approximately 450,000 people on a dairy farm in rural Sullivan County, became of symbol of the fellowship and faith of a generation and an expression of the hope that we could, in fact do better. As Michael Lang, who envisioned the festival as a respite for his world weary generation, expressed it:

Woodstock “came to symbolize our solidarity....the connection to one another felt by all of us who worked on the festival, all of those who came to it, and the million who couldn’t be there but were touched by it. On that August weekend, during a very tumultuous time in our country, we showed the best of ourselves, and, in the process created the kind of society we all aspired to, even it for only a brief moment. The time was right, the place was right, the spirit was right, and we were right. What resulted was a celebration and confirmation of our humanity....”

“On Max Yasgur’s six hundred acres, everyone dropped their defenses and became a huge extended Family. Joining together, getting into the music and each other, being part of so many people when calamity struck – the traffic jams, the rainstorms – was a life-changing experience. None of the problems damaged our spirit. In fact they drew us closer. We recognized one

¹ Charles Kaiser, *1968 In America: Music, Politics, Chaos, Counterculture, and the Shaping of a Generation* (New York: Grove Press, 1988), xv.

² Stonewall is a National Historic Landmark and a New York State Historic Site.

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another for what we were at the core, as brothers and sisters, and we embraced one another in that knowledge. We shared everything, we applauded everyone, we survived together”³

The three-day festival was an economic and business venture advanced by two sets of unlikely associates who formed a partnership known as “Woodstock Ventures” in February 1969. They included financial investors Joel Rosenman and John Roberts and creative partners Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang. Although Lang hired a team of highly skilled and talented professionals in the music industry to design and implement the various technical and practical aspects of the event, the vision for an idyllic Arcadian happening was his alone.

The festival began on Friday, August 15, 1969, and extended into the early morning hours of Monday, August 18, 1969. During that time, thirty-one individual performers, blues, and rock and roll bands, including some of the most well-known and well-regarded performers of the era (and some newcomers whose careers received an immeasurable boost at Woodstock), played to an audience that was estimated at more than 450,000, most of whom camped on the site.⁴ Although nearly seven months had been invested in planning every aspect of the festival’s infrastructure and design, the actual venue was secured only six weeks before the event, after festival organizers were denied permits for the original site leased in Wallkill, Orange County, where they were forced to vacate by angry officials and intolerant residents. However, the new site, 600 acres of Max Yasgur’s dairy farm in rural Sullivan County, characterized by rolling pastoral farmland and forests, dotted with streams and ponds, and nestled within the surrounding Catskill Mountains, was infinitely more suited to Lang’s original vision. Although they had only five weeks to prepare, ideas conceptualized by Michael Lang and his team and planned for the Wallkill site were easily transferred to Yasgur’s farm. The layout and design were meticulously calculated to lay a safe, secure and sophisticated infrastructure, soundstage, and camping venue over cultivated farm fields and within the wooded enclaves. Nevertheless, the inadequate time to complete these preparations

³ Michael Lang, *The Road to Woodstock*, with Holly George-Warren (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), 4.

⁴ Since the festival occurred, people have been trying to estimate the number of attendees. The Museum at Bethel Woods uses the number 450,000 and notes that some estimates place it at over a half-million. For consistency, I will use 450,000.

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forced the coordinators to prioritize the most important tasks for completion. In addition, festival organizers failed to anticipate the mammoth size of the crowd, which proved to be at least three times the number expected. The immense crush of patrons, who began to arrive days before the festival began, utterly overwhelmed all transportation, food, sanitation, security, and medical facilities, and in the process effected the near complete isolation of the already secluded rural site. Difficulties were compounded by inclement weather, including intermittent thunder storms. Yet, to the immense credit of organizers, festival goers, performers, security, medical personal, and local residents, there was no disaster. Rather, a temporary and transitory community formed bounded by site, atmosphere, music and fellowship. Enormous credit was due to the creative and thoughtful way that the security plan had been conceived and carried out, which placed Woodstock in contrast to most other rock festivals of the period. A so-called "peace force" was schooled to help rather than to punish; peacekeepers were selected for their tolerance rather than their righteousness; and they were trained to keep people safe and the site secure rather than to enforce drug laws. In particular, they were not allowed to carry weapons, ensuring that any escalation would not end in tragedy. Not one violent incident was reported during the festival, and no medical personnel treated a wound resulting from violence.

The festival was recognized almost immediately as a watershed event in the transformation of American culture. Although approximately a half million people attended the outdoor festival in person, its effects spread far beyond the audience and profoundly affected a generation who experienced it and identified with it in other ways almost immediately through numerous retellings, recordings, a documentary film, an album, newspapers, articles, magazines and books.

Woodstock is also significant in music history. It was the largest and most memorable of dozens of outdoor music festivals that took place between 1967 and 1969, an era that began with the widely publicized Monterey Pops Concert, Monterey, CA, on June 16-18, 1967 and ended, tragically, with a concert at the Altamont

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Racetrack, Altamont, CA, on December 6, 1969, just three months after Woodstock. This one-day concert, organized at the request of the Rolling Stones to cap their 1969 North American tour, was so poorly organized that the venue was secured less than twenty-four hours before the bands were scheduled to play. The event was marred by the promoters' complete lack of planning and attention to safety, poor stage design, the fact that large segments of the audience had taken or been dosed with toxic drugs, the lack of a unified audience identity, and the delegation of security to a small chapter of drunken and drug-crazed Hell's Angels who assaulted bands on the stage and murdered one concert goer just a few feet from where the Rolling Stone were playing. The drug and alcohol inflamed mayhem was out of control before it started and the peaceful aura generated by Woodstock was tarnished in the eyes of the establishment a mere three months after it was created. While Altamont gave music festivals a bad name, the ideals of the Woodstock generation were shattered on May 4, 1970, when four students were killed by members of the Ohio National Guard on the campus of Kent State University.⁵ The sixty-five rounds of ammunition fired at unarmed protesting students, hitting some in the back, felling others while they were walking to class, was shocking and shattering, all but ending the optimism of the 1960s. In 1970, John Lennon wrote that he no longer believed in Elvis, Zimmerman, or Beatles; "the dream is over, yesterday," and perhaps it was.⁶ Within a decade, Lennon himself joined the ranks of murdered heroes cut down in their prime.

Yet, the memory of Woodstock and the extraordinary community that formed there has never been tarnished. As such, Woodstock has become a symbol of the idealism of those who came of age in the 1960s and believed that they could together challenge oppression and injustice – end the Vietnam war, achieve civil rights, and provide an alternative to corporate America. Woodstock remains a symbol of what was thought possible. The Woodstock Music Festival is recognized by cultural historians, music historians, and large numbers of American citizens who came of age in the 1960s as a defining event in the history of the post-World War II era.

⁵ The May 4, 1970 Kent State Shooting Site has just been recommended for NHL designation

⁶ John Lennon, "God," *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, 1970.

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The long-lasting impact of the festival on American life is attested to by the fact that the Woodstock festival and its aftermath helped shape the world views, social consciences, and musical tastes of thousands of people who are now in leadership roles in every segment of American life.

Musically, the Woodstock festival was regarded as a critical success. It is remembered as the largest musical event of its kind to that date, the most successful, and the most significant. Thirteen of its thirty-two groups or performers have been inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Some of the bands that played there made career breakthroughs (such as Santana) and several seminal performances occurred there, most notably Joe Cocker's "Freedom" (which he composed on the spot), Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixing-to-Die-Rag," and Jimi's Hendrix's version of the "Star Spangled Banner," which was said to have "encapsulated the both the musical and political spirit of Woodstock with blues-edged poignancy and other-worldly improvisations."⁷

The site is locally significant for its effect on commerce and social history and politics in the Sullivan County town of Bethel and the surrounding region and for the way in which the local battles between festival organizers who sought approval to have the fair and the members of the establishment who fought it mimicked national trends.

The period of significance extends from Friday, August 15, 1969 – when Richie Havens opened the festival – until the early morning hours of Monday, August 18, 1969 – when Jimi Hendrix brought the festival to a conclusion. The Woodstock Monument, installed in the northwest corner of the main field in 1984, is also significant under criteria consideration F as a commemorative. The monument is not significant for its association with the festival itself but for the sentiments of those who erected it in the late 1980s, for the values

⁷ Evans and Kingsbury, 215.

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that they placed on Woodstock and a reminder of the enduring significance of Woodstock to later generations. The Woodstock Monument has had a continuing role as the site of commemorative activities since it was installed, with visitors, many from the Woodstock generation, stopping on a daily basis to view the field.

Post-war America

In America, the period after World War II was ushered in by ten million returning veterans, many eager to find jobs, marry, and start families. This immediately triggered a profound housing crises that compelled government intervention. The flood of new families with urgent needs for shelter combined with the massive amounts of federal money allocated to highway construction virtually forced the development of suburbia, while at the same time decentralizing and destabilizing cities. Between 1948 and 1958 thirteen million homes were built, eleven billion of them in the suburbs, and by 1960 the population of the suburbs equaled that of the center cities.⁸ As the middle class – the white, married middle class, that is - followed the wealthy to the suburbs, generating explosive growth there, they left behind people who were more marginalized, poorer, and less able to invest in their neighborhoods and downtowns. At the same time, the GI bill sent many of these veterans to school, following which many of them got good jobs, some in new industries such as nuclear power or aeronautics. Economic growth was generated in part by the demand for roads and houses, schools and consumer goods, as well as by the drive to propel America into leadership in the sciences and dominance in the military, and widespread prosperity ensued.

The post-war period was marked by stability, substantial economic growth and material wealth. In 1955, 50 percent of all white American families owned at least one car, a television and a refrigerator. By 1960, the stock market was more than twenty times higher than any year since the Depression; the GNP had increased by 250 percent since the end of World War II, and median family income had doubled. America was the richest

⁸ David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 11.

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nation the world had ever known. Telephones, televisions, refrigerators, electrical appliances, fast cars and cheap gas were considered part of the American birthright.⁹

Yet, not everyone benefitted. In particular, the legacy of slavery, war, reconstruction, and Jim Crow had left widespread poverty and inequality throughout the south and legally sanctioned racism was entrenched. About 20 percent of African Americans were poor. And the effects of prosperity that washed over the middle class largely excluded them. In the south, new farming technologies had forced small farmers off the land. By 1960 about 55 percent of the African American poor lived in cities and 30 percent lived in small towns. New technologies also displaced unskilled workers, most of whom were African American, and jobs for this group largely vanished.¹⁰ Poor blacks were especially visible in America's older cities, which began to decline following the exodus of the middle class to the suburbs. This population was replaced with a poorer and less stable one, less able to sustain inner city businesses. Government programs to help declining cities ended up destabilizing them - if not demolishing them altogether.

The 1960s

The 1960s began as a decade of promise with the election of John F. Kennedy in 1960. The rise of a youthful president and gifted speaker who challenged Americans to "ask what they could do for their country" was inspiring to American youth, and if they didn't quite grasp the impact of the Bay of Pigs crisis or the implications of the early American involvement in Vietnam, they were nevertheless inspired by the president's vision for a Peace Core and his stated determination for a moon landing in their time – for these were distinctly modern goals for a new age. In equal measure were they distraught by the president's assassination just three years later, the first – perhaps the most shocking - but certainly not the last disillusionment that this group would bear before it took on the mantle of adulthood.

⁹ Farber, 8-9.

¹⁰ Farber, 12-18.

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Like the population and the economy, the magnitude of “youth” itself grew exponentially during the 1960s to include more than 76 million Americans. This was a direct result of the “Baby Boom” (1946-1964), the dramatic increase in the birth rate in the decades after WWII, as well as post-war affluence, which allowed people to have larger families, gave young people longer and more carefree childhoods and the means to stay in school longer, and the new emphasis on completing higher education. By the mid-60s, almost half of all students attended college and were not yet part of the adult workforce. In 1964, 41 percent of the population was under twenty, and the largest age group in America was composed of those who were seventeen years old.¹¹ The Baby Boom generation were full participants in the “national culture of prosperity,” which enabled them to engage in self-expression through personal consumption, freely buying clothes, music and attending concerts; however, they also began to question the values that led to that prosperity and whether it was a morally appropriate goal.¹²

Kennedy’s successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, who became president following the 1963 assassination, did not lose the confidence of youth immediately. Johnson began his presidency with a deep devotion to Civil Rights and a strong belief in the federal government’s responsibility to reduce inequality and protect oppressed minorities. In his first state of the union message (January 1964), the new president declared a “War on Poverty” and subsequently introduced a broad program designed to fight poverty and promote better health, ensure higher education, protect mass transit, ensure consumer protection, environmental protection, and historic preservation.¹³ Johnson’s agenda reflected the liberal ideology of the age. As Joseph Califano, secretary of health, education and welfare, put it “We could not accept poverty, ignorance and hunger as intractable, permanent features of American society. There was no child we could not feed, no adult we could not put to work, no disease we could not cure, no toy, food or appliance we would make safer, no air or water we could

¹¹ Farber, 57.

¹² Farber, 11.

¹³ Johnson’s achievements include the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

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not clean.”¹⁴ Johnson succeeded in some of his ambitions to make America a more just and fair place, winning some important civil rights victories and social justice legislation, but his reputation ultimately suffered by his handling of the small foreign war in southeast Asia that he had inherited from Kennedy.

Civil Rights

Years of institutionalized racism and discrimination proved more difficult and complicated to untangle and southern lawmakers more intractable than anticipated. Nevertheless, by the 1960s, years of struggle against the legacy of slavery and civil war, reconstruction, Jim Crow laws, Ku Klux Klan terrorism, and state sponsored segregation had finally provoked the nation’s African American population to begin large-scale organizing to take a stand against state-sponsored racial segregation, discrimination and the status quo. In addition, by the 1960s, the federal government (particularly under Kennedy and Johnson) also began to take a stronger role in protecting rights and liberties of every American¹⁵

After several small but symbolic victories, such as the desegregation of the military in 1948 and major league baseball [Jackie Robinson] in 1946, radical change to the system itself was necessary. In the mid-1950s, the US supreme court finally rejected the notion of “separate but equal,” which had been used to justify institutional discrimination for more than a century, in the seminal decision, *Brown v Board of Education* (1954). The court ruled that the sole purpose of segregation was to isolate and exclude black children, to denigrate and demoralize them and ordered states to end legally mandated segregation.¹⁶ This led intransigent governors to defy the order, setting up more conflict, and forcing the federal government to send troops across the south to protect small children on their way to school.

¹⁴ In Farber, 105

¹⁵ Farber, 71.

¹⁶ Farber, 69-72.

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Encouraged by leaders such as Martin Luther King, John Lewis, Julian Bond, and others, African Americans themselves began to take some of the first assertive activities to organize against oppression. In 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus, sparking the Montgomery bus boycott, during which most of Montgomery's African American citizens refused to ride city busses for over a year. The boycott ended with a supreme court order to de-segregate the city's busses. In 1960, four black college students held the first "sit in" at the Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro, NC. When they were not served, the four refused to leave until the store closed, returning the following day to repeat the action. This peaceful protest marked the beginning of an organized anti-discrimination tactic that spread to fifty-five cities in a month. Within six months Woolworth's lunch counter had been quietly integrated. In 1963, the March on Washington [organized by Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph] brought 200,000 people to the Washington Mall to demonstrate in support of jobs and freedom and to hear Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his inspiring "I have a dream" speech.

In 1964, more than 1,000 mostly white, idealistic, out-of-state young people who believed that they could personally confront racism participated in Freedom Summer, a drive sponsored by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) to register as many Mississippi African Americans to vote as possible. While workers managed to register less than 7 percent of eligible black voters, eighty of the volunteers were attacked or beaten. The tragic legacy of the summer was the brutal murder of three civil rights workers, one black and two whites. Their killers were not brought to justice for forty-one years. However, the voting rights act of 1965, which prohibits racial discrimination in voting, was a landmark achievement, considered by some to be the most significant Civil Rights legislation in history. But none of these victories put an end to segregation and racism – or the poverty that often accompanies them. After Martin Luther King was assassinated in April 1968, rioting began and soon spread to as many as 130 cities. Sixty-five thousand National Guard troops were called out to quell the riots, thirty-nine people died, and 20,000 were

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arrested. The non-violence that King had devoted his life to seemed to vanish and blacks and whites seemed more polarized than ever.¹⁷

During the same years, the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) was built on sixty years of polite struggle against a losing battle, and by the late 1960s many African Americans rejected the ideal of a “color blind melting pot” and turned instead to black separatist movements.¹⁸ The Black Panther party was organized in 1966, just a year after Malcolm X was assassinated. The panthers had grown restless after centuries of oppression, few victories, repeated assassinations of their leaders, and the halting progress of change that often did not include economic gain. Yet, in 1968, mainstream America was surprised and offended when Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their black gloved fists on the Olympic podium in Mexico City black power at 1968 Olympics.

Vietnam

For the average American, the Vietnam conflict began in the mid-1950s, when President Eisenhower sent military advisors to help the South Vietnamese. For the Vietnamese, the conflict had always been about winning control of their country from a colonial power, France, which had held it since the 1880s. When a communist led faction finally defeated the French in the early 1950s and the Geneva Convention divided the country in two, the United States refused to accept the solution, prompting U.S. officials to start sending military advisors to mentor a poorly led South Vietnam to resist the “communist threat.” Under President Kennedy, the American presence grew dramatically, and the draft began to escalate to meet the demand. With the nation in the middle of the Cold War, most Americans perceived a communist takeover as any country’s greatest threat; thus, the Vietnam situation was presented to the American people as a example of the so-called “Domino Theory,” the idea that if South Vietnam fell to the communists, all of southeast Asia would fall behind

¹⁷ Kaiser, 148.

¹⁸ Farber, 68.

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it – and thus the importance of the conflict was greatly exaggerated. Johnson’s decision to escalate the war in 1964 and 1965 was presented a part of the global fight against communism.

The North Vietnamese were defined as aggressors, while their actual goal was to reunite their country. While American citizens thought they were fighting to defend an innocent people from tyranny, the war was more about American power and image. No American president wanted to lose a war or be seen as letting a country fall to communism. The conflict was less a war than a “demonstration project illustrating how the United States could reshape a Third World revolutionary struggle.”¹⁹ Further, it became more and more difficult for American leaders to conduct a clandestine war now that horrifying images of carnage came into American homes on the nightly news. In addition, the decision to take the youngest men first, rather than the oldest, as had been the policy in previous wars, along with the increasing reliance on the draft, meant that the average age of the American soldier in Vietnam was nineteen, bringing the war under directly under the scrutiny of college students. And, as it went wrong, it became increasingly hard to explain its purpose to the American public or to the young men who were plucked from college campuses to go and fight it. As Americans learned the truth, Vietnam provoked “the most sustained mass resistance to any war in American history”²⁰ The entire episode gradually undermined faith in government and in authority in general. This was especially true for the American youth who were old enough to be drafted at the age of eighteen but could not vote until they were twenty-one. During the second half of the 1960s, the Vietnam war was *the* most significant concern of American youth.

In 1965, 180,000 US troops were sent to Vietnam. In 1967, 389,000, and in 1969, 540,000. When the thirty-year war finally ended, ingloriously, in 1975, a total of 2,594,000 US troops had fought in Vietnam (of which 25 percent had been were drafted), and 58,193 of them had died (and of those 30 percent were drafted). More

¹⁹ Farber, 119.

²⁰ Farber, 119.

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than 300,000 American soldiers were wounded and, of those, 75,000 were severely disabled. At least 500,000 civilians had died.²¹

The Counterculture

Counterculture is a broad term that has been used to describe the generation gap that separated youth culture from that of their parents in the 1960s. While there was certainly a generational component involved, and differences in fashion, musical taste and other superficial accouterments often kept people at odds, the term refers to a much deeper split between the values, morals and truths that guided the everyday lives of citizens. The term “counter culture” was apparently first used by Talcott Parsons in 1951 in *The Social System* without being defined. In 1960, Milton Yinger defined the characteristic element of what he called the “contraculture” as something that was “in value-conflict with the dominant society”²² However, Roberts noted that such conflicts may exist between cultures that actually have much in common and that “not every value or characteristic of the dominant culture will be rejected.” Rather, the counterculture is focused on the rejection of certain explicit characteristics of the culture from which it arises and that proponents are more interested in changing the culture than replacing it.²³

The historical roots of the 1960s counterculture are often traced to the late 1950s, when the Beat poets began to express their rejection of certain aspects of American materialism, living less conservative lifestyles and experimenting with drugs such as marijuana. Yet the Beats and the Hippies didn’t share exactly the same values. Bohemian counterculture was at heart elitist, while the disillusionments and contradictions of the 1960s led privileged young people to question the “capitalistic competitiveness [that] is the fundamental characteristic

²¹ Mike Evans and Paul Kingsbury, ed., *Woodstock: Three Days That Rocked the World* (New York: Sterling, 2009), 18-20.

²² Keith A. Roberts, “Towards A Generic Concept of the Counter-Culture,” *Sociological Focus* 11.2(April, 1978), 111.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20831076>

²³ Roberts, 113-115.

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of America society.”²⁴ The countercultural response included actions that specifically rejected these values. Communal living, for example, was a direct rejection of that value-orientation, as is a distribution of wealth based on a person’s intrinsic worth rather than on merit or hard work. Equal rights is the ultimate countercultural goal. The counterculture is interested in creating a better society, not by violent opposition but by providing an alternative so that the establishment may change voluntarily and adopt a more humanistic way of life.²⁵

One early organized group that took a strong stand against capitalist society and also became associated with the symbols of the countercultural lifestyle was the Diggers, named after a group of seventeenth-century English utopians. The Diggers took up residence in the Haight-Ashbury in the mid-60s, helping to bolster the connotation of San Francisco as the heart of the counterculture. The Diggers operated a free store, a free theater, and free concerts. They fed many of the “flower children” who drifted to the city in the late 1960s.²⁶

They also popularized some of the fashion that came to be seen as the signifier of the counterculture, as they took to wearing colorful outfits that recalled theatrical costumes. However, they weren’t the only ones introducing new fashions. Musicians, such as the Beatles and the British invasion, also had a major influence on hair and fashion. Soon longer hair and new and more provocative ways to dress began to characterize the “hippies,” who were the outward manifestation of the counterculture. In addition to new styles of dress, there was radically new music, more sexually expressive dancing, and, of course, sexual freedom, which was “at the core of the counterculture’s rejection of conventional American morality,” since “in 1969 more than two-thirds of all people believed that premarital sex of any kind was wrong.” Illegal and experimental drugs were another

²⁴Laurance Veysey is apparently the source of “capitalistic competitiveness,” in Roberts, 118.

²⁵ Roberts, 121.

²⁶ Farber, 169-172.

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manifestation of the countercultural lifestyle and one of the reasons the establishment most feared the counterculture.²⁷

Yet, the essence of the cultural split was always more a questioning of the moral code than the dress code. It involved questioning the moral foundation of the establishment itself: the moral superiority that got us into a war, the traditions that perpetuated racism; the affluence and economic imbalance that caused poverty; the religious truths that precluded questioning. The counterculture was very much about opposition to the war. The Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) may have dressed conservatively, but their first student strikes and college takeovers were a bold statement of the counterculture's position. The national debate over Vietnam and racism caused many young people to question who had the legitimate authority to tell them what was right and what was wrong.²⁸ No longer able to trust traditional authorities, young people set out to find their own truths.

The establishment, on the other hand, believed that the "traditions and values that made the nation great were under attack by people who did not respect them or their way of life."²⁹ The nature of any establishment is "to believe itself the only valid expression of human needs. To recognize the legitimacy of an alternative society and culture would be to confess its own inadequacy and failure - an admission which establishments of any sort have always found it virtually impossible to make."³⁰ The success of a counterculture depends upon members of the establishment undertaking a basic change in their way of thinking followed by a real change in their behavior toward other human beings and the world in general. This did not occur. However, some now believe that some of the smaller scale activities that grew out of the counterculture -- such as establishing food co-ops --

²⁷ Farber, 174-183.

²⁸ Farber, 176.

²⁹ Farber, 168.

³⁰ John Gorman, "The Counter Culture in Crisis," *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 555.4 (Winter 1972), 392, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41177960>

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furnished desperately needed services to communities abandoned by the establishment and provided the basis for new lifestyles that continued to flourish.³¹

Rock and Roll

The foundation for the rock and roll revolution began in the mid-1950s, when Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" became the first rock and roll record to reach number one. The following year Elvis Presley, who drew on the "race music" of the American south and shocked mainstream audiences with an overtly sensual performance style, scored his first number one hit with "Heartbreak Hotel." Yet, as the 1960s dawned, more mainstream and conservative singers such as Frankie Avalon, Paul Anka and Connie Francis were still extremely popular with multi-generational audiences.³² Music with a message began with the revival of enthusiasm for folk music in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Groups such as Peter Paul and Mary and Pete Seeger (following in the footsteps of Woody Guthrie) began to sing about some of the more important social issues of the era, such as the civil rights movement. This music began to reach a wider audience with the young after Bob Dylan appeared in New York City, making his first club appearance in 1961. Dylan was at once more eloquent and more compelling. Songs such as "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" or "Masters of War" (1963) addressed racism and war and offered stinging criticisms of the establishment in a more contemporary rhetoric. He and Joan Baez sang "Only a Pawn in Their Game" (about the assassination of Medgar Evers) at the 1963 March on Washington. One of his best known and most didactic songs of the era, "The Times They are a-Changin'," was both a prediction and a stern warning: A new age, an age of great change, was coming; youth would be empowered; and those who couldn't change with it should get out of the way. At the same time, Dylan's bold lyrics were still expressed within the traditional musical language of folk.

³¹ Gorman, 404.

³² Mikal Gilmore, "Bob Dylan, the Beatles, and the Rock of the Sixties," *Rolling Stone* (August 23, 1990)

http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/bob-dylan-the-beatles-and-the-rock-roll-of-the-60s-19900823?utm_source=email

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In the same years, the Beatles, who, like Dylan, also made their first club appearance in 1961, gave fair warning that musical expression itself was also changing in an explosive way. The Beatles introduced a new musical language built on exciting chord progressions and combinations and the ability to synthesize everything that had come before them.³³ As *Rolling Stone* critic Greil Marcus put it, “the form of the Beatles contained the forms of rock and roll itself.”³⁴ In the U.K., the Beatles had an unprecedented six singles in the top twenty in 1965, just before “I Want to Hold Your Hand,” their first American single, followed by their appearance on the Ed Sullivan show in 1964, marked their conquest of American music. According to *Rolling Stone*, “Their music transfixed and delighted us.”³⁵ Dylan noted that they were doing things nobody else was and he knew that “they were pointing the direction that music must go”³⁶

In 1965, influenced in part by the Beatles, Dylan began to experiment with the new language of electric rock. His first electric album was *Bringing it all Back Home*, 1965, which was electric on one side and acoustic on the other. His first public appearance using the new form was at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, where he played “Like a Rolling Stone” and “Maggie’s Farm” backed by the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Some of his fans had difficulty following him [Pete Seeger, for example, tried to unplug him at Newport.] As Robbie Robertson, who, with other members of The Band, backed Dylan on his 1965-66 world tour, recalls, “at every stop they were greeted by boos from audiences unhappy with Dylan’s switch to electric”³⁷ Nevertheless, Dylan persevered and began to use more complex electronic instrumentation to transform and layer his music with additional meanings and complexity, and by enriching the sonic landscape he was able to “[connect] with a broader and more vital audience”³⁸ Perhaps his greatest song from that era, “Like a Rolling Stone,” released in

³³ Kaiser, 198.

³⁴ In Kaiser, 198

³⁵ Gilmore, n.p.

³⁶ In Gilmore, n.p.

³⁷ “The Birth of the Band: The True American Journey of Robbie Robertson,” *Rolling Stone* (Nov 17, 2016) 52; Adapted from Jaime Robbie Robertson, *Testimony* (New York: Penguin, 2016).

³⁸ Gilmore, n.p.

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July 1965, was rated number one on *Rolling Stone's* "500 Greatest Songs of All Time."³⁹ Bruce Springsteen discussed the importance of the song when he inducted Dylan into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988:

The way that Elvis freed your body, Dylan freed your mind, and showed us that because the music was innately physical did not mean that it was anti-intellect. He had the vision and talent to make a pop song that contained the whole world. He invented a new way a pop singer could sound, broke through the limitations of what a recording could achieve, and he changed the face of rock'n'roll for ever and ever.⁴⁰

Dylan, who has been awarded the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature, has been called "the most important songwriter of the last 50 years."⁴¹ He has served as an inspiration and a model for too many other important songwriters to mention. A very brief list includes Paul Simon, Joe Strummer, The Who, David Bowie, Neil Young, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen, Nick Cave, Patti Smith, Mick Jagger, Tom Waits, Bono, and Ryan Adams.

By the mid-1960s, as the baby boom generation came of age, everything got more serious for American youth. Music began to lose its innocence, generational tensions strained, and teenagers, who no longer shared any musical interests with their parents, began to find a refuge in the joy, fear and tension that defined rock and roll. By the late 1960s, rock and roll had become an enormously unifying, liberating and comforting force. The best music embodied the fear, doubt and the terror of the apocalypse along with the consensus of joy and promise.⁴²

³⁹ "500 Greatest Songs of All Time," *Rolling Stone* (April 7, 2011) www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-500-greatest-songs-of-all-time-20110407

⁴⁰ Bruce Springsteen inducts Bob Dylan Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Inductions, 1988. http://youtu.be/SRu6613Q1_U

⁴¹ Sean Wilentz, in Eleanor Barkhorn, "How Bob Dylan Changed the '60s and American Culture," *The Atlantic* (Sept 9, 2010) <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2010/how-bob-dylan-changed-the-60s-and-american-culture/62654>

⁴² Gilmore, n.p.

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Charles Kaiser has written that 1968 was the “pivotal year of the sixties: the moment when all of a nation’s impulses toward violence, idealism, diversity, and disorder peaked to produce the greatest possible hope and the worst imaginable despair.” At the same time, “the remarkable unity achieved through the music on the radio” was the only place in the history of US where, for a fleeting moment, we created a world of seemingly genuine racial and sexual equality embraced by everyone under thirty.”⁴³ “The songs they produced kept us alive, even a little hopeful, through the most terrifying year of the decade.”⁴⁴

Music Festivals

If music was a near universal expression of countercultural comfort and solidarity, the outdoor music festival became one of the most important sources of cultural expression and mutual support for the 60s generation. The American rock music festival had its origins in the successful Newport Jazz Festival and its west coast counterpart, the Monterey Jazz Festival, both founded in the mid-1950s to showcase the performance of jazz in a relaxed outdoor setting. These festivals helped to broaden the appreciation of jazz by expanding the audience from elite spectators to a more egalitarian crowd, and they also served to popularize the idea of the outdoor festival. With the increasing popularity of folk music, Newport organizers added the Newport Folk Festival in 1959, further broadening the appeal of outdoor festivals, as well as promoting gatherings of musicians with messages. Bob Dylan, who performed at Newport in 1963 and 64, was especially popular with his early “protest” songs. By the middle of the decade, the Newport Folk Festival was ready to experiment with rock and roll, allowing special rock performances at its 1965 festival. This experiment, which featured the Paul Butterfield Blues Band backing Dylan on electric instruments, was seen by many of the folk fans as a betrayal. Others were thrilled, however, and Dylan’s electric debut ensured his place in the counterculture.

⁴³ Kaiser, vix.

⁴⁴ Kaiser, xx.

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However, the relationship between music and the counterculture that led to Woodstock was forged during the 1967 “Summer of Love.” The Summer of Love was ushered in on January 14, 1967 with the first “Human Be-in” at Golden Gate Park. Part music festival, part poetry festival, and part protest over a new law that criminalized LSD, festival organizers, led by Timothy Leary, served up sandwiches dosed with LSD and urged participants to question authority.⁴⁵ Although this was the first widespread use of the words “Be-In,” the term was derived from the “sit-ins” held throughout the south beginning in 1960. The Human Be-In featured Beat poets, such as Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and some of the early San Francisco bands, such as the Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead. It was attended by students, hippies, and members of the older counterculture groups. It was widely covered in the press and sparked dozens of similar events.⁴⁶ The Be-In popularized hippie culture and sparked the Summer of Love, a season fueled by a combination of electric rock and psychedelic drugs, drawing between 50,000 and 70,000 young people to the west coast in search of a new, liberal kind of life.⁴⁷ There, in San Francisco’s Haight-Ashbury District, they staked their claim to a community based on questioning traditional values and resisting traditional authorities, a society made manifest in language, dress, sex, drugs and music that captivated youth but confused authorities⁴⁸

Among the reasons that the hippie community gravitated to San Francisco was the increasing popularity of the regional music scene, as well as a tradition of free concerts and other community gatherings in Golden Gate

⁴⁵ Ken Kesey had actually pioneered the so-called acid tests, big multi-media public gatherings with light shows, rock music, mad dancing and acid dropping- a year earlier. Kesey’s acid tests were important early multimedia happenings combining light shows, tapes, live rock bands movie, slide projectors, strobe lights and other stuff – but they were more about art than music. The Grateful Dead was the official band. The San Francisco Tripps Festival (Jan 1966), at which the Grateful Dead and Big Brother performed, began staging them at the Fillmore in San Francisco. William L. O’Neill, *Coming Apart: An Informal History of America in the 1960s* (New York: Random House, 1971), 242.

⁴⁶ Michael William Doyle, “Statement on the Historical and Cultural Significance of the 1969 Woodstock Festival Site.” *Bethel Performing Arts Center Draft Generic Environmental Impact Statement*, DATE, 2

⁴⁷ Joel Selvin, *Altamont: The Rolling Stones, The Hells Angels, and the Inside Story of Rock’s Darkest Day* (New York: Harper Collins, 2016), 27

⁴⁸ Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, rev. (New York: Bantam, 1993), 215.

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Park. More than 200 bands defined the “San Francisco sound,” which was very loosely based on country, blues and jazz. The music of these bands generally embodied spiritual and pacifist ideals but tended to be less overtly political [at least at first]; rather, the San Francisco bands formed social bonds with their audiences and tried to build community out of a mixture of music, drugs, sex, and love.⁴⁹ Among the most important were the Grateful Dead, Hot Tuna, the Jefferson Airplane, the Steve Miller Band, Moby Grape, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Canned Heat, Country Joe and the Fish, Creedance Clearwater Revival, the Doors, Electric Flag, Sly and the Family Stone, Steppenwolf, Big Brother and the Holding Company, and Santana.

The Be-In and the other events in Golden Gate Park became the inspiration for what is thought to be the very first important rock music festival in the United States. The little-known Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival was held on June 10-11, 1967 at the Sydney B. Cushing Memorial Amphitheater in Marin County, CA. Thirty acts, including the Doors, Jefferson Airplane, the Byrds, Captain Beefhearts and the Magic Band, Dionne Warwick, Canned Heat, and Country Joe and the Fish, performed at a two-day festival organized by Tom Rounds, a program director for KFRC radio, and co-produced by Mel Lawrence, who later helped to produce a number of other festivals, including Woodstock two years later. The concert was a benefit for the Hunters Point Child Care Project. Rounds noted that they relied on the leaders of Haight-Ashbury to help set it up, and Lawrence described himself as handling the logistics and transportation, a job that provided him with valuable experience for later festivals. Apparently, the festival’s idea of having a doctor to minister to those with bad trips set an important precedent, and Hells Angels (not formally engaged or paid) provided some kind of security⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Pietro Scaruffi, *The History of Rock Music: The Sixties*. www.scaruffi.com/history/cpt21.pdf

⁵⁰ *Rolling Stone* (June 17, 2014) <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/the-untold-and-deeply-stoned-story-of-the-first-u-s-rock-festival-20140617>

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The San Francisco sound reached a national audience after the Monterey International Pop Festival, which was held one week later, on June 16-18, 1967. Monterey is recognized as the first large-scale outdoor rock music festival. Approximately 50,000 people attended the event, which was planned by John Phillips of the Mamas and the Papas, Lou Adler, a record producer, and publicist Derek Taylor. Their idea was to validate rock music as an art form using the successful Monterey Jazz Festival as a model. The rock festival, which was held at the same venue as the jazz festival, was planned as a free event. All but two of the bands donated their fees, and all the money was donated to charity. This festival popularized the idea of the multi-day rock festival and set the standard for some of the logistics used by numerous other concert organizers. Like the Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Music Festival, these organizers had a staff of trained volunteers to deal with bad trips. The Monterey Pop Festival introduced artists such as Jimi Hendrix, the Who and Janis Joplin to large American audiences; it established San Francisco as the center of America's rock scene, and it bestowed legitimacy on the music of the counterculture.⁵¹ Monterey also helped to disseminate the less restricted cultural mores of the San Francisco community across the country. As festivals like Monterey proliferated, their forms – crowded gatherings where people camped and bonded under sometimes adverse circumstances - conveyed the sense that they “were sites where the counterculture itself was rehearsed, performed and....consumed, as at the be-ins.”⁵² Other performers at Monterey included the Grateful Dead, Big Brother and Holding Co., Quicksilver Messenger Service, Moby Grape, Steve Miller Blues Band, Electric Flag, Otis Redding, Jefferson Airplane, the Mamas and the Papas, Janis Joplin, Canned Heat, Laura Nyro, Buffalo Springfield, Ravi Shankar, Booker T and the MGs, Hugh Masakela, the Association, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, the Blues Project, and County Joe and the Fish.⁵³ Over the next two years, some of these new “acid rock” groups used state of the art sound and light shows and performance enhancing psychedelic drugs to significantly expand their popularity in America.

⁵¹ Selvin, 28.

⁵² Doyle, 3.

⁵³ Monterey was documented in a film by D.A. Pennebaker.

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Following the success of Monterey, there were dozens of large, outdoor, mostly multi-day music festivals throughout the United States between 1967 and the early 1970s. California alone had ten, Florida six and Georgia two. It is estimated that more than two million Americans attended a rock festival in these years [fn] As a phenomena, rock festivals were “unique, dynamic and experimental.”⁵⁴ They primarily drew youth and they often offered budding counterculturalists the first opportunity to meet others like themselves, as well as those of racial and ethnic diversity, and to experiment with being part of the movement. Many of these young people were completely on their own for the first time, away from parents and other authorities, free to engage in drinking, drugs, sex, public nudity, all sorts of personal expression, and the free airing of their political beliefs in a large crowd of people like themselves, all in sync to a unifying and powerfully addicting beat. Instead of clashing with “normal society,” for the first time they *were* normal society. And while they may have appeared to be gathering in the name of fashion and fad, these experimental “cities” were often testing themselves to see if they could form the kind of community they wanted to see in the world, unified in their views of the social and political concerns of the times.⁵⁵ This was an enormously empowering idea and it partially explains why so many people who attended Woodstock and other festivals say that their lives were changed by them. As Michael Lang put it, we created the kind of society we all aspired to, even it for only a brief moment.⁵⁶

The small Miami Pop Festival, May 18-19, 1968, was notable because it was the first concert produced by Woodstock visionary Michael Lang (with Richard O’Barry). It was held at the Gulfstream Race Track and drew an audience of 25,000. Bands, staged on flatbed trucks, included John Lee Hooker, Chuck Berry, Mothers

⁵⁴ Bill Mankin, “Peace, Love and...We Ca All Join In: How Rock Festivals Helped Change America,” *Like the Dew: A Journal of Southern Culture and Life* (March 4,2012.) http://likethedew.com/author/wmankin/#.WA_EHdUrJEY

⁵⁵ Mankin, 10.

⁵⁶ Lang, 4.

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of Invention, Blue Cheer, Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Blues Image, Evil, Charles Austin Group, and Jimi Hendrix. Although it was scheduled for two days, the second day was all but washed out by rain.⁵⁷

The Newport Pop Festival was held August 4-5, 1968, at the Orange County Fairgrounds in Cosa Mesa, CA. This two-day festival, said to be the first festival where attendance topped 100,000, was promoted by “Humble” Harvey Miller, a local disc jockey, and Westco Associates. This concert was beset by poor planning. The event was hurriedly moved from a pavilion to an outdoor space after tickets outsold the original venue, and gates and fences subsequently proved inadequate in holding back the crowds. Seating was provided on bales of hay or piles of sand and the stage itself was shaded only by a canopy. Unfortunately it was beastly hot, the field was open and unshaded, and the food and water supply was totally inadequate. People passed out and a number experienced bad trips. Although the police were on high alert, drug use was generally ignored and few arrests were made. Eventually, a water tanker was called in to soak the crowd, creating a muddy mess. Musicians included the Byrds, Illinois Speed Press, Steppenwolf, Quicksilver Messenger Service, the Chambers Brothers Band, Tiny Tim, Iron Butterfly, the James Cotton Blues Band, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Alice Cooper, Canned Heat, Country Joe and the Fish, Electric Flag, Eric Burden and the Animals, the Grateful Dead, and the Jefferson Airplane.⁵⁸

The second festival in that city, Miami Pop Festival II, held December 28-30, 1968, was promoted by Tom Rounds and Mel Lawrence; this was their second event together and it further enhanced Lawrence’s reputation and experience. The festival attracted 100,000 and was the first large concert in which bands were set up on two separate main stages, several hundred yards apart. Those who played included Fleetwood Mac, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Flatt and Scruggs, Steppenwolf, Richie Havens, Sweetwater, Terry Reid, the McCoys, Pacific

⁵⁷ Lang, 26-28.

⁵⁸ “40 Years later, Newport Pop Festival Reverberated,” *The Orange County Register*, 3 August 2008
<http://www.ocregister.com/news/festival-108932-pop-days.html>

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Gas and Electric, Marvin Gaye, Joni Mitchell, the Box Tops, Iron Butterfly, Jr. Walker and the All Stars, Joe Tex, the Grateful Dead, the Turtles, Ian and Sylvia. *Rolling Stone* called it “a monumental success in almost every aspect....”⁵⁹

The Newport Festival, held at Devonshire Downs, Northridge CA, June 20-22, 1969, had an audience of 150,000 and was promoted by Mark Robinson and Paul Schibe. Promoters apparently spent lavishly to produce this three-day festival; however, visibility was limited, food was scarce, and there was a poor sound system. Performers included Jimi Hendrix, Joe Cocker, Southwind, Ike and Tina Turner, Spirit and Taj Mahal, Buffy Sainte Marie, Creedance Clearwater Revival, Eric Burdon and War, Jethro Tull, Steppenwolf, Sweetwater, Johnny Winter, Marvin Gaye, The Byrds, the Rascals, and Three Dog Night. The poor planning showed and *Rolling Stone* noted that “once again violence has severely mauled the face of rock,” attributing misfortune at the festival to the “a small minority of youngsters...initiating the trouble” and police “for reacting too brutally.” In an article, writer Jerry Hopkins faulted concert goers for gatecrashing, looting, throwing bottles and rocks, and vandalism; while police were accused of [?]... hired as security only made things worse. A total of 300 were injured and 75 arrested. [*Rolling Stone* fn??]

Denver Pop Festival, Mile High Stadium, June 27-29 1969. This festival, attended by 50,000, had the support of the city of Denver; however, it was marred by a clash between gatecrashers and police in full riot gear armed with dogs, clubs and tear gas. On the second day, the wind shifted and the tear gas spread over those inside the stadium, causing the crowd to surge for the gates. Chip Monck, who was the announcer, urged the crowd to stay calm and put their clothing over their faces. Michael Lang, who attended, recalled that the festival was everything he wanted to avoid [kids rushing gates; cops wielding clubs, mace spraying] and vowed that there

⁵⁹ *Rolling Stone*, 1 February 1969

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would be no uniformed police at Woodstock.⁶⁰ Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix Experience, Johnny Winter, Three Dog Night, Tim Buckley, Joe Cocker, and Creedance Clearwater Revival played.

Newport Jazz Festival (Rock), Newport RI, July 3-6, 1969. The concert was promoted by George Wain and drew 78,000. Performers included Jeff Beck, Led Zeppelin, Ten Years After, Blood, Sweat and Tears, James Brown, and Jethro Tull. After Friday night was devoted entirely to heavy rock, authorities demanded that Led Zeppelin's Sunday performance be cancelled. Tension and trouble ensued; however, Led Zeppelin showed up on Sunday and played anyway.

The Atlanta International Pop Festival occurred on July 4th weekend, 1969, at the Atlantic International Speedway, Hampton Georgia. This festival was promoted by Chris Cowing, Robin Conant and Alex Cooley. Cooley later promoted the Texas International Festival, a month later, on August 30-Sept 1, 1969, and others. Temperatures were near 100 degrees in Atlanta and the crowd topped 100,000. The local fire departments used hoses to create sprinklers to cool off the crowd. Performers included Led Zeppelin, Delany, Bonnie and Friends, Blood Sweat and Tears, Canned Heat, Joe Cocker, Creedance Clearwater Revival, Janis Joplin, Al Kooper, Spirit and Santana. The following Monday, July 7th, the promoters sponsored a free concert in Atlanta's Piedmont Park to thank local patrons. Some of the bands who had played at the festival appeared, as did the Grateful Dead, who had not.

The Atlantic City Pop Festival, was held 1-3 August 1969, only two weeks before Woodstock, at the Atlantic City Race Course, and had an audience of 110,000. Larry Magrid and Herb and Alan Spivak produced this three-day festival, which boasted a rotating stage created by Buckmaster Fuller that allowed one band to set up while another was performing. A stage with a similar capability was constructed at Woodstock but it

⁶⁰ Lang, 102-3.

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malfunctioned almost immediately. This concert had a slightly different mix, including rock, jazz, soul and blues and, although there was an abundance of drugs, there were no arrests. This concert had tight security and was guarded by police working twelve-hour shifts, 100 private security guards at the race track, and state troopers near the high school. Performers included Three dog Night, Canned Heat, Little Richard, Santana, Jefferson Airplane, BB King, Booker T. and the MG's, Joni Mitchell (who did not complete her set), the Chambers Brothers, Dr. John, Iron Butterfly, Procol Harum, Janis Joplin, and Arthur Brown.⁶¹

The Wild West Festival was scheduled for Golden Gate Park on August 22-24, 1969; however, this festival never took place. It was proposed as a massive outdoor free festival; more than two hundred artists were scheduled to appear on eight stages over a three days. Plans for this event were undermined by a dark current of unrest in the community – resistance from the police, the mayor, etc. and also from some of the left and a group of African Americans, who protested the meaning of spending \$300,00 on three days of “grooving” in the parks to ghetto children. Shouting matches and bad vibes created negative energy and escalated attacks from radical elements, leading to cancellation of the event.⁶²

Chronologically, the next festival was Woodstock, Bethel NY, August 15-18, 1969. “Woodstock became as instant, simple symbol of the new community built around rock music....[despite problems] Woodstock instantly took on a larger meaning. The festival came to represent the triumph of the new rock music and the values associated with the rising youth culture”⁶³

⁶¹ Tom Wilk, “Look Back: 1969’s Atlantic City Popo Festival” 8.17.11 Internet Archive Wayback machine.

<http://www.atlanticcityweekly.com/news-and-views/waltz-through-time/Atlantic-City-pop-festival-Summer-of-Love-atlantic-city-pop-festival-1969-video-photos-peter-stupar--127947653.html>

⁶² Selvin, 31-33.

⁶³ Selvin, 29.

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The Texas International Pop Festival, Lewisville, TX, held on August 30-Sept 1, 1969, with 120,000 attendees. The first festival after Woodstock, this was promoted by Angus Wynne and Alex Cooley. The three-day festival was held at the Dallas International Motor Speedway. There was also a small free stage on the shore of Lewisville Lake. Performers included Canned Heat, Chicago Transit, James Cotton, Delany and Bonnie and Friends, Grand Funk Railroad, the Incredible String Band, Janis Joplin, BB King, Freddie King, Led Zeppelin, Herbie Mann, Rotary Connection, Sam and Dave, Santana, Sly and the Family Stone, Sweetwater, Ten Years After, and Johnny Winter. Most accounts hold that this festival went off without a hitch; however, the conservative local citizens were shocked and offended by the nude bathing in the lake and easily available drugs.⁶⁴

Altamont, Livermore CA, Dec 6, 1969. 300,000. Although there were rock festivals after Altamont, they lost their association with innocence and idealism, at least until contemporary times. The Altamont Festival was proposed by the Rolling Stones to cap their American tour in Fall 1969. The idea was to put on a massive, free concert in Golden Gate Park, with an appearance by the Rolling Stones as a last minute surprise. It is hard to say with certainty who was responsible for the lack of responsible planning and production for this festival. What can be said is that the event presented a stark contrast with virtually every festival of the era for the depth of its failures. The actual site for the concert was identified fewer than 24 hours before the event was to begin. The venue— a remote speedway - was completely inappropriate. The flimsy stage, constructed a mere six inches off the ground, did not allow for a barrier between performers and the audience, allowing undesirable people to gain access to the stage. In addition, a local group of Hell's Angels had been offered free beer in return for security and although the Grateful Dead had a good relationship with the Hell's Angels, moving the

⁶⁴ Dave Ferman, "The Forgotten Rock Festival," 20 June 1997, 97; "Memories of a Rock Fest of Old: 'Lewd and Loose in Lewisville'" (Reprint Courtesy of the Forth Worth Star-Telegram) <http://www.cityoflewisville.com/index.aspx?page=896>

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concert put them in the territory of a new and particularly violent chapter. In addition the angles drank and dosed themselves with abandon. The audience also ingested vast quantities of drugs – many of them tainted, as it turned out – and many, many people were accidentally dosed with high potency drugs. Only Jefferson Airplane, Flying Burrito Brothers, Santana, Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, and the Rolling Stones performed, and many of the performers expressed fears for their safety. Several were attacked by the Hell’s Angels. These included Marty Balin, of the Jefferson Airplane, who was knocked unconscious during the band’s performance. When the Rolling Stones arrived, Mick Jagger was punched in the face upon exiting the helicopter. The Grateful Dead left without playing.⁶⁵ The evening culminated with a heinous act. A drugged fan near the stage pulled a gun [for unknown reasons] and a Hell’s Angel stabbed him to death and then beat his head in only inches in front of the Rolling Stones as they finished “Under My Thumb.” Horrified, the band finished its set with six more songs as the fatally injured fan was carried away: “Brown Sugar,” “Live with Me,” “Gimme Shelter” (with Jagger screaming “rape...murder...it’s just a shot away” over and over), “Satisfaction,” “Honky Tonk Woman,” and “Street Fighting Man.”⁶⁶ After the show, a drug-fueled hit and run accident killed two more concert-goers on their way home. Altamont changed the outdoor festival scene and the participating bands themselves. The Grateful Dead were never the same, nor were the Rolling Stones.⁶⁷

Woodstock Music and Art Fair

Although the Woodstock Music and Art Festival began when Richie Havens took the stage late on the afternoon of Friday, August 15, 1969, the inspiration for the festival had occurred almost a year before, when Michael Lang moved to Woodstock, New York. It was Lang who had the idea to hold a large outdoor music festival – first aspiring to hold it in Woodstock itself, an Ulster County hamlet long known for its association with the arts. As executive producer, Lang was the creative genius behind the festival, responsible for its musical,

⁶⁵ Many sources list them as playing; however, upon arrival, they took one look around and boarded a helicopter to return home. Selvin, 227-228

⁶⁶ Selvin, 217-222.

⁶⁷ Selvin, 275-281; 310-311.

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artistic, creative and social goals. Nevertheless, Lang could not have planned, organized, designed, promoted and funded the enterprise alone. As technical director Chip Monck observed:

[Michael] had a very good idea of what he wanted to do as talent and the feeling that was to be there, the overall control that he wanted the collective mind to exhibit. He had no other idea nor did he necessarily care who was passionate about what shape and what containment, what load bearing capacity any of the structures would be.... He was really more interested in the overall feeling and, perhaps, the sense by which or through which everybody would be connected to each other. He was the major purveyor of that type of guideline... There was the money, there were the structuralists, there were the people who were hanging from the rafters and there were folks like myself that were most concerned with the design, the installation, the operation of something.....”⁶⁸

Lang assembled a team of people who played pivotal roles in bringing Woodstock to life. The most important were John Roberts and Joel Rosenman, his financial partners, especially Roberts, because it was his money. Many of the others were well known on the music festival circuit or in the concert business. Those with the most important technical expertise were Mel Lawrence, director of operations, Chip Monck, technical designer, and Chris Langhart, technical director. Wes Pomeroy, chief of security, was essential to that aspect of the event, and John Morris, production coordinator, played a vital role in working with the artists. As for Artie Kornfeld, the fourth of the young men who formed the original partnership, it is difficult to assess his individual contributions. He was Michael Lang’s friend and confidant at the beginning and he helped Lang to develop the original vision. As time went on, his drug use placed him outside the “inner circle” and most sources do not attribute any specific functions to him. Yet, he was also an important part of the early team, conceptualizing the scheme with Michael Lang – and going after the funding. Lang remained ever devoted to him. The last essential member of the team was Max Yasgur . Although not part of the creative team, Yasgur’s role in leasing his 600-acre farm and serving as a local booster for the festival cannot be overstated.

⁶⁸ Joel Makower, *Woodstock: The Oral History*, 40th Anniversary Edition (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 46.

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Michael Lang (1941-)

Michael Lang was born in Bensonhurst. His parents were middle class and of Eastern European descent. His father owned an engineering business, for which his mother kept the books; however, they were also entrepreneurs, opening a Latin nightclub on the Upper West Side of Manhattan in the 1950s. The family summered in the Catskills and took road trips to Miami and Canada in the winter. Lang learned the drums and played in a band; he studied at NYU but was eager to start a business and so left before graduation. In 1965, he moved to Coconut Grove, FL, where opened a head shop.⁶⁹ In May 1968, Lang co-produced the small Miami Pop Festival at the Gulfstream Racetrack for an audience of 25,000. Scheduled for two days, the concert had to be cancelled on the second day due to rain. The most notable performer was Jimi Hendrix, who composed a song about the experience, "Rainy Day, Dream Away."⁷⁰ The key to Lang's business sense was a combination of optimism and opportunism. He was a true visionary, unconcerned with conventional business skills, but had a way of getting things done. Miriam Yasgur, Max's wife, called him a born conman, but she noted that he was a conman that you couldn't help but like.⁷¹ Numerous people involved with planning the festival have described him as attractive and charming, the man who held the vision, but not the guy who worried about the details. Nevertheless, his commitment to the festival was unshakable, and there would have been no Woodstock without Michael Lang.

In late summer of 1968, Lang moved to Woodstock, NY, where he found solace from the deeply troubling events of that year. He wrote that in comparison to events such as the escalation of the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr and Robert F. Kennedy, race riots in urban areas, the beating and jailing of antiwar demonstrators and student protestors, and the violence at the Democratic National Convention in August, the mountainous, Ulster County hamlet, long a haven for artists and musicians, seemed to offer him

⁶⁹ Lang, 7-10.

⁷⁰ Lang, 32.

⁷¹ In Makower, 118.

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“Shelter from the Storm.”⁷² In particular he found a sense of peace in a weekly series of open air concerts known as the “Saturday Soundouts,” held on the Pan Copeland Farm, about ten minutes from the village. He described these gatherings as three or four artists, local or national, playing on a low, makeshift stage, in a former cornfield and noted that “the rural setting was the key”⁷³

Lang’s acquaintance with the artistic community gave him the idea for a new business venture: a recording studio in Woodstock. However, the concert series played a direct role in inspiring his vision for the Woodstock festival. Keenly attuned to the cultural climate of the country, Lang extrapolated his own sense of relief and serenity during these rural evening concerts to envisioning a kind of cultural catharsis for a generation that might be possible if such an environment could be reproduced on a large scale. Beyond the idea for holding a large outdoor concert in Woodstock, Lang had strong feelings about the kind of atmosphere that he wished to create: what environmental factors would be key to generating it, what feelings it would induce in the audience and what it would symbolize for society.

The idea for the studio led him to Artie Kornfeld, then vice president [of A&R] at Capitol Records. The two shared an immediate affinity because Kornfeld was also from Bensonhurst, “the neighborhood,” and together they evolved the idea for a big festival. Early in the new year, Lang identified a potential site for the festival in the town of Saugerties owned by a Mr. Schaller (of Schaller and Weber meats) that seemed promising.⁷⁴ Lang also knew an entertainment lawyer, Miles Lourie, though his work on the Miami festival, and Lourie knew John Roberts and Joel Rosenman, the oft-described “young men with unlimited capital”⁷⁵ Roberts and Rosenman were young venture capitalists then funding development of a music studio in Manhattan. Lang and Kornfeld

⁷² Bob Dylan, “Shelter from the Storm,” *Blood on the Tracks*, 1975.

⁷³ Lang, 35-39.

⁷⁴ Lang, 44.

⁷⁵ From the add placed in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*, March 22, 1967, “Young Men with Unlimited Capital looking for interesting, legitimate investment opportunities and business propositions.”

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pitched an idea for a music studio in Woodstock supported by the proceeds from a festival. The latter two were less interested in investing in another studio than in a festival; however, the foursome were enough intrigued in each other that they agreed to both proposals (a concert in Saugerties *and* a studio in Woodstock), forming the unlikely partnership, “Woodstock Ventures,” on February 28, 1969. The terms called for an investment of \$575,000.

As John Roberts described the terms, he and Joel would provide seed money and be responsible for all the business of putting the thing together, up to and including ticket sales, advertising, procuring equipment, fencing, etc. Meanwhile, Lang and Kornfeld would handle site planning, promotion, set up, and production, “most of the work,” as Roberts recalled. They would split the profits 50/50 or invest them in the studio. Roberts noted that the festival called for a modest gathering of 25,000 people, at \$6 a day per person; that would yield \$400,000, for \$200,000 in costs.⁷⁶ It seemed to all four of the partners – businessmen and dreamers – that a fortune was theirs to be made.

Although all four of the partners brought something to the arrangement, it was never an association of equals, and an uneasy truce always prevailed between the pairs. Lang produced, while Roberts and Rosenman were the financial partners. Kornfeld was responsible for publicity and press, though he developed drug problems and his role diminished over the months leading up to it, he remained Lang’s friend.⁷⁷ No matter the size or importance of any partner’s contribution, the vision for the festival remained Lang’s, who admitted his inability to communicate or collaborate on his evolving idea:

⁷⁶ In Makower, 36-37.

⁷⁷ Despite coming from different worlds and having little in common, Lang and Roberts became close friends and remained so until Roberts’s death from cancer in 2001.

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My vision for the festival had evolved into a complex, three-dimensional picture encompassing multiple elements: physical and emotional, spiritual and practical, artistic and commercial. The interplay between them all was hard for some to grasp.... I hoped John and Joel would come to see, beyond the money, what the festival could be. Artie got it completely but didn't know how to attain it. So I devoted myself to the task of staying true to the ideals Artie and I had developed at the beginning of this adventure. I made sure senior staff like Mel, Chip, John, Chris and Joyce were all on the same page as far as production and design. But in terms of the big picture, I knew that everyone would get it when it all came together at the end.⁷⁸

The festival was named "An Aquarian Exposition: The Woodstock Music and Art Fair." According to Lang, "Woodstock" was chosen to symbolize the rural, natural setting he envisioned, a nod to the Sing Out concerts. "Exposition" signified that the festival would encompass all the arts, and "Aquarian" was an allusion to the age of great harmony predicted by astronomers, a time when the stars and planets would align to promote greater compassion and understanding. Even though the Age of Aquarius wasn't expected for perhaps eons, the idea had great currency in the countercultural community in the late 1960s, and it was popularized to the general public by the musical *Hair*. In this spirit, Lang stated his belief that the festival would be a place where people could come together to celebrate the coming of a new age, a chance to see "if we could create the kind of world for which we'd been striving throughout the sixties....proving that peace and understanding were possible and creating a testament to the value of the counterculture."⁷⁹

Planning the Festival

In the late winter of 1969 all four partners visited the Winston Farm and agreed that it was a suitable site for the festival. Not only was the 600-acre farm easily accessible from the New York State Thruway, but it was already developed with drainage, plumbing, wells, and electricity. Further, the land formed a natural amphitheater that looked like it could accommodate 100,000 concert goers. The group offered to rent it for

⁷⁸ Lang, 79-80.

⁷⁹ Lang, 52-53.

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\$40,000 for 12 weeks, but despite the caretaker's encouragement, by early March the partners learned that the owner had no intention of renting it to them.⁸⁰ In spite of this disappointment, they chose August 15th as the date for the festival in order to allow them to begin booking acts.

The next site, in the village of Wallkill, Orange County, was far less desirable. John Roberts and Joel Rosenman had found it on the last Sunday in March as they drove around looking for another venue. Only two hundred acres in size, the Mills Industrial Park, advertised for rent for \$10,000, was former family farmland owned by Howard Mills, who seemed amenable to the deal. Although the land was flat and less than ideal, time was short and they decided they could make it work. At that point members of the group began to meet with local officials to see what permits, etc., were required. They thought they were successful when the Wallkill Zoning Board of Appeal gave the proposal a cursory review and then approved it on April 18, 1969, after Joel Rosenman assured one of the members that the music was going to be folk, swing and a little jazz.⁸¹

In the spring of 1969, even before they lost the Saugerties site, Woodstock Ventures began to hire experts to plan the details of the festival. Lang was determined to get the very best people available for the team.⁸² Stanley Goldstein was the first person hired, in March. Goldstein had worked for Criteria Recording Studios in Miami when Lang was there, and he had served as a technical director on Lang's Miami festival. Goldstein was not thrilled by the opportunity to produce a festival; however, Lang convinced him to help with the initial design and staffing, promising that he would later be released to concentrate on building the studio, a project that did interest him.⁸³ Over the course of the summer, the studio plans became ever more distant; however,

⁸⁰ Spitz, 43-44.

⁸¹ Spitz, 73-74.

⁸² Lang, 56.

⁸³ Makower, 40-41; Lang, 55.

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Goldstein remained an invaluable asset to the Woodstock team through the concert. At one point, when someone questioned his title, he said he was the festival's "Holy Ghost."⁸⁴

In their early discussions, Lang and Goldstein began to frame out the idea for a three-day festival: Friday would start late in the day with "gentle music" and Saturday and Sunday would feature the headliners. The slogan "Three days of peace and music" was formulated at this time, and Lang came up with the proposed guitar and dove logo (later drawn by Arnold Skolnick).⁸⁵ They also began to discuss the symbolic concepts that Lang envisioned for the festival and to explore how to translate these ideas to the site. The goal was "to convey to kids across the country that their festival was to be a place to escape the burdens of conventional society." Goldstein felt that "the name had to convey a sense of freedom, both of thought and physical presence." Lang insisted that the name Woodstock be used to convey a sense of the community of Woodstock, which, he noted, had "a mystical feeling," explaining that he was referring to "everything that's in The Band's music, y'know – country, woodsy feelings."⁸⁶ In the same vein, Lang also wanted a "rustic stage." While they were talking about how to translate the vision into a site plan, Goldstein also began to research the logistics of such a large proposition. He studied the bathrooms at Yankee Stadium and read US Army handbooks looking for clues on siting tempering cities.⁸⁷

Mel Lawrence, who had worked with Lang on the first Miami Festival, came up in April, after Goldstein reached out to him. Lawrence had designed grounds for a number of other festivals, including the pioneering Fantasy Fair and Magic Mountain Festival and the second Miami Pop Festival in 1968. Lawrence recalled that the "festival business was a small business and [that he] had been involved with most of them."⁸⁸ Lang knew

⁸⁴ Makower, 45.

⁸⁵ Lang, 55-57.

⁸⁶ Spitz, 75.

⁸⁷ Lang, 55-57.

⁸⁸ Makower, 147.

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Lawrence to be a “practical, get it done guy,” who had the right skill set and shared the same vision.⁸⁹

Lawrence liked both Goldstein and Lang, and he liked the Wallkill site; he was excited about the opportunity to do the festival. As director of operations, Lawrence was responsible for overall planning and site design for the festival grounds. He described his assignment as “to design, operate, plan for all of the functions of the festival aside from the actual show, but that included sort of a coordination of all the things that got built, and that basically was it.”⁹⁰

During the same few months, Chip Monck, a well-known lighting designer, was also hired. Monck, who had served as lighting designer at both the Fillmore East and Fillmore West, heard about the festival and approached Lang, who hired him, as Monck described it, “to look over a design to be generated by a number of different people for the stage house and the load bearing roof, to cause that to be erected, to be basic production manager to be the lighting designer, to be the operator, and to find out at seven in the morning that they were shy a master of ceremonies. That was the mission....I think he got what he paid for.”⁹¹ Lang wanted Monck to lay out a lighting design for a six-hundred acre city that would be very colorful, like an acid trip.⁹² He allocated money for Monck to hire a stage manager, and he chose Steve Cohen, a Carnegie tech grad who had worked at Fillmore.

Monck introduced his friend, John Morris, a production assistant who also worked at the Fillmore East. Lang realized that Morris was familiar with the business in a way that he wasn't, that Morris knew how to work with agencies and the industry, and that he knew about the logistics of bringing in talent. Morris was hired as a production coordinator and he was responsible for functions pertaining to the area around the stage: coordinating performances, performer and production facilities, driving the bands back and forth, backstage

⁸⁹ Lang, 58.

⁹⁰ Makower, 44-45.

⁹¹ Makower, 47.

⁹² Spitz, 99.

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security. He would also be responsible for the materials, method and crew to build the stage.⁹³ Both Monck and Morris recommended Chris Langhart as technical director. Langhart taught theater design at NYU and had done plumbing and engineering at Fillmore East.⁹⁴ Langhart said his skill was that he could “fix things.” He would deal with all the parts of the festival that no one else wanted to: toilets, communication, power. Monck, Langhart, and Cohen became the core of the production crew.

Lang held a competition for the design of the stage. He continued to develop the idea that it should be rustic to complement the surroundings and familiar; yet also organic and substantial; he wanted it to be big and sturdy enough to give everyone confidence.⁹⁵ He also wanted a technically sophisticated machine that would rotate, so that it could accommodate two bands at a time: one playing and one setting up. Various staff members built small-scale models of their submissions. The finalists were Bert Cohen, Chris Langhart and Steve Cohen; Cohen won. Jay Devers was hired as the foreman in charge of stage construction. Langhart was asked to design the performers pavilion, where the artists could hang out and socialize before and after their sets. Lang hired Bill Hanley, said to be the best live soundman in the business, to *build* a sound system for the festival because no system for a crowd that size existed.⁹⁶ Hanley was a pioneer in the field of really large sound systems. He had done sound systems at Fillmore East, the Newport jazz and folk festivals, and the inauguration of Lyndon Johnson.⁹⁷

Three other essential members of the team were Joyce Mitchell, overall administrator; Penny Stallings, Lawrence’s assistant, and Ticia Bernuth, assistant to Lang. Bernuth got the job after a successful trail run picking up security chief Wes Pomeroy from the airport. Pomeroy had been recommended for the job by the

⁹³ Spitz, 105.

⁹⁴ Lang, 61.

⁹⁵ Lang, 80-81

⁹⁶ Lang, 61-62.

⁹⁷ Makower, 146.

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Association of the Chiefs of Police. Although not a typical police officer, he had worked in law enforcement at high levels in the Johnson and Nixon administrations.⁹⁸ Pomeroy then recommended Don Ganoung, a priest and colleague, to handle community relations with Goldstein.⁹⁹ Goldstein and Ganoung later became the advance men in Wallkill, going up to introduce themselves around town and meet with local officials such as the town supervisor.¹⁰⁰

The first week in June, a small staff moved to Wallkill to start preparing the site. Lang and Lawrence walked the Wallkill site discussing the model city they would build. Their intent was to create smaller communities where people would sleep, eat, and entertain themselves. They used aerial photos to divide the site into smaller parcels, indicate proposed paths and locations for planned structures.¹⁰¹ They wanted to “improve” the landscape while also maintaining the natural beauty of the site. As part of preparing for the Miami II festival, Mel Lawrence had worked with the art department of the University of Miami to create a naturalistic environment that included stone formation sculptures and playgrounds made with wood debris.¹⁰² Lawrence now suggested hiring Bill Ward from the University of Miami and his wife, Jean, to supervise ground cleaning and beautification, as well as to create art from old machinery on the site. Boyd Elder was hired to create giant sculptures along paths and supervise the playground from fallen trees from orchard – swings, see saws, monkey bars and “environmental rides”¹⁰³ Lawrence started landscaping and development, but, fortuitously, he saved stage construction, piping and plumbing for last. He later noted that he had made a checklist of everything with a tremendous amount of detail right down to types of water hoses¹⁰⁴

⁹⁸ Lang, 71.

⁹⁹ Lang, 73.

¹⁰⁰ Lang, 65.

¹⁰¹ Spitz, 140.

¹⁰² Spitz, 65-69.

¹⁰³ Spitz, 109.

¹⁰⁴ Makower, 49.

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Near the end of May, Lang hired Peter Goodrich to handle concessions. By far his most difficult task was food. Most of the well-known large-scale vendors did not want to take on an assignment of this magnitude because they did not want to invest in all the equipment needed and the cost of transporting it upstate.¹⁰⁵ As it turned out, only one company, a group with little experience called Food for Love, would take the job. It was probably a mistake to hire them but there seemed no other choice at the time. They threatened to pull out the Tuesday before the festival because their booths were not Food for Love ended up demanding 100 percent of their profits (another blow to the festival's solvency), were inefficient and had long lines, raised their prices as supplies got shorter, and had their booths burned by patrons outraged at their high prices.¹⁰⁶

At the end of June, the weekend of the 27-29, Lang went to Denver to attend that city's three-day pop festival. He complained that it was everything he wanted to avoid – police in riot gear – kids rushing gates; cops wielding clubs and, finally mace spraying on Sunday. He vowed that there would be no uniformed police presence at Woodstock.¹⁰⁷

Trouble in Wallkill

Because the concert was moved to another site, the full saga of what took place in Wallkill in the spring of 1969 is somewhat outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, it reveals the deeply perceived cultural divide that separated generations and cultures in the more conservative regions of the Catskills – if not the country – in this turbulent era. As word got out that there was to be a large-scale gathering of “hippies” in Wallkill, it unleashed a tidal wave of social prejudice and fear of the unknown. Local opposition coalesced rapidly, as people sought to stop the event in two different ways. First, a Concerned Citizens Committee formed and obtained 2,000 signatures of locals who opposed a festival. This group worked on denying the organizers the required permits.

¹⁰⁵ Lang, 78-79.

¹⁰⁶ Lang – various pages

¹⁰⁷ Lang, 102-3.

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Although the organizers had obtained a permit, soon all sorts of additional documents were requested; a long and bitter legal battle ensued during which Woodstock Ventures tried to meet every request, while local authorities tried to find every reason to deny them.

However, at the same time, the townspeople felt free to engage in outright bullying and threats in an attempt to frighten the organizers and staff away – or at least make them unwelcome. The following is only a sample of some of the invectives hurled at the hippie invaders either directly, at public meetings, in newspapers or in threatening phone calls:

“I just want you to know that you’re not welcome in this community’ and I’m going to do everything in my power to see that you don’t remain here”

“If you hippies don’t get the hell out of our town you’ll be sorry”

“We don’t want you filthy pigs in Walkkill”

“You’ve got two days to move out of here or we’re going to burn that barn down with your people locked inside”

“If you don’t clear out you’re going to die”

“First we ought shave those hippies’ heads so we can tell whether they’re boys or girls we’re dealing with. Then we ought to rub their noses in the dirt for what they’re doing to this country.”

“I can’t tell you how much we fear the kind of hippie-yippie crowd this thing’ll attract.

“we don’t want your kind here! Get out of our town”!

“You goddamn hippies aren’t coming anywhere near our people!”

“They don’t fool me....I’ll tell you this: I’m going to be sitting on my front porch with a loaded shotgun, and the first hippie that sets foot on my land – I’m gonna shoot to kill.” ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Spitz, 143-155.

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And threats to locals who aided and abetted the concert promoters, including the family of the landowner who rented to them, increased as well: “Listen carefully, Mrs. Mills. You’ve got two days to get those slob off your land and out of town before we start throwing rocks through your picture window.....understand?” And later, “They’re still there Mrs. Mills. Those goddam hippies are still in your field. You’re not taking us seriously enough. You’d believe us if you woke up in the middle of the night and found your house on fire...your beautiful children...”¹⁰⁹

On July 15, 1969, thirty-one days before the festival was to commence, the Wallkill Zoning Board of Appeals issued a four-page decision rejecting Woodstock Ventures’ application for a permit, calling the plans “indefinite, vague, and uncertain.” The board also added that “problems of fire, police protection, and health would be contrary to the health and safety of the public.”¹¹⁰ At that point the team had invested over a half million dollars and sold more than 50,000 tickets. Some wanted to stay and fight, but Michael Lang declared that they were going to find another site.

Moving to Bethel

Within a day, Ticia Bernuth received a call from an Elliott Tiber offering the festival his land in White Lake, a small resort hamlet in the town of Bethel, Sullivan County.¹¹¹ Lang, Lawrence and Goldstein went to investigate, and while Tiber claimed no permits were necessary, the land turned out to be an unusable swamp

¹⁰⁹ Spitz, 187.

¹¹⁰ In Lang, 113.

¹¹¹ Lang, 115-116. Other sources report that Mel Lawrence received the call from Tiber and that he and Goldstein had been looking at sites in Sullivan County via helicopter even before the Wallkill site fell through. As reported by Ronald Helfrich, the Minutes of the Bethel Town Board from July 1, 1969 indicate that Tiber had met with the board to discuss bringing the festival to Bethel in August or September. This was probably done without the knowledge of Woodstock Vestures. All sources seem to agree that Lawrence, Goldstein and Lang were together when then saw Yasgur’s land for the first time. See Makower, 113; Ronald Helfrich, “What Can a Hippie Contribute to our Community?’ Culture Wars, Moral Pains, and The Woodstock Festival,” *New York History* 91.3 (Summer 2010), 221-244. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41965647> The latter article was based on local newspaper articles and government records.

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behind the El Monaco, his parents motel. However, Tiber became an essential middle man who introduced them to local real estate broker Morris Abraham.¹¹²

Abraham took them to look at some other properties, including farmland about three miles west of White Lake that belonged to Max Yasgur. The large field was southeast of the corner of West Shore Road and Hurd Road, and, according to Lang, they approached it from the south via Hurd Road. As they reached the crest of the hill, there, spread out before them, was a natural amphitheater. According to Lang, who shouted, "stop the car," it was the "field of [his] dream." He described "a perfect green bowl," what he had hoped from the beginning."¹¹³ Abraham immediately phone property owner Max Yasgur to set up a meeting, which occurred the same day.

Upon meeting them, farmer Max Yasgur remarked, "You're the people who lost your site in Wallkill, aren't you....I think that you young folks were done a grave injustice over there. Yes, I'll show you my land - - we might be able to strike a deal." As they toured the area, Yasgur pointing out what he owned, Lang steered him to the amphitheater, explaining that it had the right size and shape, sight lines and great vibes: "It feels like we were meant to be here."¹¹⁴ Lang later admitted that he might have been slightly disingenuous when he told Yasgur that the expected crowd would be 150,000 over three days and that they expected only 50,000 on site at any one time.¹¹⁵

John Roberts came up the next day to see the site and meet the Yagurs. Roberts agreed with Lang's assessment of the site and recalled that there was a moment when he crested the hill (he called it the "Moment from Max"), and that after that he didn't care about profit or loss; he just wanted to get the festival going,¹¹⁶

¹¹² Makower, 115.

¹¹³ Lang, 118.

¹¹⁴ Lang, 118-119.

¹¹⁵ Lang, 126-127.

¹¹⁶ Makower, 125.

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The lease was signed at 10 pm on July 16, 1969. Yasgur was paid \$50,000 plus a \$75,000 escrow. With everyone in agreement, they moved to get the required permits right away. Clearly, none of them wanted to risk another catastrophe. John Roberts: We were excited about this site, but we didn't want to risk another debacle so we paid attention to the politics of the site.¹¹⁷

Thanks to Yasgur's influence the Bethel town board and zoning boards held a special meeting on July 21, 1969 to review the proposal. Mel Lawrence filed the site plan and Yasgur spoke eloquently on behalf of the festival: "All they are asking for is fair play. Once we have formed a barrier against those who want to grow their hair long, we can just as well form a similar barrier against those who wear long coats or go to a different church."¹¹⁸ The zoning board of appeals, however, in a letter to the *Republican Watchman* on August 7, 1969, claimed it had no knowledge of the festival until the July 21 meeting and that no vote was taken. Therefore, board members claimed that they had not approved the festival.¹¹⁹ According to Ronald Helfrich, who examined the local politics surrounding the festival for an article in *New York History*, the problem seemed to be a disagreement about authority between the relatively new zoning board and the town board, traditionally the bastion of local power. At a meeting on August 1, 1969 the two parties fought it out until Frederick Schadt, the town attorney, decided that no permit (and therefore no public meeting) was necessary.¹²⁰ It is worth noting that town supervisor Daniel Amatucci, a festival supporter, was defeated in the November election by eight votes.

On August 4, 1969, as a gesture of good will to the community, Woodstock Ventures donated \$10,000 to the Bethel Medical Center's building fund.¹²¹ Following the town board's approval, organizers also went to work to

¹¹⁷ Makower, 123.

¹¹⁸ In Lang, 124-125.

¹¹⁹ Helfrich, 226.

¹²⁰ Helfrich, 226-226.

¹²¹ Helfrich, 227

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address concerns about health, sanitation and safety. At a meeting on July 28, 1969 with officials from the New York State Health Department and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Woodstock Ventures submitted a preliminary plan for water, sewage, trash and environmental concerns. In addition, Dr. William Abruzzi, a local physician who had been hired as medical director, developed a plan for medical facilities. Following this, the State Board of Health Officer for the Oneonta District issued a permit to Woodstock Ventures to operate a “temporary residence” on the Yasgur farm.¹²²

Organizers also tried to allay local concerns about damages to the community. They took out bonding and insurance to protect the town, the public, and the Yasgur farm from costs associated with any potential damage. They had a fully thought out security plan and a rational traffic plan. All of these plans, however, were based on an audience of 50,000 per day.¹²³ The festival attained the backing of several influential groups, the Catskill Resort Association and the Bethel Board of Business – both arguing in favor of tourism and economic development.¹²⁴

Max Yasgur

Nearly all of the land leased for the festival itself belonged to Max Yasgur, a successful and well-known local dairy farmer. Yasgur (1919-1973) was among the “Jewish Farmers of the Catskills” who played a dominant role in the economy and settlement of southwest Ulster and northeast Sullivan counties in the early decades of the twentieth century.¹²⁵ Jews, primarily eastern European immigrants escaping political uncertainty and economic decline in their homelands, began arriving in the western Catskills around the turn of the twentieth century. Although few had been farmers in Europe, most arrived in the Catskills pursuing an ideal of agrarian

¹²² Helfrich, 227-228.

¹²³ Helfrich, 228.

¹²⁴ Helfrich, 229.

¹²⁵ This context is derived from Abraham Lavender and Clarence Steinberg, *Jewish Farmers of the Catskills* (Gainesville: UP of Florida, 1995)

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self-sufficiency. The return to a centuries-old agricultural tradition was promoted - both for individuals and collectives - by Jewish resettlement societies in Europe and the United States. Farming was presented as a healthy alternative to the crowded and poor living conditions characteristic of immigrant neighborhoods in large urban cities. Although agricultural communities sprang up in several parts of the United States, the western Catskills region was the largest. During the first decade of the twentieth century, hundreds of Jews arrived in the Catskills to take up the agricultural life. In 1908, one source reported that of the 684 Jewish farms in New York State, 500 of them were in Sullivan and Ulster counties.¹²⁶ In 1911, nearly one-third of all the Jewish households in the United States were located in Sullivan and Ulster counties and a triangular area between Ellenville, Kerhonkson (Ulster County), Woodridge and Mountindale (Sullivan County) was said at one time to support one thousand Jewish households.

For the most part, these new settlers acquired existing farms. Although there were many farms throughout the region during the nineteenth century, the region's stony, hilly landscape did not make ideal farmland and much of the agricultural land had already been exhausted. Jews often acquired farms from Christians who had either abandoned their farms or given up on farming. Most of the Jewish farmers established dairy or poultry farms, which were best suited to local environmental and economic conditions. However, most had to supplement their incomes. Many Jews continued to return to the city to work during the week, while others began to take in summer borders. Some constructed hotels or bungalow colonies on their farms and/or abandoned their farms to become full-time resort operators. Jews also found employment in the commercial activities that supported the rural and summer populations.

The Yasgur family was among this demographic. Max's father, a butcher by trade, had migrated to Sullivan County before Max was born and acquired a small farm near Maplewood, outside Monticello. Like many Jews

¹²⁶ Jewish Agricultural and Industrial Aid Society, *Annual Report for the Year 1908*, in Lavender 37.

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who acquired unproductive farmland, the family made only a modest living and decided to supplement its income by building a boardinghouse on the farm. Max grew up on the Maplewood farm, and in 1936 he took over crop management and helped to run the boardinghouse. However, he also studied real estate at NYU. In 1947, Yasgur decided to become a farmer, purchasing the first of at least nine nearly adjacent farms in the town of Bethel. Max's wife, Miriam Yasgur, recalled that Max decided to go back to the farm rather than work in real estate in the city.¹²⁷ After a decade of work the Yasgurs finally received a license to purify and bottle milk and built a pasteurization plant on Rte. 17b.¹²⁸ Yasgur's Dairy became a very well-known and successful business, delivering to some of the large hotels such as Grossingers.¹²⁹ In temperament, Yasgur was a conservative republican with a strong sense of righteousness. He was offended at the treatment that the concert promoters had received in Wallkill. Goldstein noted that Yasgur's decision to allow the festival was a moral one, that he felt it was the right thing to so.¹³⁰

The land

According to Stanley Goldstein, Max Yasgur was "a farmer who cared about his land." Goldstein described Yasgur's land as "manicured." Agricultural historians would probably describe him as "Farmer Snug," alluding to a metaphoric drawing used to illustrate "the moral virtue of tidiness meets agriculture" in Solon Robinson's 1864 "Fact's for Farmers," one of many visions of the model farm.¹³¹ According to Goldstein, "Yasgur's fences were painted" and everything was in good repair; there were no pebbles, no rocks; everything was tilled and turned, and all obstructions had been removed. He described the Yasgur property as a "gorgeous lovely

¹²⁷ Makower, 118.

¹²⁸ Spitz, 278.

¹²⁹ Makower, 118.

¹³⁰ Makower, 121-122.

¹³¹ Solon Robinson, "Facts for farmers; also for the family circle. A compost of rich materials for all land-owners, about domestic animals and domestic economy; farm buildings; gardens, orchards, and vineyards; and all farm crops, tools, fences, fertilization, draining, and irrigation" (New York: Johnson and Ward, 1864), p. 275. <http://openvalley.org/exhibits/show/farm-to-table/item/184>

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farm surrounded by other farms.” Goldstein noted that Yasgur grew hay [or more precisely, alfalfa] and his neighbor to the east [Gabriel] grew corn¹³² Gempler, his neighbor to the south and west, also grew corn.

Planning and Site Design

It is one of the great myths of Woodstock that a quarter million young people descended onto the fields of an unsuspecting farmer for a three-day concert for which no preparation had been made and met with disaster. In reality, every aspect of the festival –from infrastructure to sound quality to security - was meticulously planned by experts with experience in planning previous festivals, in sound and lighting technology, and in security, and the majority of those plans were carried out. Detailed drawings survive that document the extent to which the site was prepared to ensure the comfort and safety of festival goers [see attached]. However, it is also true that not all of the carefully laid plans worked out as intended and that the festival was marred by massive overcrowding, inadequate parking and sanitation, regional traffic jams and road blocks, and severe weather. Most of those problems can be attributed to three unforeseen circumstances: after months of planning and site work, the planners were forced to move the festival to another location less than a month before the event, the massive underestimate of the expected crowd size, and the seriously bad weather.

On Tuesday, July 22, 1969, the festival staff officially took up residence on Yasgur’s farm. Michael Lang noted that once Yasgur entered the picture it freed up spending, but now they had twenty-eight days to build what would normally take three months. They immediately arranged for trucks to bring materials and equipment from Wallkill to the new site and Chip Monck and Steve Cohen arrived with blueprints and designs. Despite the shortened schedule and inconvenience, it was immediately clear to all the production staff that the natural amphitheater was far superior to any previous site that had been considered and that the overall concept for the Wallkill site could be easily transferred and improved. The stage could be constructed at the bottom of a gentle

¹³² Makower, 116.

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hill, which offered unobstructed views to an almost unlimited number of audience members ranged across the hillside. Yet, the concert site was also contained by roads on two sides and a plateau at the top of the hill (south end), which could define the back of the “house” and be used for food concessions. On the east, a field road separated Yasgur’s farm from that of Royden William Gabriel and a strong tree line would prevent concert goers from venturing onto the Gabriel farm, where they were not welcome. From the top of the hill, audience members could view their compatriots spread out before them, the stage, and beyond that a pond framed by the Catskill Mountains. The sound engineers thought the site offered the possibility of excellent acoustics. A secure area for performers to gather could be isolated north of the stage, across West Shore Road, and a bridge could be built over the road, allowing the performers to travel to and from the stage safely. The performers’ area also had space for trailers for the production crew, a large performers’ pavilion, to be built as a gathering space, and smaller tents for dressing rooms.

In addition to the concert field and performers area, the other parts of the large expanse could be marked off as sites for camping, parking, and commerce. Each use could be demarcated and contained by field lines, tree lines, stone walls, forests, swamps and hedgerows that were already part of the farm. The existing agricultural landscape offered an excellent way to organize space and people, orient people, divide the group into management sections, and allow for infrastructure to be installed.

Back in April, Lawrence had begun with a checklist so detailed that it “blew everybody’s minds.” According to him, it was pages and pages, listing everything from roads to fences to people to transportation, fire access, security...headquarters, communications systems, lines of communication and more.¹³³ Now it all had to be fitted to this specific site. Lawrence noted that they did a lot of walking to find the best areas to locate different activities: “We started to lay out what the grounds would be, where the concessions would go, where the art

¹³³ Makower, 50.

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park would go, where the camping areas would be. We'd do a lot of walking around, finding the best areas."¹³⁴ Bill Ward recalled that Lawrence "did everything in the field – kept everything together. He was the one who made the whole thing work – other than maybe god."¹³⁵ They also set up an employment office to hire a crew, including laborers, guides, parking guards, an garbage cleaners. By August 7th they employed 1500, and by August 15th they had doubled that number.¹³⁶

The original lease of Yasgur's land included 600 acres. Most of the land for the festival was contained within this original lease, but, as they began to prepare the grounds, Woodstock Ventures leased additional land that proved necessary for the site development from four adjacent farmers. In addition, during the festival, important concert related activity [primarily camping and swimming] took place on several parcels of contiguous land that was never leased. The following outline of land associated with the festival is also represented on Map 1:

--Max Yasgur's land included all the land on south side of West Shore Road from the Gabriel Farm to Perry Road as well as additional land on the north side of West Shore Rd west of Hurd Rd. The original lease included 600 acres for \$50,000; however, they later leased additional parcels from Yasgur. Lang says the rented more land behind the stage from Max's neighbor to construct a heliport – but the map shows this land belonged to Yasgur.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ Makower, 124.

¹³⁵ Makower, 130.

¹³⁶ Spitz, 329.

¹³⁷ Lang, 138.

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--Walter Hoeft owned the parcel directly across the road from the main stage that had been identified as the performers area. Hoeft's ownership had gone unnoticed until after the performers' pavilion had already been constructed on his land. Joel Rosenman noted that they gave him whatever he wanted to rent it.¹³⁸

--Bruno Feldman owned two small parcels within Hoeft's holdings bordering Filippini Pond; whether or not they were actually leased, they were considered part of the performers area and they are included in the nomination.

--William Filippini: One of the key components of the infrastructure plan was to draw water from the pond north of the festival site and transport it to the site, where it would be stored in large containers and then distributed throughout the site via plastic pipes. It was not until construction was underway that organizers realized that they would need permission from William Filippini to use the pond. "We [found that we] had to acquire... that property next to the lake. Mister Filippini – that was the guy we worked with."¹³⁹ On the Wednesday before the festival, Lang told John Roberts that they had to " see Filippini about his pond and people camping on his land"¹⁴⁰ William Filippini also owned campgrounds leased on both sides of Best Road, north of West Shore Road, and camping areas that were not leased in the same area. The transactions with William Filippini are reported differently in different sources. Maps from the period are clear about what he owned, and it is possible that in the last minute rush to complete preparations, memories are hazy. At least one source notes that Filippini was paid \$5,000 for the rights to pump water out of the pond.¹⁴¹ [someone said that the pond was owned collectively by a group of farmers and on behalf of the farmers' association, Wm Filippini signed over the rights to pump water out of the pond for \$5000 – in E&K – 186 – this actually MAKES SENSE but is it true? Source?]

¹³⁸ Makower, 178.

¹³⁹ Mel Lawrence, in Makower, 125.

¹⁴⁰ Makower, 177.

¹⁴¹ Evans and Kingsbury, 186.

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--Benjamin Leon owned land on the west side of Filippini Pond on both sides of Hurd Road. This land was not leased by festival organizers, but photos show extensive camping activity in this area. Of all the land once associated with the festival, this area alone has lost substantial integrity with the development of large homes and contemporary landscaping, and it is not included in the nomination.

Royden Charles Gabriel – Gabriel owned the farm immediately east of Yasgur’s, adjacent to the main field where the performances were held. A strong tree line separated the two farms, as it does today. Gabriel was vehemently opposed to the concert, and he later claimed that campers had severely damaged his fields. It’s difficult to assess the significance of Gabriel’s farmland. Undoubtedly, some campers probably wandered over; however, there were not enough to be visible in any of the historic aerial photos, in which the Gabriel farm fields look empty. The only spot on the Gabriel farm where festival goers did congregate was along the stream that parallels the north edge of his property, paralleling West Shore Road. The stream, which terminates at a concrete dam across from Best Road, was one of the popular places festival-goers went to swim and bath, and there are numerous photos documenting skinny dipping around the damn. No land was leased from Roy Gabriel; however, the stream and dam are included in the nomination boundary.¹⁴²

Adolf Wagner and John Gempler. The Gempler Farm boarded Yasgur’s on the south and west. Most of the Gempler Farm was not used by festival goers; however a lot in the southwest corner was leased for camping. In addition, a bit of Gempler land along Hurd Road became part of the festival when it became an unauthorized parking area; a tiny portion of this land that retains integrity is included in the nomination. Francisco Rosina Cigna – small campsite on Best Road, small parcels owned by Frank and Freda Feldman- on the pond [check]

¹⁴² The Gabriel farm was purchased by the Gerry Foundation in c2001 and the Bethel Performing Arts Center was built on Gabriel farmland. It cannot be seen from the Woodstock site. The Gabriel farm outbuildings can be seen along West Shore Road.

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The Plan

Detailed site plans were devised by Mel Lawrence and drawn up by Tom Jablonka. Jablonka had worked as a volunteer at the Monterey Pop Festival, apparently winning free admission for doing so, in 1967. He was twenty-three years old in 1969 and his role at Woodstock was to draw up the plans at Lawrence's direction and to lead a crew building the wood fence in front of the stage. Now a resident of Tucson, AZ, Jablonka donated a set of hand-drawn festival plans to the Bethel Museum in 2013 with a letter explaining their provenance. According to Jablonka, the plans were "generated for rational function. And not for astetics [sic] or promotion." There were never hung on a wall but always stored rolled in a tube. He explained that the roads and paths on the plan were named after the wives and girlfriends of contractors on the site and noted that the imaginative flowers that decorate the plans were drawn by his assistant, Denise Lawrence, a teacher from New Paltz. He lived on site that summer, in a trailer, and had a ten-person crew of volunteers to help him build the six-foot wall in front of the stage. He was responsible for feeding the crew and they received free admission to the festival as compensation.¹⁴³

The plans are extremely detailed and specific. They cover the entire leased area, from Best Road to Perry Road and both sides of West Shore Road. They also show one of the non-leased areas that is included in the nomination: the stream and dam south of West Shore Road, between the Gabriel Farm and Best Road. There are both overall plans for the entire site and details of specific areas. A site plan key denotes all existing conditions, both natural and constructed, including streams, swamps, trees, water features, stone walls, planted fields, roads (public, private and state), property lines, stone fences, barbed wire fences, trails, blaze posts, outhouses, and telephone poles. Symbols denote features to be added, such as wells, pumps, porta potties of two types (porta sans, johnnys on the spot), water storage tanks, security fences, and gates. Numbers show each trailer and who it was assigned to. Existing buildings are sketched in, showing their representative shapes, as

¹⁴³ Thomas Jablonka to Robin Green, letter, 17 July 2013.

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are planted crops on adjacent farms. The detail used to render the Gempler Farm's corn crop is impressive. The plans show – apparently to fairly exact detail and scale – the locations for all planned temporary construction, such as the stage, performers area and tents, the concession area with each of its proposed booths, parking lots and information booths, the free stage, free kitchen, puppet and movie stages, playground and infirmaries. They also show those areas indicated for camping, camp check-in locations, proposed road entrances, security fencing and the location of the main gate. Not everything shown on these plans was constructed exactly as shown (for example, it is not known what “movies” shown in the campground refers to or if it were ever built); however, most proposed items line up with historic photographs. In general, however, the plans depict the festival grounds as they were planned and developed and they provide a remarkable record of design intent and functional use of the site.

The overall design can be broken down into four components: main concert field, performers' area, Bindy Woods, and the camping areas (which are in two separate locations), and there is a detailed site plan for each. These four main components can be conceived of as “rooms,” as they depict where specific activities were to take place, and they are enclosed by features such as woods, water, tree lines, roads, stone walls, etc. At the same time, there were four categories of site preparation that applied to the site as a whole: infrastructure, [power, water, wells, phones, sanitation, paths]; concert production [stage, stage fence, sound and light]; performers accommodations [dressing rooms, pavilion, heliport]; patrons' accommodations [food vendors, free kitchen, free stage, vendors, campground, playground, infirmaries]; and security [parking, fencing, and ticket booths,]. In creating the plan, designers took advantage of the natural site features and topography to site features and activities. Overall, they created a sheltering and protective designed landscape intended to reinforce the intended shared vision and provide a safe and comfortable experience

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Site infrastructure was the highest priority. Each item (garbage, sanitation, power, roads) had to be contracted from a different provider. Several roads were constructed immediately to provide access to camping areas and the main gate and to allow construction; however, in most cases, workers were encouraged to use existing farm roads to bring in materials in order to cause as little damage to the farm fields as possible. As for water, Chris Langhart developed an especially ingenious solution to distribute water over the large site with as little ground disturbance as possible (something Yasgur was especially concerned with). Water was drawn from Filippini Pond, the large water body to the north, into four 10,000 gallon tanks installed at the southeast corner of the main field. An additional six or seven wells were dug throughout the site. Plastic tubes connected with elbow joints were laid atop the fields (because Yasgur did not want them buried, creating permanent furrows) across the site and camp grounds. At intervals, spigots were installed to provide patrons with access. Other than people stepping on the tubing and creating leaks, which required frequent repairs, the system worked and there was never a water shortage. Walkie-talkies were installed through the site so that breaks could be reported and repaired quickly.

As for electricity, lights and power were essential, and a few hundred telephone poles were installed throughout the site; wire was strung, and large generators were used. Howard Pantel, the electrical contractor, recalled that the Woodstock staff had everything well organized with prints, maps, and projections. About thirty electricians worked steadily. The company was well prepared, having purchased some of the larger equipment from the 1964 New York world's fair when it ended. Pantel boasted that they produced enough electricity to light up a small city.¹⁴⁴

The phone company initially balked at the request to install so many banks of phones; however, Chris Langhart contacted Tom Grimm, his roommate from Carnegie Tech, now a phone company executive, and soon trucks

¹⁴⁴ Makower, 14.

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began arriving in droves. They quickly installed seven or eight miles of phone lines - large panels with sixty to eighty pay phones and more than twenty lines for festival personnel. It cost \$20,000 to install but the company made a substantial profit from the collect calls placed over the festival weekend.¹⁴⁵

Sanitation was perhaps the festival's biggest failure, as no one really knew how to deal with toilets, despite the massive amount of research members of the team did at bus stations, stadiums, concert halls, in army manuals, etc. Langhart observed that the health department later set a standard of one toilet per every hundred persons; but, at the time, no one had ever done an event of this magnitude, and thus no one could accurately predict the required number. In addition, the size of the crowd itself was seriously underestimated. Woodstock Ventures ordered as many porta potties as they could find from two different providers; however, it proved an insufficient number. Goldstein also noted that portable toilets had to be pumped out regularly and the waste dumped after it was removed. So, although there were not enough toilets, the larger problem was that the trucks could not access the site to pump them due to traffic jams.¹⁴⁶ Garbage collection was also a failure for the same reason. An extensive plan for trash removal had been devised based on estimates of the numbers of cups, plates, cans, bottles, food wrappers, etc., x four days x 200,000 people. Large trash compactors had been rented and placed around the site; these were to be emptied regularly and taken to a dump. Unfortunately, traffic and overcrowding did not allow the trucks to get in and remove it.¹⁴⁷ Locally, the plan called for trash bags on posts, and initially the crowd seemed to do a good job of keeping the site clean. However, rain and crowds that didn't move around (in the main field) overtaxed the system.

Security fencing was planned to enclose that portion of the site reserved for performers and paying patrons. This would be in the form of chain link fencing (set in concrete) and its location was clearly marked on

¹⁴⁵ Makower, 141-142.

¹⁴⁶ Makower, 136-136

¹⁴⁷ Lang, 196.

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Jablonka's map. The fenced-in areas included Bindy Woods (on three sides), the performers area (on four sides) and the main field (on the three sides). The area between the main field and Bindy Woods was open because it was within the larger fenced-off area. Patrons' access to the paid area would be from the main gate on the west side of Bindy Woods. The performers' area was off limits to patrons; hence, the bridge over West Shore Road. The fences failed because of time. As they got closer to the date of the concert, other things took priority, such as completing the stage and sound system. In addition, people started arriving at the concert and setting up camp during the week before the concert started. By noon, Friday, August 15, 1969, there were thousands of people on the main field eagerly awaiting the first act, scheduled for 4 pm. Organizers realized that there was no practical way to collect tickets from these people or to ask them to leave and reenter. At the same time, new people were arriving, climbing over the unfinished fences faster than they could be erected. The ticket booths were not ready and people – some of whom had abandoned their cars and were on foot - were arriving from all directions rather than from the prescribed parking lots and main entrance. It was at this point, realizing that a wrong move could set off a massive protest, that organizers made the decision to make Woodstock a free festival. There are lots of stories about the fences: how they were or were not constructed in time; how they were run down and stepped over by attendees (there is photo documentation supporting this). And, as noted before, organizers gave certain, more radical groups permission to sneak people in at night, to keep them cooperative. One that is especially appealing comes from Roz Paine, a friend of Abbie Hoffman's, who recalled that as the teams put them up each day, she, Abbie Hoffman, Paul Krassner, and Jean Jacques Lebel would take the wire down each night – leaving the posts¹⁴⁸

As for the four main spaces, the most important, of course, was the Main Field, where the concert itself would take place. The natural bowl-like shape of the field, sloping from north to south, was already nearly perfect for seating the audience. The field was mowed of course (and the water lines and electricity were installed).

¹⁴⁸ Lang, 158.

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However, the most important preparation involved construction of the stage, sound towers, and barrier fence to protect the stage from the audience. These were built southeast of the intersection of Hurd and South Shore Roads, close to Hurd Road.

Approximately seventy carpenters and laborers were hired to construct the stage, which was about eleven and one-half feet off the ground, seventy feet by eight feet in size, with a sixty-foot turntable. They were supervised by Jay Drovers, the foreman in charge. The same crew also built the lighting and sound towers, which were sixty-four feet tall. A six-foot barrier fence surrounded the stage, keeping the audience at an eight-foot distance from the performers was constructed by Tom Jablonka and his crew. Camera platforms were sited in front of that. At the summit of the field, a plateau at the southern edge of the site, an area was set aside for food vendors. Here the crew constructed small wooded booths with decorative fabric flags.

The Performers Area was located directly north of the main field, across West Shore Road. This was also a secure area, set aside for the performers and festival staff only. In order to protect the performers as they traversed between the performers area and the stage, Chris Langhart designed a bridge that spanned West Shore Road directly to the stage. The wooden bridge had an eight-foot span and was four-feet wide. Langhart also designed a pavilion for artists to hang out and socialize in. Michael Lang described it as beautiful and rough-hewn, “an open, airy sculptural structure made from 34 telephone poles...with a white fabric roof over the crossbeams.”¹⁴⁹

Also within the performers area was a group of trailers assigned to staff and crew members, a group of tents to be used as performers’ dressing rooms, and a crew mess hall tent, later turned into an infirmary. Fortuitously, someone had the forethought to plan for a heliport to transport the performers back and forth between their hotel

¹⁴⁹ Lang, 81.

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accommodations in nearby Liberty.¹⁵⁰ The heliport was built on adjacent land, said to be owned by a neighbor of Max's.¹⁵¹ The heliport was constructed by repeatedly mowing the grass until it had the texture of a golf course and the landing area was created by outlining it with Christmas lights. They contracted with an aviation company to supply helicopters.

Bindy Woods was the name given to a grove located southwest of the intersection of West Shore and Hurd Roads. In terms of the plan, Bindy was centrally located between the concert field and the major campgrounds. Bindy Woods was an interesting and important part of the festival site. Remains of stone walls and barbed wire fencing ran through the site, north to south. The main entrance to the festival grounds was located on the west edge of Bindy Woods; it was sited at a distance from the concert field to control traffic and crowds. Everything to the east was a secured area, to be enclosed by chain link fencing. The festival goers were to check into the camping or parking areas to the west of Bindy, walk to the gate, show their tickets, and pass into the restricted area, through the woods, and onto the field. Within Bindy Woods, walls and fences were breached and paths cleared to provide a number of different approaches to the main festival, as well as to create spaces for exhibitors to display and sell their wares (which were to be vetted for quality). Makeshift exhibit spaces were built using only found materials, such as stones and branches. In addition to a location for buying and selling crafts, Bindy was the most popular area for buying and selling drugs. North of Bindy Woods, along West Shore Road, where they were clearly visible, was a playground, medical and hospital facilities and security.

Campgrounds: Father to the west, free campgrounds and parking areas were dispersed in meadows around a wooded area. A free stage in the area would give those who came without tickets a place to hear music. The plans also show camp check-ins, a camp store, food concessions, a puppet theater, several infirmaries, camp

¹⁵⁰ During the festival itself, the heliport became one of the only means of transportation into or out of the site.

¹⁵¹ Although several sources, including Michael Lang [Lang, 138], note that the site was leased from a neighbor of Yasgur's, the 1969 map shows the heliport site as owned by Max Yasgur. It is possible that the maps were out of date.

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offices, a free kitchen. It is not known exactly how many of these smaller proposed items were completed; however, the free stage and the free kitchen are well documented. A specific area just southwest of Bindy Woods was designated as the location of the Hog Farm, where members of a New Mexico commune had been hired to set up a camp and run a free kitchen.¹⁵² Two hundred workers and the first group of Hog Farmers to arrive began to work on preparing campgrounds. In addition to mowing and clearing, these workers dug fire pits and chopped and piled wood for campfires. They would also assist anyone who showed up without camping equipment of experience and show them how to get started.¹⁵³ The Hog Farmers laid trails through the woods, built bridges over streams, and created interconnecting paths; other communal groups that showed up were also put to work on the same tasks.¹⁵⁴ The free kitchen proved critical as time went on. The Hog Farmers were very resourceful in buying large quantities of local produces and turning it into nutritious means for large crowds. After the festival, they were to stay and help restore the natural landscape.¹⁵⁵

Best Road Campgrounds: Several other areas for camping were leased on both side of Best Road, north of West Shore Road. These campgrounds may have been mowed, but the plan does not illustrate as many preparations as for those to the west of Bindy Woods. Nevertheless, they were heavily used. In numerous historic photos of the festival field, they can be seen in the distance.

In both camping areas, historic aerial photos show campers siting themselves in relation to fields, streams, crop and tree lines. An examination of contemporary aerial maps (such as Bing birds eye views) for these areas today show remarkable integrity to the 1969 period. The same field patterns and features seen in the historic views survive today.

¹⁵² The Hog Farm was a commune founded by Hugh Romney, one of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters. The group was a leading advocate of the "Back to the Land" philosophy and had relocated from California to New Mexico. Evans and Kingsbury, 102.

¹⁵³ Lang, 142.

¹⁵⁴ Goldstein, In Makower, 157.

¹⁵⁵ Spitz, 217-222.

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Security

Wes Pomeroy, chief of security, believed that traditional approaches to security at large-scale rock festivals were ineffective. These methods, which included confrontation and force, were based on fear and intended to control behavior and ensure that no laws (mostly relating to illegal drugs) were broken. Pomeroy's ideas meshed with those of Lang, who believed that if security set the right mood and created the right atmosphere audiences would follow. Lang's ideas for security were partially informed by his own ideals and goals for Woodstock and partially by things he'd seen for himself at the Denver festival in June. Lang witnessed police harassing rather than helping festival goers and ultimately resorting to guns, dogs and tear gas, which ruined the event for the whole crowd, not just the lawbreakers.

Both Lang and Pomeroy sought law enforcement personnel who would not be concerned with judgment – of lifestyle, hair, clothing, musical taste, or even drug use. They wanted no open confrontations between youth and law enforcement, and they designed a non-threatening “uniform,” consisting of bellbottom jeans and a T-shirt, for security staff so that they could be identifiable but not authoritarian. Most important, there were to be no guns or weapons; this was a crucial component of the plan. Pomeroy agreed with Lang on this strategy, and working with Joe Fink, commander of the 9th Precinct in the East Village, they came up with the idea to hire off-duty New York City beat cops for the job. They first secured unofficial permission from Howard Leary, New York City police commissioner, to put notices up advertising for police to come and work at the festival.¹⁵⁶ Dubbed the “Peace Service Corps,” the cops were thoroughly screened and vetted through a series of interviews to weed out any that might be too rigid and easily put off by a kid with long hair. Jewell Ross, a retired captain from the Berkeley police force and a friend of Pomeroy's was hired to write a procedural manual and rules for the service corps.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Lang, 136-137.

¹⁵⁷ Makower, 150.

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In addition, Lang also planned to eliminate one source of crowd stress by making the festival open to everyone. Admission prices would be fair; camping would be free for all, and there would be free kitchens. For those who didn't have a ticket or could not afford one, there would be a free stage. There would also be ways to earn a ticket if you came early and helped out or if you agreed to pick up trash. Finally, certain groups and individuals who might be especially sensitive to any "profit motive," such as Abbie Hoffman, would be allowed to "sneak people in," all in the name of easing any possible tension before it escalated. Organizers also developed a pamphlet that explained what to do if you were arrested, outlined the rights of the arrested, the search and seizure laws, and New York's drug laws¹⁵⁸

Unfortunately, the security plan was thwarted when a radical/confrontational group from Manhattan's 9th Precinct called "Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers" learned about it. Members of this group, which had had numerous run-ins with the police, circulated a brochure in which they advocated that their members go to Woodstock and give a warm welcome to the NY fuzz, "who will be unarmed." Joe Fink explained that when word of that veiled threat reached the New York City police commissioner, he reneged on his promise that the officers would be allowed to go, leaving Woodstock with no security staff two days before the concert.¹⁵⁹ Many of the officers went anyway, giving false names, such as Mickey Mouse or Robin Hood.¹⁶⁰ Apparently, the fact that festival planners also hired the Hog Farmers to assist with security did not help relations with the police commissioner.¹⁶¹ The Hog Farmers seemed as surprised as Commissioner Leary. When asked what he planned to use as weapons, leader Hugh Romney (later Wavy Gravy) responded with "seltzer bottles and cream pies....and we'll move in with that if anyone gets out of hand."¹⁶² Complementing Pomeroy's "Peace Service

¹⁵⁸ Spitz, 328-329.

¹⁵⁹ In Makower 153

¹⁶⁰ Makower, 154.

¹⁶¹ Wes Pomeroy in Lang, 156.

¹⁶² Spitz, 331.

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Corps,” the Hog Farm dubbed itself the “Please Force”¹⁶³ However, the Hog Farmers had been hired to perform a valuable function. Wes Pomeroy had sat down and planned a distinct area of supervision for the members of the New Mexican commune. This semi-official security group was to share its knowledge of psychedelic drugs in order to give first aid to those experiencing bad trips and/or drug overdoses.

Performers

Lang relied on his experience with the Miami to create a list of potential bands for the festival. As he booked one band, he used that to leverage bookings with others. He also avoided huge acts such as the Beatles and the Rolling Stones because he didn’t want to overpower the festival. One of his top focuses would be the San Francisco Bay area bands that provided the sound track for the counterculture movement. He strategized that Friday, opening night, would be a night for quite, calm music, folk music, in fact, to ease people into the festival weekend. Saturday would be reserved primarily for the great west coast bands, and Sunday, the closing night, would feature the bigger international bands.¹⁶⁴ He always intended to include local artists The Band, with their Woodstock roots and possibly connection to Bob Dylan, and he definitely wanted Jimi Hendrix to conclude the show Sunday evening. He guessed that Hendrix, who was spending the summer in a cottage in nearby West Shokan, wanted to play, as he was stopping and jamming at area clubs. Lang tried to meet the Hendrix team’s pay requirements by booking Jimi for two sets – one for the Friday opening with acoustic and then closing electric.¹⁶⁵

The Woodstock Festival

By August 13, 1969, a full two days before the festival and before the installation of gates and security fencing had been completed, 25,000 patrons had arrived at the site. With no obvious place to gather, they began to

¹⁶³ Makower, 165.

¹⁶⁴ Lang, 82.

¹⁶⁵ Lang, 84-85. The acoustic set never happened.

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assemble on the main field. Concert planners realized almost immediately that they would have to dispense with collecting or selling tickets – This meant almost immediate financial ruin for the investors. This was the first of numerous problems that beset the festival. Perhaps the worst was the incredible bad weather, including several horrific thunder and lightening storms that soaked patrons, caused long delays in the shows, endangered performers, and engendered an almost unavoidable mud bath for all. There were sanitation and transportation issues directly resulting from the unanticipated crowds and food issues – not because there was not enough but because it was difficult to distribute. And there were also medical problems, unavoidable for that number of people, which the crew and the Hog Farmers seemed to deal with heroically. Out of 450,000 people, only one person died of a drug overdose, one more from an appendix, and a third in a tragic accident. Doctors, nurses, and medicines were found when needed. Medical personnel allowed the non-medical experts to deal with the drug problems. Doctors and Hippies cooperated smoothly. There was no violence and there were no confrontations between patrons and police. There were, in fact, many more stories of community, sharing, comfort, and life affirming events.

Drugs at Woodstock

Almost every account of Woodstock discusses the easy availability and almost universal use of drugs by organizers, performers, and patrons. Many have also noted that the Bindy Woods was the location for many of the drug transactions. Michael Lang recalled that they were sold in the “woody concession stands” and that you could buy “acid, THC, mescaline, peyote, mushrooms, several varieties of grass and hash.” Other booths sold “rolling papers, roach clips and cigarettes.”¹⁶⁶ While New York State Police were stopping cars and making arrests for those possessing drugs as cars exited the NYS Thruway, there were no drug arrests at the festival, in part due to Lang’s security strategy. Although drugs were widely available, there was only one death from a drug overdose. Many did seek treatment, however, and Hog Farmers, in particular, provided a

¹⁶⁶ Lang, 178.

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valuable service to all by using – and teaching to other medical personnel – a method of “talking down” those having bad trips rather than dosing them with anti-psychotic medication.

August 15, 1969

Michael Lang recalls the last twenty-four hours before the festival as a race against time. In the end there was not enough time to do everything that was planned, so they had to focus on the things that were most important to the success of the festival. For example, the crew worked all night to finish construction of the stage. By Friday morning, people were pouring into the site, and at least 200,000 people had arrived. The crowd was simply pushing over the fences that had been built and walking over them. In the afternoon, the announcement was made that it was a free festival.¹⁶⁷ Traffic from all directions had come to a virtual standstill, and while performances were scheduled to start at 4 pm, the opening act, Sweetwater, was stuck in traffic somewhere and unlikely to make it. Finally, a little after 5 pm, Richie Havens took the stage. The heavy rain and lightening began five hours later, during Ravi Shankar’s performance, and continued after a one-hour delay because the water threatened to short the electrical equipment. The crowd, some of whom huddled around bonfires, remained patient and enthusiastic.¹⁶⁸ The first day ended at 2 am with Joan Baez’s lovely rendering of “We Shall Overcome.”

August 16, 1969

Many of the Friday night audience just slept in their spots – unwilling to give them up to return to their tents or even to find food.¹⁶⁹ Mel Lawrence made an attempt to clean the place up by passing garbage bags across the rows and it worked well.¹⁷⁰ Goldstein observed that the crowd began to be its own self-policing, self-

¹⁶⁷ Lang, 174-176.

¹⁶⁸ Lang, 189-183.

¹⁶⁹ This leading to one of the rumors.....

¹⁷⁰ Lang, 195-196

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regulating, self-regulating entity.¹⁷¹ Lang toured the site, observing that people were camped in makeshift lean-tos, teepees, pup tents and shelters made of bales of hay, just as they'd hoped. He was pleased to see small encampments of people sharing everything and believed that the rapidly developing community was more important than politics.¹⁷²

As food shortages were reported, particularly at the concessions, which had underestimated demand, Lang observed that the Hog Farm kept several food lines going and that people in Sullivan County gathered thousands of food donations that were then airlifted to the site by local National Guard troops. Campers who walked off the site reported that farmers were sharing food and water from their front lawns and that people of vastly different backgrounds were talking to each other.¹⁷³

Saturday's performances started around noon under hot and humid skies as people continued to pack the bowl. Crowds were estimated at ????? One of the highlights of the afternoon was Country Joe McDonald's unplanned solo set, which he was requested to do while the next band was setting up. Although the crowd didn't respond to his folk songs, the energy soared with the FISH cheer followed by "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin-To-Die-Rag." Hundreds of thousands of people sang out passionately that they didn't know what they were fighting for. Meanwhile, Hugh Romney make public service announcements about bad acid, warning patrons which pills not to take.¹⁷⁴ The Jefferson Airplane's Paul Kanter, who had arrived early and was walking around, reported his excitement with people "setting up tents and campfires, cooking, swimming and dancing, It was like a children's crusade, a great social experiment. It simply hadn't happened before."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Lang, 198.

¹⁷² Lang, 199.

¹⁷³ Lang, 200.

¹⁷⁴ Lang, 206-207.

¹⁷⁵ In Lang, 212.

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By the time the Grateful Dead took the stage around 10 pm, a terrible storm was raging. The band continued to play, risking electrocution from the water on the stage. Bob Weir recalls seeing a blue ball and then being lifted off his feet and back ten feet into his amp.¹⁷⁶ One of the show's highlights was the Who, which performed almost the entire rock opera *Tommy* as dawn broke. Saturday's show ended at 9 am with Jefferson Airplane

August 17, 1969

Sunday dawned sunny. One problem that needed to be addressed was that thousands of people packed into the bowl hadn't budged – not to go to their tents, to the bathroom, or to find food. Goldstein and Hog Farmer Hugh Romney devised a plan to round up unused paper products, fill them with granola, and bring massive amounts over to the field on trucks to pass out. Romney made the announcement: "What we have in mind is breakfast in bed for four hundred thousand."¹⁷⁷ By Sunday, Lang felt that everyone had settled in and that they had devised solutions to the most important problems; situations like food shortages, sanitation, water pipe repair had all sorted themselves out.¹⁷⁸ One of the day's highlights for everyone was the appearance of Max Yasgur, who had decided that he wanted to come over and express his thanks. Yasgur addressed the crowd at 2 pm:

I'm a farmer....I don't know how to speak to twenty people at one time, let alone a crowd like this. But I think you young people have proven something to the world – not only to the town of Bethel, or Sullivan County or New York, This is the largest group of people ever assembled in one place. We have had no idea that there would be this size group, and because of that you've had quite a few inconveniences as far as water, food, and so forth. Your producers have done a mammoth job to see that you're taken care of...they'd enjoy a vote of thanks. But above that, the important thing that you've proven to the world is that half a million kids....a half a million young people can get together, and have three days of fun and music and have nothing but fun and music, and I God Bless You for it.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁶ In Lang, 216.

¹⁷⁷ Lang, 225-226.

¹⁷⁸ Lang, 226.

¹⁷⁹ Max Yasgur, in Evans and Kingsbury, 124.

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The crowd, which had heard the stories about how Yasgur was providing free water and milk and how he had championed their cause stood up and gave him an amazing round of applause, “for a man that they shouldn’t have been able to relate to.”¹⁸⁰

The music began around 2 pm with Joe Cocker. After that it became clear that another violent storm was imminent. Although by now everyone was more or less used to the rain, staff members began to worry about the electrical cables and the sixty-four-foot sound and light towers. Inspections proved them all safe; however, organizers decided that they did not want to risk using the electrical equipment again during a thunderstorm *and* that they had to get all the kids off the towers and back away from the stage. After deciding to shut down for a few hours. John Morris took the stage to calm the audience, persuade them to move, and assure everyone that they would all get through it. About twenty minutes after they cut the power, the worst was over. However, there was still too much water to risk using the electrical equipment, so there were a few hours of free time and play. At one point a plane flew over and thousands of flowers dropped on the audience.¹⁸¹

Free time and play¹⁸² [expand]

At 6:30 the sun came out again and the music continued through the night. Jimi Hendrix, whose manager insisted that, as a “headliner,” he close the show, came on at 8:30 am. He played a two-hour set, the longest in his career. There were only about 40,000 people left in the audience, but when Hendrix commenced the “Star Spangled Banner,” they moved closer together. Mel Lawrence, who awoke to Hendrix playing, said the song’s

¹⁸⁰ Sam Yasgur, in Evans and Kingsbury, 125.

¹⁸¹ I believe this plane was arranged by Michael Lang or by Lang and Artie Kornfeld.

¹⁸² Lang, 228-231.

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performance gave him chills. Graham Nash called it “as creative a two minutes as you can probably find in rock and roll.”¹⁸³

Music at Woodstock

Thirty-two performers and groups played at Woodstock. They included some of the most well-known and popular period groups, such as the Who, the Jefferson Airplane and Jimi Hendrix, as well as some, such as Santana, who were still virtually unknown. Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, though known individually, were making only their second appearance together, and their debut album had just been released in May.¹⁸⁴ Some performances are remembered as career highlights; while others bands were having, as bands do, an off night. Some performers were crippled due to the effects of long waits, weather, drugs, or other circumstances. The planned order of performances had to be repeatedly shuffled because performers were stuck in traffic like everyone else. Some performers appeared who were not scheduled to play, asked to fill in gaps while setups were occurring (the turntable stage not working). A number of the bands benefitted greatly from playing at Woodstock - these were mainly those captured on film and whose performances appeared in the movie and/or the soundtrack album. Others were not so fortunate – some excellent performances were not recorded; some groups refused to sign the required waivers; and some footage could not be used. Because of the film, accurate records of who played, what they played, and when they played became confused and only recently has Bethel Woods Museum been making an effort to compile the most accurate record.

Friday evening’s performance was planned as the soft, “folk” section of the festival. By , there were 50,000 people on the field waiting for concert to begin and more kept arriving. The opening act, Sweetwater, was not yet on the scene. After several attempts to find someone to open the festival, Michael Lang prevailed

¹⁸³ Lang, 239.

¹⁸⁴ Crosby, Stills and Nash, *Crosby, Stills and Nash*, 1969. Their first album included just three of the members of this supergroup. Their second, *Déjà vu*, released in March 1970, included all four and Joni Mitchell’s song “Woodstock.”

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upon African American folksinger Richie Havens, who took the stage at 5 pm. Havens played until he was out of material and then he improvised the moving song “Freedom,” which became one of the festival’s signature events. Havens recalled that he thought “the word ‘Freedom’ came out of my mouth, because I saw in front of me. I saw the freedom we were looking for And every person was sharing it....”¹⁸⁵ [see attendee quote 22] Other highlights from Friday’s show include Ravi Shankar, “who had become a central figure in the counterculture’s appropriation of Indian culture and music.”¹⁸⁶ Melanie, an unscheduled performer, was moved when she looked up to see audience members holding up cigarette lighters in the pitch black sky – she later wrote “Lay Down (Candles in the Wind)” in memory of the experience.¹⁸⁷ It was Arlo Guthie who, during his set, memorialized the phrase - and the rumor - that “the New York State Thruway is closed, man” because it was captured on film and found its way into the movie. Unfortunately, it wasn’t true; while a few exits were closed, the road itself never shut down.¹⁸⁸ Joan Baez, the beautifully voiced activist folksinger, closed the first day with a very memorable performance of “We Shall Overcome,” the anthem of the Civil Rights movement.

Day 1 Performers: Friday – early Saturday¹⁸⁹

Richie Havens 5:00–5:45 pm

Sweetwater 6:15–7:00 pm

Bert Sommer 7:15–8:00 pm

Tim Hardin 8:45–9:30 pm

¹⁸⁵ Mike Evans and Paul Kingsbury, ed., *Woodstock: Three Days That Rocked The World* (New York: Sterling, 2009) 117.

¹⁸⁶ Wade Lawrence, “3 Days of Peace & Music: The Performers of the Woodstock Festival,” exhibit script, The Museum at Bethel Woods, 2016, 10.

¹⁸⁷ Lawrence, 12.

¹⁸⁸ Lawrence, 13.

¹⁸⁹ *Denotes performer/act inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (as of 2016) Joan Baez in included among those performers nominated for 2017 John Sebastian was inducted in 2000 as part of The Lovin’ Spoonful but not as a solo artist Neil Young inducted 1995, the group Crosby Stills & Nash inducted 1997

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Ravi Shankar 10:00–10:45 pm

Melanie 11:00–11:30 pm

Arlo Guthrie 12:00–12:45 am

Joan Baez 1:30–2:15 am

On Saturday, music did not begin until noon. The opening band, Quill, a regionally known rock band from Boston, played a notable role in festival history because Michael Lang engaged them to play a “goodwill tour” of local schools, community centers, and even prisons to gain the support of local citizens for the festival. They also became the “house band” entertaining the crew itself.¹⁹⁰ Their performance was cited as lackluster, however, and it did not appear in the movie – they received no career bump.¹⁹¹

The next performance became one of the festival highlights. Country Joe McDonald, scheduled to take the stage with his full band on Sunday, was asked to play solo during a set change. Even though McDonald repeated the song with his band the following day, his solo performance of the “Fish Cheer” [“Gimme an F.....U.....C.....K”] followed by the “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin-To-Die-Rag” captured the audience’s exasperation with the war, its feeling of strength in numbers, and its camaraderie. This performance, a highpoint in the movie, has become an iconic touchstone of the antiwar movement:

So it’s one, two, three, what are we fighting for?
Don’t ask me, I don’t give a dam
Next stop is Vietnam¹⁹²

McDonald was followed by Santana, a Latin fusion band popular in the San Francisco music scene but virtually unknown nationally. Santana, which gave an exceptional performance, became one of the surprise hits of the

¹⁹⁰ Lawrence, 16.

¹⁹¹ Lawrence, 16.

¹⁹² Country Joe McDonald, “I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin-To-Die-Rag,” *Rag Baby Talking Issue No.1*, 1965.

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festival and one of its greatest beneficiaries. When their first album was released just after the festival it was a huge hit. Their appearance in the movie helped catapult them to fame.

John Sebastian, who had come only as a spectator, was also persuaded to do a solo set during another bit of down time. Critics have cited his performance as flawed, but it was sincere, well received, and included in the movie. He was also remembered for his bright self-tied-died outfit.¹⁹³ Other highlights from Saturday included the performance of Canned Heat, which was included in the movie. Canned Heat was a popular band that could have benefitted greatly from this exposure, but, unfortunately, founding member Alan Wilson committed suicide only weeks after the festival.¹⁹⁴ The Grateful Dead, one of the architects of the San Francisco sound, were felled by weather, equipment problems and a nearly dark stage.¹⁹⁵ Several band members received severe electric shocks due to flooding from the rain.¹⁹⁶ They ended with a forty-minute jam of “Turn on Your Lovelight.” This band’s bad luck would continue through the end of the year –Altamont was only three months in its future. Creedance Clearwater Revival, one of the most popular bands of summer 1969, has been called one of the best of the festival; unfortunately, the bandleader disagreed and refused to allow its performance to be in the movie. They broke up a few years later in 1972.¹⁹⁷

Janis Joplin, playing with a new band, Kozmic Blues Band, was another staple of the San Francisco scene. She sang full of raw energy and emotions and was well received by the crowd, but her Woodstock performance was not well reviewed by critics.¹⁹⁸ Her set was also not in the movie. Joplin died tragically from a heroin overdose

¹⁹³ Lawrence, 20.

¹⁹⁴ Lawrence, 25.

¹⁹⁵ Lawrence, 27.

¹⁹⁶ Evans and Kingsbury, 143.

¹⁹⁷ Lawrence, 30.

¹⁹⁸ Lawrence, 31.

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just a year later. Sly and the Family Stone delivered what was also considered an inspired performance, in particular the call and response of “Higher” during “I Want to Take You Higher.”¹⁹⁹ [in the movie?]

The Who didn't come on until 5:30 am but they played a long twenty-one song set. Apparently Pete Townsend did not like Hippies.²⁰⁰ He also did not enjoy the Woodstock audience. He thought that “the whole of America had gone mad” and felt that the audience were a bunch of hypocrites for claiming they had started a revolution just because they “took over a field, broke down some fences, imbibed bad acid, and then tried to run out without paying the bills”²⁰¹ [In a perhaps more revealing quote, Townsend said that, as a cynic, he wanted to make them realize that had changed and nothing was going to change.²⁰²] He demonstrated his antagonism when Abbie Hoffman provoked him by rushing the stage to deliver a rant about freeing political prisoner John Sinclair. As variously reported, Townsend either whacked him over the head, tapped him on the head, shoved him, or gently pushed him with the neck of his guitar and told him to get off the stage. But Townsend didn't have to dispense any group hugs to the audience. His connection was entirely through his music. The Who's rock opera *Tommy*, which the band then went on to play almost in its entirety, fully embodied the fear and alienation that terrified the 60s generation. According to reports, the sun rose just as Roger Daltry sang “See me, Feel Me,” which includes the plaintive line “see me, feel me, touch me, heal me.” The morning concluded with the Jefferson Airplane, a psychedelic rock band and another leader of the San Francisco scene. They were also beset by the rain delays, technical problems, the long wait, and a really tired audience – even their hit “Somebody to Love” failed to rouse.²⁰³ They did not appear in the film, but singer Grace Slick observed: “it was unique in that there were a half-million people not stabbing each other to death.” Marty Balin, who thought [Woodstock] was the “idealistic high point of the festivals that had been happening,” recalled the announcement

¹⁹⁹ Lawrence, 33.

²⁰⁰ Lawrence, 35.

²⁰¹ Lang, 221.

²⁰² Evans and Kingsbury, 165.

²⁰³ Evans and Kingsbury, 170; Lawrence, 37.

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about the bad acid and how everyone was being careful.²⁰⁴ He thought that was a good idea. Slick and Balin's opinions were probably reinforced three months later at Altamont, when Balin was knocked out by a drug-crazed Hell's Angel on stage.

Day 2 performers: Saturday – early Sunday

Quill 12:15–12:50 pm
Country Joe McDonald 1:00–1:30 pm
Santana* 2:00–2:45 pm
John Sebastian* 3:30–4:00 pm
Keef Hartley Band 4:45–5:30 pm
The Incredible String Band 6:00–6:40 pm
Canned Heat 7:30–8:30 pm
Mountain 9:00–10:00 pm
Grateful Dead* 10:45 pm–Sunday 12:30 am
Creedence Clearwater Revival* 1:00–1:50 am
Janis Joplin* (Kozmic Blues Band) 2:30–3:30 am
Sly & The Family Stone* 4:00–5:00 am
The Who* 5:30–6:35 am
Jefferson Airplane* 7:00–8:45 am

Sunday's music began at 2 pm with Joe Cocker, whose set included a powerful version of the Beatles' "With a Little Help From My From My Friends." His inclusion in the film gave his career a remarkable boost. After Cocker's performance, another tremendous rainstorm caused a three-hour delay. One of the key performers on Sunday was The Band. The Band was local, hailing from the very Woodstock that epitomized the spirit of the festival. In addition, at the time the group was Dylan's backup band, leading to speculation that he might show up (he did not). The Band played a roots-inspired, country music set. It was well received, but it was not included in the movie because their manager thought the pay was too low. Although they lost an opportunity to

²⁰⁴ Evans and Kingsbury, 173.

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become more widely known, the members didn't really care. Robbie Robertson described their set as "a slow haunting set of mountain music." Since they lived near Woodstock, it seemed "kind of appropriate from our point of view."²⁰⁵

Crosby Stills Nash and Young's performance at Woodstock marked only their second live show as a band. According to numerous stories, the band members were terrified – not of the audience or of playing live – but of playing in front of their peers. "Everyone we respected in the whole goddamn music business was standing in a circle behind us when we went on....We were so happy that it went down well that we could barely handle it."²⁰⁶ By all accounts their performance was breathtaking and it was used in the movie. Neil Young was not seen, however, because he refused to let them film him.²⁰⁷ The four did not play every song together. They divided into groups and played both acoustic and electric before all joining together.²⁰⁸

Woodstock's last performer, Jimi Hendrix, did not go on until 9 am Monday morning. Although organizers had tried to get him on earlier, his manager had insisted that, as the headliner, he close the show. Unfortunately, by the time he started playing, vast numbers of people had left and only about 40,000 remained. Hendrix's performance of the "Star Spangled Banner" was described as epic. Holly George-Warren noted that his use of all the tools of the electric guitar expanded the definition of music. "Hendrix pioneered the use of the instrument as an electronic sound source."²⁰⁹ His rendition is said to have evoked the horrors of war.²¹⁰ Billy Cox, Hendrix's bass player, summed it up with: "It was just a good gig. The great thing about it was it was peace and love and harmony, and some buzz, and everybody got along peacefully"²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Evans and Kingsbury, 196.

²⁰⁶ David Crosby, in Evans and Kingsbury, 204.

²⁰⁷ Evans and Kingsbury, 205,

²⁰⁸ In early 1970, the four-member supergroup covered the song "Woodstock," by Joni Mitchell in their album *Déjà vu*.

²⁰⁹ Holly George-Warren, *Rolling Stone*, in Lawrence, 56. Better source

²¹⁰ Lawrence, 56.

²¹¹ Billy Cox, Jimi Hendrix bass player, in Evans and Kingsbury, 217.

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Day 3 Performers: Sunday- early Monday

Joe Cocker (The Grease Band) 2:00–3:30 pm
Country Joe & The Fish 6:30–7:50 pm
Ten Years After 8:30–9:30 pm
The Band* 10:00–10:50 pm
Johnny Winter 12:00-1:10 am
Blood, Sweat & Tears 1:45–2:45 am
Crosby, Stills, Nash* & Young* 3:30–5:00 am
The Paul Butterfield Blues Band* 6:00–7:15 am
Sha Na Na 7:45–8:15 am
Jimi Hendrix 9:00–11:15 am

Press Coverage

Woodstock was covered by at least six major newspapers, all three major networks, three significant magazines, and many regional and local newspapers. Two magazines, *Rolling Stone* and *Life*, put out special issues. Overall, early coverage was not favorable. The *New York Times* entitled its editorial of August 16, 1969, “Nightmare in the Catskills,” noting:

The dreams of marijuana and rick music that drew 300,000 fans and hippies to the Catskills had little more sanity than the impulses that drive the lemmings to march to their deaths in the sea....What kind of culture is it that can produce so colossal a mess?...The sponsors of this event, who apparently had not the slightest concern for the turmoil it would cause, should be made to account for their mismanagement. To try to cram several hundred thousand people into a 600-acre farm with only a few hastily installed sanitary facilities shows a complete lack of responsibility.²¹²

The author had neither tolerance nor sympathy toward the festival planners and attendees and apparently had neither visited the scene nor checked into the facts. An interesting 2012 study by Michael Sheehy concluded

²¹² “Nightmare in the Catskills, *New York Times*, 18 August 1969.

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that many of the older generation of journalists did not immediately recognize Woodstock as the “transcendental moment” that it was for youth in the 1960s. What they did recognize and focus on was the logistical and public safety nightmare aspects of the story.²¹³ Sheehy discussed the effect that a journalist can have when he or she “frames” a story within a certain perspective. In this case, framing the story in terms of the potential public safety issues helped to shape the public’s perception of the event and thus create a biased historic perspective for Woodstock.²¹⁴ There were very few interviews with participants and reporters. Most reporters ignored the young people in favor of organizers, public safety officials, local residents, and the business community.²¹⁵ Some reporters, who were at the site and wanted to use another angle, had to fight with editors who were not at the site. Sheehy also made the point that youth perspective received little coverage in the mainstream media of the 1960s.²¹⁶ He suggested that framing the event in terms of a public safety story reflects the interests and values of the establishment and can be a way of retaining control, noting that this technique has been used to describe coverage of student activism and the new left movement from the 60s: an attempt to marginalize the political power of the students or the new left because older Americans would perceive them as threats to the social order.²¹⁷ Those youth quotes that do survive reveal instead of a nightmare, “an incredible unification”²¹⁸ And at one point during the festival, Michael Lang observed that as people called their friends and family, “word started getting out that the picture was quite different from what was being painted by the media”²¹⁹ Yet, when Max Yasgur was permitted to weigh in on the topic, he delivered

²¹³ Michael Sheehy, “Woodstock: How the Mass Media Missed the Historic Angle of the Breaking Story,” *Journalism History* 37.5 (Winter 2012), 1-2. Proquest LLC

²¹⁴ Sheehy, 2-3.

²¹⁵ Sheehy, 6.

²¹⁶ Sheehy, 2-3.

²¹⁷ Sheehy, 8.

²¹⁸ Bernard L. Collier, “Tired Rock Fans Begin Exodus,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1969. In Sheehy, 8.

²¹⁹ Lang, 199.

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a mild reprimand to the establishment, noting that “if the generation gap is to be closed, we older people have to do more than we have done.”²²⁰

Overall, the *New York Times* ran more than twenty articles about Woodstock and, as time passed, they became gentler in tone. There were good reviews of the music and complimentary statements about the crowd. “Yet the young people’s conduct, in the end, earned them a salute from Monticello’s police chief as ‘the most courteous, considerate and well-behaved group of kids’ he had ever dealt with.”²²¹ But, almost every single one mentioned the shocking use of illegal drugs without arrests and many made a point of mentioning public nudity. One entire article was devoted to residents suing the town and the producers for damages. These included several members of the zoning board of appeals, who were angry that the town and zoning boards approved the permit without a public hearing .

Royden Gabriel, whose farm was adjacent to Woodstock on the east, said his pond was now a swamp; he had no fences; they had picked his corn and camped all over the place He predicted that “the community will never be the same. We pulled 30 of them out of the hay mow smoking pot” and threatened to burn his farm down if they came back.”²²² However, Patrick Lydon, a reporter who [actually attended?]gave a more generous assessment:

It started on Rte. 17, hip cars passing bread to the cycle riders and waving the ‘V’ signs everywhere. Bethel townspeople gazed in awe at the streams of hippies, but the murmured “peace” to the visitors, offered free water, and returned smiles. Everyone arrived to find the whole show was free. As the weekend went on, the miracles kept coming – the kindness of the scattered police, the ‘food-drop’ by an Army helicopter, and flowers from the sky. Yet faith makes miracles and it was the astonishing peace and

²²⁰ “Farmer with Soul, Max Yasgur,” *New York Times*, August 18, 1969, In Sheehy, 9.

²²¹ “Morning After At Bethel, *New York Times*, August 19, 1969. www.woodstockpreservation.org

²²² Alfonso A. Narvaez, “Bethel Farmers Call Fair a Plat to ‘Avoid the Law,” *New York Times*, August 20, 1969. www.woodstockpreservation.org

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joy of the youth masses that brought happy results....What began as a symbolic protest against American society ended as a joyful confirmation that good things *can* happen here, that Army men cans raise a 'V' sign, that country people can welcome city hippies.”²²³

The local press reported that some of the feared Hippies were found to be “kind, polite and willing to pitch in and help in whatever way they could. Many residents were able to overcome their prejudices about the long-hairs, ragged, and ‘peculiarly dressed’ individuals they had heard so much about but rarely seen.”²²⁴ Several letters to local newspapers stated that the writers had changed their minds about the group. Others, however, seemed to have had their prejudices confirmed. One person wrote that the festival was a “COLOSSAL BLUNDER,” and several seemed to think the town had agreed - or conspired - to do it in the name of the “Almighty Dollar.” Some thought the festival brought only “filth, drugs, nudity, property damage, and the debasement of town politics.”²²⁵ Many objections were made on moral grounds. Politicians condemned drug use, and the Roman Catholic clergy of Sullivan County sent a letter strongly condemning nudity, drug use, alcohol abuse, public sex acts, and politically subversive aspects of the festival.” They were all for tourism but not at the cost of “moral degeneration.”²²⁶ Another group, including neighbors of the Yagurs, took out an ad in the *Republican Watchman*, asking :

What can a hippie contribute to our community?

Hypocrisy, Insubordination, Pornography, Pollution, Impudency, and Effusiveness, in short, HIPPIE²²⁷

²²³ Patrick Lydon, “A Joyful Confirmation that Good Things Can Happen Here,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1969.

²²⁴ Helfrich, 221.

²²⁵ Helfrich, 232.

²²⁶ Helfrich, 234-235.

²²⁷ In Helfrich, 233. Note: I've been unable to find a dictionary that recognizes a noun form of impudent as “impudency.” Effusiveness has no moral connotation.

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Interestingly, despite the fears for public health and safety, the population of 450,000, frequently under adverse weather conditions, many experimenting with drugs that they may not have been used to, experienced only three deaths. One was from a drug overdose, one from a medical emergency, and one from a tragic accident (when a tractor crushed a sleeping fan). Approximately 5,000 people were treated for a variety of illnesses and injuries – some as small as a cut foot; others more serious – by fewer than 100 doctors and a 36 nurses, who were able to evacuate the seriously ill by helicopter to nearby hospital. There was no mass public health crisis of any sort. And not one gunshot or stab wound – or any wound inflicted by violence – was treated. Nor did any participant commit a crime of violence in the town. In the same vein, certain long held beliefs about the fair are not true. Reports vary, but it appears that there never was a true food shortage – some kids didn't eat because they were reluctant to leave choice lawn spots. And where there were perceived shortages, neighbors were overly generous in providing all sorts of sandwiches, provisions, and snacks, some of which was delivered by army national guard helicopters.

Demographics

It is interesting to consider why more than 450,000 people came to Woodstock. The attendance was larger than that of any other festival of the 1960s.²²⁸ Some have suggested that Lang's advertising was aimed directly at the counterculture and that from its beginning in the underground, thousands of people "spontaneously decided that this was an event that they wanted and needed to attend."²²⁹ In one survey, done a decade later, 3 percent of attendees identified themselves as upper class, 30 percent as upper middle class, 18 percent as lower middle class and 5 percent as lower class. They were just about evenly divided from across the county: 30 percent from the northeast; 21 percent from the south; 24 percent from the central/midwest; and 25 percent from the west. In terms of age, 43 percent were born between 1950 and 1952; 40 percent between 1946 and 1949, and 17 percent between 1940 and 1945. One percent had some high school education; 5 percent were high school

²²⁸ Altamont had 300,000; however, more of the other large festivals had audiences of between 100,000 – 150,000

²²⁹ James E. Perone, *Woodstock: An Encyclopedia of the Music and Art Fair*. (Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 39

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grads; 31 percent had some college; 27 percent were college grads; and 35 percent had some post graduate work.²³⁰ In other words, the attendees seem to have been exactly who we might guess they were: middle to upper class, well-educated young people.

Why did they come? Some scholars believe that the chief motivation for so many young people to travel from all over the country to spend three days together was the antiwar movement. Many of those – especially college students -- who were deeply committed to the antiwar movement shared feelings of the futility of traditional politics and protests, especially after the 1968 presidential campaign.²³¹ The joyous singalong of Country Joe McDonald's "I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixing-To-Die-Rag" speaks to their pent up fatigue and frustration. However, the yearning for community was perhaps the overarching motivation.

"I'm here for the same reason that Indians used to have tribal gatherings. Just being here with people like me makes it all worthwhile. I guess it will reinforce my life style, my beliefs, from the attacks of my parents and their generation."²³²

ADD: *New York Times* interview with four people

Paul Krassner, Yippie cofounder and publisher of *The Realist*, who attended the festival, noted that "Woodstock fit our original vision of what the protest at the Chicago DNC should have been the year before: an alternative event with music, a special community with people who shared the same value system where you couldn't separate the idealism from the irreverence."²³³

²³⁰ Rex Weiner and Deanne Stillman, *Woodstock Census: The Nationwide Survey of the Sixties Generation* (New York: Viking, 1979), in Perone, 40.

²³¹ Lawrence J. Dessner, "Woodstock, A Nation At War," in ?????

²³² In William E. Farrell, "19-Hour Concert Ends Bethel Fair," *New York Times*, August 19, 1969.

²³³ In Lang, 198.

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Another potential draw was the appeal of “Back to the Land Movements,” in this era, which were another expression of futility with materialism and establishment values. This connection is something that seems evident in some of Michael Lang’s descriptions of his goals for the festival. And as it turned out, due to circumstances both planned and unplanned, Woodstock *was* an experiment in self-sufficiency. So many of those who attended have commented on the effect of seeing so many gathered together who shared that same views and values – of finding out that they were not alone, of getting through challenging times together. They were simply grateful to live for three days in a manner that showed complete rejection of establishment values.. Some have commented that seeing so many like-minded in the same place changed their lives²³⁴ need some quotes here

Follow up

Woodstock was never intended to be a free festival, but it ended up losing more than \$1 million. When the four partners met on the afternoon of August 18, 1969, it was clear that there were only two choices: declare bankruptcy or John Roberts and his family would have to agree to cover the \$1.4 million in bad checks. Roberts was extremely reluctant to declare bankruptcy, citing his good name and not wanting to stiff their providers. The Roberts family, represented by John’s brother, Billy, pledged to cover the checks with personal funds. Roberts and Rosenman asked Lang to remain a partner but not Kornfield; however, Lang could not abandon his friend. Therefore, the partnership was dissolved. Lang and Kornfeld sold their shares to Woodstock Ventures, receiving 31,000 each and giving up all rights to the Woodstock name.²³⁵

“Woodstock was the most monumental failure in the history of the underground if one measures it in financial terms. But it was a failure caused for the most part by too much success on the artistic side. Essentially, the 31 rock and folk groups, the bucolic mountain setting, the proximity to New York City and the \$200,000 worth of

²³⁴ Perone, 40-41.

²³⁵ Lang, 247-255.

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publicity and advertising in both underground and Establishment media resulted in the unexpected turnout of youth that overwhelmed festival promoters.”²³⁶ The movie version of Woodstock was over released in March 1970 and won the academy award for best documentary. To date, Warner Brothers has made well over \$50 million on the film..

Stanley Goldstein stayed in Bethel for about three weeks to clean up. Attendees left an incredible amount of trash, in some cases because it was too waterlogged to carry and in others because their cars were parked up to fifteen miles away. Lisa Law, one of the Hog Farmers, estimated that between 30,000 and 80,000 sleeping bags had been left. They sorted those that could be cleaned and salvaged from those that could not, making giant piles of trash, for tow trucks to take away.²³⁷ Much of the tools and larger equipment disappeared from the scene – some suspected the Hog Farm. At least eighty law suits were filed; however, most were dropped or settled, especially as Woodstock Ventures began to make good on their promise to restore anything that had been damaged.

After Woodstock

Several smaller and less eventful festivals were held in the last few month of 1969; however, in December, the Altamont Music Festival made world headlines, proving itself the antithesis of the myth and the reality of Woodstock. Altamont – unplanned, unregulated, and unprotected - has been called “rock’s ugliest moment.”²³⁸ At the same time, the War in Vietnam continued to tear at the fabric of the country. In October, more than 10 million Americans were involved in the largest public protest ever held in America (National

²³⁶ Bernard L. Collier, Woodstock Fair’s Staff Parting in Dispute Over Future Control, *New York Times*, September 8, 1969.

²³⁷ Evans and Kingsbury, 220.

²³⁸ Gilmore, n.p.

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Teach In Against The War). Things became even more heated when Nixon started blaming the stalemate in Vietnam not on the war ...but on the antiwar movement.²³⁹

And in the new year, after promising to end the war, Nixon instead expanded it; in April 1970 he ordered American troops to invade North Vietnamese bases in Cambodia, sparking widespread protests throughout the nation. On May 4, 1970, the standoff between student anti-war protestors and their government reached a tragic denouement when Ohio National Guard soldiers called out to disperse a peaceful student protest at Kent State University panicked and fired into the unsuspecting crowd, felling thirteen and killing four. [the students were unaware that the guard was firing real bullets] Some of those killed or injured were not even part of the protest.²⁴⁰ Page

Only nine months after Woodstock, Kent State was considered by many to be the defeat of the counterculture. The effects of this ultimate betrayal on young people were devastating. "On the campus of Kent State the government of the "Silent Majority" showed that it had not only the power but also the will to use ultimate force against *white* dissenters." After the shootings it was obvious that the days of tolerance were over – any significant challenge to the establishment involved risking not only freedom but even life.²⁴¹ As some realized that the stakes were too high, some withdrew to safer ground and others became more radical, no longer interested in changing society but in overturning it.²⁴² Meanwhile, the American war machine raged on, able to kill and maim without any noticeable interruption, while students looked on terrified and fearful, their confidence in the future replaced by frustration and despair.²⁴³ In the next few months, there was a massive outpouring of grief and rage. A full scale national student strike crippled and shut down universities throughout

²³⁹ Farber, 230

²⁴⁰ Kent State nomination

²⁴¹ Gorman, 397.

²⁴² Gorman, 397.

²⁴³ Gorman, 397-398.

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the nation. Eventually, a massive disillusionment began to sink in and the age of idealism seemed over. By the 1970s, as some of the broken hopes of millions erupted in violence, rock music had become full of hard options and opposing arguments. -- *failed hope for social community we had never really achieved* FN

In this confused state, the “Woodstock Nation” [as Abbie Hoffman dubbed us] bumbled our way into adulthood. We graduated from college, found jobs, had families.... Some became complacent but many others became deeply involved in causes that furthered social justice or the social contract, from projects as small as running a church food pantry to those as large as working to fight global poverty. The innocence is gone, but the idealism has never faded from the memory of Woodstock. David Crosby perfectly expressed the sentiment:

We felt very encouraged by seeing each other. Everybody was thrilled that there were so many of us. We thought, “Hey, we’re going to change everything, We’re going to stop the war tomorrow.’ Well, it didn’t work out that way. But at that point we were all thrilled with the idea that our values were triumphant someplace in the world. That, at least for this one small space in this one little town in New York the hippie ethic was the ruling way to do. And it felt great.”²⁴⁴

Epilogue

Most of those who experienced Woodstock - directly or indirectly - carry it with them. That remembrance is embodied in the song by Joni Mitchell, who didn’t attend the festival but captured its spirit:

Woodstock

I came upon a child of God
He was walking along the road
And I asked him, where are you going
And this he told me
I'm going on down to Yasgur's farm
I'm going to join in a rock 'n' roll band

²⁴⁴ In Makower, 285.

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I'm going to camp out on the land
I'm going to try an' get my soul free

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden

Then can I walk beside you
I have come here to lose the smog
And I feel to be a cog in something turning
Well maybe it is just the time of year
Or maybe it's the time of man
I don't know who I am
But you know life is for learning

We are stardust
We are golden
And we've got to get ourselves
Back to the garden²⁴⁵

Woodstock Remembered - 1984

In 1984, a monument to the festival was introduced into the northwest corner of the main field, commanding a sweeping view of the concert site, to celebrate the anniversary of Woodstock. Designed and sculpted by local artist Wayne C. Saward, the monument was installed on land then owned by Ruth Gellish. The monument is a 5.5 ton, flat rectangular concrete slab, 46"x74.25"x39.5" in size. Two original, painted iron plaques are embedded in the concrete. One notes this as the original site of Woodstock and the other is a high relief design showing the original bird on a guitar design by Arnold Skolnick. Two later plaques list the performers.

²⁴⁵ Joni Mitchell, "Woodstock," *Ladies of the Canyon*, 1970.

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The Woodstock Monument is exceptionally significant under Criterion F for its commemorative value. A commemorative cannot be significant for association with the original event but must be significant for its association with the sentiments of those who erected it and the value that they placed on Woodstock. The commemorative is also a reminder of the enduring significance of Woodstock for later generations and it is the site of ongoing commemorative activity. Numerous examples of commemorative activity have occurred there, with pilgrims stopping to view the field almost daily for the past thirty years. The Woodstock Monument is significant in its own right because it reflects the tremendous esteem with which the festival continues to be held in the hearts of the 60s generation today.

11.28.16 draft

See continuation sheet

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Boundary Description

The boundary is indicated by a heavy line on the enclosed map with scale.

Boundary Justification

The nomination boundary was drawn to include the largest area directly associated with the Woodstock Music Festival that retains sufficient integrity to illustrate the significant events that occurred there between Aug 15, 1969 and Aug 18, 1969. The boundary was established based on a study of the original 600-acre site leased for the festival, historic maps showing the proposed festival layout; historic accounts, photos, and, especially, aerial photos, showing the actual layout of concert related features (stage, camping, etc.) and the use of the site by the performers and concert-goers (for playing music, listening, eating, sleeping and other recreational activities); and a study of existing conditions at the site. Boundary lines were based on patterns of historic activity associated with the festival and followed property lines, tree lines, stone walls, farm roads, and water features wherever possible. The survival of numerous historic aerial photos documenting the actual concert provided exceptional documentation and allowed the identification of extremely accurate boundaries.

In addition to the site leased by festival organizers for the concert and related activities such as performer comfort, camping, and recreation, the boundary also takes in adjacent areas that are directly associated with the history of the festival because significant amounts of spontaneous concert-related activity occurred on them (these include makeshift camping areas and adjacent streams and waterfalls that became popular bathing spots. The boundary excludes areas that have lost integrity, including the southernmost portion of the main field, which has been developed with the Museum at Bethel Woods. Although this building can be seen from other parts of the site and does compromise the setting slightly, it was always the less important, secondary view, *away* from the stage and the major scenic views of the mountains. It was originally the site of food concessions.

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The boundary also excludes peripheral areas that are not contiguous to the site that were subject to incidental concert-related traffic jams, informal parking, and road closures. Some of these areas are as many as twelve miles from the concert site and it would be difficult to verify the accuracy of their direct connection to the festival. Instead, the boundary encompasses the land most closely associated with the Woodstock Festival: places where one could see or hear the concert, walk to it, socialize with other participants and, essentially, participate in the short-lived experimental community.

Remarkably, despite changes and the evolution of nature over time, numerous elements of the original landscape (including field patterns, stone walls, tree lines, topography, water bodies, etc) upon which the concert unfolded survive and are enumerated in item 7. Although elements such as the stage and other built features were lost immediately after the festival, their locations are known, evidence of their presence survives, and the activities of the festival can be clearly understood on site. Contemporary changes to the landscape that compromise or obscure the original character of the land (such as new trees, fences, decorative grass) are generally related to the current management of the festival site and the development of the museum. These alterations were well intentioned, helped to preserve the site from development, and are reversible.

Perry Road

Perry Road
Camping

West Shore Rd

Helipoint

Best Road
Camping

Camping

main
set

HP
KAYAK

Birdy
Woods

Performs

stage
MAIN
Field

Best Room

concessions

Compton
Farm

Gabriel
Farm

area where
museum
was
built -
excluded

dotted line = leased area
/// = land outside of lease
included in nomination

Henry Rd

LEGEND

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boundary Line Property Line Water Vegetation Structure Power Line Drainage Well Septic Tank Water Well Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation Structure Power Line Drainage Well Septic Tank Water Well Other |
|--|---|



WOODSTOCK
MUSIC
&
ART FAIR

MEDIA OF HYPER
TEXTILES

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Performers Area

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Bindy Woods



Hog Farm and Camping Area

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1969 aerial view looking south over stage at main field



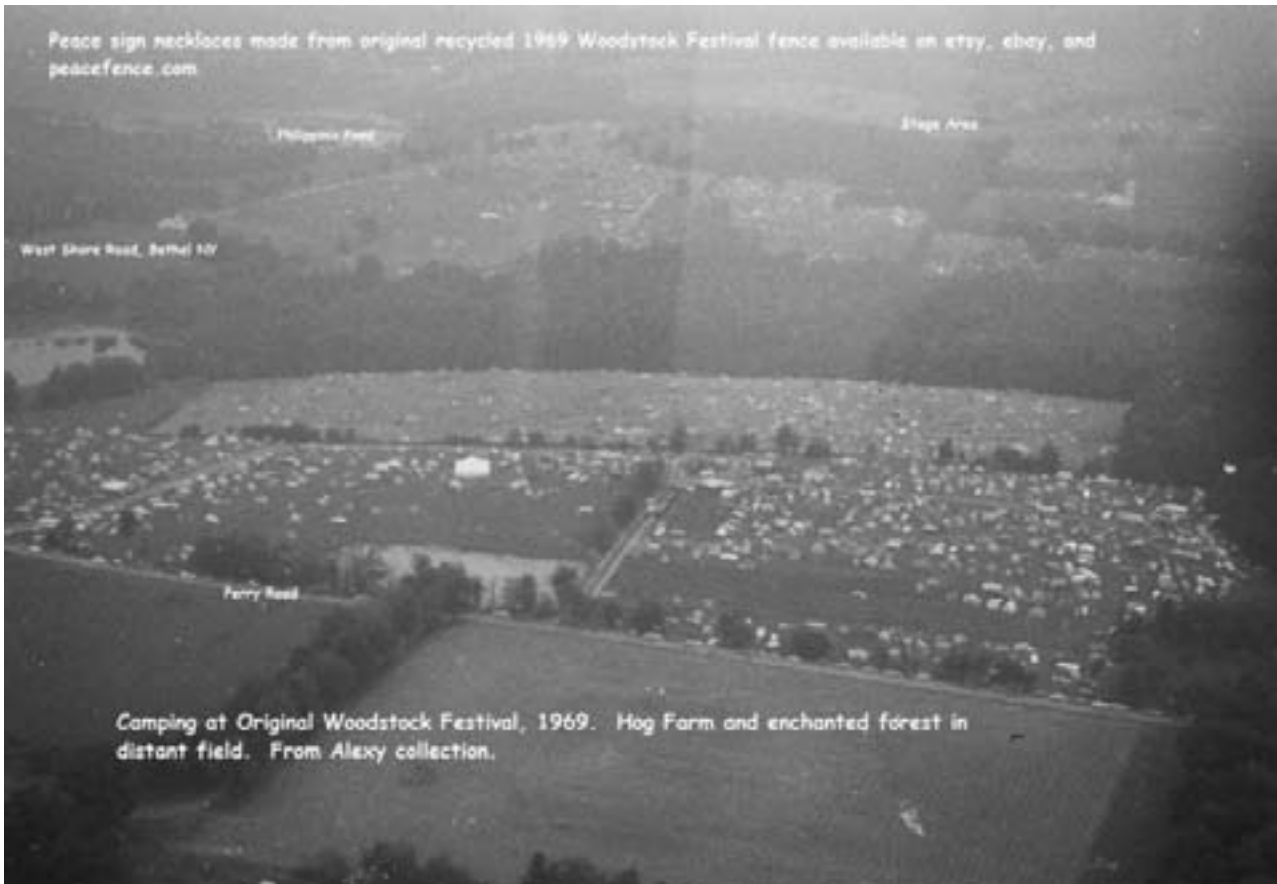
1969 aerial view looking southeast – main field is in the center; Best Road Campground is the rectangular area straight ahead; Filippini Pond on the far left

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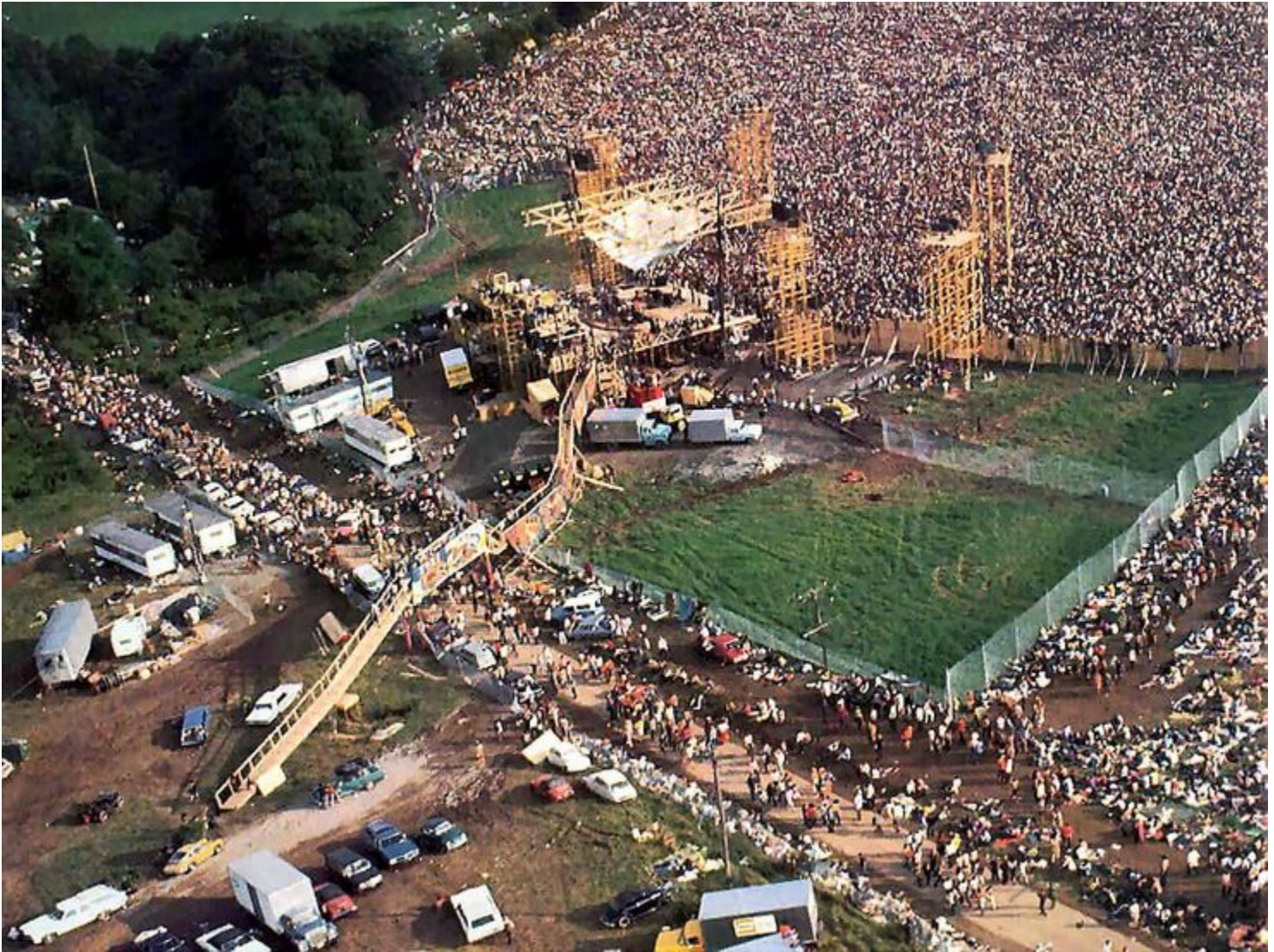
1969 aerial view from far western edge of site (Perry Road) showing camping and looking east toward stage.

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Stage and Performers' Bridge over West Shore Road

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1969 – Bindy Woods

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1969 – Water Distribution System

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1969 – West Shore Road Stream and Dam

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1969 – looking south over West Shore Road showing Hog Farm Camp and Gempler Farm beyond; to the left is Bindy Woods. The original entrance should have been along the edge of the woods

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Main Field looking southeast – stage would have been to the left of the raised pad

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Main field, looking north toward stage location; Filippini Pond in the distance; Bindy Woods to the left

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Performers' Area to the right; heliport area to the left, across. Looking north, across West Shore Road



Best Road Campground

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Best Road Campground



Bindy Woods

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Bindy Woods



Perry Road Camp Ground

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Perry Road Campground



Information Tree, corner of West Shore and

Hurd Roads

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West Shore Road Stream and Dam



West Shore Road Dam

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Woodstock Monument

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Woodstock Monument with visitors