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# Woodstock: Community and Legacy

Dissertação de Mestrado em Estudos Ingleses e Estudos Americanos, orientada pelo Doutor Stephen Wilson e co-orientada pela Doutora Teresa Tavares, apresentada ao Departamento de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra

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# Woodstock: Community and Legacy

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Abstract

The Woodstock Festival in 1969 was, without a doubt, a significant event of the Sixties. The event was envisioned as a music festival, at which youngsters could socialise, and as an important social statement. The United States had been through a tumultuous decade with the Civil Rights movement, the military presence in Vietnam and student protests. About 500,000 people enjoyed not only three days of music, but peace as well, and, for a brief moment, generations with different values got together and learned a bit about each other. Nevertheless, many have regarded this aspect of Woodstock as simply a myth. By looking at how the event was planned and at testimonies, opinions and at Michael Wadleigh's 1970 *Woodstock*, among other sources, I will demonstrate that Woodstock was socially and historically significant. The fact that people still talk about Woodstock nowadays and that many tried to replicate it, without success, demonstrates that something extraordinary happened. What Woodstock proved, and Hippie philosophy also, was that a way of life governed by values such as love, altruism and fraternity was, in fact, possible.

Resumo

O Festival de Woodstock de 1969 foi, sem dúvida, um acontecimento marcante dos anos sessenta, visto que foi projectado não só como um festival de música, onde jovens poderiam conviver, mas também como uma importante afirmação social. Os Estados Unidos tinham atravessado uma década turbulenta com a luta pelos Direitos Civis, a presença militar no Vietname e os protestos estudantis. Cerca de 500 000 pessoas disfrutaram não só de três dias de música, como também de paz, onde, por um breve momento, gerações com valores diferentes conviveram pacificamente e aprenderam um pouco acerca uma da outra. No entanto, muitos consideram este aspecto do Woodstock como simplesmente um mito. Com base numa análise do planeamento do evento, de testemunhos, opiniões e do documentário *Woodstock* de Michael Wadleigh de 1970, procurarei demonstrar o impacto e a relevância social e histórica de Woodstock. O facto de ainda hoje se falar sobre o Woodstock e de muitos terem tentado imitá-lo, sem sucesso, diz muito sobre o evento. O que o Woodstock provou, e a filosofia Hippie também, foi que um estilo de vida regido por valores como o amor, o altruísmo e a fraternidade era, de facto, possível.[1]

[1] Nota: A ortografia do texto segue o Acordo Ortográfico de 1990.

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# Introduction

The first person to appear in the documentary about the Woodstock Music and Art Fair is Sydney Westerfeld, a tavern owner in Mongaup Valley, who says: "This thing was too big. It was too big for the world. Nobody has ever seen a thing like this, and when they see this picture in the news... Well, over the moving pictures, they'll really see something."[2]

As a happening, Woodstock was a new and significant event in 1960s history that almost defies belief. What started out as just another music festival turned out to be one of the most important lessons to American society and also the world. The festival did live up to its promise of "Three Days of Peace and Music."

2014 marks the 45th anniversary of the Woodstock festival held in Bethel, New York, in 1969. The fact that people today still talk about Woodstock, whether in favour or not, needs to be taken into account because it suggests that the event was really something out of the ordinary.

The festival as a social lesson in fraternity and respect has been viewed by some as a myth, a legend from immediately after it ended. Normally, people who defend this idea use arguments that focus only on the negative aspects of the three-day event. The festival certainly had its shortcomings but its accomplishments outweigh them.

What I will try to prove here is that Woodstock was not a myth and was indeed a remarkable event that many have tried to emulate over the years but have failed to do so. It was the music that brought about 500,000 people to a farm in Bethel but the memories of the sense of community among like-minded people are what is most dearly remembered by those who were there.

[2] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

I will also seek to show how and why Woodstock was a product of the 1960s. Therefore, before I begin discussing Woodstock, I will briefly look at the social and musical context of the decade.

In the first part, in order to show why Woodstock as a peaceful gathering is not a myth I will look at testimonies, contemporary media reports, opinions, both positive and negative, and at Michael Wadleigh's 1970 documentary that brought Woodstock to those who weren't there. Reference will also be made to statistics and statements concerning arrests, deaths and acts of violence.

The second part is concerned with the legacy of the festival. Because of the huge success of Woodstock, many festivals that followed aspired to become the next Woodstock. The most positive examples would be Vilar de Mouros in 1971 and Live Aid in 1985, which did not try to emulate Woodstock. Conversely, Altamont, held in December 1969, and Woodstock '99 proved to be disastrous. Finally, I will explore how Woodstock has been remembered and what significance it has acquired throughout the years.

# 1. A brief social and cultural context of the Sixties

The Sixties have a special place in history and popular culture for both the right and wrong reasons. It is a decade remembered for its achievements in the areas of social science, science and technology, and as the beginning of important social changes: who can forget the Civil Rights movement, the increasing awareness of women's rights, Beatlemania, the moon landing on 20 July 1969, Mary Quant's miniskirt, which revolutionised the world of fashion, or Rudolf Nureyev's defection from the Soviet Union? However, the Sixties were also the decade of the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King Jr., the Vietnam War and the Cambodia bombings, Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution, race riots, antiwar protests and major student protests (particularly those of May 1968 in France).

Although the 1960s have been continuously revisited and viewed as a less mythical and romantic decade (Gerard DeGroot's *The 60s Unplugged: A Kaleidoscopic History of a Disorderly Decade* is a good example), it is undeniable that they were energised by change, by dreams and the desire for a better world. As Edward J. Rielly says: "Every historical period brings some transformations, but the 1960s seemed to replace an old world with a new one" (ix). Unfortunately, that did not happen and, from a contemporary perspective, those ideals have generally been lost. I agree with Jonathan Green, who says: "the Sixties was an era of unashamed utopianism." Not everything changed but the dream was there, whether it was realistic or "naïve" (ix).

Frank Zappa once remarked that "there was a lot of revolutionary rhetoric but there never was a revolution."[3] I agree that the establishment ended up celebrating its victory

[3] "Frank Zappa Interview, Danish Television 22-Sept-1987 'Inventing Modern America.'" 17 July 2013. 14 February 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykbibn4Lgh0>.

over the counterculture but some things changed, not as perhaps intended but they did, and where there were failures, it wasn't due to "lack of trying" (Green xiii). Nowadays the world is overrun by a general feeling of pessimism and insecurity. If the world nearly ended with the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, that immediate has passed but we have certainly not entirely escaped the danger of nuclear war. In addition we have other worries concerning the future of our planet: the climate has been changing dramatically and resources are becoming scarcer due to an increasing world population and the failure to come up with alternative resources. As for economic affluence and social welfare, regression is the agenda of current politics in countries where the welfare-state was first implemented.

What made the Sixties so unique was the baby boom generation. Baby boomers, "individuals born between 1946 and 1964" whose parents had gone through the Great Depression and World War II, lived in an era of economic affluence (the US became the richest and most powerful country in the world) and social welfare. "During the 1960s, the first wave of baby boomers" became old enough to assume the "responsibilities of adulthood" (Rielly 23).

The counterculture of the Sixties represented a challenge to American middle-class values and was inspired in part by the Civil Rights movement and the opposition to the Vietnam War. According to Covach, the counterculture distrusted practically every institution in American society and searched for and offered alternative lifestyles and philosophies. The generation gap wasn't a novelty itself, as the 1950s had already experienced a youth culture, albeit a less assertive one (Covach 256), but it was the first time in American history that age was the cause for social conflict (O'Neill 233). Nonetheless, it should be recognised that, as O'Neill observes, many youngsters "retained confidence in the 'system' and its norms" and that many adults took part in the

counterculture (233). O'Neill further notes that "[w]orking-class youngsters" often "resented" the counterculture while "those adults who admired or tolerated it" tended to be "upper-middle-class professionals and intellectuals" (271).

The counterculture was certainly not homogeneous as it included everything from Eastern philosophies and religions, with drugs (marijuana and LSD especially) being crucial to obtain a higher level of consciousness, avant-garde art to radical and utopian politics (Covach 257); it essentially "meant all things to all men and embraced everything new from clothing to politics" (O'Neill 233). This diversity meant that there was disagreement as to the alternatives offered to solve the issues of society. For example, Berkeley radicals diverged from San Francisco Hippies over the effectiveness of political action (Covach 275).

However, the Hippie culture stands out in the counterculture of the Sixties and had its roots in the Beat movement of the previous decade, whose name was a reference to those "who shed the trappings of institutional society," the drifters, but also "to the beat of jazz" – especially be-bop and cool jazz (Szatmary 160). The name "Hippie" "derived from 'hip,' a term applied to the Beats."[4]

The Hippie movement had the blessing of notable Beats such as Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and Michael McClure who helped organise the Human Be-In (Covach 267-68) in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park on 14 January 1967, which was a peaceful gathering of about 30,000 Hippies (Lisboa 6). Both Beats and Hippies shared the same passion for oriental mysticism, such as Zen and Veda, consumed drugs like *peyotl* (Laffont 23), embraced open sexuality and rejected American materialism.

Nevertheless, there were noticeable differences between the two, for instance, the music of choice. While Hippies preferred rock music, Beats preferred artists like Charlie

[4] "Hippie." *Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica, 2012. DVD-ROM.

Parker and Miles Davis (Szatmary 160). An amusing comparison was made by Janis Joplin, who considered herself a Beatnik rather than a Hippie: "Beatniks believe things aren't going to get better and say, 'The hell with it,' stay stoned, and have a good time" (Kurlansky 183).

Hippies were mostly white middle-class youngsters, between 17 and 25 years old (although there were Hippies in their fifties), who wished to build a society based on lost spiritual virtues from ancient times such as fraternity and mutual respect (Laffont 19), and also preached altruism, honesty, happiness as well as non-violence. This was famously known as "Flower Power" (Laffont 15) and its motto was "Be nice to others, even when provoked, and they will be nice to you" (O'Neill 252). They normally lived in communities, which they referred to as "tribes" or even "families." The largest were located in the Haight-Ashbury district near Golden Gate Park in San Francisco and in the East Village in New York (O'Neill 252).

Hippies considered figures such as Hillel, the 1st century BCE Jewish prophet of peace and simplicity, Jesus Christ and Buddha as role models. They also admired philosophers such as Plato and Sir Thomas More who wrote of Utopian states and the 19th century American writer Henry David Thoreau, whose philosophy of life was based on living with only the bare necessities (Laffont 22-23). Hippies "embraced the beliefs of past, less technology-driven civilizations, real or imagined, to create a counterculture" (Szatmary 168).

Because of their rejection of bourgeois society and its values and their desire "to create an atmosphere that engendered freedom of individual expression" (Szatmary 167), Hippies were scorned and feared by many conservative Americans. Some adults simply considered them immature idiots, while others criticised them for being pretentious and for

being violent among themselves (Laffont 44). They were also censured for the fact that they didn't want to take action and change society on a wider scale (Laffont 28).

Drugs, such as marijuana and LSD, were central to Hippie culture. The drug prophet Timothy Leary, a former scientific researcher at Harvard, preached that they were a means to achieve a higher level of consciousness and spirituality, thus paving the way for a more peaceful world. O'Neill writes that for Leary: "Truth was in the man, not the drug, yet the drug was necessary to uncover it. The natural state of man thus revealed was visionary, mystical, ecstatic. (…) Even better, drugs promoted peace, wisdom, and unity with the universe" (238-39). In *All Dressed Up: The Sixties and the Counter-culture*, Jonathan Green asserts that Leary "coined one of the most enduring calls to action of the era: 'Turn on, tune in, drop out'" (112).

"Dropping acid" and smoking marijuana were deviant practices and forbidden pleasures (O'Neill 239), even though LSD was only criminalised in late 1966 (Farber 181). The consumption of cannabis increased over time because it was considered to be less dangerous than alcohol while research suggested that LSD caused genetic damage (O'Neill 239-40). Besides, its illegal status, since 1937 (Farber 174), was considered a social contradiction by many since alcohol was, and is, legal and many believed, and still do, that "a truly democratic society would legalize drugs" (Kurlansky 183).

In the end, many suffered dire consequences (Szatmary 179). In this matter, "young drug-takers" were no different than alcoholic adults and those dependent on nerve pills and tranquillisers. Ironically, drug use encouraged "conformity among the young" and made them less subversive (O'Neill 240). In the novel *Brave New World* (1932) by Aldous Huxley, whose essay *The Doors of Perception* (1954) influenced Timothy Leary (Covach 256), drugs were used "as a means of social control" by the state (O'Neill 240).

The second most important figure in the promotion of LSD was novelist Ken Kesey, author of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1962), which was adapted into a film in 1975 starring Jack Nicholson and directed by Milos Forman. Ken Kesey founded the Merry Pranksters, notorious for their life style of sex, music and drugs, who began their journey across the United States in the spring of 1964 on a school bus (O'Neill 240-41), which they called "Furthur" (Covach 268). Ken Kesey is perhaps better known for his "acid tests," which were pivotal for the development of the San Francisco musical scene. These multimedia events, which combined light shows, rock music and acid-dropping were held at the Fillmore Auditorium (O'Neill 242). Unlike Leary, who used LSD to obtain spiritual wisdom, Kesey saw the drug as part of the entertainment provided at his tests (Covach 268).

According to Covach, the psychedelic scene started in mid 1965 in San Francisco (267). By the autumn of 1966, "Hippie culture, with its drugs, rock groups, psychedelic folk art, and other apparatus, was well and truly launched" (O'Neill 242) but its peak only lasted two years, 1965 and 1966 (O'Neill 252). The main cause was the increased media exposure that followed the 1967 Summer of Love, when over 100,000 Hippies converged on Haight-Ashbury (Lisboa 7). This led adolescent "runaways" and "disturbed youngsters" to join the earnest Hippies that lived in the Haight-Ashbury and the East Village. Drug poisoning, diseases, "[r]apes, muggings and assaults became common place" in the former, while the latter changed less due "to its more diverse population and strategic location" (O'Neill 252-54).

The Summer of Love ended with the "Death of Hippie" ceremony by the Diggers (Farber 187) – a group of Samaritans who "provided free food, shelter, and transportation" (Szatmary 170) – on 6 October in San Francisco's Buena Vista Park, and two days later in

the East Village, with the murder of a couple high on LSD (Linda Rea Fitzpatrick, who was pregnant and had been raped, and James Leroy Hutchinson [O'Neill 253]).

While Hippie culture met an early end after the 1960s, the music of the decade still lives on and has influenced countless performers over the last fifty years. It would be safe to say that music is what defined the decade, according to most people, Americans or not (Rielly xi).

As far as innovation, creativity, experimentation and overall quality goes, the music of the 1960s has never been equalled since because it "inhaled the spirit of the time and, by exhaling it, accelerated the rotation of the world" (Lisboa 6; my translation). Music, as a form of popular culture, defines "the people of any society" and shapes "the everyday world," which is even more noteworthy in a democracy such as the United States (Browne vii). Marty Balin, guitarist and one of the founders of Jefferson Airplane, once remarked: "It's the most moving generation since the twenties. In creativity. And out of this are going to come many wonderful artists and people and thinkers. Even the philosophy of the day is being changed by what's happening now" (Szatmary 159).

Not only was it the decade of psychedelic music and rock & roll, but also the revival of folk music, which was the anti-establishment's first voice for the Civil Rights movement and in denouncing the Vietnam War (Rielly 151). As a medium of propaganda, it identified the young as a particular group with its own values and aspirations (O'Neill 233).

Folk music was popular during the first half of the decade with figures such as the veteran Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Judy Collins and, of course, Bob Dylan. Dylan is sometimes referred to as "the voice of a generation" and his songs are the soundtrack of the 1960s: "Blowin' In The Wind" (1963) became an anthem for the Civil Rights movement (Szatmary 103), "Masters of War" (1963) was a bitter condemnation of the weapons

industry, "The Times They Are A-Changin'" (1964) spoke about "the emerging social revolution" (Szatmary 103), while "A Hard Rain's A Gonna Fall" (1963) "was presumed to be about fallout, despite Dylan's affirmation that the song refers to the lies perpetrated by the media" (Millward 84).

Rock was the main music genre of the Sixties. The Beatles changed the music scene by helping move rock & roll back "into the pop mainstream" (Covach 255), when they played for the first time in the United States on 7 February 1964 (Szatmary 113), and "paved the way for other British groups" that constituted what became known as the British Invasion (Szatmary 128).

Even though its breakthrough into popular culture was during the Summer of Love, psychedelic music was already "well established by the end of 1965" (Covach 255). In early 1966, it was being developed by San Francisco acts like the Grateful Dead (Covach 255), Ken Kesey's "house band" for the acid tests (Covach 270), and Jefferson Airplane as well as London bands such as Pink Floyd and Soft Machine (Covach 255). By experimenting with and exploring new techniques, artists created a more ambitious rock music with longer tracks (Covach 258). With the emergence of British prog rock in the late sixties, tracks would become symphonies on their own. Psychedelic music had its roots in folk music: Marty Balin was inspired by Bob Dylan, and Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead by Joan Baez (Szatmary 171-72). Just like folk music, psychedelic music was directed at a more mature audience (Covach 295).

Because of its close relationship with the counterculture, music challenged middle-class values by dealing with social and sexual freedom, as well as political issues (O'Neill 243). In the *Woodstock* documentary, Michael Lang, one of the producers of Woodstock, corroborates that idea: "Music has always been a major form of communication, only now, the lyric and the type of music is a little bit more involved in society than it was. (…) It's

about what's happening now, and if you listen to the lyric and you listen to the rhythm and what's in the music, then you'll know what's going on with the culture."[5]

The apocalyptic song "Eve of Destruction" (1965), whose most famous recording is by Barry McGuire, spoke of the violence and hate of the first half of the decade. Personally, I consider "In the Year 2525" (1969) by Zager & Evans the most frightening and disturbing song of the decade, since its predictions may very well come true. Nowadays, we are not far from what Rick Evans predicted for the year 6565: "You'll pick your son, pick your daughter too/From the bottom of a long glass tube." Stephen Stills, of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, wrote "For What It's Worth" (1967), performed by Buffalo Springfield, which spoke of the increasing tension and division in American society. "White Rabbit" (1967) by Jefferson Airplane spoke about drugs, and Creedence Clearwater Revival "infused the blues with a political message" (Szatmary 205). Their song, "Fortunate Son" (1969), and Richie Havens's "Handsome Johnny" (1967) were antiwar statements, for example. Jimi Hendrix, often considered the greatest guitarist ever, "reflected the desperate mood of late-sixties youth through a psychedelic blues" (Szatmary 199).

Many songs by black artists were influenced by the Civil Rights movement and their own experiences of racial discrimination, such as Nina Simone's protest song "Mississippi Goddam" (1964) (Millward 158) and "A Change Is Gonna Come" (1964) by Sam Cooke, who was moved by Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" (Millward 166). There were also songs that preached love, such as "What the World Needs Now is Love" (1965) by Jackie DeShannon, and in "Everyday People" (1969) Sly and the Family Stone advocated tolerance and equality.

[5] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

However, the musical scene wasn't entirely against the dominant society. Sergeant Barry Sadler's "The Ballad of the Green Berets" was a patriotic song about an elite special force in the U.S. Army and was a best-seller in 1966. Other hits included Pat Boone's pro-Vietnam War song "Wish You Were Here, Buddy" (1966) and Victor Lundberg's "An Open Letter to My Teenage Son" (1967) (Lipsitz 209). Merle Haggard's "Okie from Muskogee" (1969) could be considered a satire on both the counterculture and small-town America. Nevertheless, according to an interview Merle Haggard gave to *The Boot*, he "became disheartened watching Vietnam War protests and incorporated that emotion and viewpoint into song," after being released from San Quentin prison.[6]

Even John Lennon, in The Beatles' song "Revolution 1" (1968), questioned if violence could be justified: "We all want to change the world/But when you talk about destruction/Don't you know that you can count me out." Even though the Rolling Stones' "Street Fighting Man" (1968) was a call for revolution, it admitted that it was solely confined to songs.

A different and critical point of view can be found in the album *We're Only in It for the Money* by The Mothers of Invention, led by Frank Zappa. Released in 1968, after the Summer of Love, the album is a social and cultural satire on both the establishment and the counterculture. For example, in "Who Needs the Peace Corps?" Zappa criticises "plastic Hippies," those who only cared about the Hippie lifestyle and disregarded its philosophy, and "Absolutely Free" mocks the use of drugs as a means of liberation. The song also contains the line "Flower Power sucks." Zappa's criticisms are valid in so far as although at the outset many psychedelic bands rejected "the competitive, corporate structure of American society in general and of the recording industry in particular" (Szatmary 173),

[6] Dunham, Nancy. "Merle Haggard, 'Okie From Muskogee' — Story Behind the Lyrics." *The Boot*. 11 October 2010. 26 February 2014. <http://theboot.com/merle-haggard-okie-from-muskogee-lyrics/>.

the music of the revolution was easily exploited by the major record labels that later "marketed the psychedelic sound" (Szatmary 181).

# 2. Social harmony at Woodstock

## 2.1. Concept, promotion and planning of the festival

The Woodstock Music and Art Fair, the official name of the festival, was held from 15-17 August 1969 in the town of Bethel, in the Catskill Mountains in New York's Sullivan County. The Borscht Belt area, which was best known for farming and as a holiday destination, became the second largest city in New York State of more than 450,000 for a brief period of time (Littleproud 14).

Woodstock was envisioned by Michael Lang, 24 years old, who had previously produced the two-day Miami Pop Festival in 1968, which drew 40,000 people (Littleproud 15). The name came from Woodstock, an idyllic town in New York State, which "had long been populated by (…) workaday, rural folk and free-spirited bohemians" (Lang 36). Michael Lang also spent his summers at a holiday camp in the area (Lang 9), and several artists settled in Woodstock, including Bob Dylan and his backup band, The Band (Lang 37). As Michael Lang says: "The town did seem like a shelter from the storm (...) in September '68" (38).

Indeed, the year 1968 was notoriously violent in Sixties America with the murders of Martin Luther King Jr. (4 April) and Robert Kennedy (5 June); the police clubbed and gassed protesters at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago on 28 August and activists such as the Black Panthers and the Yippies (Youth International Party) "were indicted on trumped-up charges" (Lang 39). Violent confrontations also occurred on university campuses, "in urban ghettos, and at demonstrations across the country" (Lang 53). Eugene McCarthy, Democrat Senator of Minnesota, who ran against President Lyndon Johnson in the Democratic primaries, called 1968 "the hard year" (O'Neill 360).

The Soundouts in Woodstock, which had been held every summer since 1967, were the main inspiration for the Woodstock festival with their pastoral scenes, such as "little

kids running around, people sharing joints and lazing around on blankets as the sun set," among the cattle and nature (Lang 39). Because of this, Michael Lang decided to keep the name Woodstock for the Bethel festival (Lang 52), even though it would not be held in the town of the same name.

Critical commentators on Woodstock, Gerard DeGroot and Mike Marqusee wrongly believe the original concept of the event was closely related to Bob Dylan. DeGroot states that Woodstock began "as a pilgrimage to the home of the prophet" (237), while Marqusee says the festival "traded heavily on Dylan's cachet" (286). In fact, the concept for Woodstock began to evolve when Michael Lang became friends with Artie Kornfeld, 25 years old, who was "Capitol Record's first vice president of rock music" (Littleproud 14-15). The other two key figures who made Woodstock possible were John Roberts, 24 years old, who "was heir to a drugstore and toothpaste manufacturing" company "and supplied the money," and Joel Rosenman, 26 years old, who had recently graduated from Yale Law School (Littleproud 14). Lang and Kornfield met Roberts and Rosenman after an acquaintance of Lang's, an entertainment lawyer named Miles Lourie, set up a meeting in early February 1969 (Lang 44-45). As a result, they formed Woodstock Ventures Inc. (Littleproud 16).

Woodstock was going to be more than just a music festival. It would be "a gathering of the tribes," where "experimental new lifestyles would be respected and accommodated," thus creating "a new paradigm in festival events" (Lang 52). For Artie Kornfeld, the event would be "a happening that would exemplify the generation." At first, the festival was named "An Aquarian Exposition: The Woodstock Music and Art Fair." Both Lang and Kornfeld wished to advertise Woodstock by appealing to the sense of independence of their peers (Littleproud 16). According to Michael Lang, the word "Aquarian" referenced the Aquarian age, "an era of great harmony predicted by astrologers

to coincide with the late twentieth century, a time when stars and planets would align to allow for more understanding, sympathy, and trust in the world"; "Exposition" encompassed all the arts (Lang 52). The belief in the Aquarian Age was a central subject in *Hair: The American Tribal Love-Rock Musical*, which premiered in December 1967 (Rielly 210). It was adapted into film by Milos Forman in 1979.

In the end, the slogan of the festival would become "Three Days of Peace and Music." After the turbulent year of 1968, Woodstock would be an opportunity to prove to society that "peace and understanding were possible." Therefore, the promoters advertised the event as peaceful and set aside "the onstage discussion of political issues" (Lang 53) in order to avoid violence. Woodstock would be a test to the counterculture:

> Jane Friedman (Publicity): We desperately wanted to do the festival, not only because it was a PR account, but we were really involved in the antiwar movement in those days. There was so much going on politically and sociologically in the world, and we realized Woodstock was going to be special. If you were into the whole politic of the era, it was the most exciting account to have at the time. Michael and Artie really built it that way – and that's how we built the festival in our campaign. We were desperately looking for a project on which to hang our hope for *change*, and this festival stood for a new way of thinking and living. (Lang 86)

By early April, Woodstock was being promoted in the underground press, in publications such as *Village Voice* and *Rolling Stone*, and in advertisements in newspapers like *New York Times* and *Times Herald-Record* in May (Littleproud 16). Artie Kornfeld also ran adverts on FM radio stations (Lang 105), which targeted older teens and young adults (Covach 263), and used aeroplanes to pull banners promoting the festival in places like beaches (Littleproud 17). "Ticket sales were limited to record stores in the greater New York City area, or by mail via a post office box at the Radio City Station post office in Midtown Manhattan" (Reynolds 234).

"Word of mouth" was also an extremely important factor for the promotion of Woodstock (Reynolds 133). The fact that the festival attracted such a large number of people in an era without today's technology is remarkable. Peter McAlevey (motion picture producer) was one among many who promoted the festival whenever he could. Even though the festival was not going to be free, at first, McAlevey and his friends expected it otherwise (Reynolds 135).

Around this time, Michael Lang began booking musicians for the festival. The first bands to be booked were Jefferson Airplane, Creedence Clearwater Revival and Canned Heat (Lang 54-55). For Lang, "Woodstock was not intended to be about any one band or group of bands. It was about the people – and the ideas and music interwoven through their lives." As such, The Beatles, who were on the verge of breaking up, and the Rolling Stones were not considered as "they would dominate the festival and change the focus of our message" (Lang 84).

By early June, most of the bookings were made and the line-up of the festival was decided: Friday would be folk day, Saturday would primarily feature artists from the West Coast and Sunday would be reserved for "the bigger international rock bands" (Lang 82). True to its ethos, the advertising of Woodstock did not focus on the musical acts alone, unlike previous events, since it was supposed to be about the generation's culture, music, art and values (Lang 105).

One of the most important concerns for the organisers was security. Possible unrest at Woodstock would be dealt with peacefully in order to reflect the peaceful nature of the event. Wes Pomeroy, the Justice Department representative who had tried to negotiate with Mayor Daley to avert the riots at the Democratic National Convention, was employed as head of security (Lang 71-73). Both Lang and Pomeroy agreed that enforcement inside festival grounds would be handled by festival staff and that no arrests for smoking

marijuana would be made. Pomeroy further added that he had never seen anyone become hostile after smoking cannabis (Lang 72). The unusual harmony between youth and the police would be a highlight of Woodstock. As for people trying to enter festival grounds without purchasing a ticket, Michael Lang informed Wes Pomeroy that a free area would be available (including a stage, camping and kitchens), as well as a sound system to hear the acts on the main stage (Lang 72).

Even though Woodstock is considered the high point of the counterculture by many historians, such as William O'Neill (259-60), the counterculture itself threatened the festival. The coalition of political factions of the Lower East Side led by Abbie Hoffman, one of the founders of the Youth International Party, believed that Woodstock Ventures was exploiting the counterculture by charging admittance (Lang 92-93). However, money was necessary to finance the festival and for the well-being of the attendees.

Ironically, the matter was settled with money: Hoffman settled on $10,000, half of which was used to buy a printing press to print a survival guide for festival goers and political propaganda (Lang 94). Roz Payne (activist filmmaker), who accompanied the Yippies, even compared the meeting to an armed robbery: "Abbie and I just went to Michael's office one day and said to him, 'All right, this is a stickup, we've come to get what's ours!'" (Lang 92). However, Mike Marqusee does not consider this as extortion because, according to him, the promoters were "hippie capitalists," which also shows his incomprehension of the idealism behind Woodstock (286-87). Truth be told, Abbie Hoffman was an important presence at Woodstock, since he worked alongside doctors in the medical tents (Lang 203).

According to Jane Friedman, various political factions had threatened to disrupt Woodstock with riots if it weren't a political event. Conversely, Kornfeld and Lang envisioned Woodstock mainly as a cultural event, although not one "devoid of politics,"

and believed that a successful and peaceful event was “the strongest political statement possible” (Lang 97). In order to get their message across to the counterculture, a discussion between political groups was held in New York on 26 June where it was decided that Woodstock would remain a peaceful and cultural event and politics would be represented in booths in an area named Movement City (Lang 96-98). Nevertheless, as Penny Stallings (assistant to Mel Lawrence, chief of operations) pointed out, many young staffers viewed Woodstock as a political event: “we were going to show the world who we were, how big we were” (Lang 149).

The choice of a site for the Woodstock festival was particularly complicated and frustrating. At first, the location was going to be the town of Woodstock, which had inspired the creation of the event, but in early March “the town supervisor, Bill Ward, and an official from the county health department” told Lang that “a large outdoor event” would not be welcomed (Lang 53).

The second site was the town of Wallkill but there were many local efforts to ban the festival, including a petition to stop the event by the Concerned Citizens Commitee and an ordinance forbidding gatherings of over 5,000 people by town officials. Meanwhile, the Woodstock crews were finalising their plans for sanitation, health safety and security to present to Wallkill officials in order to get a permit for “a large assembly of people” (Lang 95). On 15 July, the town Zoning Board of Appeals rejected their application for a permit (Lang 113).

The day after the verdict, Ticia Agri (production aide and assistant to Michael Lang) received a call from Elliot Tiber, a motel owner, who was willing to rent his land in White Lake (Lang 115-16). The land turned out to be a large swamp, so Tiber called an acquaintance of his, Morris Abraham, to look at some properties (Lang 117). It was then

that Michael Lang saw the right land to hold the festival, which belonged to Max Yasgur, "the biggest dairy farmer in the county" (Lang 118).

As Lang says: "Without Max Yasgur, there would have been no Woodstock. He was known in Sullivan County as a strong-willed man of his word" (119). Not only did he rent some of his land to the Woodstock crew but he was also a valuable spokesman who urged the boards of Bethel to approve the festival: "All they are asking 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" (Lang 124-25). Even though he belonged to the older generation, he was especially tolerant and did not share the prejudices of the majority of his contemporaries. In an interview to the Hackensack *Record Call*, he stated: "They're pretty good kids, and I welcome them, (…) I'm from a different generation, and we did other things… Just because a boy wears long hair doesn't mean he's going to break the law. I don't buy that nonsense. This is going to be something different, but I don't have any fears at all" (Lang 126-27).

Despite the festival being approved by the town boards on Monday, 21 July, a sign against the festival was placed on the road from the entrance to Max Yasgur's property: "STOP MAX'S HIPPY MUSIC FESTIVAL – NO 150,000 HIPPIES HERE! BUY NO MILK" (Lang 125-26). Nevertheless, there were many local volunteers:

> The more money we spent, the better we were treated by the community. We were buying materials locally and hiring residents, and as that happened, it changed some of the negative attitudes in town and began to endear us to them. More and more White Lake residents got into the Woodstock spirit. They became supporters because they liked what we were doing, and they saw everybody working hard. During those last two weeks before the festival, it seemed as if thousands of people offered to help in every way. (Lang 151-52)

Because the festival was less than a month away, the entire operation behind Woodstock ran on a twenty-four-hour schedule to finish the stage, the concessions, parking

lots, sanitation, medical facilities and kitchens (Lang 152). The fact that thousands of people began arriving as early as Monday, 11 August, (Lang 152) and delays caused by rainy weather (Lang 158) made it more difficult to build the planned infrastructures: "We rented two massive cranes for a thousand dollars a day to assist in the construction of the stage and towers. The cranes became trapped next to the stage because the wooden fence encircling the stage, and other construction, prevented us from getting them out before people started arriving" (Lang 158-59). The ticket booths were never set up (Lang 153). Even though Michael Lang only noticed it on Friday morning, others had known it for days (Littleproud 47). Therefore, attendance could not be charged.

**2.2. Friday, 15 August**

Although the organisers expected a maximum of 200,000 people to attend Woodstock, thousands of people were already arriving in the week preceding the festival (Lang 160). Dr Bill Abruzzi, chief medical officer (Lang 151), "arranged for more medical supplies and personnel". Additional helicopters were also arranged to transport sick people as well as supplies (Lang 167). Buses from Port Authority in New York to Bethel were added "to meet the demand, and a few people were flying into the Sullivan County airport" (Lang 162). Most would travel to Bethel by car but by Thursday afternoon, 14 August, the roads became blocked: "Tiny Route 17B was becoming a twenty-mile-long parking lot, and we started hearing reports that the delays on the larger Route 17 were beginning to back up into the New York State Thruway" (Lang 166).

As a result, festival goers abandoned their cars and walked to the festival site, as John Bianco (TV and film producer) and Jon Jaboolian (live sound engineer) remember: "We knew we were getting close when abandoned cars lined the road and throngs of

hippies (and a lot of pretty straight looking teens), with knapsacks and sleeping bags slung over their shoulders, filed steadily in one direction" (Reynolds 142).

The pilgrimage to the festival site became an iconic image of Woodstock. Janine Fleury (retired teacher) described the situation as "endless lines of parked cars and Volkswagen buses, some gaudily decorated with giant sunflowers and peace signs" (Reynolds 149-51). Michele Hax (teacher) also recalls those who would offer their help to fix mechanical problems or "to generously – and quickly – push them out of the way" (Reynolds 44-46).

However, this chaos did not stop people from trying to get to Bethel, even if the one-hundred-mile journey "took eight or more hours" (Lang 178). Wes Pomeroy advised people not to travel to the site and about a million returned home (Lang 180), and the New York Thruway and the Canadian border were shut.[7] Performers were transported by helicopter (Reynolds 142), resulting in delayed performances. Woodstock seemed to have become the perfect place for an entire generation to gather: "It was like the earth tilted as the entire baby boomer demographic tried to get there" (Penny Stallings) (Lang 181).

The chaos on the roads was the background to an interesting Woodstock experience. Louis S. Denaro (a musician), who was travelling with his "parents and younger siblings to a resort near Swan Lake" on 15 August (Reynolds 56), recalls how their Woodstock experience changed his mother, who had been born in Fascist Italy (Reynolds 57):

> Personally witnessing a happening where so many people could freely express themselves, particularly in stark contrast to her wartime upbringing in a regime that instilled fear and suppressed personal freedom, apparently raised her consciousness. (…) Within a year, she got U.S. citizenship and a driver's license, but she was on her way to real independence when she proclaimed that hippies were cool and partnered with a neighbor to open a boutique that sold love beads

[7] "Woodstock 40 Years On." 4 July 2011. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swyfP92Gzdg>.

> and mood rings and consequently incorporated these items into her daily wardrobe. Her newly acquired life balance and idealism affected most of us – with the exception of my father, who still seems to be taking his time managing these social transitions. (Reynolds 59)

This life-changing experience is one of many testimonies that show that Woodstock was not an ordinary music festival because it had a remarkable impact on not only those that actively partook in the festival experience but also those who happened to be in the area by chance. Many music festivals have come and gone, but few, or none, can be compared to Woodstock in this respect.

According to Jeff Blumenfeld (a local and the owner of a PR agency), Bethel had never experienced anything as big as Woodstock (Reynolds 67). The residents certainly had never seen thousands of young people in their small town, as White Lake resident Debbie Stelnik, who was 11 at the time, recalls:

> I remember the adults were scared, including my mom. Sure, we were used to a lot of middle-class urbanites traveling to the area for the summer, but nobody had ever seen anything like this. This was a relatively quiet place, and then all of a sudden here are all these people just walking through everyone's property. People were looking for food, water, or a place to sleep. A couple from Poland owned the colony, and they were absolutely freaking out. At night they stood guard with shotguns. The traffic was so incredible and my dad wanted to take a look, so we filled some water jugs and Dad passed it out as we went along. Everyone was so grateful, saying, "Peace, man. Thanks." (Littleproud 42)

Jeryl Abramson, from Brooklyn, who was fifteen in 1969, and his mother made sandwiches and gave them away, as well as water jugs, to festival goers, who came from different parts of the country: "I remember seeing all the different license plates – Alaska, California, and Nevada. It was very exciting to me" (Littleproud 54).

A woman on holiday compared the mass of people trying to get to the festival site to "an army invading a town." Nevertheless, she said the people were "beautiful." Jerry

Garcia of the Grateful Dead described the situation as "a biblical, epochal, unbelievable scene."[8]

Even though there was opposition to the event, many festival goers, such as Sandy McKnight (screenwriter and musician), remember the friendliness of the local grocers: "I remember walking into the little town of Bethel and buying a sandwich from a local. The vibe was so festive everywhere, even among the local residents, who had never seen anything like us before. The lack of commerciality was astounding" (Reynolds 40).

One of the most amazing aspects of Woodstock is the generally peaceful mood in small-town Bethel, considering the thousands of festival goers who made their way to the event:

> Barbara Acker (freelance writer and reporter): Unlike the atmosphere almost everywhere else in America at the time, no one shouted for us "damn hippies" to cut our hair or get a job. Locals stared from their front porches, but I never heard a single unkind word. I began to feel like I was part of a nation – a nation that was going to forget, at least for a few days, about Vietnam body counts, racial discrimination, uptight employers, and controlling parents. This *hippie nation's* only aspiration that weekend was to sit in the sun, listen to great music, and love one another. (Reynolds 186)

In the sixties, there was the issue of the generation gap. Many young people did not identify with adults and their values. The generation gap might not have been completely closed but it narrowed at Woodstock.

The previous statement also suggests that this particular festival could have only acquired such a special significance because it took place in the 1960s. It followed a rather tumultuous decade of protests and riots that reached a peak in 1968. While many still believed that a revolution would come, there were also those, such as Phil Vinall (a medical writer), who were beginning to see things more realistically: "But by the summer

[8] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

of 1969 we were growing tired and feeling old; the protests, the riots, and the assassination of our heroes kept coming and coming" (Reynolds 162).

Exhaustion "from the turbulence of 1968" was general. The last beacons of hope faded away with the murders of Martin Luther King Jr. and Democratic Senator Robert Kennedy. The election of Richard Nixon did not abate the polarization of the nation and "[t]here were more campus outrages in 1969" than in the previous year (O'Neill 396). Therefore, Woodstock would be a Garden of Eden for many, serving as a temporary escape from the harsh reality of the times (Fricke 16).

Perhaps that was one of the reasons so many made their way to Bethel. Not that the musical line-up should be considered irrelevant, since the opportunity to listen to some of the best acts of the time was what made Woodstock possible in the first place. But it is also true that there would not have been three days of peace and music without the people. Also, for many youngsters the festival was a rare chance to socialise with like-minded people, as political activist R.G. Nourse recalls: "Thousands and thousands of people just like us: long hair, blue jeans, and everyone smiling" (Reynolds 166). Robin Chanin remembers how no one stood out in the immense crowd (Littleproud 56). John Rossi, who was 18, remembers the bus ride with his friend from Providence, Rhode Island, to New York City: "The bus was filled with freaks – 50 of our best friends we'd never met before – all heading to the same festival together, rapping and sharing all the way" (Littleproud 46). Caleb Rossiter, who was seventeen at the time, of Ithaca, New York, recalls how long hair was something to be proud of at Woodstock: "Long, wild hair that usually earned a hostile or sarcastic stare everywhere else was like a badge of honor here" (Littleproud 62).

Many attendees remember the vast population concentrated at the festival site, which kept increasing. On the first day of the event, the infrastructures were still being built, as Barbara Acker and Christine Oliveira (founder of a children's school) recall:

> For the next few hours, I felt like I was watching a city grow: The stage crew was shouting orders; scaffolds were erected; and sound systems were being checked repeatedly. Row upon row of portable toilets crested the hill, while food concession stands waited for the arrival of their supplies. A shiver ran through me like electricity – this was *really* going to be big! (Reynolds 186-87)

> The Hog Farm was really together in terms of getting food organized for people and staying on top of sanitation. (…) I got up and walked around. There were pipes lying across the ground, and the water system broke down, and the roads weren't really in properly to get the cars in and out. They were building the stage right up to the last minute. They were even working on stuff while the first acts went on. They had this little village and woods, with concessions and beautiful stuff – leatherwork and tie-dye, but it was the whole culture. It was gorgeously set up, with a big jungle gym and a playground. It was this magic utopian village. (Lang 186)

Because of this build-up, and because people did not want to give up their spots in front of the main stage, many could not make their way to town to buy supplies. However, there was a feeling of community and sharing:

> Linda W. Hamilton (medical social worker): People started arriving en masse. All kinds of people from everywhere descended on the farm. The bright colored clothing worn on the close-knit human bodies smeared the landscape like a crazy quilt. With the population increase, Tony and I could no longer hitch into town to buy food. No one was going anywhere, and we began to get hungry. But all those who had anything to eat shared what they had with those who had nothing. A pretty flower child with long, flowing hair, fed me strawberry jam with a spoon. Sweet! (Reynolds 159)

R.G. Nourse confirms this: "Everywhere I looked, I saw people sharing what food and drink they'd brought" (Reynolds 166). Eileen Simas and Nancy Whipple, for the *Times-Herald Record*, reported: "This seems to be the pervasive philosophy at the campsites that ring the Aquarian Exposition site in White Lake" (Littleproud 68).

The organisers hired the Hog Farm commune, led by Hugh Romney, "better known as Wavy Gravy" (Lang 275), to serve food to the attendees (Reynolds 159). Their other duties were taking care of people experiencing acid trips and offering advice. Barbara Acker, like many, volunteered to work with them by "feeding organic oatmeal to children (or anyone else who wandered in) and gently talking down teenagers who were experiencing bad acid trips" (Reynolds 187).

The Bethel festival will forever be remembered for having become a free event. About 186,000 advance tickets had been sold (Littleproud 48) and the rest of the profits would have come from tickets sold at the entrance gates. Because of "matters of organization and time constraints," the crafts fair and ticket booths were not set up (Littleproud 48). The fences were also down, a sign to many that this was to be a free concert: "On Thursday, tens of thousands of people arrived. Our first thought: Get tickets. When we spotted cyclone fencing lying on the ground near the planned main entrance, it was clear this had already been proclaimed a free concert" (Bod Dickey, journalist and educator) (Reynolds 181). Randy Sheets, who was 19, "joined a large crowd that was headed towards a fence that had been rather haphazardly set up." He and his friends pushed the fence down and headed toward the stage area: "It really wasn't a 'pushing down' as much as it was a 'walking down.' There was no malice; it was just meant to be down" (Littleproud 36-37). The documentary record also shows people jumping over the fences.[9]

According to Michael Lang, there were already 200,000 people in Max Yasgur's fields by Friday morning, making it impossible to collect or sell tickets (175). Michele Starkey (retired senior investigator for the New York State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigations) further states that it was impossible to contain the enormous mass of people or to arrest them (Reynolds 90).

[9] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

In the afternoon, John Morris (director of production area) made the historical announcement, which was met with applause:

> This is one thing that I was gonna wait a while before we talked about, but maybe we'll talk about it now so you can think about it. It's a free concert from now on. That doesn't mean that anything goes. What that means is we're gonna put the music up here for free. What it means is that the people who are backing this thing, who put up the money for it, are gonna take a bit of a bath. A big bath. That's no hype, that's true. They're gonna get hurt, but what it means is that these people have it in their heads that your welfare is a hell of a lot more important and the music is, than a dollar.[10]

Mike Marqusee may believe that the sole purpose of the promoters was to make huge profits out of the event (286). However, this ignores the fact that a considerable amount of money had to be invested to hire medical staff, set up food concessions and sanitation in order to ensure the well-being of the attendees. Although Marqusee acknowledges that it was Warner Bros. that capitalised on the event, and thus youth culture, with the release of the film and soundtracks (290), he fails to mention that the promoters never profited from the festival: "Artie [Kornfeld] and I [Michael Lang] never saw a dime from any of the proceeds from the film or soundtracks" (Lang 255).

In the end, the underground groups who wanted a free festival got what they wanted. Shopkeepers were satisfied with the situation as attendees could spend more money in their shops (Littleproud 53). Nevertheless, according to Wes Pomeroy, some people still wished to donate their money to the promoters in acknowledgement of making Woodstock a free festival, since there was a feeling of gratitude and a spirit of community (Lang 176-77).

The festival site soon became a chaotic city. A *New York Times* reporter called Woodstock "a disaster site" (Lang 181). Ethel G. Romm, for the *Times-Herald Record*,

[10] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

reported: "The show is late, there are seven hours of travel for the last 15 miles, parking lots are five miles away, toilet facilities are overloaded and sanitation trucks can't get through. (…) Maybe there will be a riot today or tomorrow. Maybe it will all turn into a bad scene. Maybe we'll all get dysentery or hepatitis" (Littleproud 53). On Friday morning, the board of health sent an inspector but the report was never filled, since he spent the whole weekend looking for his daughter, who "disappeared as soon as they arrived." Lang believes that "his daughter was having the time of her life" (197-98).

According to Linda Breslin, who arrived "late Friday evening," the reports about the unsanitary conditions were exaggerated:

> We heard on the radio that Woodstock had been declared a disaster area, so the first thing I did when I got there was find a pay phone and call home. My mother asked if I was aware what the news was reporting, but to me, it didn't seem that way at all. It was quite calm. The ground was muddy, but we made due with plastic bags to sit on. (Littleproud 87)

Some people – for example, Michele Hax, who anticipated problems with accommodation and food – left at the end of the first day: "Where would we go once we passed the stage? What would we drink?[11] (…) What bothered me were the sleeping arrangements, and the huge, deafening crowd. What if I got trampled in a rush toward the stage? Where would I shower?" (Reynolds 46).

Jeff Blumenfeld left after two hours, since it was overcrowded (Reynolds 67) but his Woodstock experience only ended on Saturday afternoon at the Civil Defence headquarters: "I was dispatching emergency calls for water and drugs, relaying messages from authorities, and calling nervous parents by telephone to tell them their kids were fine, if not a bit freaked out by the crowds" (Reynolds 68). In *Woodstock*, a woman who couldn't handle the enormous crowd is sobbing because she wanted to leave and couldn't

[11] Most liquids "at rock concerts or in park gatherings were laced with acid" (Reynolds 44).

find her friends.[12]

Sandra Johnson (retired teacher) described Woodstock as a "social cataclysm, a lawless, drug-assisted, rebellious human soup" but recognises that the people became "a family of music worshipers." However, she did not stay the whole weekend:

> But then, the mercury rose, the beat intensified, rain fell, and civility turned to excitement, excitement to lack of convention, playfulness to hedonism. (…) And so, with soggy resolve, mud-caked shoes, and fond V-shaped farewells, my boyfriend and I began the long trek away from this reservation called Woodstock Nation. (Reynolds 72)

While some could not handle the crowds, many remained and went through much worse: the shortage of food, the rainy weather (Reynolds 81) and the lack of sleep (Reynolds 85). Nevertheless, there was a general feeling of unconcern, as reported by Eileen Simas and Nancy Whipple: "Both refreshing and perplexing was the fact that no one seemed to worry, not about the future, not about the past, not even about today" (Littleproud 68).

For those that remained, the chance to listen to their favourite performers and socialise with other people made it worthwhile. Anita Winder never left her spot at the centre and in front of the stage from Friday morning. She remembers the friendly mood around her, people sharing food and other utensils, taking only what they needed and throwing something in, which was "the most astonishing thing about Woodstock (other than the music)" (Reynolds 102). In the documentary, we see people passing on wine to the next person.[13]

For Janine Fleury, who was "a recent immigrant from communist Poland" (Reynolds 149), the sight of thousands of people freely protesting against Vietnam

[12] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[13] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

astonished her:

> In my country, everyone – demonstrators and innocent bystanders alike – would have been immediately arrested, or worse. For a while, I could scarcely breathe, but none of these protesters appeared concerned… not a trace of fear showed on anyone's faces. Slowly, I relaxed enough to hear the music again. What a country America was shaping up to be. (Reynolds 151)

This experience has some similarities with Louis S. Denaro's account of his mother's Woodstock experience: both Janine Fleury and Denaro's mother had been raised in countries in which freedom of expression was violently repressed and Woodstock had a profound impact on both.

If the crowds were an amazing or frightening sight to the attendees, for many performers it was also unlike anything they had ever seen. Richie Havens described the size of the crowd as "double Times Square on New Year's Eve" and "a human blanket," which blocked three roads (Lang 174). Gilles Malkine, guitarist for Tim Hardin, compared the sight to the entire human population in a single location: "You could not see the end of the crowd. It was like all of humanity looking at you" (Lang 189).

For the Woodstock staff, the financial disaster that the festival would turn out to be was a secondary issue compared to the problem of getting the performers transported to the site and helping festival goers with food and accommodation. According to John Sebastian, who performed a solo set on Saturday even though he was not booked:

> Everyone was coping simultaneously with the fact that it had become a free festival. The mechanics about getting people on and off the stage had been thought about, but it was a monumental task. So all those who weren't onstage found themselves helping with food or helping with lodging, helping any way they could. (Lang 184)

Richie Havens opened Woodstock at 5:07 p.m. on Friday afternoon (Lang 182). The first day was already behind schedule as the other performers were still in the hotel

about seven miles from the site[14] and, according to Ethel G. Romm, "some vital parts for the sound system" had still to be brought in by helicopter (Littleproud 53).

Havens, who was supposed to have been the fifth performer, played for nearly three hours without his bass player, Eric Oxendine. The bassist was stuck in traffic on New York State Thruway, so he abandoned his car and walked thirty miles to the festival site; when he arrived, Havens's performance had already finished.[15] However, thirty miles on foot would have taken much longer.

The highlights of Richie Havens's performance were "Handsome Johnny" and "Freedom," both of which were present in the original version of the 1970 documentary.[16] "Handsome Johnny" was one of the many antiwar songs performed at Woodstock. The song portrays war as never-ending by highlighting significant battles in History, as weapons become deadlier. "Freedom" became famous for being made up on the spot:

> I'm back out there one more time, when finally I've completely run out of songs and know I've got to get off, no matter what the situation is. So I started tuning and retuning, hoping to remember a song I've missed, when I hear that word in my head again, that word I kept hearing while I looked over the crowd in my first moments onstage. The word was: *freedom*.
>
> And I say to the crowd: "Freedom is *what we're all taking about getting. It's what we've been looking for… I think* this *is it*." (…) This was the same feeling I'd been experiencing all along. The feeling that Bethel was such a special place, a moment when we all felt we were at the exact center of true freedom. I'm singing it, "FREE-dom, FREE-dom," picking up the rhythm another beat, and the pulse of it is carrying me and connecting the whole Woodstock Festival for me in my very last moments onstage. I felt like I could feel the people I couldn't even see on the other side of the hill… "Clap your *hands! Clap your hands!*" And they all did! (Lang 182-83)

[14] Havens, Richie. "Richie Havens on Opening Woodstock." *Rolling Stone*. 24 August 1989. 6 June 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/richie-havens-on-opening-woodstock-19890824>.
[15] Havens, Richie. "Richie Havens on Opening Woodstock." *Rolling Stone*. 24 August 1989. 6 June 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/richie-havens-on-opening-woodstock-19890824>.
[16] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

On Saturday, Canned Heat and Mountain were also inspired by the event and the crowds and improvised two songs during their performances: “Woodstock Boogie” and “For Yasgur’s Farm,” respectively (Lang 213).

Michael Lang recalls they kept telling Havens to continue performing (182) until the next act, Sweetwater, arrived by helicopter. Sweetwater, an eclectic band, was also the first electric group to perform. As a result, they were the “sound crew’s sound check,” in the words of bassist Fred Herrera (Lang 187).

After Richie Havens, Swami Satchidananda, an Indian spiritual leader, gave a speech before the audience. A friend of Lang’s, Peter Max, who was studying meditation and yoga, had brought the Swami and his followers to Woodstock. Lang, Kornfeld and John Morris believed the Swami would inspire the crowd to be well-behaved and peaceful (Lang 183):

> America leads the world in several ways. Very recently, when I was in the East, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi asked me, “What’s happening in America?” I said, “America is becoming a whole. America is helping everybody in the material field, but the time has come for America to help the whole world with spirituality also.” (…) I, with all my heart, wish a great, great success to this music festival. Let it pave the way for many more festivals in other parts of the country…. The entire world is going to know what the American youth can do for humanity. Every one of you should feel responsibility for the outcome of this festival. Once again, let me express my sincere wish and prayers for the success and peace of this celebration. Thank you. OM Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi. (Reynolds 112-13)

This speech and Max Yasgur’s on Sunday were among the most iconic moments of the three-day event. Powerful as these speeches were, one of the things that Woodstock showed was how important and powerful music is for us as individuals. Music is such an integral part of our existence that certain songs remind us of important moments or people in our lives either because we relate to the stories they tell, the messages they convey or

simply because of their presence. Music has the power to reach people and is indeed a universal language.

The second most memorable performance on Friday was by Ravi Shankar, a close friend of George Harrison, who would perform at The Concert for Bangladesh in 1971.[17] Before Ravi Shankar started his set at around 10:30 p.m., he confessed his worries to Al Aronowitz, reporter for the *New York Post*: "I am frightened in case something goes wrong with so many people" (Lang 189-90). His concerns were not unfounded as riots could have easily been started, thus turning Woodstock into a tragic event. There were no riots and his music reached out to the crowd and Ravi Shankar was given "standing ovations" despite the rain and thunder:

> Gilles Malkine: One act that was miles above everybody else was Ravi Shankar. There was no speaking, it was all pure music. What he did with that crowd was amazing, just with music. And at certain points in the performance, people would stand up and yell because of where he took them. They say it takes several lifetimes to make a sitar player. I believe it, because talk about leaving your mind behind! And just going with the music and with the flow and with a couple of others you've played with all your life, like Ustad Alla Rakha, who was the tabla player. He woke up that audience and took them along with him on this soaring musical journey. Nobody else could touch that. (Lang 190)

Al Aronowitz reported that festival guards feared "that the stage, built on scaffolding, was beginning to slide in the mud" and the canopy above the stage might collapse due to the accumulation of water. As a result, "most of the audience waited an hour while the music was interrupted because the water threatened to short the electrical equipment" (Lang 190). However, according to Michael Lang, the stage was sturdy because the poles were set in concrete and on Saturday morning, a crane was used to push the tarp up above the stage to empty it (191).

[17] Although his performance has never been officially released on film, the first song of his set is included on the *Woodstock 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm* box set. Shankar's complete set was released on vinyl and CD but both are currently unavailable.

The folk singer Melanie Safka, practically unknown then, followed Ravi Shankar. Just like Richie Havens, Melanie, as she is professionally known, connected with the audience:

> It was magical. I had my first out-of-body experience. I started walking across the bridge to the stage, and I just left my body, going to a higher view. I watched myself walk onto the stage, sit down, and sing a couple of lines. (…) It was an amazing experience to be there, to be in that time and live through that group of people who were acknowledging each other, as if we were all in one family. Woodstock was an affirmation that we were part of each other. (Lang 191)

Before Melanie's performance, E.H. "Chip" Monck (production supervisor and stage lighting designer), following a suggestion from performer Tiny Tim (Littleproud 84), told the audience to light candles in order to stop the rain: "By the time I finished my set, the whole hillside was a mass of little flickering lights". Her Woodstock experience inspired Melanie to write "Lay Down (Candles in the Rain)," which was released a year later and "became her first big hit" (Lang 191). After Woodstock, every time Melanie sang this song, people would light their lighters. As a result, alarmed firefighters banned some of her concerts (Fricke 19). Nowadays, people use cell phones but are nonetheless continuing a trend started by Melanie: "The lighting of candles would set a precedent that carries on to this day. The candles became lighters, which have since become cell phones" (Lang 191).

Before the last performance, John Morris advised the attendees to stay where they were, since the campgrounds and the woods were almost full. Before he praised the behaviour of the audience, he asked them to remain off the roads, so as not to disrupt the vehicle traffic that brought food and water. Morris's reiteration that Woodstock was all about the people was followed by applause:

> So if everybody hangs together with funny little things like the fences down here which aren't to keep you out but to keep the way so that the technicians can get up

> and get everything set up and that we can move the performers. If you can respect the things when you're buying things in the concessions, which you have been doing… You know, if everybody just figures, this isn't the Woodstock Music and Art Fair, this is your fair, man… And each of one of you is a piece of this thing. It's been that way for a long time. I don't know what started it, I don't know how it got going but this is not for producers, thirty acts or anything else and it's all you funny people.

He finished by warning people not to take acid that was being circulated and not to pass it around.[18]

After midnight (Lang 192), Joan Baez, renowned activist, gave one of the most memorable performances. Hers was the most political, with songs such as "Joe Hill," "Drug Store Truck Drivin' Man" (featuring Jeffrey Shurtleff), which was dedicated to Ronald Reagan, then Governor of California;[19] "'We Shall Overcome' ended the first day of music around 2 A.M." (Lang 192).

Her outstanding performance of "Joe Hill" made its way into the original cut of the film.[20] The song about the famous union leader tells how Joe Hill's spirit still lives on after he was shot and how he continues to be an inspiration for working-class people fighting for their rights.[21] Before the song, she told the audience about her husband David Harris,[22] who had been recently imprisoned for draft resistance and was already organising a hunger

[18] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.
[19] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[20] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[21] "Joe Hill (1879-1915) emigrated to the USA from Sweden and, as an itinerant labourer, wrote political songs and organised union activity. He was executed for murder on very dubious evidence and thus became a martyr among working people. Alfred Hayes wrote a poem in his honour, 'I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night', which was set to music in 1936 by Earl Robinson and has been much covered since" (Millward 75-76).
[22] Journalist and writer. He "entered the Federal prison system in July, 1969" and "was released to the custody of the U.S. Board of Parole in March, 1971 for the remainder of his sentence." Mayfield, Rob. "Biography." *David Harris, Writer*. 16 May 2014. <http://www.davidharriswriter.com/bio.html>.

strike in federal prison.[23] The song has been a part of her repertoire for years and she performed it at the Occupy Wall Street Veterans Day Rally on 11 November 2011.[24]

Friday ended without any incidents despite adversities caused by the weather and the infrastructures: "The police and the festival's promoters both expressed amazement that despite the size of the crowd – the largest gathering of its kind ever held – there had been neither violence nor any serious incident" (B.L. Collier for *New York Times*) (Warner, 58). For Lang, his vision of Woodstock came true: "we were living – at least for the moment – in the kind of world we had envisioned (193). I believe many attendees would have agreed with Lang's vision: there was a feeling of community among festival goers (almost everything was shared), the local mood was surprisingly welcoming for the most part, and there was not a single incident. The drawbacks of the first day would be the same throughout the weekend: the rainy weather, the mud and the somewhat unsanitary conditions. Despite all this, however, Woodstock would bring out the best in human behaviour.

### 2.3. Saturday, 16 August

On Saturday morning, Mel Lawrence (chief of operations) made sure that the attendees had safely made it through the previous night and when the audience began to wake up, he went up onstage and asked them to help the staff clean up the site, which they did (Lang 195-96). According to Abbie Hoffman, there were was more rubbish at the site after Friday night than in the Lower East Side during the rubbish strike (Lang 196) and Philip Pisani (writer) commented: "The whole place was a mess. I expected something different" (Reynolds 48).

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[23] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

[24] "Joan Baez Performing 'Joe Hill' for OWS Veterans Day Rally." 11 November 2011. 16 August 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mh1z-E5RDhM>.

Peter McAlevey, who had stayed for the first day, left on Saturday morning and described what he called "the full effect of the ecological disaster": "the johns were overwhelmed and smelled ghastly, and people were relieving themselves where the bears do, which was not a pretty sight – and, besides, more rain was coming." Although, he never experienced everything his friends did, he argues that Woodstock might have been "the greatest musical happening of all time," despite his friends spending "practically the entire time sopping wet, freezing in the cold night air, hungry, thirsty, and covered in mud" (Reynolds 136).

The rainy weather throughout the weekend also convinced many to head home, including Geraldine Goldberg (community activist), who assumed Bob Dylan would be performing at the event (Reynolds 84). Although she considered Friday a perfect day, she decided to leave on Saturday morning because of the rain, mud, "the effect of too many drugs and too little sleep" and Dylan's absence (Reynolds 85). Nevertheless, she remembers the sense of camaraderie among festival goers: "What I do fondly recall is the freewheeling spirit of folks working together for peace through music, as well as the unimaginable camaraderie of thousands of strangers creating a community" (Reynolds 86).

Edward D. Christensen (a retired post office worker) also acknowledges the feeling of community that existed despite the unsuitable conditions: "Yeah, it rained, and yeah, it was muddy. Still, people were nice to one another, like you will notice sometimes when there's a snowstorm or catastrophe – everyone helped everyone else. Half a million strangers recognized each other as brothers and sisters" (Reynolds 179). Paralegal Rozanne Reynolds, who only attended Saturday, considers Woodstock "one of the best times of my life" (Reynolds 65) and also confirms the sense of community at the event: "I turned around often to gaze at the crowd and found it awe-inspiring that such a massive group of

people could get along in those conditions – hot sun, rain, hot sun, thundershowers, mud, little to no food or water, few and smelly portable-potties" (Reynolds 64).

Even though Woodstock came to be known as a "disaster area," it is clear from the previous statements that the inconveniences brought out the best in people. One of the most widely recognised and most profound statements about Woodstock came from Hugh Romney on Sunday morning: "There is always a bit of heaven in a disaster area."[25] Artie Kornfeld already considered the audience a family:

> Yeah, it's worth it. Just the... Just to see the lights go on last night, man, and to see the people stand up, man, it makes it worth it. I mean, you know, there will be people... There's people out there that really don't dig it. Very few of them, but, you know, this really is to the point where it's just family here, man.[26]

The rather unsanitary conditions at Woodstock were one of the negative aspects of the event. Music critic David Fricke, who attended the festival, states that the crowd left enough waste and sleeping bags to cover a city of double the area of the festival site (16). There were also no collection bins "within eyeshot of the festival site."[27]

As I pointed out in the Introduction, Woodstock was not perfect. Over the three days of the festival, three people died. Two died on Sunday ("one from a heroin overdose and the other from a burst appendix"). The third person, who died on Saturday morning, was seventeen-year-old Raymond Mizsak, from Trenton, New Jersey who was "run over by a tractor while he slept in his bedroll next to the road." It was an unfortunate death: "It was devastating news" (Lang 202). According to Gery Krewson of Tunkhannock, Pennsylvania, the "tractor came rumbling over the hill as it plowed through heaps of soaked garbage and sleeping bags. It was towing a tank trailer hauling away sewage."

[25] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.
[26] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[27] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

Christopher Cole tried to get help but it was already too late: "We noticed the tractor moving. It ran over what appeared to be a mound of mud, but a human arm flopped out. It was a kid in a mummy sleeping bag. I ran to the trailers and screamed for help" (Littleproud 103). Michele Starkey never forgot this tragic event:

> Sadly, my Woodstock memory is tainted with the untimely death of one undeserving young man. There were two deaths that year, one was of his own accord – a drug overdose. It is the first boy who stepped from this life into eternity who remains fixed in my memory. He was barely sixteen and had run away from his home in New Jersey to attend the concert. By all accounts, it was his miscalculation on his second night at the concert that was fateful for him. He took some black plastic garbage bags and wrapped himself up in them for protection from the storm. Shortly thereafter, he fell asleep. A farm tractor pulling a tanker wagon ran over the young man, mistaking him for garbage. He died instantly. I met with his father and his uncle (who happened to be a lieutenant in the New Jersey State Police Department) at the funeral home in Monticello, not far from Woodstock. It was a horribly sad ending for a young man who came with a dream to make a memory that would last his lifetime. (Reynolds 90)

The festival was, and continues to be, a victim of exaggerated media reports which seemed predisposed to heighten the faults of the event:

> With radio reports about traffic jams and a lack of supplies coming in, rumors about food and water shortages, chaos and misery were rampant in the ill-informed media. To the press, it was a disaster area. I knew things were not that bad. I made my way around the site to see for myself. (Lang 196-97)

There was notable discrepancy between people who were actually at the festival site and the media: "People were calling their friends and telling them how great things were. Word started to get out that the picture was quite different from what was being painted by the media" (Lang 199). The average time to wait in a queue to make a phone call was two

hours.[28] In *Woodstock*, we see people waiting to call their parents. One attendee said: "I'm gonna call my mother and father because they think this is gonna be like another Chicago, like I'm gonna get my head beaten in. They're terrified. So I'm gonna call and tell them, 'Ha, ha, I fooled you. I'm alive.'" She said over the phone: "It was nice, We got wet. (…) All I miss is the bathtub."[29]

However, there was in fact food shortage and following the news reports Sullivan County groups "gathered thousands of food donations to be airlifted to the site." Not only that but people who arrived after walking for miles confirm that locals offered them food and drinks along the way: "Stories hit the press of price gouging, but I think most of the residents of White Lake were giving what they could" (Lang 200). The Sisters of the Convent of St. Thomas distributed 30,000 sandwiches prepared by the Women's Group of the Jewish Community Centre of Monticello.[30] Even in this respect, Woodstock showed that people with different beliefs could come together for a common goal. A nun flashing the peace sign is seen in the documentary.[31]

There were also complaints from the Food for Love concession stands who had short supplies of food and thus "started overcharging for cold hot dogs ($1 each, when the going price was a quarter), which people had to stand in line hours to get." This created discontent among the hungry attendees and the Movement City people (Lang 199-200).

According to the staff, festival goers and political activists, by Saturday Woodstock was more than simply a music festival – it had become a community. Yippie cofounder Paul Krassner remarked that the protest at the Chicago Democratic Convention in 1968

[28] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[29] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[30] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[31] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

was a failure because it was not modelled on Woodstock, which was "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" (Lang 198).

As has already been stated, in response to the demands of activists a Movement City with booths for the main political groups was set up. Tom Smucker, of the Movement for a Democratic Society, stated that the booths were never used since the festival itself was more engaging than politics (Lang 199). According to Lang, Woodstock as a whole had become a Movement City with people sharing everything: community overshadowed politics (199). I agree that Woodstock as it happened made an important political statement about community in a polarised nation. However, I believe that if the underground groups had had their way and turned Woodstock into an overtly political event it would have failed. As I have said, and David Fricke also points it out, political rhetoric was present in some of the songs played at the festival (16). This, however, did not make it an overtly political event. Had it been so it may have been a tragedy. Also, it is hard to believe that around 500,000 people would have showed up.

Woodstock proved to be more successful as a peaceful and cultural event. At first, the Yippies and other political groupings threatened to cause riots a couple of months before Woodstock but the irony was that even Abbie Hoffman ended up praising Woodstock. The communal spirit inspired him to write *Woodstock Nation* (1969) and, shortly before his death in 1989, Hoffman stated: "Out of that sense of community, out of that vision, that Utopian vision, comes the energy to go out there and actually participate in the process so that social change occurs" (Lang 265). Tom Smucker also praised the cooperation between people at Woodstock (Lang 200).

As Stan Goldstein (campsite coordinator and headhunter) remarked: "The crowd began to be its own self-policing, self-regulating, self-controlling entity" (Lang 198). One

of the most remarkable things about Woodstock was that the attendees looked after themselves and each other. Miriam Yasgur's account is an example of such righting of the wrongs:

> Kids were running motorcycles through our fields planted with corn right across from our office plant. They were breaking cornstalks, and Max promptly called Michael [Lang] and said, "Do you know they're destroying this field, which is not part of the land that I rented to you at all?" It didn't take very long until a whole group of young kids came out and put signs all around the field: DON'T RIDE THROUGH THIS FIELD… THESE ARE MAX'S CROPS. Nobody ever rode through the field again. They kept going around it. People were camping along the sides of the road, and they started coming up my driveway and I went out and I said to the young people, "Look, we cannot have people camping along the driveway. Our men are working, they have to get in and out." They moved. Nobody camped on my driveway. Nobody camped near the dairy. (Lang 197)

Valerie LaMont (librarian at the University of Pittsburgh) recalls local farmers selling milk to festival goers and sharing her milk with other attendees, complete strangers: "We didn't know each other, but we were all in this together, caught up in our spirit of community." The community of strangers became one of friends: "We didn't have a way home, but we had new friends, music, and, at times, sunshine" (Reynolds 131). Trudy Morgal also remembers people giving out food to couples with children: "We brought food but it didn't last long and we didn't care, (…). We were really having a great time. All of us were in the exact same situation, so if you saw somebody with kids, you gave them what you had" (Littleproud 96).

Edward D. Christensen also describes a farmer giving out drinks and sandwiches "to anyone who wanted one" (Reynolds 178-79). The fact that the locals themselves were immersed in the spirit of altruism is a clear indication that Woodstock was not just a music festival. It was a different type of society, where fraternity, sharing, altruism and tolerance

were possible. As for tolerance, Christensen talks about the absence of fences between people:

> I remember the feeling that was growing in me: that this was not just a concert; this was something more. Something important. And then word came back through the crowd, "the fences are down!" Not just the fences around a concert area, but all sorts of fences between people began coming down. (Reynolds 179)

Bill Ward (grounds designer) confirms this:

> A nice little old couple along the street had all these hippies camped out in their yard, and they were bringing them food and water, and people were sharing Cokes and stuff. All these groups of people who appeared to be so different were all standing around chatting and sharing things. (Lang 200)

Gilles Malkine also stated:

> Everybody rallied to help each other, to be like family, to play in the mud, to share, to help. A lot of the townspeople felt it too. People said over and over, "The kids are wonderful. We helped them. We ran out of food too." It was a wonderful thing and brought out the best in everybody. (Lang 200)

However, some locals still viewed the attendees as if they did not belong there, according to Harriette Schwartz: "The memory of all these local residents lining the road and looking at us as if we were from Mars is forever emblazoned in my brain" (Littleproud 102).

R.G. Nourse, like Anita Winder, stayed in the middle of the immense crowd. It would be reasonable to expect that being in a tight spot would make people less friendly and uncooperative but that was not the case: "No one stepped on your stuff, unless they were a little too high. People would walk by the edge of your blanket and say, 'Excuse me.' And smile. Sure everyone was mellow, but the vibe emanated love" (Reynolds 167). Harriette Schwartz, like many others, worked "her way up to the front" until "she was about 50 feet from the stage" and remembers the cooperation between people when it came to sleeping:

> Obviously, the closer we got, the more crowded it became, (…) Thus, sleeping and sitting always involved the cooperation of those around you. You may have slept with your head on someone's knees, and yet another person's head on yours. If nothing else, it was a very interesting way to get to know your neighbors. (Littleproud 112)

As was the case with Louis S. Denaro's mother and Janine Fleury, Woodstock had a deep effect on French actor Francis Dumaurier: "Now, on my first weekend ever in America, I join a sea of kindred spirits on another planet. I know right away that I'm where I belong" (Reynolds 53). He "became a proud American citizen" in 1984 (Reynolds 54). It is interesting how in these three experiences Woodstock appears as the embodiment of the best the United States represent. At the same time, it could be said that Woodstock transcended its American borders and had an international impact.

According to Gerard DeGroot, "harmony was quickly incorporated into the Woodstock myth – instead of something engineered by the promoters, it was assumed to have arisen from the assertive will of those who attended" (239). While it is true that the police was especially pragmatic during Woodstock, since it was impossible to contain or even arrest an immense crowd (Reynolds 90), and it had been agreed that arrests for smoking marijuana would not be made (Lang 72), I have shown that there was indeed a general feeling of community and mutual helping among the attendees who became, as Stan Goldstein stated, an entity on their own. The fact that most attendees recall how friendly and polite people were shows that "the image of order, politeness, and good humor" (DeGroot 241) was not a myth. As Trudy Morgal says:

> There really wasn't any way to police this thing. We had to take care of each other, (…). I would dare anybody to harass someone in that crowd the way everybody's head was. There were just too many people around. We needed to be our own security. You'd just need to say something like, "Hey, man…be cool," but I didn't even hear that. (Littleproud 77)

In the afternoon, Michael Lang made the following statement to the *New York Times*: "It's about the best behaved five hundred thousand people in one place on a rainy, muddy weekend that can be imagined. There have been no fights or incidents of violence of any kind." Lang also cites the comment of a "state police official" who "told the same reporter that he was 'dumbfounded by the size of the crowd. I can hardly believe that there haven't been even small incidents of misbehavior by the young people'" (204-05).

On the day of Raymond Mizsak's tragic death, one of the most celebrated events of the festival took place: as Harriette Schwartz later recalled, US Army helicopters "tossed out oranges" to the crowd (Littleproud 112). According to Michael Lang, when a local politician requested that the National Guard supply helicopters the helicopters brought around "ten thousand sandwiches, water, fruit and canned good donated (…) by people all over Sullivan County" (204). Penny Stallings adds that the National Guard also brought "cots, blankets, and medical supplies" (Lang 203). John M. DeVoe recalls that they also dropped "baloney sandwiches and Best Cola" (Reynolds 24). According to Susan Reynolds (professional editor and author), the helicopters generated "paranoia and anger" at first but were then welcomed by the crowd: "I remember the cheers that arose when the announcer told us they were bringing us food, water, and medical supplies, and that someone on board had flashed a peace sign" (2). The announcement was made by John Morris: "Somebody may have noticed, or all of you may have noticed our familiar-colored helicopter over there. The United States Army has lent us some medical teams and is giving us a hand. They're with us, man. They are not against us. They are with us. They're here to give us all a hand and help us, and for that they deserve it."[32]

[32] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

What makes this episode so remarkable is the fact that Woodstock was a countercultural event and the National Guard was the military, supporters of the Vietnam War. Yet, these differences could be overcome and assistance given to fellow Americans:

> Abbie Hoffman: But when it came to things like saving lives and getting out good information about not drinking certain water, all of a sudden the casual sex and the nudity and the drug smoking, and the fact that we were against the war, didn't matter. So in a sense, we were all Americans. And I can't remember a single moment of friction. (Lang 201)

One festival goer praised the Army: "The Army's really done a great job, you know. People out in the stands are calling them pigs and shit like that, and it's not right, you know. They've done a good job."[33]

Another demonstration of tolerance came from Barbara Acker, who held hands with a GI. The love for music was stronger than their diverging views on the Vietnam War:

> I do remember the feeling, the vibe, as we called it, of perfect peace and happiness. I held hands with a young GI, swaying to the music, feeling in sync even though I opposed the war he had vowed to fight. It didn't matter. We were all living in the moment, lifting our shining faces (albeit mostly from the rain) up to the music that promised us unity, music that gave us power and hope to go forward and change the world. (Reynolds 187)

As more people continued to arrive at the festival site, the number of people who required medical attention increased. Nevertheless, most cases "were people who'd cut their feet on broken bottles. Helicopters transported serious cases to Sullivan County hospitals" (Lang 202). There were no cases of hepatitis or dysentery as Ethel G. Romm, for the *Times-Herald Record*, had feared on Friday (Littleproud 53).

Medical care was a great concern for the organisers and they "sent for doctors and nurses willing to help" (Littleproud 103): "By Saturday, there would be some twenty

[33] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

doctors and fifty nurses on-site – and more due in" (Lang 202). According to John Morris, at least 45 doctors were volunteers.[34] The community also assisted by transforming "a high school in Monticello" into "a hospital ward" and a now defunct regional airline, Mohawk, "volunteered the use of a forty-seat plane to fly in Don Goldmacher and June Finer from New York City's Medical Committee for Human Rights, along with other medical personnel and supplies." At the site, the staff canteen was turned into another hospital (Lang 202-03). Woodstock was also famous for the birth of two babies: "Over the course of the weekend, two babies were born – one in a car stuck in traffic on the road and the other in a local hospital after the mother was airlifted out in a helicopter" (Lang 202).

Saturday was notable for some of the best performances of the weekend. It would be safe to say that two of the most important Saturday concerts were by Country Joe McDonald, lead singer of Country Joe and the Fish, and the band Santana, the breakthrough of one of the most influential guitarists of the era, Carlos Santana.

Country Joe was scheduled to play with his band on Sunday but John Morris convinced him to do a solo set (Lang 205). Country Joe was immortalised by his performance of "The 'Fish' Cheer/I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-To-Die Rag" which roused the audience. It was so popular that it was featured in the 1970 documentary and even included sing-along style subtitles.[35]

The "Fish" cheer featured at Woodstock was actually the "Fuck" cheer, which the band had first performed in 1967 in Central Park at the suggestion of drummer Gary "Chicken" Hirsch (McDonald 150). As for the song itself, it was a dark satirical take on the Vietnam War: the war would only bring death to young men, while Wall Street and the arms industry would profit from it. It is one of my favourite moments of the three-day

[34] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[35] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

event as it perfectly encapsulates the feeling against the Vietnam War; you can also clearly see how people reacted to the song in the documentary (many stood up and started clapping) and in the ovation Country Joe McDonald got.[36] If it were not for this song, McDonald would not have made history:

> Country Joe McDonald: I just sang a mixed-bag folk set. Not too many people were paying attention to me. I was watching them and they were talking. They knew Country Joe and the Fish, so I wasn't really surprised. (…) I knew my job was just to go up and kill time. But after about an hour, I got more confident, I figured I had nothing more to lose. Boredom brings on confidence. I stopped playing for a minute and went over and asked [my manager] if I should try out the cheer. I came back out.
>
> And I said, "Give me an F." And everybody turned and looked at me, and said, "F."
>
> Then I said, "Give me a U." And they yelled back, "U!" And it went on like that. And I went on singing the song and they all kept staring at me. My adrenaline got really pumping. (Lang 206)

For Rozanne Reynolds, this performance was a recognition that her generation "was passionately against war and death and destruction and racism" and conformity as well; "And that it *was* an occasion to celebrate, because we were something to behold" (Reynolds 64). Peter Faur (public relations), who left after Canned Heat, considers McDonald's song "the highlight of Woodstock Saturday" (Reynolds 196).

In 1989, Country Joe would say that he was destined to perform the song at Woodstock (Fricke 17). He also appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* as part of the 20th anniversary of the festival and said:

> My appearance at Woodstock essentially ruined my career and I have never recovered but it was motivated by the same reasons that I enlisted in the navy at 17 years old, which were patriotism and altruism… I don't think it is that important and I'm amazed it's getting as much attention as it is. (McDonald 153)

[36] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

The reason for this statement was the fact that he never escaped his connection with the Vietnam War and was warned by several of his peers "for constantly bringing up the issues" of the war (McDonald 152). Nevertheless, he has come to terms with it:

> Since then I have come to realize that Woodstock is what it is, and I am at peace with it now. At that time, I wanted it to be something other than it was. We all have our own personal history and I am pretty much at peace with mine now. Woodstock was great fun! I loved it! (McDonald 153)

Santana's performance is regarded as a highlight of Woodstock by many, not only because it launched Carlos Santana's career but also musically, as his band fused rock & roll with Latin rhythms, thus making it a "cross-cultural moment":

> Caleb Rossiter: Like most of the crowd, I had never listened to Latin music and knew nothing of its tradition as a companion to revolution, (…). Earlier generations may have had their epiphany about the breadth of the world in a classroom or on a trip with their parents, but mine was Santana's celebration of a culture so near, yet so far. (Littleproud 114)

The band was unknown on the East Coast, although they had played "around the Bay Area" for two years. According to Carlos Santana, the band arrived at 11 a.m. and had been told that they were scheduled to perform at 8 p.m. As a result, he decided to take mescaline but when he was peaking, someone said: "Look, if you don't go on *right now*, you guys are not going to play":

> Carlos Santana: I went out and I saw this ocean as far as I could see. An ocean of flesh and hair and teeth and hands. I just played. I prayed that the Lord would keep me in tune and in time. I had played loaded before, but not to that big of a crowd. Because it was like plugging into a whole bunch of hearts – and all those people at the same time. But we managed. It was incredible. I'll never forget the way the music sounded, bouncing up against a field of bodies. For the band as a whole, it was great. (Lang 207)

Michael Lang says "Santana was the first group that really got everyone up and dancing." The instrumental "Soul Sacrifice" is, perhaps, the most significant musical moment of Woodstock. The twelve-minute instrumental is especially remembered for the outstanding drum solo by Michael Shrieve, as the percussionists join in and Santana's guitar builds it to "a crescendo": "The audience went nuts – it was obvious another star was being born" (Lang 208). "Soul Sacrifice" "solidified Woodstock as a bona fide musical 'happening'" (Littleproud 114).

As was the case with Richie Havens, Woodstock would have a deep impact on Carlos Santana. Not only was it fundamental for his career but also allowed him to stay in the United States. Santana also believes that Woodstock was wrongly labelled as a "disaster area." Instead, he saw people coming together, sharing everything and enjoying themselves. According to him, if Woodstock was, in fact, out-of-control then America would need to lose control at least once a week (Fricke 21).

"As the performances continued, so did the influx of humanity. The bowl area continued to fill, as well as the surrounding areas" (Littleproud 77). Both Alan Douglas (producer and music executive) and Michael Lang agreed that the audience was the star of Woodstock, which confirms what I said earlier:

> Michael always says, "The crowd was the star." He was right. They were just so inspiring. I never heard the musicians play the way they did, and of course, all you could see was the whites of their eyes. The whole place was hallucinating, so it was always a little bit unreal. (Lang 210)

"Hailed as blues innovators" (Littleproud 116), the now somewhat forgotten Canned Heat was also a favourite with the crowd with songs such as "Going Up The Country," "Leaving This Town," "On The Road Again" and the improvised "Woodstock Boogie." Before opening with "Going Up The Country," vocalist Bob "The Bear" Hite, amazed by the size of the crowd, said: "You know, this is the most outrageous spectacle

I've ever witnessed, ever. There's only one thing I wish. I sure gotta pee, and there just ain't nowhere to go."[37] The studio version of "Going Up The Country" was featured in the first minutes of Wadleigh's documentary.[38] The song depicts the countryside as an idyllic shelter from the tumultuous city with its "fussing and fighting." It is a topical song as it refers to the general mood in the cities during the Sixties with student and antiwar protests, as well as race riots. The song even goes further as to suggest leaving the country to escape the turmoil. Its connection with Woodstock is obvious, since the festival was held in the countryside and was a manifestation of peace and goodwill.

"Leaving This Town," with its gospel message, is my favourite song of their set. Firstly, the song is about the widespread belief that a better world would come, where peace, goodwill, love and friendship would prevail. For me, it seemed to be the perfect song to play at Woodstock, since the festival embodied that spirit of community. Secondly, in the Director's Cut version of the documentary, you see something that nowadays would be highly unlikely to happen: a fan jumps onstage and hugs Bob Hite. This moment alone is a significant statement not only about Woodstock but also about human relationships: Bob Hite does not push the fan away and actually grasps him in his arms, which makes it a sincere and genuine reaction of a performer embracing the audience and feeling connected with it. A staff member approached them but Hite gently pushed him away and shared a cigarette with the fan, who remained seated onstage.[39] If it were today, fans would probably be immediately tackled. Adolfo de la Parra (drummer) said "that though the band was tense, its energy was electric, and the group's show is often cited as one of the highlights of the event. 'I think we got the best ovation of the festival'" (Littleproud 117).

[37] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.
[38] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[39] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

Widely regarded as the "greatest white urban blues and soul singer of her generation," Janis Joplin performed with her band, The Kozmic Blues Band, at night. Joplin, together with Jimi Hendrix and Jim Morrison, is "part of the short list of sixties immortals." Although her career lasted only four years, her work "survives as a reminder of what she often was and could have continued to be." "Her singing style was strongly influenced by two earlier blues artists, Bessie Smith and Willie Mae 'Big Mama' Thornton, both of whom also had deeply troubled personal lives."[40]

According to Trudy Morgal, Janis Joplin had been brought by helicopter: "She came early and just hung out. You could see it was her. We were really excited." Chuck Early of Huntington Beach, California, who was twelve at the time, recalls a loving moment with Janis Joplin:

> She called me over to hug some lady, but I was a little embarrassed; she wasn't wearing a shirt. Mom said it was ok, so I did. Much to my surprise, I had her muddy breast prints on my t-shirt, and all I knew was that I didn't like the way it looked. I went straight to the first mud puddle I could find to get dirtier and cover it up. I really wasn't much into girls yet, so that's why I reacted the way I did. I wish I knew what I had. Janis Joplin's boobs on my chest! (Littleproud 111)

As expected, Joplin thrilled the crowd with songs such as "Try (Just a Little Bit Harder)," "Work Me Lord," "Piece of My Heart" and "Ball and Chain." Strangely, she was not featured in the original cut of the 1970 documentary.[41] According to Michael Lang, the audience "begged her not to stop." Ellen Sander adds: "Janis Joplin danced with them as if they were one, they shouted back at her, they wouldn't let her off until they'd drained off every drop of her energy" (Lang 218). For Joplin, Woodstock was remarkable for the immense gathering of people who were looked down elsewhere: "There's lots and lots and

[40] Aldin, Katherine Mary in Joplin, Janis. *18 Essential Songs*. Legacy/Columbia, 1995. CD.
[41] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

lots of us, more than anybody ever thought before. We used to think of ourselves as little clumps and weirdos."[42]

Joplin was followed by Sly and the Family Stone, one of the most significant bands of the decade, who gave an outstanding performance that featured songs like "M'Lady," "Sing a Simple Song," "You Can Make It If You Try" and "Everyday People." Sly and the Family Stone, the "first integrated, multi-gender" rock band, celebrated differences and created "a template for Seventies funk." Their Woodstock performance is their "greatest triumph."[43] The highly anticipated performance (Lang 218) ended with the medley "Dance to the Music/Music Lover/I Want to Take You Higher," with Sly Stone leading the audience into a sing-along: "Now a lot of people don't like to do it because they feel that it might be old-fashioned but you must dig that it is not a fashion in the first place, it is a feeling… And if it was good in the past, it's still good."[44]

Sadly, the documentary does not feature the complete performance of their finale, only featuring "I Want to Take You Higher,"[45] which got everyone dancing and clapping, as Greg Henry recalls:

> During "I Want to Take You Higher," every single person was on their feet, clapping and stomping. I remember standing still; I could feel the ground beneath me rumble. I told my friend to try it, and we just stood there with these huge smiles on our faces. It was amazing. Sly had everyone dancing and some with torches made by tying shirts on sticks and setting them afire. (Littleproud 125)

According to Ellen Sander, Grace Slick (lead singer of Jefferson Airplane) and Janis Joplin also danced to "I Want to Take You Higher" and the audience shouted "Higher" in unison:

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[42] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[43] "Sly and the Family Stone Biography." *Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum*. 18 April 2014. <http://rockhall.com/inductees/sly-and-the-family-stone/bio/>.
[44] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.
[45] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

> "*Higher!*" Sly shouted into the crowd. "*Higher!*" they boomed back with the force of half a million voices at their loudest. He threw up his arms in a peace sign, a billow of fringe unfurled around them, and the audience responded, shouting "Higher" in unison and raising their arms and fingers into the air, joyously, desperately, arms and hands and fingers raised in peace signs, heads and voices crying out into the night, crying the anguished plea of the sixties, "*Higher, higher!*" (Lang 218-19)

Joe Shea, for the *Times Herald-Record* (18 August 1969), reported: "When Sly and the Family Stone told the crowd 'I want to get you higher, higher.' Thousands of young people raised their hands in the famous two-fingered 'high' sign" (Littleproud 130). For Patrick Colucci, the performance of "I Want to Take You Higher" embodied the birth of the Woodstock community that valued the spiritual over the material:

> The highlight was when Sly and the Family Stone came on stage, (…). And they lit the place up and strobe lights were flashing and the audience... And 500,000 kids stood on the top of their feet and on their toes, on top of vans, put the peace sign in the air and sang the lyrics "Gotta get higher! Gotta get higher!" Right then for me, the Woodstock Nation was born at that point and I felt for the first time in my life connected. I really felt connected to these people. It was a catharsis for me. And it wasn't about getting high on drugs, it was about a higher state of consciousness. We had finally got to a point where we realised that the important things in life were justice and peace and compassion and love. Not the consumerism that we find ourselves in today. So that was the highlight, the epitome of Woodstock was that Sly Stone performance.[46]

In Santana's opinion, Sly and the Family Stone was the best performance at Woodstock: "I got to witness the peak of the festival, which was Sly Stone. I don't think he ever played that good again – steam was literally coming out of his Afro" (Lang 218).

At 3:30 a.m. (Lang 219), The Who began their two-and-a-half-hour set (Lang 222). Along with some of their previous hits, The Who played the rock-opera *Tommy* (1969) in

[46] "The Greatest Woodstock Story Ever Told!" 16 August 2010. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5uK2GXr_Sc>.

its entirety. The opera about a "deaf, dumb and blind child who is sexually molested by his uncle" was written by guitarist Pete Townshend and changed the band's career. Considered one of the most iconic albums in rock history, it "was promptly banned by the BBC and various US radio stations." The story of *Tommy* approached themes like trauma, bullying, child molestation, sex, drugs, spiritual awakening, religion, charlatanism, betrayal and rejection. "No pop album before had contained songs as remotely daring as these."[47]

Despite Townshend's claim that the audience did not enjoy *Tommy*, their set was a success (Lang 221) and singer Roger Daltrey said that Woodstock launched the band into the rock & roll mainstream: "It made our career. We were a huge cult band, but Woodstock cemented us to the historical map of rock and roll" (Lang 222). Joe Shea reported: "When England's 'The Who' took the stage, a massive roar climbed from the throats of the crowd and out over the mountains" (Littleproud 130).

However, The Who's concert is notoriously known for the incident involving Abbie Hoffman and Pete Townshend. Hoffman had consumed acid in order to stay awake, while working in the medical tents (Lang 219). He also became obsessed about John Sinclair, "manager of the radical Detroit rock band the MC5 and founder of the White Panther Party," who was set up by the police "and sentenced to ten years in prison for the possession of two joints" (Lang 219-20). Despite Lang advising him not to interrupt The Who's set, Hoffman grabbed Townshend's microphone after "Pinball Wizard" (Lang 220) and said: "I think this is a pile of shit while John Sinclair rots in prison…"[48]

Pete Townshend, thinking Hoffman was a lunatic (Littleproud 126), responded by hitting him in the head with his guitar (Lang 220), which was met with applause.[49] According to Michael Lang, Hoffman disappeared in the crowd and he never saw him for the remainder of the event. Townshend had shown violent behaviour earlier when he

[47] Barnes, Richard in The Who. *Tommy*. Polydor, 1969. CD.
[48] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.
[49] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.

"kicked Michael Wadleigh in the chest while the director crouched in front of him with his camera" (Lang 220), and then he threatened anyone who dared to interrupt the performance: "'*The next fucking person who walks across this stage is going to get fucking killed!*' he yelled as he retuned his Gibson SG. The audience at first thought he was joking and started laughing and clapping. 'You can laugh,' he said coldly, '*but I mean it!*'" (Lang 221). As of now, no footage of the incident has been released, only audio clips.

Hoffman's attitude was criticised by both Michael Lang and Artie Kornfield. The former said: "He was in his element, berating everyone for having a good time" (220), while the latter stated: "Abbie was just being Abbie, (…). He was out of his head at Woodstock. He didn't have contact with reality" (Littleproud 126). I agree with music critic David Fricke, who said that Abbie Hoffman showed a complete lack of tact and respect for his peers (16). Hoffman could have publicised Sinclair's case at a more appropriate time in between sets. His stance towards Woodstock was always inconsistent: after the festival, he praised it and its community spirit but, at first, he opposed the event.

As for John Sinclair, the Michigan Supreme Court ordered his release on 13 December 1971, and "later overturned his conviction, upholding his contention that Michigan's marijuana statutes were unconstitutional and void."[50] Years later, Townshend regretted his reaction towards Hoffman:

> My response was reflexive rather than considered. What Abbie was saying was politically correct in many ways. The people at Woodstock really were a bunch of hypocrites claiming a cosmic revolution simply because they took over a field, broke down some fences, imbibed bad acid, and then tried to run out without paying the bands. All while John Sinclair rotted in jail after a trumped-up drug bust. (Lang 221)

[50] Meyer, Stephen. "The John and Leni Sinclair Papers, 1957-1999 at the Bentley Historical Library." *Bentley Historical Library: University of Michigan*. 11 October 2007. 21 April 2014. <http://bentley.umich.edu/exhibits/sinclair/>.

I think Townshend's statement is unsurprising. First of all, he never wished to play at Woodstock, despite booking agent Frank Barsalona saying that "it would be a huge boost for the band's career" (Lang 104), in fact it turned out to be "the most important show of their career" (Lang 195). Secondly, The Who was one of only two bands, the other being the Grateful Dead, whose road managers demanded the second half of the fees before the performances (Lang 194), even though a contract had already been signed (Lang 104). Of the two bands, the Who were the least likely to play, since the Grateful Dead themselves would have performed anyway (Lang 195).

It is rather ironic that Townshend accuses the Woodstock promoters of being hypocrites when the band demanded the rest of the fees before their performance, contrary to what their contract stated. DeGroot, however, sees this breach of contract as "a wise precaution" (238). Townshend's defence of Hoffman is also ironic as The Who never wished to take part in the counterculture movement[51] and his reaction could have resulted in Hoffman's death. However hard he tries to deny it, the truth is that if it weren't for Woodstock, the band's career could have taken a completely different path.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, Jefferson Airplane closed the second day of the festival (Lang 222) with hits such as "Somebody to Love," "White Rabbit," "Volunteers" and "Uncle Sam Blues." "Volunteers" was a cry for revolution in the streets, while "Uncle Sam Blues" questioned the purpose of the Vietnam War. It is odd that one of the bands that were at the forefront of psychedelic music in the Bay Area was not included in the original cut of the Woodstock documentary.[52]

On the second day of Woodstock, a community of people had already grown. Despite the unsanitary conditions and the rainy weather, people came together and proved

[51] "Woodstock 40 Years On." 4 July 2011. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swyfP92Gzdg>.
[52] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

that there is always room for politeness and altruism in less than ideal situations. The differences between the younger and older generations seemed to be meaningless, since locals helped festival goers by giving what they could. The duty to assist fellow Americans when in need was more important than the diverging feelings on the Vietnam War as the National Guard brought supplies to the festival site, especially in a decade when taking sides in the question of the Vietnam War was a social statement and the cause of many divisions.

It was also clear that Woodstock was working because it wasn't an overtly political event. As I have already pointed out, political statements were indeed featured in several songs performed at Woodstock but Community was obviously proving to be a more effective statement. The fact that there was a community at Woodstock showed that it was possible for people to get along with each other and unite to create an alternative society where goodwill, cooperation and friendship were the norm.

### 2.4. Sunday, 17 August, and Monday, 18 August

Sunday was the last scheduled day of the Woodstock festival which ended on Monday morning with Jimi Hendrix's set. As with the previous days, Sunday featured amazing performances, although the torrential rain during the afternoon caused many to leave the festival (Littleproud 129).

Many people had refused to move from their spots in front of the stage centre for anything. According to Stan Goldstein, this situation was often misinterpreted by reporters, who probably thought that they were starving because of an inefficient and incompetent staff: "The fact is, you couldn't have moved that kid ten feet to get some food" (Lang 225). As a result, the community supplied food to festival goers, once again:

> Saturday night we got word over at WVOS that a lot of kids in town didn't have anything to eat. Word went out that everybody should contribute food. We went

> over to the park and the village permitted them to camp there. A police car went up the street here with a loudspeaker and told the kids to come up there. We fed them Saturday night, all day Sunday. Excess stuff was taken over to the school and they flew it to the site.[53]

On Sunday morning, the Hog Farm distributed cups of granola to the stage area, which Hugh Romney announced as "Breakfast in Bed for 400,000."[54]

Even though Woodstock lived up to its slogan of three days of peace of music, it was an event where so much could have gone wrong. One example was the two Food for Love stands that were burned down on Saturday night by attendees and members of Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers in reaction to the overpriced hot dogs and long queues. Fortunately, the Hog Farm managed to soothe the situation, and in the same morning announcement Hugh Romney asked festival goers to help out the owner of the stand: "There's a guy up there – some hamburger guy – that had his stand burned down last night. But he's still got a little stuff left, and for you people that still believe capitalism isn't that weird, you might help him out and buy a couple hamburgers" (Lang 226).

Sanitation problems increased as well with "every portable toilet filled to capacity, and the mud was at least six inches deep" (Littleproud 131). However, according to Lang, "the most pressing problems, and crises like food shortages and sanitation were nearly in hand," as the water pipes were regularly fixed and lorries could get in and out when necessary (226).

The press seemed focused on highlighting the negative aspects of Woodstock. A.N. Romm for the *Times-Herald Record* reported on 18 August 1969 that Rep. Martin B. McKneally of Newburgh R-27 "called the festival a 'disgraceful act,'" and "censured all public and private individuals who brought the hundreds of thousands into the area

[53] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[54] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.

'without proper preparation.'" Nevertheless, the same reporter acknowledged that the number of people had been greater than planned: "The monumental problems posed by an underprepared site and an influx four times greater than planned may mark the death of music festivals of this sort" (Littleproud 129).

However, Woodstock was not a "disgraceful act" because it brought people closer, not just the attendees but also the locals as Valerie LaMont describes it:

> Luckily, the Woodstock experience had extended outside the festival boundaries. The people at the first house we came to invited us in like we were family. They gave us a piece of cardboard and pens so we could make a sign for hitchhiking and fed us turkey soup. As we took our position by the roadside, holding our sign, we saw a boy hitching opposite us who was shirtless. A local motorist stopped, took off his own shirt, and gave it to the boy. (Reynolds 131)

R.G. Nourse also recalls how the crowd itself was a self-policing entity which made sure that everyone had a good time and got along with each other:

> Sometime during Sunday afternoon, we heard a guy begin yelling behind us. Another man answered in anger. Within minutes, a circle of smiling, happy people had formed around them. Someone began to chant, "No more war, man! No more war." It quickly grew into a larger group, encircling the two men in peace and love. "No more war, man! No more war." They hugged each other and laughed, then a girl offered a beer, and it was back to "Peace, man." (Reynolds 167)

Woodstock had in fact been planned with 200,000 people in mind but more than double had attended the festival. Leo Lyons, bassist for Ten Years After, never forgot "the overwhelming mass of humanity" (Littleproud 131) and Barry "the Fish" Melton, guitarist for Country Joe and the Fish, stated:

> I was in the chopper with Joe Cocker, and we were riding low to the trees. It was a heck of a sight. Not only could you see the people in the stage area, you could see that there were another several hundred thousand people in the trees beyond the fringe. That's when I realized how many people were actually there. (Littleproud 132)

Glenn Nystrup (co-principal of a private day school for students with Asperger's syndrome) left after Jefferson Airplane and witnessed the significance of Woodstock not only in numbers but in spirit as well:

> As were driving off, we got to really see the magnitude of the event. I had never seen so many people in one place, packed in, getting along, with smiles on their faces. It all seemed to be a wild free-for-all, without rules, yet with something more. Something was definitely driving the heart of what was happening; something that was shared by the many souls there; something that allowed a tremendous number of people to cram together, with less than comfortable accommodations, enjoying themselves, and primarily treating each other well. The word that kept coming to me was, well, awesome. (Reynolds 210)

Sunday was notable for Max Yasgur's speech before the immense crowd. Michael Lang had convinced him to do it, since the audience would "love to meet the man who gave them and us his land for this wonderful weekend" (227). Yasgur had a heart condition and had endured several angina attacks during the weekend (Lang 226). As his wife and partner, Miriam Yasgur, recalls: "He went over to see what was happening. He wanted to express his thanks and let them know he appreciated the way they were acting" (Lang 227). The address was a Sunday highlight and was met with a roaring applause and ovation. For the first time, his speech was included in its entirety in the *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm* box set:

> 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 people have proven something to the world – not only to the Town of Bethel, or Sullivan County, or New York State; you've proven something to the world. This is the largest group of people ever assembled in one place. We 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 a half a million kids – and I call you kids because I have children that are older than you are – a half-million young people can get together and have

> three days of fun and music, and have nothing but fun and music, and God bless you for it![55]

According to Lang, Max Yasgur was "overcome with emotion" (227). He had also been a pivotal figure during the event, since he and his family had made every effort to help out festival goers:

> Max was with us all the way. When he found out that a few people were selling tap water to festivalgoers, he hung a huge sign on his barn that said FREE WATER. He gave away water, milk, cheese, and butter – and asked a relative to donate bread to go with it. His daughter, a nurse, volunteered in the medical tent, and his son, Sam, helped direct traffic. "If the generation gap is to be closed," he told a reporter, "the older people have to do more than we've done." (227)

Joe Cocker and the Grease Band opened the third day of music at around 2 p.m. Like Santana, Cocker became a star after his Woodstock performance. The audience was amazed by his "soulful vocals" and "unique stage moves" (Lang 228). As Randy Sheets recalls: "The singer was clad in a tie-dyed t-shirt and seemed to be spazzing out as he sang. It was Joe Cocker. We never heard of him or his music, but his sound and band were amazing!" (Littleproud 133-34). Cocker could be credited with inventing or popularising air guitar (Lang 228).

His set featured mainly cover songs: "Dear Landlord," "Feelin' Alright," "Just Like a Woman," "I Don't Need No Doctor," "I Shall Be Released" and "Let's Go Get Stoned." However, it was his rendition of The Beatles' "With a Little Help from My Friends" that immortalised Joe Cocker and earned his much deserved spotlight in the original cut of Michael Wadleigh's documentary.[56] Cocker's cover is one of those cases when a cover surpasses the original and, in Lang's opinion, the song "perfectly described the weekend

[55] Various Artists. *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm*. Rhino, 2009. CD.
[56] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

and everybody knew it" (228). This rendition has been "labelled one of the best cover songs of all time."[57]

Twenty years after Woodstock, Joe Cocker recalled how Woodstock changed his career:

> Two years before Woodstock, the most people I'd played to was 300 in a bar. It was hard getting the attention of such a crowd. Even so, when I finally did 'With A Little Help From My Friends,' we got through to them. And right as I finished, this huge black cloud came up and just poured on everything for hours. If such a thing as Woodstock could happen again, I'd be there in a minute.[58]

After Joe Cocker's set, a huge storm and torrential rains followed, so the performances had to be interrupted (Lang 228), as can be seen in the documentary.[59] According to Leo Lyons, "the promoters were in a state of panic" because the high voltage cables that powered the amplification system were exposed and "dangerously close to the audience" (Littleproud 138). As a result, power was only restored at 6.30 p.m. (Lang 231). Jackie Watkins adds that the swaying towers were also a cause for panic:

> We got soaked to the bone. There was mud everywhere, and it was spraying everywhere. The towers were swaying, and people were screaming, scrambling for cover. The greatest fear was those towers coming down. There were fools climbing up for a better view, and one guy actually fell and had to be air lifted out. The gentlemen who were manning the microphones were very professional but firm. It was much more organized than people think, and not as chaotic as people say. (Littleproud 137)

After the storm, a National Guard helicopter dropped "thousands of flowers" (Lang 229), as Richard Gladstein (Justice Department environmental enforcement lawyer) also

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[57] "Woodstock 1969: The Music." 14 August 2009. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbTyV8aMz7w>.
[58] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[59] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

recalls (Reynolds 199). Just as on the previous day, the National Guard was part of the spirit of peace and cooperation that represented Woodstock, which is something no one can deny as there is photographic evidence (Littleproud 140) and it was captured on film as well.[60] For Trudy Morgal, it was "a 'spirit of Woodstock' high point" (Littleproud 140). The surprise was planned by Lang (Lang 228). Personally, I think this is one of the strongest statements Woodstock made.

Both Artie Kornfeld and Michael Lang were happy with the success of the festival. For them what Woodstock made possible made the fact that it was a financial disaster irrelevant. For Kornfeld, the community born at the event showed an alternative, more peaceful, lifestyle: "if we can't all live together and be happy, if you have to be afraid to walk out in the street, if you have to be afraid to smile at somebody, right, well, what kind of a way is that to go through this life?"[61] As for Lang, Woodstock proved that a society based on fraternity and altruism was viable and also represented the beginning of a change:

> This is the beginning of this kind of thing. Being able to see... This culture and this generation, away from the old culture and the older generation, you know, and you see how they function on their own. Without cops, without guns, without clubs, without hassle. Everybody pulls together and everybody helps each other and it works. It's been working since we got here, and it's gonna continue working. No matter what happens when they go back to the city, this thing has happened and it proves that it can happen. That's what it's all about, you know. That's the whole thing right there.[62]

Ten Years After were scheduled to follow Joe Cocker (Lang 229) but the storm and rain postponed the performance to around 8 p.m. (Lang 231). During this time, Country Joe and the Fish took the stage despite attempts from stagehands to discourage the band

[60] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[61] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[62] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

from doing so as there was water onstage, making it dangerous to turn on the power. Nevertheless, the band insisted, saying they would play acoustically:

> Country Joe McDonald: When the electricity went out, the kids were bored. Having played a lot of demonstrations, we knew that people would respond to some kind of nonamplified noisemaking. We wound up banging pots and pans and did a little agitprop drumming. We chanted "No rain" and played cowbells, and the audience picked it up. (Lang 230)

As Joyce Mitchell (production administrator) remembers: "Country Joe came in, and he said, 'I've had enough of this. Those kids are out in the rain, they're out in the mud. We're playing music for them.' And that's what they did. To me, he was a big hero. I can't tell you how impressed I was with the way he did that" (Lang 230). The famous "No rain" chant made its way into the very first album release of the festival and became yet another highlight of Woodstock.[63]

For Country Joe McDonald, Woodstock was an ideal community of like-minded people where no one was persecuted:

> I felt completely at home, it was really an amazing free space. In 1969 the counterculture was not a secure place to be. A lot of people didn't like you and would just come up and hit you or arrest you for being a rocker or a hippie. So it was very refreshing to be in a totally free environment where you weren't going to be trashed for being part of the counterculture. And it became very obvious to me from the word go that this was our turf. (Lang 231)

Country Joe's decision is to be applauded since it shows that performers cared about the audience and felt connected to them, contrary to DeGroot's opinion that the artists were only concerned with money (238). With the obvious exception of The Who, almost every performer enjoyed playing at Woodstock and were greatly influenced by the

[63] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Music from the Original Soundtrack and More*. Atlantic, 1970. CD.

experience, as we have seen was the case with Richie Havens, Melanie Safka, Carlos Santana and Ten Years After, among others.

As has already been said, Sunday afternoon witnessed an early exodus of festival goers because of the thunderstorm and rain. John Bianco and Jon Jaboolian left that afternoon and Bianco especially remembers that he did not witness a single act of violence despite the inconveniences. Instead, a spirit of giving and sharing prevailed:

> Instead, I saw food being passed around freely – sandwiches being passed from person to person, with each person taking a small bite before passing it on to the stranger beside him. Everyone was sharing everything. Even the concession stands – like the ticket-takers – gave up any idea of charging for anything and began giving away whatever food they had. (Reynolds 144)

As a result, Woodstock left a mark on John Bianco as something with deeper significance than simply a music festival:

> I left Woodstock with a sense of purpose and belonging that has remained alive in me to this day. Between the anti-war protests and being one of hundreds of thousands gathered on Max Yasgur's farm, I felt part of something big, something I had no idea at the time would have such far-reaching consequences. (Reynolds 144)

Ten Years After, on their fourth U.S. tour, followed Country Joe and the Fish, as Leo Lyons recalls (Littleproud 131). The band was headed by guitarist Alvin Lee, "the fastest guitarist around" (Lang 131), who is now largely forgotten by music critics. Ten Years After played for two hours (Lang 231) but it was their eleven-minute improvisation "I'm Going Home" which cemented their reputation. They appeared in the original version of *Woodstock*[64] and left the stage to an ovation: "We could certainly feel the energy and

[64] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

warmth from the people" (Leo Lyons) (Littleproud 147). A year later, Alvin Lee would describe Woodstock as "the 'Gone With The Wind' of our generation."[65]

Johnny Winter from Beaumont, Texas, was 25 years old when he played at Woodstock: "We knew it was going to be a big happening and it was something we wanted to be part of" (Littleproud 147). Another often forgotten guitarist, he played "a mix of Texas blues, R&B, and early rock and roll, including Chuck Berry's 'Johnny B. Goode' to end his set" (Lang 233). His spectacular performance of "Mean Town Blues" should have been included in the film.

One of the highlights of Sunday's performances was certainly Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, "a new super group as it was a combination of the best music the late '60s offered" (Littleproud 148): The Hollies (Graham Nash), The Byrds (David Crosby) and Buffalo Springfield (Stephen Stills and Neil Young). Woodstock was the band's second live performance and was eagerly anticipated by everyone, including performers and journalists (Lang 234):

> David Crosby: We were scared. Everyone we respected in the whole goddamn music business was standing in a circle behind us when we went on. Everybody was curious about us. We were the new kid on the block, it was our second public gig, nobody had ever seen us, everybody had heard the record, everybody wondered, "What in the hell are they about?" So when it was rumored that we were about to go on, everybody came, standing in an arc behind us. That was intimidating, to say the least. (Lang 234-35)

According to Michael Lang, "The crowd and everyone backstage were entranced." "'Long Time Gone,' another high point, would become the opening track of the film *Woodstock*." Music critic Greil Marcus considered their performance to be a "brilliant proof of the magnificence of music." He further stated: "I don't believe it could have happened with

[65] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

such power anywhere else. This was a festival that had triumphed over itself, as Crosby and his band led the way toward the end of it" (Lang 235).

Opinions in the band diverged. For Graham Nash, it was "a lousy set," despite the band doing their best (Lang 235), but for David Crosby, their performance was thrilling: "The people who were my close friends – Paul Kantner and Grace Slick, Garcia, and a lot of people – they were all thrilled. They said, 'Wow! You tore it up! It worked!' They loved it, everybody loved it. How could you not love it? 'Suite: Judy Blue Eyes" – what's not to like?'" (Lang 235-36). "Suite: Judy Blue Eyes," without Young, is arguably their best remembered performance at Woodstock, which was featured in the 1970 version of *Woodstock*.[66]

At 6 a.m. The Butterfield Blues Band, led by Chicago harmonica player and vocalist Paul Butterfield (Lang 236), played songs such as "Born Under a Bad Sign," "Morning Sunrise" and "Everything's Gonna Be Alright." It was, however, the "Love March" that resonated with Woodstock and became an anthem of love and fraternity. Stu Fox said: "The 'Love March' was a real surprise, being much more attuned to the Woodstock crowd than their usual blues songs" (Littleproud 144). I find it odd that this performance never found its way into the *Woodstock* film.

As the performances went on, people continued to leave (Lang 236) and only 40,000 would remain for the last performance by Jimi Hendrix. Hendrix had arrived at around noon on Sunday (Lang 237). Michele Kadison (dancer, teacher and choreographer) remembers seeing Hendrix wandering around the festival area:

> A beautiful black man wearing paisley pants and a leather vest circled us, his enemy so bright he seemed angelic, an apparition who laughed and flirted and was so sexy and so very high, kissing each one of us as if we were his girlfriend. His aura brought us into the epicenter of his magnetic sexuality and it wasn't until later

[66] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.

> that I realized that it was Jimi Hendrix, wandering about unleashed. (Reynolds 37-38)

Jimi Hendrix and his new band, "Gypsy, Sun, and Rainbows," went onstage at 8.30 a.m. His Woodstock performance would be his longest (Lang 237). There is little left to say about Hendrix. He is often considered the greatest guitarist ever and makes us wonder what more he could have accomplished if he had not died prematurely in 1970. Hendrix's career, like Joplin's and Morrison's, was short-lived but it made a huge impact on the musical scene. During his performance, he told the audience: "Y'all've got a lot of patience – three days' worth! You have proven to the world what can happen with a little bit of love and understanding and *sounds*!" (Lang 2).

The Woodstock set is widely famous for his rendition of the United States national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner." It wasn't just an electric guitar rendition. It was also a creative and experimental rendition of the anthem; a re-enactment of "bombs, explosions, screams, and gunfire" (Covach 297) that reignited and re-defined one's love for the country and sense of patriotism.

This performance alone is widely considered one of the defining moments of rock & roll history. For Graham Nash, "'The Star-Spangled Banner' was unreal. As creative a two minutes as you can probably find in rock and roll" (Lang 239). For Tom Law of the Hog Farm, Hendrix was "the defining poet of the festival" (Lang 238-39). According to John Covach: "This single song, played by a former paratrooper, was perhaps the most eloquent antiwar statement of the entire era and by itself demonstrated how far rock music had come in terms of ambition, creativity, and virtuosity" (297).

Michael Lang described Hendrix's rendition of the national anthem as a "message of joy and love of country, while at the same time an understanding of all the conflict and

turmoil that's torn America apart" (238). It also conveyed a vast array of images and was a summary of the decade:

> I realize the national anthem will never be the same. Jimi has plugged into our collective experience: all the emotional turmoil and confusion we have felt as young Americans growing up in the sixties pours from the sound towers. His song takes us to the battlefield, where we feel the rockets and bombs exploding around us; to demonstrations and marches, confronting police and angry citizens. It's a powerful rebuke of the war, of racial and social inequity, and a wake-up call to fix the things that are broken in our society. (Lang 2)

For Barbara Acker, it signalled hope and was "a fitting end for a half million people who had been brought together by music – and the idea that we really could change the world just by loving each other and opting for peace instead of violence and war" (Reynolds 188). For Richard Gladstein, it is his "single most moving memory": "As the concert wound to a close on Monday morning, listening to Hendrix rocking our anthem made me feel patriotic. He captured what it was like to be young and yearning for a national identity when our nation was torn apart by war and riots. In my mind, Hendrix's interpretation bestowed it to a new generation" (Reynolds 200).

Jimi Hendrix's performance ended at around 10.30 a.m. and the three days of peace and music were officially over (Lang 239). For Sandy McKnight, the last performance "had an odd flavor of sadness to it" as Woodstock was a once in a lifetime happening: "We'd made history and 'come together' but we also understood that it could never happen again" (Reynolds 41). However, she knew she had been part of something unique: "But I also felt joy that misty Monday morning. I knew I'd experienced something extraordinary and unique. I was dirty, exhausted, and hadn't eaten since Woolworth's on Saturday, but I had shared a utopia with my brothers and sisters for a brief moment in time" (Reynolds 42).

Max Yasgur's field was unrecognisable after the event: it was filled with the waste of nearly 500,000 people. Bob Dickey described it as "a disaster zone" (Reynolds 184) and Mel Lawrence as a "depressing scene" (Lang 239). According to Penny Stallings, Lawrence also referred to the site "as looking like Andersonville, a Civil War prison camp" (Lang 242). Henry Diltz (photographer) also described it as a battlefield "of bloated horse bodies, cannonballs, dead soldiers lying in the field" (Lang 243). The site was filled with blankets, rain slickers, programmes, sleeping bags, tents, coolers and several clothing articles (Reynolds 41, 184). It took at least two weeks to clean up the field (Lang 242). Fortunately, many volunteers offered to help (Lang 242), among them Jackie Watkins and her friends: "Eric was really civic-minded, plus they said that they would pay us if we helped clean up. (…) We were thanked with a goody bag of souvenirs, and we took home around $500. We still had our tickets, and we made a pact to hold onto them as a remembrance of our time we spent together" (Littleproud 160).

After the festival, locals continued to assist attendees by giving away food and water or opening "their homes to them for the night," as Parry Teasdale (videographer) and Christine Oliveira recall (Lang 241-42). The Monticello Police also opened up the town's park "to provide a sleeping place" for those waiting for buses (Lang 241).

According to Stan Goldstein, a group of unhappy locals "claimed all kinds of damage from the marauding hordes" (Lang 243). Clarence Townsend (farmer) said: "They made a cesspool of our property. We don't have a fence left on the place, they used them for firewood. My pond is a swamp and they used my field as a latrine."[67] His wife pointed out that the festival had created "a deep split in the townspeople" and that it had been an immoral happening because of sex and drugs: "You know, there were a lot of good children who came to this and a lot of them who never smoked pot before, you know, did

[67] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

and a lot of them who never experienced sex before did, I mean they were just exposed."[68] Another farmer described the situation as a "shitty mess" and his wife called it "a disaster area." Both complained about people trespassing on their fields. Nevertheless, they were willing to give water to attendees.[69]

As for drugs, Country Joe McDonald said that there was hashish and psychedelic drugs but no drugs that made people violent or anti-social. It was friendly and courteous (Fricke 17). However, the drug issue divided residents, as can be seen in the scene in the documentary that shows a group of men arguing.[70] One man was shocked by the sight of teenagers sleeping in the field and said: "They were all on pot. It never should have happened." He was criticised by another man, who suggested that he thought the issue of young men dying in Vietnam was less controversial than what had happened. The same person questioned if drunken adults would be as well-behaved as youngsters on pot. He concludes that marijuana was not as dangerous as alcohol, which is an issue that divided generations and was mentioned in the first chapter of this thesis:

> - You didn't see any drunks?
> - That's right. There was no fighting. Nobody stealing.

A third man also supported the attendees, saying: "I was giving them water all along the road here, right up on the bridge, and they were not on pot. Very lovely children, believe me." Despite the controversy over drugs, only 33 people were arrested on drug charges.[71]

Although many townspeople were apprehensive at the sight of thousands of people, the majority of them praised the behaviour of festival goers and saw them in a new light,

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[68] "CBS News Woodstock Follow-ups 8-25 & 8-29 1969." 29 August 2012. 16 August 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Md7dsek-MKQ>.
[69] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[70] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[71] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

for example, Joe Rustic, who operated Rustic's restaurant in Monticello: "I sure have changed my opinion of these kids since I have had the opportunity to come in contact with them… they are so polite" (Littleproud 130). Sydney Westerfeld, the tavern owner that appears at the beginning of the *Woodstock* documentary, said: "And the kids were wonderful. I have no kick. It was 'sir' this and 'sir' that and 'thank you' this and 'thank you' that. Nobody can complain about the kids."[72] A female resident also spoke about the cheerfulness of the attendees: "They were all happy-go-lucky."[73]

The *Times Herald-Record* edition of 18 August ran a headline entitled "Merchants praise hippies' behavior." Gil Weisinger reported: "From every section of Sullivan County, complimentary remarks pour in, most in the superlative such as 'most polite, best behaved people I have ever met' and 'they are the best mannered customers I have ever experienced.'" Mrs Minnie Schoen, a Liberty housewife, was astonished at the attitude of youngsters in a local supermarket:

> "They are quiet – not like most of the vacationers – and don't push their grocery carts into your back to get you out of the way," she said. What surprised her most, she added, was that they consistently said "Excuse, me." One shopper dropped her bag of groceries, Mrs. Schoen said, and immediately a bunch of hippies came running over to help.
> "This response would never come from the ordinary shopper I have seen," she said. (Littleproud 130)

Most of the merchants and businesspeople were also satisfied, since they had "never done so much business" in such short time (Lang 243). There were no problems with shoplifting, something merchants were already accustomed with people who came on holiday (Littleproud 130). Fred Vassmer, who gave away food and cashed cheques for the

[72] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[73] "Woodstock Documentary – Behind the Music." 2 January 2014. 2 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZedBs1uoKaA>.

attendees and who also appears in *Woodstock*,[74] said he never had any problems[75] and his wife, Marion Vassmer, added, "The kids were good."[76]

A news report by Gregory Jackson for ABC showed how people in Monticello, the biggest town near the festival site, changed their opinion of these youngsters and one resident praised their endurance over the three days of the event: "They took a lot of aggravation and inconvenience the average adult wouldn't take." The reporter also lamented the fact that "the press coverage was so jaundiced in its reports of what happened here, not many people in the country will have learned what Monticello learned." In response to criticism of the event, he said that "it was not a disaster area" and asked "what would happen if 450,000 well-dressed businessmen were thrown together for three days under similar circumstances."[77] DeGroot suggests that the number of residents who criticised Woodstock was greater than those who praised it (241). On the contrary, I have shown that most people praised the behaviour of festival goers.

Although some of the local officials were upset by "the havoc and inconveniences" caused by the festival, the majority praised the politeness and civility of festival goers. A proof of this is the unusual harmony between youngsters and the police. Sullivan County sheriff Louis Ratner stated: "I never met a nicer bunch of kids in my life." One police officer told reporters that the attendees helped the police to get their cars out when they got stuck (Lang 245). A traffic control officer reported that not a single horn had been leaned on during the traffic jam (Littleproud 130). The greatest compliment came from Monticello's constable, who was interviewed for the *Woodstock* documentary. Most young

[74] "Woodstock 1969 – A Bethel Perspective." 15 August 2009. 26 November 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyteVKiJSjI>.
[75] "Woodstock Documentary – Behind the Music." 2 January 2014. 2 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZedBs1uoKaA>.
[76] "Woodstock 1969 – A Bethel Perspective." 15 August 2009. 26 November 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyteVKiJSjI>.
[77] "Woodstock ABC Coverage 8-18-1969." 28 August 2012. 16 August 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQcEfG4eRGI>.

people with different ideas, including Hippies, were regarded as unpatriotic by the older generation but the constabulary believed otherwise:

> From what I've heard from the outside sources for many years, I was very, very much surprised, and I'm very happy to say we think the people of this country should be proud of these kids. Notwithstanding the way they dress or the way they wear their hair, that's their own personal business. But their inner workings, their inner selves, their self-demeanour cannot be questioned. They can't be questioned as good American citizens.[78]

He also went on to say that "they are the most courteous, considerate and well-behaved group of kids I have ever been in contact with in my 24 years of police work."[79]

Although no drug arrests were made inside the concert area, Michele Starkey recalls that one arrest was almost made but the police officers were persuaded by the crowd not to apprehend the suspect:

> A total of twelve state troopers were assigned to the narcotics squad inside the perimeter of the concert – one cop for every 40,000 kids. An almost impossible feat, and in the end, only one drug arrest was actually almost made inside the concert area. I say "almost" because as the undercover police were removing the suspect, a crowd of thousands surrounded the officers and began chanting and hollering. The bust was not worth the officers' safety so they "un-apprehended" the suspect immediately. (Reynolds 88)

As for medical emergencies, "Dr Abruzzi reported that his team had treated about five thousand people since Thursday, but almost half of the cases were cut feet" and added: "It's about what you'd expect for a city of over three hundred thousand people" (Lang 245). More important, he said that they "didn't treat one single knife wound or black eye or

[78] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[79] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

laceration that was inflicted by another human being" (B.L. Collier for the *New York Times*) (Warner 63).

Despite the overall satisfaction and praise by local residents and the police, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair was a victim of the media, especially of the *New York Times*: "We got roundly criticized by the *New York Times*, which particularly upset John [Roberts] and Joel [Rosenman]. The Monday edition ran an editorial, NIGHTMARE IN THE CATSKILLS, condemning us." The editorial of the Monday edition accused the organisers of mismanagement and irresponsibility:

> 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. (Lang 245)

The reporter, however, completely disregards the fact that more than double the number of people expected attended the event and that because of the large number of attendees arriving in the days prior to the festival, many facilities were hastily set up. It also fails to mention the overall praise by locals and police officers, which contrasts with the idea of havoc associated with the event. Trudy Morgal was shocked by how the newspaper portrayed festival goers:

> They insinuated that we caused this big disturbance; that we piled in there and just inundated this little town. Reports made us feel that it was our fault that we caused a spectacle. We felt blame instead of pride in what we just accomplished. At the time, the perception was that we just took over. Took over what? (Littleproud 164)

However, the same newspaper published a more positive editorial the next day, "Morning After at Bethel" (Lang 249).

In contrast to the *New York Times*, Woodstock was highly praised by *The Boston Globe*, where it was compared to the March on Washington:

> The Woodstock Music and Art Festival will surely go down in history as a mass event of great and positive significance in the life of the country… That this many young people could assemble so peaceably and with such good humor in a mile-square area… speaks volumes about their dedication to the ideal of respect for the dignity of the individual… In a nation beset with a crescendo of violence, this is a vibrantly hopeful sign. If violence is infectious, so, happily, is nonviolence. The benign character of the young people gathered at Bethel communicated itself to many of their elders, including policemen, and the generation gap was successfully bridged in countless cases. Any event which can do this is touched with greatness. (Lang 249)

In the Monday edition of the *Times Herald-Record*, Ethel G. Romm reported that one of the promoters believed that there would be no more festivals like Woodstock because of high maintenance costs. In the same newspaper, another promoter lamented this outcome: "It's too bad. You couldn't ask for a happier, nicer, better well-behaved crowd. Maybe one day our society will feel it can afford to sponsor a Festival of Life as quickly as we spend money for wars" (Littleproud 153).

Max Yasgur continued to show his support for the event, its organisers as well as the audience. He held a press conference on Monday afternoon:

> The kids were wonderful, honest, sincere, good kids who said, "Here we are. This is what we are. This is the way we dress. These are our morals." There wasn't one incident the whole time. The kids were polite, shared everything with everyone, and they forced me to open my eyes. I think America has to take notice. What happened at Bethel this past weekend was that these young people together with our local residents turned the Aquarian festival into a dramatic victory for the spirit of peace, goodwill, and human kindness. (Lang 246)

News reports by ABC, CBS and NBC also praised Woodstock, especially the behaviour of the crowd, and also discussed the lessons that could be taken out of the event, such as understanding, cooperation and peace.

Lem Tucker, for NBC, acknowledged that Woodstock had its drawbacks but that those were overshadowed by the peaceful nature of the festival:

> It'll be two or three days before all the people leave the peace and quiet of the Catskill Mountains. Despite the problems and there were many problems, though they were not as great as many people believed, this weekend says a lot about the youth of America. Many said they learned a lot about themselves and learned a lot about getting along together and priorities and for most that alone makes it all worthwhile.[80]

CBS News correspondent John Laurence reported that the generation gap was not an issue at Woodstock and, as such, adults and youngsters "came together in harmony and good humour and all of them learned from the experience." For adults, especially, it was "a revelation in human understanding," since these young people were not violent or dangerous. Woodstock also showed that people can help one another in times of need and that compassion is still a fundamental value in our everyday lives:

> Housewives handed out hot coffee to stranded youngsters who had not eaten in days. Catholic nuns passed around sandwiches made by Jewish mothers. (…) So then, what was learned at White Lake was not that hundreds of thousands of people can paralyse an area and break the law but that, in an emergency at least, people of all ages are capable of compassion. And while such a spectacle may never happen again, it has recorded the growing proportions of this youthful culture in the mind of adult America.[81]

[80] "Woodstock NBC Coverage 8-18-1969." 28 August 2012. 16 August 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYLUMEILEoU>.
[81] "Woodstock CBS Coverage 8-18-1969."28 August 2012. 16 August 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WehjMZcQqPA>.

It is impossible to state the exact number of people who attended Woodstock. The estimates usually vary between 400,000 and 500,000 attendees. Nevertheless, White Lake historian Charlie Feldman believes that 700,000 people were at Woodstock, since the "attendance estimate is based on aerial photos," thus not counting "thousands of people under trees" (Lang 246).

## 3. The legacy of Woodstock

On 31 December 1969, Jeremiah Horrigan, a reporter for the *Times Herald-Record*, who attended Woodstock with his friends, was asked by a reporter for Buffalo's morning paper "to name the greatest event of the 1960s." Four people said it was the moon landing and another said the Nixon administration. For Horrigan, it was Woodstock: "I called it a cosmic event. An entire city got a big laugh out of that one" (Reynolds 11). Even Frank Zappa considered Woodstock an important event in the social history of the United States.[82]

The Woodstock Music and Art Fair was, without a doubt, one of the two most significant events in 1969, the other being the moon landing on 20 July. Woodstock "was listed in *Rolling Stone*'s '50 Moments That Changed the History of Rock and Roll'" (Reynolds xiv), and the large-size headlines of the *New York Times* coverage of Woodstock and the moon landing indicated the importance of these events for the newspaper. As director Michael Wadleigh suggests, it is also interesting to think about the fact that "we have not had another Woodstock and we have not had another moon landing," which only makes both events even more significant in 20th century history.[83]

Two months after Woodstock, the *Rolling Stone* and *Life* magazines published special editions covering the event (Lang 257). In the following year, the song "Woodstock" was released. It was written by Canadian singer Joni Mitchell, who could not attend the festival because David Geffen thought she wouldn't be able to return in time for *The Dick Cavett Show*. As a result, she watched the coverage on television (Lang 258).

[82] "Frank Zappa – Lost Interview – Hendrix, UFOs & Sex (5-7)." 21 Jan 2009. 14 February 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRtIRvztbwY>.
[83] "Reflections on an Era" in Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut (40th Anniversary Ultimate Collector's Edition)*. Warner Bros., 2009. Film. DVD.

"Woodstock" begins:

> 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
> 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[84]

For me, Mitchell's song perfectly encapsulates the Woodstock experience: the sense of togetherness among the people and the fact that Woodstock had proved that the world could be changed for the better. For John M. DeVoe and his friends, however, "Woodstock was a place that vanished" and just a music festival. As a result, they mocked the song when it was released (Reynolds 25).[85]

The Woodstock festival was also immortalised in the documentary directed by Michael Wadleigh, released in March 1970 (Lang 255). Before the festival, Artie Kornfeld had managed to get a film deal with Warner Bros. (Lang 163). However, because Woodstock turned out to be a financial flop, Joel Rosenman and John Roberts sold half of the film rights to the studio for a million dollars (Lang 254). As a result, Warner Bros. got all the profits, unlike the promoters, who never profited from the event.

In the first decade, the studio made over fifty million dollars on the film, which "became a tremendous success" (Lang 255). Because of this, the movie and television divisions of Warner Bros. were not closed and the studio was able to climb "to its top slot

[84] Mitchell, Joni. *Hits*. Reprise Records, 1996. CD.
[85] Even though Joni Mitchell wrote the song, it was Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young's cover that was used in the *Woodstock* film. Apparently, David Geffen threatened Warner Bros. "to withhold the band's performances" if they did not use their version (Walker 130).

in the world media business today" (Reynolds 136). According to Lang, "before the movie was released, Warner Bros. Pictures was the least profitable of the eight major Hollywood studios. By buying *Woodstock*, the studio had its first coup in many years" (255). The documentary also won an Academy Award for Best Documentary.[86] In 1996, it was selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the National Film Preservation Board of the Library of Congress,[87] since it was considered "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant" and a work "of enduring importance to American culture" as a reflection of who Americans are as "a people and as a nation."[88]

Because of the success of Woodstock, it didn't take long for others to try to recreate the experience. However, throughout the years, it has been proven that Woodstock as a happening was unique and impossible to replicate, with or without profit in mind. The Altamont Music Festival on 6 December 1969 was an early example of such a mistake. The so-called "Woodstock West" (Reynolds 54) was an example of "how awful things can get without foresight and proper preparation" (Lang 259).

Altamont was a free concert in San Francisco that was meant to close the Rolling Stones' U.S. tour, a "gift to the fans" as they said (O'Neill 261). While Michael Lang said that the band "and their staff had approached it with good intentions" (259), others believe that the Stones were opportunistic. According to William O'Neill, the band "had been impressed with the moneymaking potential of Woodstock" and, as such, wanted to do another Woodstock (261). At a press conference, Mick Jagger went so far as to say that Altamont would prove, as Woodstock did, that people could behave in large gatherings:

[86] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. DVD.
[87] "National Film Registry Titles 1989 – 2013." *National Film Preservation Board*. 21 May 2014. <http://www.loc.gov/film/registry_titles.php>.
[88] "Frequently Asked Questions about the National Film Registry." *National Film Preservation Board*. 21 May 2014. <http://www.loc.gov/film/faq.html>.

"It's creating a sort of microcosmic society which sets an example for the rest of America as to how one can behave in large gatherings" (Walker 132).

Altamont was also planned to be like the free concert the Rolling Stones held in London's Hyde Park on 5 July 1969. The concert was originally planned to showcase the band's new line-up. However, founding member Brian Jones (guitarist) died three days before it was going to happen and the concert was turned into a requiem of sorts.[89] Acting as security guards were the London's Hell's Angels, who proved to be "affable," and, as a result, Jagger suggested hiring their "Californian counterparts" at Altamont: "It was this affability that would, three months later, cause the Stones such misery" (Green 436). Hiring the Hell's Angels as security guards and inadequate planning turned Altamont into a tragic event. The Altamont Raceway was chosen to hold the concert at the last minute, since the Rolling Stones had lost the Sears Point Raceway days before the scheduled date (Lang 259). Altamont also had poor infrastructures for more than 300,000 attendees (Szatmary 212): "a weak sound system, a short stage just four feet high, and virtually no space between audience and performers led to a steady crush of audience members surging forward" (Rielly 171-72).

Michael Lang called Altamont "one of the worst experiences of my life" (259). For many people, such as Bill Thompson (manager of Jefferson Airplane), it represented the end of an era: "It was December 1969, and that was the end. Of the whole feeling" (Szatmary 212). For Francis Dumaurier it was "a disaster" and proof that Woodstock could "never be duplicated" (Reynolds 54).

Hundreds of attendees "required treatment for drug overdoses," including one person "who jumped off a freeway overpass after ingesting some LSD" (Szatmary 212). The number of drug overdoses at Altamont surpassed those at Woodstock, since "medical

[89] Woodhead, Leslie and Jo Durden-Smith, dirs. *The Stones in The Park*. Granada, 1969. Film. DVD.

care was less adequate" and because physicians "lacked the support provided at Woodstock, whose promoters had spared no expense to avert disaster" (O'Neill 261). Indeed, many announcements that can be found in the *Woodstock – 40 Years On: Back to Yasgur's Farm* box set show that the staff were concerned with the well-being of the audience.

There were also beatings throughout the entire day and no police to act at the site (Lang 259). The worst offenders were the Angels, who kept beating and clubbing people: "No one knows how many were clubbed that day" (O'Neill 261). Even musicians were beaten: Mick Jagger was hit by a bystander when he arrived by helicopter, and Marty Balin of Jefferson Airplane was knocked unconscious when he intervened in a skirmish between the audience and the Angels.[90]

Four people died at Altamont, three by accident: "A car drove off the road into a clump of people" killing two and a "man, apparently high on drugs, slid into an irrigation canal and drowned" (O'Neill 261). However, Altamont is infamous for the murder of Meredith Hunter, who "got into a skirmish early in the afternoon" and later returned with a gun (Lang 259). When he pulled it, he was stabbed to death by the Hell's Angel Alan Passaro; he died before he could be transported to a hospital. The Rolling Stones were not aware of the murder and Passaro was later acquitted by a jury on the grounds that "he had acted in self-defense" (Walker 137). The fact that the murder was captured on film for the Altamont documentary *Gimme Shelter* makes the event even more gruesome.[91]

*Rolling Stone* heavily criticised the Rolling Stones and called the event the "Altamont Death Festival." The magazine accused the band of "commercial cynicism" because they wanted "to make a lucrative film on the cheap" and "were too rushed for the

[90] Maysles, Albert and David and Charlotte Zwerin, dirs. *Gimme Shelter*. Maysles Films, 1970. Film. DVD.
[91] Maysles, Albert and David and Charlotte Zwerin, dirs. *Gimme Shelter*. Maysles Films, 1970. Film. DVD.

careful planning that went into Woodstock, too callous (and greedy) to pour in the emergency resources that had saved the day there" (O'Neill 261-62).

Contrary to what many people believe, Woodstock was carefully planned and the organisers did everything they could to assist festival goers and avert disaster. William O'Neill found it odd that early reports about Altamont acclaimed it "as yet another triumph of youth" (261). The Woodstock organisers, on the other hand, were condemned for incompetence, especially by the *New York Times*, even though the festival was a success. I personally find it odd that Gerard DeGroot accuses the Woodstock organisers of incompetence and greed and even says Woodstock was "closer to carnage" (239), a word he does not use when discussing Altamont (411-16).

Another thing I don't understand is the fact that some people consider Altamont to have been better intentioned than Woodstock, or "purer" as Michael Walker suggests (133), because Altamont was planned as a free concert from the start. In defence of Woodstock, I would like to remind its critics that the organisers never deceived people into thinking it would be a free festival. However, Walker does admit that the free Altamont concert would carry benefits for the Rolling Stones (134).

In the following year, the Isle of Wight Festival, known as "Britain's Woodstock,"[92] also proved controversial and can in no way be compared to Woodstock. The first edition in 1968 began "as a benefit for a local swimming club" and in the next year, "150,000 people came to the island" for the second edition, which featured Bob Dylan (Simmons 3). The third edition was held between 26 and 30 August 1970 at East Aston Farm and was seriously undermined by inadequate planning and disturbances caused by political groups and audience members.[93] The promoters had expected an

[92] Lerner, Murray, dir. *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970*. Castle Music Pictures, 1995. Film. DVD.
[93] Lerner, Murray, dir. *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970*. Castle Music Pictures, 1995. Film. DVD.

audience of 200,000. Instead, 600,000 came to Isle of Wight, whose population was 100,000. The biggest problem, however, was that most attendees did not wish to purchase a ticket that cost £3, or $7.20 dollars, for five days of music (Simmons 3-4). Ironically, the tickets for the Woodstock festival cost $18 for three days and there were no disturbances.[94]

Those who refused to pay camped up on a hill, which was dubbed Desolation Row, a reference to Bob Dylan's song of the same name (Simmons 3). Several days before the festival, there were disturbances caused by political groups such as White Panthers, French and Algerian anarchists, Hell's Angels and Young Liberals (Green 440). Militants also set lorries and stands on fire (Simmons 3). Unlike at Woodstock, security at the Wight festival was tighter involving double fences and police officers with dogs.

Because of the turmoil, the organisers ended up declaring it a free festival, thus making it a financial disaster.[95] However, "in certain pockets of the crowd the ill-will remained. And some of it seemed to get taken out on the quieter performers" (Simmons 4). Several performances were interrupted, such as Joni Mitchell's when she was performing "Woodstock"[96] and during "Kris Kristofferson's set, bottles were thrown and he was booed off the stage." According to the singer, the audience "were booing everybody" (Simmons 4-5). The stage was even set on fire during Jimi Hendrix's performance.[97] At Woodstock, the audience never interrupted performances, the only exception being Abbie Hoffman during The Who's set. In the end, The Isle of Wight Festival failed to be "Britain's Woodstock."

[94] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[95] Lerner, Murray, dir. *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970*. Castle Music Pictures, 1995. Film. DVD.
[96] Lerner, Murray, dir. *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970*. Castle Music Pictures, 1995. Film. DVD.
[97] Lerner, Murray, dir. *Message to Love: The Isle of Wight Festival 1970*. Castle Music Pictures, 1995. Film. DVD.

The music festival that perhaps most closely resembles Woodstock is the 1971 Vilar de Mouros Festival, the oldest rock festival in Portugal, which was organised by local doctor António Barge between 31 July and 15 August. António Barge organised his first festival in 1965 in order "to transform Vilar de Mouros into a tourist destination" (my translation) and to promote popular music from the Alto Minho and Galicia regions. In 1968, the festival featured protest singer José Afonso and other bands, including folklore groups.

The goal of the 1971 edition was to put Vilar de Mouros on the map and it took three years to organise. It ran over three weekends, of which the second (7 and 8 August) was the most memorable. It was aimed at youngsters, featured Portuguese acts and was headlined by Elton John and Manfred Mann. As happened with Woodstock, the roads were filled with cars and young people, Portuguese and foreigners, dressed in Hippie fashion. Camping grounds also became parking lots. At first, the locals were apprehensive, albeit curious, but, according to reports, some gave away food to hungry spectators. Some merchants closed their establishments but were swayed by the peaceful and friendly nature of the attendees and, in the end, served them as best they could.[98]

There are no exact figures as to how many attended this weekend but estimates say around 20,000 people.[99] Many reporters, national and international, stated that the festival had been "a reflection of Woodstock" (my translation). Although national reports were more restricted because of the dictatorship, international reporters praised the peaceful nature of the event and highlighted the large number of attendees.[100]

[98] Ribeiro, Brito. "1971 – Festival de Vilar de Mouros (2ª parte)." *Vila Praia de Âncora*. 23 September 2010. 13 May 2014. <http://vilapraiadeancora.blogs.sapo.pt/85615.html>.
[99] Ribeiro, Brito. "1971 – Festival de Vilar de Mouros (2ª parte)." *Vila Praia de Âncora*. 23 September 2010. 13 May 2014. <http://vilapraiadeancora.blogs.sapo.pt/85615.html>.
[100] Ribeiro, Brito. "1971 – Festival de Vilar de Mouros (3ª parte)." *Vila Praia de Âncora*. 2 October 2010. 13 May 2014. <http://vilapraiadeancora.blogs.sapo.pt/85823.html>.

What is most remarkable about Vilar de Mouros is the fact that it was held during the dictatorship, which only ended with the Revolution of 25 April 1974, and there were no problems involving police forces.[101] Youngsters bathed naked, smoked marijuana and consumed LSD, something which shocked some locals since it was uncommon.[102] Unlike the Isle of Wight Festival, the Vilar de Mouros Festival deserves to be known as "The Portuguese Woodstock," although it did not try to emulate Woodstock – and to a degree succeeded.

Although they did not aspire to be another Woodstock, there were two musical events that I consider to be its follow-ups in terms of social awareness and reaching out to those most in need. In this respect The Concert for Bangladesh and Live Aid both embody the spirit of the 1969 event.

The Concert for Bangladesh was held on 1 August 1971 at Madison Square Garden and featured George Harrison and friends, including Ravi Shankar, who opened it. The concert was held in order to raise funds for "10 million East Pakistani refugees [that] had fled over the border into India with scant hope of surviving inevitable hunger and disease" because of political turmoil and the floods caused by the monsoons. Most of the victims were children.[103]

Ravi Shankar considered the event "one of the most moving and intense musical experiences of the century."[104] According to Charles J. Lyons (President of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF), the concert itself raised "$250,000 that was immediately converted to urgently needed aid," and performers' royalties from the album "in December 1971 and the concert film in March 1972 dramatically increased the revenue donated to UNICEF in the

[101] Ribeiro, Brito. "1971 – Festival de Vilar de Mouros (2ª parte)." *Vila Praia de Âncora*. 23 September 2010. 13 May 2014. <http://vilapraiadeancora.blogs.sapo.pt/85615.html>.
[102] Ribeiro, Brito. "1971 – Festival de Vilar de Mouros (3ª parte)." *Vila Praia de Âncora*. 2 October 2010. 13 May 2014. <http://vilapraiadeancora.blogs.sapo.pt/85823.html>.
[103] Swimmer, Saul, dir. *The Concert for Bangladesh*. Apple Films Inc., 1972. Film. DVD.
[104] Shankar, Ravi in Swimmer, Saul, dir. *The Concert for Bangladesh*. Apple Films Inc., 1972. Film. DVD.

decade that followed."[105] "Millions of dollars were raised and given to UNICEF who distributed milk, blankets and clothes to refugees."[106] The results also helped "UNICEF to expand its work in Bangladesh."[107] Sales of the live album and DVD release continue to support The George Harrison Fund for UNICEF.[108]

The second humanitarian aid project connected to Woodstock is Live Aid, which comprised two concerts held on 13 July 1985 at Wembley Stadium in London and at JFK Stadium in Philadelphia. Eight other countries contributed to the event, such as "Holland, Australia, West Germany, Austria, Japan, the former USSR, the former Yugoslavia and Norway."[109]

Live Aid was organised by singer Bob Geldof of The Boomtown Rats in response to a famine in sub-Saharan Africa that affected about 30 million people. The event was considered "the single most important public event in the lives of two generations" and was televised around the world. Its audience was more than a billion and a half. According to Paul Vallely, Live Aid was "the first inkling that we now live in a globalised world. Its lingua franca was pop music. And its distinctive message was of the need for change."[110] Richie Havens considered Live Aid "a child of Woodstock" and named it "Globalstock."[111] When Joan Baez opened the Philadelphia concert, she said: "This is your Woodstock and it's long overdue."[112]

Various acts performed at Live Aid, including Woodstock performers, such as The Who, without drummer Keith Moon, who had passed away, in London, and Joan Baez,

[105] Lyons, Charles J. in Swimmer, Saul, dir. *The Concert for Bangladesh*. Apple Films Inc., 1972. Film. DVD.
[106] Shankar, Ravi in Swimmer, Saul, dir. *The Concert for Bangladesh*. Apple Films Inc., 1972. Film. DVD.
[107] Lyons, Charles J. in Swimmer, Saul, dir. *The Concert for Bangladesh*. Apple Films Inc., 1972. Film. DVD.
[108] Swimmer, Saul, dir. *The Concert for Bangladesh*. Apple Films Inc., 1972. Film. DVD.
[109] Sinclair, Jill S, prod. *Live Aid*. Woodcharm Ltd., 2004. DVD.
[110] Vallely, Paul in Sinclair, Jill S, prod. *Live Aid*. Woodcharm Ltd., 2004. DVD.
[111] Havens, Richie. "Richie Havens on Opening Woodstock." *Rolling Stone*. 24 August 1989. 6 June 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/richie-havens-on-opening-woodstock-19890824>.
[112] Sinclair, Jill S, prod. *Live Aid*. Woodcharm Ltd., 2004. DVD.

Carlos Santana, Crosby, Stills & Nash, and Neil Young in Philadelphia. Musicians spoke of "love," "possibility," "a common humanity" and "shared ideals."[113] All of them performed for free and were not paid by the Band Aid Trust for their contribution to the DVD that was released. "The publishers, record companies, and songwriters also waived their fees to help maximise the revenues for the Band Aid Trust." Between January 1985 and November 2004, when the DVD was released, "the Band Aid Trust and Live Aid Foundation spent over $144 million on the relief of famine in Africa by supporting projects in Burkina Faso, Chad, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mali, Niger and Sudan." Sales of the DVD continue to support the Band Aid Trust.[114]

Woodstock, The Concert for Bangladesh and Live Aid share something in common: human solidarity. All of them showed that if people get together for a common goal, it is possible to make a difference. Even though Woodstock was not a humanitarian aid project, it showed that people could help each other in times of need.

Throughout the years, there have been official festivals to celebrate the original Woodstock in anniversary years. In 1989, when Woodstock turned twenty, Michael Lang planned a Woodstock event on both sides of the Berlin Wall, since he believed "the spirit of Woodstock could create a bridge between East and West." However, the project was thwarted by Warner Bros. and the Communist Party in Moscow (Lang 261).

In 1994, on the twenty-fifth anniversary, Woodstock '94 was held between 12 and 14 August near Saugerties, New York, where the promoters originally wanted the 1969 festival to take place. The original promoters, except for Artie Kornfeld, although he attended the weekend, together with John Cher, president of PolyGram, organised the festival. 350,000 people "and, in many cases, their parents," attended the event. The line-up included some of the original Woodstock performers, including Carlos Santana, Joe

[113] Vallely, Paul in Sinclair, Jill S, prod. *Live Aid*. Woodcharm Ltd., 2004. DVD.
[114] Sinclair, Jill S, prod. *Live Aid*. Woodcharm Ltd., 2004. DVD.

Cocker and Crosby, Stills & Nash (Lang 262), and artists such as Sheryl Crow, Peter Gabriel, Aerosmith, The Cranberries, James, Metallica and Bob Dylan.[115] Lang had asked Dylan to perform at the original event but he did not show up (145).

Despite the fact that it was a peaceful event, with rain and mud included, and the promoters did not profit from it, the festival was heavily criticised by the press because it was sponsored by Pepsi. According to Lang, this was inevitable since it "had become part of the concert business" (262).

The NBC Dateline broadcast of 9 August showed a commercial for the 1994 festival, which announces a Summer of Love Reunion. Actors portraying people who attended the original event now wear business suits. Even Country Joe McDonald and John Sebastian appear in the commercial. The ad also features slogans from Pepsi: "Be Young. Have Fun. Drink Pepsi" and "Love it, Love Pepsi." The broadcast also mentioned that merchandise, such as t-shirts and hats, were available for purchase and that tickets cost $135.[116] "The realities of the festival's costs (over thirty million dollars) meant that the ticket prices for the weekend would have been substantially higher without sponsors" (Lang 262).

Many of those who attended the original event were against the 1994 concert. Francis Dumaurier contacted all the media of New York City warning against what he considered a "fallacy." His calls were ignored and he considered the event "a dud": "I hope it never happens again" (Reynolds 54). As for Doctor Mereidth, she chose to attend the alternative Woodstock anniversary event at the original site:

> Why am I here at Woodstock? Well, because this is the real Woodstock, this is where the mud slide was, this is Woodstock. Woodstock is not in Saugerties with Porno for Pyros and Metallica. I wouldn't watch that if you paid me. I mean, $135

[115] Various Artists. *Woodstock 94*. A&M Records, 1994. CD.
[116] "Woodstock 25th Anniversary." 19 August 2009. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sT8EaIxsQGE>.

> a ticket, you've got to be joking. 3,500 security guards, no thank you. Pepsi... I like Coke. That's why I'm here.[117]

Trudy Morgal also believed that a second Woodstock was not a possibility:

> The general mindset is too paranoid, there are too many rules, too many 'what ifs,' and it goes right back to the people. The people who put on the show had a great vision and they handled it well, but then...they had a great group of people – everybody's heart was in the right place. In retrospect, I wish it were like that again. What we had was great but it wasn't appreciated. We just thought it would always be that way. (Littleproud 177)

As a result, the 1994 event was Woodstock only in name. Although it was criticised for its commercialism, and Pepsi's sponsorship, it wasn't like Woodstock '99, which seriously tainted the name Woodstock. The thirtieth-anniversary festival was held between 23 and 25 July at Griffiss Air Force Base in upstate New York's Mohawk Valley. Of the original Woodstock producers, only Michael Lang was part of the production team (Lang 262).

Extremely hot weather, expensive water bottles at concessions (which Lang tried to unsuccessfully to get reduced), "darker and more aggressive" acts, such as Korn, Limp Bizkit and Rage Against the Machine and disturbances turned the event into "a massive MTV spring-break party than a Woodstock." Some members of the audience became very aggressive and caused disorder: bonfires were lit, supply lorries burned and women molested (Lang 263-64). There were no murders but ten years earlier, a woman in the audience at *The Oprah Winfrey Show* had already explained why there could not be a second Woodstock: "I don't think today, in today's world, you could get half a million people together or 850,000 and not have several murders."[118] It is perhaps sufficient to say

[117] "Woodstock 25th Bethel, NY." 20 January 2011. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stDosZ3l8hg>.
[118] "Joel Makower Discusses Woodstock on Oprah, 1989." 9 July 2009. 17 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gc25EpR00kU>.

that there has never been another official Woodstock anniversary festival since 1999. However, Michael Lang is interested in holding a 50th anniversary event in 2019.[119]

There have, however, been yearly celebrations of the Woodstock festival at which attendees of the 1969 event, their friends and family, as well as other people, gather at the original site to enjoy themselves. For example, Tommy Hayes "returned to Bethel for the 5th, 10th, 15th, and 20th anniversaries and every year since" (Littleproud 177).

On the twentieth anniversary, a concert was held on Yasgur's farm and, as had happened in 1969, there were no disturbances and, according to Robert Jahm, the police had a good time as well. By Tom Anderson's account, the event was not so much a concert but people coming together as in 1969: "There's no big name bands here but it seems that the people aren't really paying much attention to the bands, since it's more togetherness. It's like a big camp, a big camping."[120]

In 1994, there was another celebration at the original festival site, which perfectly contrasted with the official Woodstock '94 anniversary event. In my opinion, the unofficial anniversary event was closer in spirit to the 1969 event, including rain, mud and people enjoying themselves. According to Doctor Mereidth, this was the real Woodstock: "You couldn't have had it this way in a million years, exactly the same time Saturday afternoon, the same lightning storm comes in and makes the same mud slide. Same mud slide, same people, twenty-five years later. You couldn't have paid for this."[121]

Woodstock performers Arlo Guthrie, son of folk singer Woody Guthrie, and Melanie Safka, who also attended the 20th anniversary event, were present as well. According to Melanie, 100,000 people attended the alternative event. As for Arlo Guthrie,

[119] Newman, Jason. "Woodstock Organizer Plotting 50th Anniversary Concert for 2019." *Rolling Stone*. 30 May 2014. 8 June 2014. <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/woodstock-organizer-plotting-50th-anniversary-concert-for-2019-20140530>.
[120] "Woodstock 20th Bethel, NY." 20 January 2011. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g2wvhIZO8LE>.
[121] "Woodstock 25th Bethel, NY." 20 January 2011. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stDosZ3l8hg>.

the event represented what Woodstock was all about: "And so far this has been a most wonderful time because there's people putting this show together with no controls, with nobody telling them what to do, with no one telling them who've they got to be or what they've got to think or how much they've got to spend."[122]

In 2010, John Pertel for *Record Online* interviewed people who come to Bethel every year to celebrate Woodstock, such as Bob Kristopher and John Van Buren from Circleville. These celebrations are more like family gatherings where people can take a break from the working world; as John Van Buren says: "It's fun. You hang out with the family, we enjoy ourselves, we have a lot of fun. We let loose and then we go back to the normal working world again come Monday." For Gina "Love," it is an opportunity to see her friends and have a good time: "Every time I come here I just feel peace, I can see all of my friends, see how their kids have grown up, listen to wonderful music, eat wonderful food, just hang out and enjoy three days of peace, love and happiness."

The three August days of the Woodstock festival have become a holiday in many people's calendars. More than forty years later, people still travel to Bethel to relive the same experience of togetherness. It's a social gathering where friends and family see each other and meet new people and that's what Woodstock is also about. It's about socialising and people enjoying themselves. As John Pertel said: "Whether they're here to reminisce, to party or to simply take a load off, there's still plenty of good vibes to be found here forty plus years after Woodstock."[123]

The community in Bethel has recognised its Woodstock heritage. Years earlier, it had been against "a historical state marker on the site" (Reynolds 70), which finally did

[122] "Woodstock 25th Bethel, NY." 20 January 2011. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=stDosZ3l8hg>.
[123] "Woodstock Festival – 41st Anniversary." 13 August 2010. 24 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ziIE6fynLvg>.

happen in 1984.[124] Further, a once struggling community with high unemployment has been revived thanks to the inauguration of the "Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, an outdoor performing arts center and museum that opened in 2008" (Reynolds 70).

Although Woodstock ended on Monday, 18 August 1969, it had a lasting impact on almost everyone who attended the festival, even if they were only there for a single day. Many Woodstock "alumni" remember and long for the love and friendship they found there. Woodstock seemed a happy ending for a tumultuous decade and reignited the hope that the world could change for the better and that love, instead of money, made the world go round:

> Edward D. Christensen: But what I remember most about Woodstock was the love. That sounds so foreign to us now, so foreign to a polarized nation. We act like it's never been that way in America, but it has. At Woodstock, we all proved that it's possible to come together, to take care of one another, and yes, to love each other. That's what I took away from Woodstock, and what still matters the most to me now. We *can* love another. We've done it before. (Reynolds 179)

That coming together was also possible because no one stood out in the crowd and there was a gathering of people with similar values. Catherine Hiller (novelist, filmmaker and book editor) said: "I loved that the performers and stagehands and audience all wore the same clothes. I loved the convergence: young people with the same politics, outrage and values all gathered together, half a million strong, supporting each other" (Reynolds 140). Musicians and audience alike got soaked by the rain which, in the words of Jack Cassidy (bassist for Jefferson Airplane), "brought everyone down to a common reality": "That was the most precious thing about the festival. The egos all melted away."[125] The Age of Aquarius may not have come yet but it cannot be denied that Woodstock was a life-

[124] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut (40th Anniversary Ultimate Collector's Edition)*. Warner Bros., 2009. Film. DVD.
[125] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

changing event for those who were there and, to some extent, those who were somehow influenced by it.

At Woodstock, Canadian Bob Brown, a marketing specialist, was able to understand the "American counterculture's anger toward an unwanted war" and "their activism and their burning desire for peace and love to annihilate war." As "the parent of a nineteen-year-old son and a countryman mourning the loss of soldiers in Afghanistan" he finds that these feelings are still alive today. After he left Woodstock, Bob Brown "felt strangely rejuvenated, a new person, a citizen of the world" and, for him, Woodstock was "a place where status and material things meant nothing, and hatred and violence didn't exist" (Reynolds 77-78).

Woodstock influenced people's behaviour and stances towards life. According to Sandra Johnson, the experience changed her "parochial thinking" and the music made her "braver" and "more willing to step outside the norm" (Reynolds 73). For Peter Faur, the two most important lessons he learned at Woodstock were not to judge people solely on their appearance and that music has a rejuvenating power (Reynolds 196-97). According to Linda W. Hamilton, who was fifteen at the time, the experience taught her to share herself "and to abstain from judging others – to meet folks where they are instead of where I'd like them to be, or imagine them to be" (Reynolds 160).

Woodstock also taught Valerie LaMont "not to judge people by labels," since "the locals were just as generous as the hippies" (Reynolds 132). Today, she talks to students about her experience and teaches them that the communal spirit present at the event is still possible. For that to work, however, people need to "think beyond themselves" and "participate in the ribbon of humanity" and vote: "One voice can seldom be heard, but joined with others, as at Woodstock, it can change the world" (Reynolds 132). One needs to be conscious about civic duties and rights, especially the right to vote. For Caleb

Rossiter, the festival showed him that it was possible to change the world if one actively participated in it:

> As I drove away from the meeting of the counterculture, I had seen the best that it had to offer, and the many ways one could choose to respond to the challenges of the time, (…). After Woodstock I chose to not "drop out" with Timothy Leary, not go up to the country with Canned Heat, not sit back and groove on a rainy day or live in Electric Ladyland with Jimi Hendrix. I left Woodstock energized, still believing that we could help in the real world – help end war and injustice. I learned at Woodstock, and as Joe Cocker declared on stage amidst the growing tempest around him, "[We could all] get by with a little help from our friends." (Littleproud 183)

For Susan Reynolds, Woodstock made a statement about human behaviour:

> We came together in peace and harmony and showed the world that love *is* possible, in the worst conditions – excessive heat, humidity, thunderstorms, and downpours, when exhausted, uncomfortable, hungry, thirsty, mud-caked, and stranded. (…) That many people crammed together in lousy conditions could have turned on each other and created chaos and disaster. Instead, we endured, helped each other, and chilled. (iii)

There are, of course, those such as prep school theatre teacher Hilary Somers Deely who do not share this view of the event: "I really never saw the peace and love aspect, just the enormous lines at the Port-O-Sans. No one I saw was sharing anything except marijuana."[126]

Many attendees have shared their memories of the event throughout the years, especially on significant occasions such as anniversary celebrations. There are many interesting stories with Woodstock as a background but I would like to highlight two from 1989, the year of the 20th anniversary, in particular. The first one is by Elaine Fellippello (an office manager), who said: "Did the experience change my life? Yes. It created a

[126] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.

constant longing to be back in those times again. I find it difficult to watch the video. The pain is sometimes too great."[127] The second one is, in my opinion, the more moving – it is by Carole Gray, from Ohio, and further demonstrates that Woodstock wasn't just about sex, drugs and rock & roll. As an unwished daughter of authoritarian parents, she considered the feeling of love present at Woodstock something significant. After her experience, she discovered a cold and cruel world, and in 1989, she was working in a factory, folding laundry. She said that the only beautiful things in her life were her son and the remembrance of those three days at Woodstock (Fricke 22).

Much has been said about the Woodstock festival. For some, it became the high point of the 1960s and an "event that named a generation," as it says on the cover of the Laserdisc edition of *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*.[128] For others, however, this is only a legend or myth. Unfortunately, many (for instance Gerard DeGroot) continue to hold the view, originally put forward in the *New York Times*, that Woodstock was nothing more than a musical festival at which sex and drugs prevailed.

As I have sought to show, Woodstock was not a myth, and viewing it simply as a music festival is to completely miss the point of the event. As stated in the Introduction, Woodstock had its faults but those very same faults brought out the best in people. Despite the ghastly weather, the unsanitary conditions caused by the rain, mud and the huge crowd, most people enjoyed themselves and a communal spirit was born out of the event: people bonded with each other and aided those who needed it most.

The event took on a deeper significance because it occurred in a decade of social and political turmoil. It proved that different generations could get along: many locals and police officers praised festival goers for their politeness, kindness and peacefulness.

[127] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[128] Wadleigh, Michael, dir. *Woodstock: 3 Days of Peace and Music Director's Cut*. Warner Bros., 1994. Film. Laserdisc.

Although DeGroot believes that the harmony that characterised Woodstock was a myth, the facts and sources that I have mentioned throughout this thesis show that it was not.

The Woodstock Music and Art Fair was part of the movements that called for change in the 1960s because it lived up to its promise of "peace and music."

According to Artie Kornfeld, Woodstock was about his generation and "issues concerning Vietnam, social changes, and ideals that no president or speech writer could touch. It was about caring for each other" (Littleproud 7). Richie Havens shares the same opinion: Woodstock was about the issues of decade, which "people felt strongly about, and the coming together was also an expression of those things. It said that people can and do have the right to get together to express themselves peacefully" (Littleproud 169).

For Richard Gladstein, Woodstock was "a contribution that reflected the best traditions and values" of the United States – "independence, tolerance, innovation, and liberty" – by "those who participated in the social upheaval and creativity of that time." While he stated that these contributions "have never been sufficiently appreciated," since they were believed to be unpatriotic, he does admit that, on some level, his generation did not properly honour those who fought in Vietnam. He hopes that the same American traditions and values will continue to guide people in this century (Reynolds 200-01).

Susan Reynolds believes that Woodstock "affected the way many of us viewed the world and our place in it" and is "worth remembering and honoring, and perhaps more importantly, because many young people today yearn for a similarly empowering experience" (5-6). In the same line of thought, Abbie Hoffman believed that the current generation (in 1989) needed a Woodstock event.[129]

D. Dina Friedman (writer), who was twelve in 1969 and staying at a Jewish holiday camp, only attended the first day of Woodstock. However, many of her contemporaries

[129] "Joel Makower Discusses Woodstock on Oprah, 1989." 9 July 2009. 17 April 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gc25EpR00kU>.

"looked to the hippies as forbearers of the current social change movement, and to events like Woodstock as part of a vision of what was possible." Not only is the music of the Woodstock generation still praised and popular but the event "paved the way to question convention, allowing for the growing popularity of feminism, gay rights, and other social issues," thus transcending generations (Reynolds 189-92). Michael Lang also sees Woodstock as the inspiration behind green movements and grassroots organisations as well as "in what some pundits have called a Woodstock moment, the election of our first African-American president," Barack Obama in 2008 (265-66). Carlos Santana goes even further and says that the collective spirit at Woodstock was present in the fall of the Berlin Wall and the liberation of Nelson Mandela in 1994 (Lang 264).

Nonetheless, some Woodstock "alumni" regard the event as the end of a movement rather than a beginning. Alan Kolman believes that the optimism that characterised the decade "has been replaced by a sense of futility" and that his generation conformed to society as easily as others (Reynolds 28). For Jim Edwards, Woodstock was "the beginning of the end of the whole hippie thing" (Reynolds 91), and Phil Vinall laments that a revolution never occurred (Reynolds 164).

While Artie Kornfeld admits that some of his contemporaries "have become complacent in the world and maybe a bit too comfortable," others "continue to believe that there is much unfinished business left." However, the younger generations have given him hope, since they have "the same sort of passion in their voices, expressing a feeling of love and concern for our planet and each other." He further says: "For the Woodstock generation, the only thing against us is our age, but we're still a force to be reckoned with and continue to fight for what we believe is right" (Littleproud 7). Hugh Romney is also hopeful because he has seen that "people can, and still do, get together for a weekend of peace, love, and music. I believe the true *Woodstock* is in everyone's hearts and

consciousness – the caring, sharing, and reaching out to help each other through whatever life's storms may bring" (Littleproud 254).

In the Introduction to this thesis, I said that the ideals of change, love and the sense of optimism that characterised the Sixties had disappeared in general nowadays. I agree with Graham Nash, who said: "There was a certain glow about the Sixties, a certain naivete and exploration, an excitement for the future that doesn't exist anymore."[130] Nevertheless, change is always possible and there are people that believe in those ideals and Woodstock is a proof of this.

Artie Kornfeld once said that "Woodstock is a state of mind and not necessarily a place" (Littleproud 7). For me, Woodstock was always more than a music festival. Sure, it was a great music festival and is a landmark in the history of music but Woodstock is, above all, a lesson about human experience. It reminds us that people can get along and love one another; that if we work together, we can make the world a better place. Unfortunately, human nature is itself a drawback to change. In his report, John Laurence talked about "old-fashioned kindness and caring"[131] (bear in mind that "old-fashioned" is used in a positive sense), and it's those human values that we often forget about in our daily lives. In my opinion, Woodstock is a reminder about the best that people are capable of and that we can and should show our best every day and not only in times of need or in situations of emergency. While it is true that Woodstock was a once in a lifetime happening and it cannot be replicated, I believe that its lessons are still relevant forty-five years later and will always be. For that, Woodstock is historically and socially significant.

[130] Various Artists. *Woodstock: Three Days of Peace and Music: The 25th Anniversary Collection*. Atlantic, 1994. CD.
[131] "Woodstock CBS Coverage 8-18-1969."28 August 2012. 16 August 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WehjMZcQqPA>.

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## List of Woodstock performers

### Friday, 15 August

Richie Havens
Sweetwater
Bert Sommer
Tim Hardin
Ravi Shankar
Melanie
Arlo Guthrie
Joan Baez

### Saturday, 16 August

Quill
Country Joe McDonald
Santana
John Sebastian
Keef Hartley Band
The Incredible String Band
Canned Heat
Mountain
Grateful Dead
Creedence Clearwater Revival
Janis Joplin
Sly and the Family Stone
The Who
Jefferson Airplane

### Sunday, 17 August

Joe Cocker and the Grease Band
Country Joe and the Fish
Ten Years After
The Band
Johnny Winter
Blood, Sweat & Tears
Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
The Butterfield Blues Band
Sha Na Na
Jimi Hendrix