



America's Biggest Commune, The Farm 1972-'76: Voluntary Peasants Labor of Love, Part 3

Melvyn Stiriss

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Beyond sex, drugs and rock 'n roll—beyond hippies—Humorist/Journalist Melvyn Stiriss sheds new light on the sixties when, as a UPI reporter, he followed the story of the times over the edge to live the story himself. Stiriss—“I co-founded and lived thirteen years in America’s biggest commune not undercover but as a full-fledged member of the hippie collective, living the dream, “saving the world.” The idea of writing about the experience came after, when I realized the importance of reporting behind-the-scenes, everyday observations of one of the most-intriguing social experiments to come out of that heady era.”

Enter what may seem another world. Entertaining, informative, true stories of America’s biggest commune—The Farm—a remarkable bold attempt to “get out of the box” and create a better way of life—Earth-friendly, people-friendly, eclectic, agrarian, vegan community and pioneering cannabis church—a commune awarded the Swedish Right Livelihood Award—“For caring, sharing and acting with and on behalf of those in need at home and abroad.” An example of The Farm’s humanitarian outreach, the author worked with Mayans and a crew from the community in remote villages after a devastating earthquake in Guatemala—building rural schools, clinics, houses and a clinic for Mother Teresa.

“Imagine all the people living life in peace.”—John Lennon

That was us! We had it going. Cool, fun, weaving of journalism, pathos and humor transports the reader on an entertaining, mind-expanding, psychedelic odyssey.

Over the collective’s 13 years, 5,000 people lived and worked together as “voluntary peasants” sharing labor, life and friendship—a path with heart—working without pay—to create a globally-affordable, sustainable safe, sane, eclectic, agrarian, egalitarian, meaningful, fun lifestyle. The Farm was a grassroots, 24/7 peace demonstration.

Pooling resources, working together, we built our own town—complete with farming, construction, motor pool, soy dairy, clinic, lab, doctors, midwives, bakery, cottage industries, FM radio station, solar-heated school, a dozen satellite communities and humanitarian outreach projects around the world. At peak—1,450 people enjoyed Zero Unemployment, Universal Healthcare, and all necessities on \$100/person a month!”

This includes the author’s deeply personal spiritual student-teacher relationship with Stephen Gaskin; personal “yogas” placed on him, “spiritual missions” to perform and what that all led too. We also examine surprising effects of group think.

The whole, remarkable 5-part story, Voluntary Peasants Labor of Love, will be available in print and Ebook Spring, 2016

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