

- On, okay it's now, this is Rose Norman. This November 7th, 2013, and I'm interviewing Connie Tarpley at Sugarloaf Women's Village, on Sugarloaf Key. Connie lives in Key West. She was a frequent visitor to Sugarloaf Village, which was not called that then, from what period would you say? You were with Vogel 13 years.

Connie: Okay, I met them, I met Jane probably first because she was involved in the Batterer's Intervention Group. There were women who were locally, in town, who were trying to get a shelter together. And so there was a group of us that wanted to do something, and then there was the more bureaucratic types (chuckles) that wanted to establish somethin' through the government, and that sort of thing. So we started doin' safe houses, and then I started comin' up here for CR group. I'm thinking that was like in the very late '70s, like '78, '79, somewhere around then.

Host: Earlier you said that the first time you saw the Sugarloaf women was at an ERA.

Connie: Event and they, and I just vaguely remembered it was a parade and I was standing on the sideline watching and they were marching in the parade and they were like, "Come on, join us, join us!" And little did I know that I eventually would join them, but I had known about Barbara before I ever came up here because I had, there was an article about her in Ms. Magazine. This, I still remember the cover of it. This beautiful, Bougainvillea cover, and talking about her living on Sugarloaf Key.

Bonnie: Oh, that's interesting.

Connie: I knew that about her, but then I met Jane through the women's group that was trying to--

- Domestic violence.

- Setup some shelters, yeah.

Host: That's how Bonnie met her... Well no, she didn't. She met her when she came down here. She got Bonnie involved in that too. Okay so, so you first, let's just sort of take it, time for the story of your interactions with Sugarloaf, starting with when they called you to join them in the ERA. Was it a action or a parade?

Connie: It was some kind of parade, and I can barely remember what it was. But they were marching. It honestly, it probably, I don't know that it was ERA. It was a NOW. It was the first chapter of the NOW group down here in Key West.

Host: So were you a member of NOW, or?

Connie: I wasn't a member of NOW at that point, no. I was not.

Host: But you just happened to see that parade?

Connie: I just, I don't know why I was there. It was one of those (laughing) synchronicities. And it is a, it's a small town.

Host: Sure, yeah. We're talkin' Key West now.

- Yes.

- It's a small town.

- Right.

Host: So late '70s, the ERA's counting down. They'd only been here a few years. They moved here in '76.

Connie: Yeah, they hadn't been here long, so it was kind of a coming together of a lot of things. Joan Sears was another women who was involved with the NOW group and there's also a woman who lives here now, who's actually, her husband was the editor of the Solares Hill before a long time. And another woman, gosh here I am with the names. I'm so bad. Iva Stanley. And her husband was the editor of Solares Hill before, oh gosh. Why am I blanking? I'm really bad with names. I'm blanking on everybody's name.

Host: He's given me a lot of names, so I can probably fill them in if you tell me who they are. These are straight women who are--

Connie: These are straight women that were involved with Sugarloaf because they lived up here. They didn't live on the land here, but they lived in the neighborhood. Jane and Barbara both related to the neighborhood.

Bonnie: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's important.

Host: And it couldn't have been much later than '79. I think ERA failed in '79, failed to get the last state.

Bonnie: I was in jail when Joan Sears--

Connie: Oh you were?

- Yeah.

- All right, well so.

Bonnie: We were in there 16 days, got to be--

Connie: So was that Sinica, or?

Bonnie: It was after Sinica, it was '83. It was that year after the big year there.

Host: So the fury when Barbara's alive is only from '73--

- Jan Howe is who I was trying to think of.

- Another one of them.

- She was another one of the straight women that was involved with the NOW organization and the community.

Host: And was involved with Sugarloaf through those activities. So Jane, or Jane and Barbara were big into NOW. (laughing)

Connie: I don't know if they were big into NOW. They were into women's rights. I'd say that they were a little more radical (laughing) than NOW. Was just that they were doin' what was available, and maybe the women and connecting as they could. I think.

- Yes 'cause NOW had a lesbian task force in Miami. We have a, somebody wrote an article about the lesbian task force in NOW. Marry Sims, we have a whole bunch of stuff from Miami that Barbara Esta put together.

Connie: Oh okay. Yeah, I know there was a lot of dissension among the ranks about whether to be out, not to be out. All the stuff that went on even though I wasn't intimately involved in it.

Host: Well I was kind of wondering, and Bonnie was a little vague about how, at what point Barbara and Jane began to think about this as women's land.

- That was Blue.

- That was really Blue.

Connie: Blue, Blue. Have you seen the little documentary that they did on Blue? Some Ground to Stand On. She was so big with that. She came from New York, where she had an apartment that was open to any woman that really needed to be there. So because of her background and really, I think not feeling like having a place, being orphaned early on, livin' with an aunt. Maybe a godmother, I guess that, I guess I can say all this stuff since (laughing)--

Host: It's in the movie, okay.

Connie: Yeah, right. I'm like well I know this stuff from CR, and from during group where there's all this confidentiality, but I'm sure she doesn't care. I think it sprang from that, and she very much wanted to have Women's Land where women could feel safe. And I think she was the real driving force before that. Before she came, it seemed to me that it was very intellectual, which I loved. It was thrilling. The people that came through here, peace activists from Argentina (chuckles) and Chile. It was, and riders and all these people that, this girl from Tennessee had never been exposed to. So it was very thrilling. But Blue brought a different flavor to it. It was more about community, I think with her. Not that they weren't about community, but I felt like it was more... It's all of the political work, the, peace activism and all that stuff. It's all, I think it's all related, but it seemed to me that Blue was the one that brought the sense of community.

Host: Okay. Well what was said at the end of that film is that it was Barbara's getting the land that gave them some ground to stand on. She's, connects that phrase to Barbara's getting the land. So I'm wanting, I'm glad to get it clear that your sense was that Barbara and Jane were activists, activists, activists, but not necessarily women's community land group activist.

Connie: Well I hate to speak for the people (chuckling) that aren't here anymore, but that was my impression of it. That's all I can say.

Host: Sure, there's so few people that are alive. You know, from that period to, and that... It's such a short period, '76 to '84. That's eight years that Barbara Deming was alive on this land. So you'd think there'd be people who--

Connie: Well, there, what about Sky? Have you tried to talk to her?

Host: I'm trying to get in touch with Sky.

Connie: And that's something that Joan Sears might help you with. And I know that Jan is connected to Joan. Actually, Joan sent me some pictures through Jan.

Bonnie: Where's Joan right now?

Connie: Joan is out on the West Coast. She's in Washington, I believe. I believe it's Washington, yes.

Host: There is a Sky Vanderline who was a nurse practitioner in, Springfield, Massachusetts. We think is our Sky. I've got a business phone. (laughing)

- Oh okay. I think that is. I think that is where she is, but I'm pretty sure that probably. Who did the, I don't know. Actually I think Joan might be the one that would know if anybody knew. That would be my guess anyway. But that sounds like her. That's her name, so. How many of them are there?

- It's an unusual name. Can you connect me to Joan Sears?

- I think I can.

- She's the one that lives behind you?

Connie: No, no, no, that's Cornelia. She's from Germany. It's a whole different thing, but yeah. Okay I'll wait.  
(laughing)

- No I was just, I'm wantin' to be sure and want you to get away with that. I'll get some phone numbers out of your hair.

Connie: Well you know what, I have your email address. And so I can always, what I can do is try to pull some of that stuff together. I wish maybe I would've made more of an effort, but I just kinda didn't. It seemed kinda like you were more interested in talking to people who were actually on the land. So I was kinda had put this out of my mind that were were even gonna do it until your phone call.

Host: Well, it's just that I'm feeling like I need more voices.

Connie: And there's, I think there are plenty out there. You might have to track them down.

Bonnie: You know, when I was here in '83, with the peace walk and then I stayed around the Keys, and spent time with Barbara and stuff. I had the impression that while she had global notions, that she was totally into a women's, I mean she, they had a women's potluck, had women's CR. I mean--

- Yes, yes, oh I'm.

Bonnie: She was doing women organizing too.

Host: Oh she was a lesbian feminist activist. There's no doubt about that and I'm not, I didn't mean to say that it wasn't her dream. Obviously it was. I guess, maybe I just saw it comin' more to life. And there's, I would also say that this woman right here, Claudia who came from Germany, was also somebody that really got the community aspect. There's a certain spirit to it. It's, and one, yeah, one is intellectual, and one is, what's the word? I'm not sure. There is just a spirit there that brought everybody together, and got things going, and projects going. I don't really know how to describe it, but definitely a community head, because there was a period of time, it seemed to me where it was just women living in separate houses. That doesn't mean there wasn't some community going on, it's just a different type of community. Does that make sense to you and would you agree with that? It's like everybody's, it's not, I'm not trying to imply that they weren't into women's community. It was just a different kind of women's community, yes.

Bonnie: They weren't the ones that would get everybody to plant flowers or to mow the lawns, and build a new porch.

Host: Oh, they didn't care, they didn't care about that. And there was like community things happening, and they probably wanted more of it, but I, part of it, they had huge connections, but so did Blue. Really, when, like say for instance when we went to this march. You would walk down the street and you couldn't move two inches without somebody knowin' Blue or Vogel. It was really pretty amazing, and I'm going oh my god. I don't know anybody here. (laughing) And it seemed like they knew everybody in the city at that moment. So there was these, that's the thing. There was this huge connection and people were visiting all the time. Blue was in her element. Barbara was a writer. Blue was like greet the people that come onto the land, let me show you everything that we have, kinda drawing people in. So everybody really contributed something, and I was definitely in awe of Barbara Deming. That was part of my problem, was that she was like on a pedestal to me. I was much more connected probably to Jane than I was to Barbara 'cause I felt a little, I was too--  
I think I felt that too.

Host: Too much in awe of Barbara. But she wonderful. She was a deep, deep listener. If, she... Everybody was valuable to her. So in that way, she was very much a community person because she would listen to anybody with the same intensity. And actually that's somethin' that I think Blue shared with her. That when she turned her attention on you, you really felt heard and listened to and valued.

- Yeah.

- Yeah. (crickets chirping)

Connie: I guess the reason I keep coming back to the notion of women's community is because this issue we're working on now is the land's issue of Sinister Wisdom. We've got, we got a women, well, the women now at Alpine, talkin' about when they were doin' Pagoda and why they were doing it and what they were doing. And Corky's gonna write about the North 40, which has six women on it today. It may be the first. We think it may be the first women's land group, at least the first one we can document in the country.

Host: Wow.

Connie: So Sugarloaf, which has, at least for me, a long reputation as a mecca. Not only because, well because of Barbara and Blue, but... That it got its start, it came from a different roots than any of these other land communities in the same period. '76 is right in the middle of when people were forming land groups. Barbara and Jane came here because Barbara was cold and needed to be warm.

- Barbara, because of her health, yes.

Connie: But she had the idea, what Bonnie has said, of forming something like what Dr. King called the Beloved Community, which hasn't got anything to do with women only or feminism, it has to do with nonviolence, and peace activism. But that was her, but it was practical goal. And so she came here with Andrew Dorgan, a gay man. That was who livin' in the two story. So that's just a really different way for a

women's land to start. Your land started very differently, with different goals and ideals. Not that you weren't peace activists, or actually--

- Yeah. But like, that was not, I mean some of us were, but some of us never did relate whatsoever on the land. Most land pieces have to do, at the get-go with forming a community, and weren't so theoretical. But Barbara was theoretical, intellectual as you say. And it was about nonviolence and it was about, it had a... Just, it, I can see it as a different kind of early vibe that started it.

Connie: Right and they came from a community in New York anyway. They were living in community there.

Host: Really? What kind of community there?

Connie: I just spoke to, when I was at the Occupy DC, I ran into a woman that had lived in the community and actually had Barbara Deming's jacket. I'm trying to think of what her name was.

- Wow.

- But I can probably track her down, but--

- Did you say you spoke at Occupy DC?

Connie: I said when I was at Occupy DC, yeah. I went and camped there for a while, yeah.

Bonnie: That's great, yeah. Go ahead, go ahead.

Connie: Anyway. (laughing) I'm gettin' off topic.

Host: No that's okay, we can edit this. That's another thing is I don't transcribe these.

- Oh good.

- I listen to them, and I pull out what I think--

- Pull out the pieces.

Host: We can use. And then I send it to you and ask you is this correct? And you can fix it or call me up and tell me how to fix it, whatever. So you don't have to worry. The tape will go to Duke, so anytime you don't want anything said on the tape, you need to tell me to pause it.

Connie: Oh, okay. (snaps) I'll get, what I was thinkin' about--

Bonnie: You came from a community, yours?

Host: Barbara Deming and Jane had lived in some kind of community too.

Connie: In New York, that's my understanding. Now you're talking to a woman with with not, (laughing) super good memory, but that's my recollection of what I was told. And the fact that I ran into this woman who knew her from there, so.

Host: Well the expansion of the property. She bought the property with three buildings on it. A guest cottage, the house that Andrew and Joan lived in, and the house that she and Jane lived in. I think the next property she bought was when, when Blue wanted, when she wanted Blue to move here, and she bought that other lot that had that house on it for Blue. So she was instrumental in expanding the land. And she kept buying property.

Connie: Yeah, so they really probably were on... Obviously that's what she wanted to have happen. I'm not, I'm sorry if I sounded like (laughing) that wasn't her main goal. I'm just saying the feel of it for me. I was coming up and all I was really doing at that point, mostly was going to see our group. So my understanding of the whole thing was not necessarily there. I did meet Blue and she came down on the trip, and she went out to my sailboat. I got to meet her, but I really, you know. I probably wasn't payin' attention. I was like in my 20s. (laughing) I was just out and so there was a lot of things goin' on in my life. So I will, you know, please take what I say with a grain of salt, and understanding that it's my memory of what was goin' on.

Bonnie: Absolutely. I wanna know how you go to Key West from Tennessee.

Connie: I came, actually (chuckling) I came on spring break and I just, kinda one thing lead to another, so I heard somebody say.  
(laughing)

Bonnie: What town in Tennessee?

Connie: East Tennessee. A little town right outside of Chattanooga.

Host: I live in Huntsville, Alabama, so I'm familiar with that--

- Oh okay. Area, we're 20 miles from the Tennessee line.

Connie: Oh okay, so good, yeah you know.

Host: I'm liking your southern accent (laughing)  
because we're getting way too many of these northerners coming in here. (laughing) Which is okay, they're southern too when they've been here 30 years. (laughing)

Connie: That's right.



Host: Okay, so it's the '70s, and you're in a CR group that meets over here.

Connie: Yes.

Host: Is it a lesbian CR group or just a CR group?

Connie: No, Joan Sears attended. It was just a women's group. And as a matter of fact, I wasn't a lesbian. I said to Barbara how I wished I could be a lesbian because I really loved women, it was just that I wasn't sexually attracted to them. So little did I know. And then when I finally came out, she says, "I so wanted to tell you any woman can be." (laughing)

Host: That's some really good stuff in this book I'm reading of hers right now, where she thinks that ideally you would have a society where everybody could be attracted to whoever they felt like being attracted to. That it wasn't so gender stratified. That was in 1973 that she was saying that. So you're in Barbara Deming's CR group, and you're comin' over here to Sugarloaf. Who are all, you had a certain--

Connie: It's no wonder I came out, right? (laughing) I mean would ya?

Host: Yes, gosh. So what was it like here then? You came to the CR group. You must have a sense of what the place was like.

Connie: Well I felt, I used to tell them it was like, I felt like I was in paradise because first of all, just the vegetation. Here, you come in, there's mangoes hanging down from the trees and banana trees and it's just gorgeous. It was wonderful, I loved it. It was, just what my heart was looking for.

Bonnie: Did they have pictures of women all around then?

Connie: I don't, you know what, I don't think so, not necessarily. What do you mean, pictures of women? (laughing)

Bonnie: Well now, when you come, you see goddesses and you see women's art, like they had time to accumulate a lot of that.

Connie: Yeah, I think so. Barbara had some antiques and stuff. I had one of Barbara Deming's rocking chairs at my house, as a matter of fact, that came to me through Vogel. So, yeah it had, it just changed so much, and so many women have been through here, and left their mark on it. It is much cleaner and neater, and prettied up and everything from when I first came up here. Yeah, I don't know. My impression was of Jane. I love Jane, but she was gruff and when I first met them, she was still drinking and people were afraid of her, but I thought she was fabulous.

Host: We found a collection of her poetry that Quinn put together and bounded with Elizabeth.

- Oh!

- Make like it was, apparently it was damaged and some of the--

- The Storm, yeah.

- This poetry's really good. Good stuff! I think she published her poetry as well, but she was primarily a painter.

Connie: Yes and she did have one book published. Have you seen that? It's called...

Host: I know what you mean.

- Well anyway.

- There's a lot of books here.

Connie: Yes.

Bonnie: I have that at home--

Connie: Something Not Yet Ended, that's what it's called.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah.

- And it sounds just like her. I mean, it is her voice or at least I think it is.

Bonnie: Good, yeah.

Host: I just remembered, let me pause this a minute.

Connie: Okay.

- Carry on.

- What can I tell you that would be important?

Host: Okay, how did things change? Blue came to visit in '81 and to stay probably in '82. And can you recall how things changed during that period?

Connie: Okay well. Actually, we continued to come to CR group, and I dropped out of CR group for a while

after Blue came because (laughing), I guess it's okay for this to be on here. I'll tell the dirt. (laughing) We would usually show up at CR group, of all things, with a bottle of wine. And so Blue was not drinking and she was sober, and she very much wanted Jane to be sober. So she was not too happy with that. And I was not to, I wasn't at a point of my life where I could accept that I couldn't drink. What do you mean I can't bring a bottle of wine? So I didn't come around for a while. I actually didn't come back around until Barbara was dying. So I regret that in a lot of ways, but it was where I was. I was still pretty much a kid in a way. So I'm not really sure what happened. That wasn't a real long period anyway. Then I started relating to the community again, at that point.

Host: You would've been from '82 to '84 I think. From when Blue moved here.

Connie: Well there wasn't exactly, the minute she moved here. I related for a while, while she was here, but then I finally at some point just decided that maybe it wasn't such a good idea.

Host: Okay, so now Barbara has died. Jane lives on for another 10 years or so. So that's when you started coming back out here?

Connie: Well, I guess I started. Actually I was in this room when Barbara walked in with that peace drum and oh my gosh. She had been having radiation. Of course I'm the only one that burst into tears. Everybody else is being reasonable,(chuckling) and strong and everything. So it was, yeah not, it was really--

- Wow.

- A sad time, but it was also wonderful because women came, and sang to her. She got to say goodbye to everybody that she wanted to, so there was, it was the beginning of me being able to see good deaths, I guess, if you will. I had never known anything like that. So that was the first experience I had with that. So she really showed a different way of dying that I think was really kind of way ahead of her time. It's the kind of a common thing to have happen now, but at that point, I think it was pretty unusual.

Host: You said people came from all over. This would be women, men, or?

Connie: Everybody, but a lot of women. She just, I think she said her goodbyes. She gave away things, she called people in. And Bruce Pratt was there, sang gospel songs to her, different things. It was, good stuff.

Bonnie: People were so affected by a different way of taking care of death and being, that they wanted that to be a specialty here, after that. They thought that was part of a mission, was to. 'Cause it had been totally taboo, and nobody knew how to handle anything. And just say this is part of love and life and stuff.

Connie: And Ruth's passing was very much like that too. It really was. And I guess really Blue's too.

Host: Yeah, there's six, the ashes of six women in the urn in the Peace Garden. And I think, I'm not sure if all 'em died here or not.

Connie: No, Addie was one whose ashes went there, and she didn't die here. And Mayoua didn't die here and her ashes went there. I don't, who else? Who else was there?

- Jane.

- Jane's are there.

- Jane. And Jane died in the hospital when I was, Vogel and I were on a trip, on a bicycle trip out west.

Host: Okay so think about the period then, from it's now Blue who is running the show. And you're coming back out here again?

Connie: Yes.

- And what--

- And actually Vogel started living out here. She moved in... trying to think of when she did move in. Oh my gosh because it wasn't before Barbara passed away 'cause she wasn't living here then. Then they had tried to get her to move out here, I think when she first moved down here.

Host: Which house did she live in?

Connie: She lived in the, I call it the lavender house, the one that's next to, was next to the one that Bonnie's in, which is where Barbara and Jane lived.

Bonnie: The two-story one.

Connie: The two-story.

Host: Oh.

Bonnie: All the houses are different colors now, but they name 'em by the old colors.

Connie: Oh. (laughing) Well, and I'm trying hard not to say she's next to Barbara and Jane's house, and this is Ruth's house and that's Blue's house. That's the way I think of it, but I know that's not the way it is anymore. So I try to be respectful of that.

Host: So Vogel was here. Vogel was an artist and did, did anybody else live there at that house? It's a big house.

Connie: It is a big house and she was the only one that lived there. Visitors might come, but she pretty much

lived there by herself, while she was there.

Host: Did she, there's a lot of her art around here, Bonnie has pointed out, in some of the different houses. I don't know whether it came back or had stayed here, or?

Connie: Probably a little of both is my guess, maybe.

Host: At that time, okay. This is now with Blue. There's a community house and Ruth was living in it then?

Connie: Yes, Ruth lived here. This part over here was partitioned off. Visitors would sleep out there, and visitors would sleep out here. And this was, that was Ruth's bedroom, but people would meet here, and have like potlucks and stuff. And sometimes potlucks in the house where Blue lived, and there was a little apartment building off of that, which was Jane's studio. And then, after Jane died, then it became an apartment. Cornelia lived there for a while. Different people lived there.

Host: So it really was, at that point, becoming more of a women's community. You're talking about having potlucks.

Connie: Yes and Ruth was very much a, she came from not lesbian communities, but communities. That was peace community.

Bonnie: Was Ruth not a lesbian?

Connie: She was, she called herself a lesbian. She was a lesbian, (chuckling) she wasn't really active. She had a crush on several women, I remember, and I was always encouraging her to act on it, but she didn't. (laughing) Said it was too much work and now I understand where she was coming from. (laughing)

Host: Well she had two sons, so she must've been married before.

Connie: Yes, she was.

Host: Can you think of other? What kept you comin' out, well Vogel obviously kept you comin' out here, but what was it like to be here, 'cause nowadays people mostly come here on vacation.

Connie: There was always women coming through, and there was always people, to me. There was, my boat was out here for a long time. I had a sailboat and we'd go out on that, and then Sandy and Randy, who was my lover later, they had their boat here. Sister and everybody went out on that. So there was lots of women and the potlucks, and one of the ways that I really related was Dream Group. We met for, I don't, Carol would know 'cause I'm still in contact with her. But I think we must've met for 17 years or somethin'. We did it for a long time, and we got to know each other on a deep level, I think. That was really good. There was this whole thing of winter visitors at one point. Women came down and stayed, they camp in the campground, they camp across the street. Ruth actually purchased the land that's next door because she

didn't want people encroaching on the land. So there was a... Let's see, what was the question? (laughing)

Host: What was it like, you've answered that. There were lots of people coming through. There was this Dream group. This is Ruth's Dream group?

Connie: This is, Ruth called herself Ruth Dream-Digger. She was the one that started it. It was, when she said it to me, my eyes lit up because it's still one of my favorite things to do. I love symbolism, I love digging into that sort of stuff and it just...

Host: I'm in a Dream group too, and we use Jeremy Taylor's book. But Bonnie said Ruth had her own.

Connie: Well it's mostly kinda, what we did was Gestalt stuff.

Host: That is a way of fostering, having regular community-like events, was a way of fostering this sense of women's community. I keep imagining this essay called Woman's Land, Women's Space and on the subject of why, why Women's Land needs to be, or needed to or whether it's continued--

Connie: I miss, I wish it, trust me, I wish it was still here. It was the, I really felt at home. It was a place where I felt at home, and connected. Lesbians got together in bars and if you don't do bars and you don't have any other connection other than drinking, it's a lonely place to be.

Bonnie: That's such a good point, yeah.

Connie: I'm sorry myself that it seems to have fallen apart. And maybe it's not in other places. Maybe it's just that I'm stuck down here, but hadn't seem to, don't get out. But I did, I really did try to make connections. I've taken several trips and called people that, that are on these lists, that they'll say this and that and the other. It really never much happened. Somebody, I was in Minnesota and call somebody and they were like, "Oh, why don't you try the internet?" I'm like oh thanks. (laughing) So it's just the world, it's--

Bonnie: Like contact dikes.

Connie: Yeah, yeah.

Bonnie: The lesbian world is really a lot different.

Connie: What is the magazine that they put out? That Lesbian Land magazine?

- MACE.

- No, it's not MACE, it's.

Bonnie: Sheila's Directory?

- I'm trying--

- Lesbian Connections?

Connie: Lesbian Connections, and I tried to use that when I went across country and I didn't really have very much success at all. But I mean, that could've just been my luck, but it's that whole thing of it's a different world. People connect different ways and this was, for me, a wonderful way to connect, 'cause you really didn't have to do anything except show up because the women always came through. And maybe that's the thing about it being--

Bonnie: On the Land made it happen.

Connie: The Women, The Women and The Women on the Lands, their connections made it happen. And the fact that people just came here. Part of it, of course is because it's winter. It was very different in the summer here than it was in the winter.

- Really?

Connie: In the summer, everything was pretty sparse and deserted. The women that actually lived here were here, but it was really, it's a different thing. In the winter, lots and lots of visitors.

Host: Bonnie said there were 105 visitors last year.

- Wow.

- Went through here, which was a stress, I guess, on the fieldies.

Connie: Yeah, that's a lot of people.

Host: Especially when you don't have somebody like Blue, who's just the host with the most kind of thing.  
(laughing)

- Right, right. She played that role very well. And that's part of, and she loved it. She loved women and it was obvious. She was welcome. You never felt like she was too tired to deal with somebody because that was, that was her thing, that's what brought her spirits up. When she, when she knew she was dying, or actually maybe she knew she was dying, but she just hadn't admitted it to herself. That's when the whole land trust started. And that was with Sally Willoughby, who also lived here, not full time, but she lived here in the winters for many years. So she might be somebody really to talk to.

- Who's that?

- Sally Willoughby.

Host: Yeah, I have her name, I don't have her contact information. Bonnie told me a good bit about her, and she's in a lot of the pictures. Was important.

Connie: Yeah so she really was encouraged Blue to do the land trust thing. And I really feel like they wanted local people on the land trust. I was one of the original board members, and was part of that process because there was a connection. I felt like the community went beyond just the Women's Land.

Bonnie: Yeah. It being, it was a networking kind of. It was a place where you could network, where people, and it is a web, and it reached out. It's not just about growing mangoes.

Connie: Right. (laughing) No.

- And it's a place where you could come and you could get information. Pergoda was the same way. When they really happened that's, you can go to, you can come in from the outside and find out what's happening across the country even, and the newest books.

Connie: Yeah absolutely. And I've got some pictures of the women, some of the women that I think they ended up in St. Augustine or something with their book mobile. They had a lesbian book mobile that they used to bring down here.

- Oh neat!

- Oh wow.

Bonnie: Wonder if that was Rusty and David. Maybe. Book Mobile.

Connie: Let me show ya their pictures, (laughing) here again. I don't know their names. This is one of the women right there.

Bonnie: Okay. That's the villa. (laughing) That's the villa! Okay. I've gotta make a note of this.

Bonnie: I'll be darned.

Connie: Got a pen there somewhere. Oh did your pen go. I got all my pictures all spread out all over the place.

Host: In the, well where? The pen, she's got one. Will that work?

Connie: Sure, yeah. I was just gonna write on here. You care if I write on this?



Host: Nope. As long as it's on the back.

- Don't get bent too much. You wanna pen that doesn't indent--

- At the top, maybe.

- Bright lights.

Host: And this was Cornelius?

Connie: No, that is Claudia.

- Claudia.

- And she really, she gave her heart and soul. And here's, and this must be Sivila Hawk's girlfriend of the moment or friend or whatever because they usually traveled together down here. That's my memory of it.

- They came--

- And this was Blue's present girlfriend at the corral meet anyway. I can't remember her name either. I think she's from some of those peace groups.

Bonnie: These things are wet, aren't they? (laughing)

- I know! Can you believe it? Just the, my luck. What I can't. If anybody could do that, it would be. And see there's a picture of Blue working on my house. I'm telling you that, they just, it's far-reaching into the community. (crickets chirping) And there's Vogel painting the Women's Flag Football Association truck. That was...

Bonnie: I met somebody from that flag football.

Connie: You did?

- Yeah, well.

- It ruined that. They're recruiting people.

Connie: I'm sure she's always recruiting. This is, that's a picture of Jane going, we were going up to the march. That was before we left. There maybe some place we stopped a lot.

Host: Is this you and?

Connie: No, that's Vogel and Jane.

Host: This is Vogel and Jane, okay. Going to a peach march?

- No, we're going up to the gay and lesbian march in Washington.

Host: That would be the, well.

Connie: We think it's '87.

- '87.

- I think it's '86.

- There was one in '93 too, and one in '78, no it couldn't have been one in '78. Well maybe there was. Okay. There was one in '93.

- I think this was '87. I think somehow I got with some people, and figured it out. (laughing)

Host: That is '87.

Bonnie: There was one that's for sure then.

Connie: 'Cause I'm trying to think of how long Jane's been gone.