

JUDITH WINFREY and JOE REYNOLDS
Love is Love Farm at Gaia Gardens – Decatur, Georgia

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Date: August 4, 2013

Location: Love is Love Farm at Gaia Gardens, Decatur, Georgia

Interviewer: Sara Wood

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

Length: Two hours, three minutes

Project: Women at Work in Georgia

[Begin Judith Winfrey & Joe Reynolds Interview]

00:00:01

Sara Wood: So I'm going to get started. So it is Sunday, August 4, 2013 and I'm sitting here with Judith Winfrey and Joe Reynolds of Love is Love Farm and we're at—sitting here at Gaia Gardens in Atlanta, Georgia [*Interview's note: the farm is actually in Decatur, Georgia*]. And I'm going to have you start Judith, can you say hello and introduce yourself for the tape, please?

00:00:22

Judith Winfrey: Sure. Hi, I'm Judith Winfrey, co-owner of Love is Love Farm. We're farming here at Gaia Gardens.

00:00:31

SW: And for the record will you tell me your birth date?

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JW: March 27, 1974. [*Laughs*]

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SW: Thank you, and Joe, will you say hello and introduce yourself too?

00:00:45

Joe Reynolds: Sure, hi, I'm Joe Reynolds, the other half of Love is Love Farm and my birthday is July 24, 1978.

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SW: I'm wondering if you guys can both start just by telling me a little bit about your background and where you grew up and what it was like there and—and if there were any connections to farming at that time.

00:01:17

JW: Uh-hm, sure. I was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. I am a—the youngest of family and I was sort of a late-in-life child for my parents, so my parents were in their forties when I came around. And what that means is that I didn't have direct connection to agriculture but my grandparents all had sort of agriculture in their lives and while I didn't really get to know many of my grandparents it was a part of the story of our family. So my father's father was a sharecropper, not just any old sharecropper but a one-armed sharecropper in the Athens, Georgia area and mom on her side always grew up with kitchen gardens. And I grew up with kitchen gardens. We would grow lettuces and tomatoes in the summer, just little things to enjoy harvested at home.

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I never expected to work in or around agriculture. When I met Joe he was doing some food activism work that I thought was really intriguing and I think that is what opened the door to agriculture. And I think it's fair to say for both of us that activism is definitely a part of what attracted us to agriculture.

00:02:57

SW: And just to back up a little bit will you tell me the names of your parents and your grandparents?

00:03:03

JW: Sure. My father's name is Calvin Grady Winfrey and my—his parents were Ednis and Earnest Winfrey. Later on in my life my grandfather lost his legs so everyone called him Shorty, so [*Laughs*] it took me a minute to recall that name.

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And then on my mom's side, my mom's name is Dixie. Her maiden name is Alvarez and her mother was also named Dixie and her father was named Guy Sidney.

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SW: So your grandfather, he was the sharecropper?

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JW: Uh-hm.

00:03:56

SW: So he had one arm and then he eventually lost both of his legs?

00:04:00

JW: Yes.

00:04:00

SW: Farming—?

00:04:02

JW: No, he didn't have a farming accident. He had debilitating arthritis and I—I know pieces of this story. I don't know all of it. I know that they were very, very poor and I know that they traveled all around the country visiting different healers to try to get some relief to the pain in his legs. And ultimately he opted just to have his legs removed.

00:04:31

SW: And so but you said the farm was—outside of Athens?

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JW: Uh-hm.

00:04:37

SW: Did he farm for the family or was it a farming enterprise where he farmed?

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JW: Well, I mean he sharecropped so he farmed mostly for a property owner somewhere *[Laughs]* but he did have a little truck farm. So he would go around and sell vegetables. There's some great stories my aunt was telling me the other day about going down, they would go down to South Georgia every—early spring, she and her dad. And they would get sweet potatoes slips and they would store them in a spring. There was a spring near where they farmed and they would sit in the spring. They would lay them around the spring until they planted them like three or four months later.

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I thought that was a really interesting story given that we deal with sweet potato slips every year but never quite like that.

00:05:33

SW: And so I'm wondering if you could also, Joe, tell me a little bit about you know where you grew up and if there are any connections to farming.

00:05:45

JR: I—I grew up a military brat and I was born in Austin, Texas. My dad was a—in the service, in the Air Force for twenty years. He—and he worked as a plane mechanic. And my—my mom was born and raised in Austin and on my dad's—for my dad's first assignment as an airman he was stationed in Austin, Texas. He's originally from the Philadelphia area. And he met my mom and they fell in love and very quickly had a pregnancy and I was the result of that pregnancy. And my folks got married at a really young age. My dad was twenty and my mom was eighteen. And we—*[Plane in Background]*—

00:07:27

And being a military family we moved around a lot, so the sort of my—I guess the narrative I developed as I was growing up was that you know we had all of these impermanent places that we went for us and so we moved to Japan when I was really young and then back to the US. We moved to New Mexico and then back overseas, we went to England then South Florida and then South Georgia and that's how I ended up here in Georgia.

00:08:03

My dad got stationed in South Georgia in Valdosta, Georgia and I was a teenager at the time and went to high school there and went to college and that's kind of where I met my peer group but we really didn't have a close connection to agriculture. I don't think it would take a lot of digging to find connections to victory gardens on my dad's side or some level of farming on my mom's side. But we didn't have a lot of close contact with my relatives. My nuclear unit family, we just sort of stayed together and I didn't appreciate it when I was a lot younger but we had a lot of fun food traditions. My mom loved to cook Tex-Mex sort of style and so we had things like enchiladas and refried beans, a lot. She had a hard time pushing it on all of us boys—all of her children. And then my dad had fun things that would show up like scrapple, which always amazed us that it existed and had that color, but we—we ate it and it was just a part of what people that are from my dad's people did. And then things like birch beer would be things that he would talk a lot about and but really the—insofar as agriculture, I ironically went to high school with a ton of farm kids because I went to the county school in South Georgia and so there were kids sort of bused in from all over Lowndes County and I didn't—*[Plane in Background]*—

00:09:52

You see, when you're at the Glover's it's going to be twice as challenging.

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JW: Right.

00:09:58

JR: It's just because they're very close to the airport.

00:10:08

But—but when I was in high school my—my peer group wasn't—weren't necessarily the kids that grew up helping their families on hog farms or cotton farms or you know even just doing weekend sort of growing. I mostly just hung out with skateboard kids and punk rockers and then when I moved to Atlanta I—I got more interested in food but it was really mostly because I thought it would be a fun vehicle for traveling. And I studied anthropology when I was in school and sort of settled on this idea of trying to live in Central America and I was real fixated with coffee growers because they had—had a lot of connections to revolutionary movements.

00:10:54

And—and so right before I met Judith I went down to Central America for a couple of months and tried to hang out with coffee campesinos and realized really quickly that I didn't know a whole lot about speaking Spanish or working outside or working in the sun. I just didn't—I just didn't know much about that or manual labor or just sort of these—just basic skills folks need to harvest and grow things and understand seasons. And so when I came back I was super fortunate and met Judith and was really inspired by a lot of ideas that Judith's had. She's always been the idea-person for our relationship. And then [*Plane in Background*]*—I bet it's like a train passing, you know. It's—it's funny how that makes you feel like you're kind of transported back in time a little bit I'm so—*

00:12:05

JW: There are great farm sounds that's very unique to this farm and maybe we'll get to hear it. There's a mosque about a block over and you can hear the call to prayer.

00:12:17

JR: It's pretty amazing.

00:12:17

SW: At sundown?

00:12:19

JW: Well it happens five times. I don't know what the schedule is, do you?

00:12:22

JR: I don't—I don't and I don't think they broadcast it all the time, so some days I hear it more than others, but we usually catch three of the call to prayers typically but it will come out. Like usually around lunchtime is the best, it's like right around one o'clock it always happens whenever we're sitting down.

00:12:39

JW: Yeah, it's—

00:12:43

SW: Sorry, about the plane.

00:12:46

JR: And I was just going to conclude by saying that in an effort to get some of the experience to live abroad I tried to convince Judith that—that would be a great feature for us. I got a part-time job on a farm east of Atlanta at Crystal Organic Farm [in Newborn, Georgia] and things I think

really took off for Judith and I from that point in a direction that has you know put us close to where we are right now. There have been a lot of other fun things that have happened, too, and hard things.

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SW: I just want to go back and ask you before I forget, what are the names of your parents and—?

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JR: My father's name is William Reynolds and my mother's name is Denise and her maiden name was Freytag.

00:13:39

SW: And what—what year did you go down to Central America and where were you exactly?

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JR: I went to Central America in—when was that—in 2003, 2002 or 2003 and I—I traveled around a little bit but I was mostly based in San Salvador in El Salvador and then went to language school there and went and visited this cooperative Las Lajas west of San Salvador and then I had a friend that was in Peace Corps in Guatemala that I visited. And then I took buses across to fly out of Managua and Nicaragua.

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SW: Let the plane go over and I want to ask about how you guys met. [*Laughs*] Do you guys have a pressing schedule after this?

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JW: Not especially, no.

00:14:41

SW: Okay, I just—I feel bad stopping for every plane. I think it—after a while—can you tell me what year you moved to Atlanta and how you guys—maybe you both want to pitch in here—about how you guys met?

00:14:57

JR: I moved to Atlanta in maybe it was late 2001 or early 2002. And I got a job working for a—a fun pub [Brick Store Pub] in Decatur which isn't too far from here. And other people sort of expats from Valdosta in South Georgia had worked there before me and I got rapport that way and worked for those guys and—and about two and a half years into my working there, Judith showed up, she—she can tell her part of the story but she—the spirit of working at the Brick Store was really fun. There was a lot of like sort of like sharing tasks and we both served or waited tables and the—the idea was that everybody sort of took care of everybody's tables and helped rally around to do a lot of jobs that could probably have been outsourced to somebody to [*Laughs*]—to pull off. But we ran all the food and washed all the dishes. And so there was this sort of camaraderie out of a hustle and bustle and then sort of an after-hours camaraderie that sort

of happened. But Judith and I shared a lot of interests and fascinations with some different folks and it was sort of small conversations over time that I guess continued to build our relationship.

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SW: And you—now you—you went to school for linguistics? Is that—can you talk about how you got to the Brick Store Pub and about meeting Joe?

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JW: Sure, so I had been working in graphic design of all things. It was a really exciting and fun time to be working in web development. The internet was still brand new and we were—we built the first website for *National Geographic* and for *Smithsonian*, so it was really fun. But I was displeased with some of the aspects of my job and I was feeling a little burned out and decided I had never worked in a restaurant before and I thought I would give it a try.

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SW: How come?

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JW: Well I had a friend that was a manager there and she convinced me to do it. She was like, “It’s really fun and you’ll like it. You should come work here.” And I needed the money of course, so I went to work at the pub. It was the first restaurant job I had ever had. I was twenty-nine years old and which was interesting because growing up my mom was a caterer. So I was familiar with food and food service, but mom always tried to discourage me from going into food service, so—.

00:18:07

SW: Why?

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JW: I think she felt like the work was really hard especially hard on your body and she wanted me to have you know that classic thing that parents want for their kids—more money and an easier job. [*Laughs*] So but I really enjoyed the work at the Brick Store and part of the reason—a big part of the reason I really enjoyed the work at the Brick Store was the community of people there and especially Joe. He was smart and thoughtful and sweet and hard working and he was the guy that if you—if you had to work a shift with Joe you knew everything was going to be okay. You know sometimes you’d look at the schedule and you’d be scheduled with somebody and you thought, “Oh god. I don’t want to work with that guy. He talks all the time—or not her, she never does anything.”

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But when you saw Joe was scheduled with you, you were like, “Sweet, it’s going to be a solid shift!” And plus he was cute, so—. We just started talking really and both had an interest in politics and food and punk rock and our first date we went to the—I can never remember what it’s called. What’s it called?

00:19:32

JR: The Krishna temple?

00:19:32

JW: No, I know but what's the meal called?

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JR: Purushottam.

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JW: Purushottam, the Hare Krishna temple and it was fun, life-expanding. [*Laughs*]

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SW: Can you talk a little bit about what that is?

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JW: Yes, Purushottam is a free meal that's prepared by the temple. It's open to the public usually. I don't know if it's always on Sunday, it's always on Sunday. So anyone can go and get free food and it is a way to introduce people I suppose to the temple and to the beliefs of the members, the congregation. We just thought it was—well, I don't know what Joe thought. I thought it was an interesting experience and delicious vegetarian food. [*Laughs*]

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SW: Did you go—did you guys go because you were interested in the congregation or did you just want to go try the meal?

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JW: Well I don't know about—I mean yes, I think as an anthropologist Joe was somewhat interest in the congregation and I'm always fascinated with sub-culture, so we were interested in that way. I mean I don't—I don't think either one of us were considering becoming Hare Krishna. I can't speak for Joe but I can say for me, I was not.

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But the food was delicious and it was fun. *[Laughs]* It was an interesting thing to do, interesting group of people to spend an evening with. And meditation is never a bad idea. So I was fine with meditating for a minute.

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SW: And what—do you guys remember what—what the meal was, what kind of—what—you said it was vegetarian but do you remember?

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JR: I don't know if we could remember for sure.

00:21:14

JW: Curried vegetables and rice.

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JR: Uh-huh, that's pretty much what it is, but the—one of the reasons that I was really interested in the Hare Krishnas is it was before I met Judith and when I was in college one of the research projects that I did was around Hare Krishna culture and specifically this ritual of this

Sunday meal and how it sort of opens the community up to outsiders. And the idea is that it creates more insiders ultimately but my—my friend that got me a job at the Brick Store Pub was a Hare Krishna for a year of his life and he's one of those interesting guys that's really quiet but does things that you just want to ask endless questions about. And one of the things that he did was one evening he decided to give all of his earthy possessions up and get on a bus and go to Coconut Grove, Florida and live in a Hare Krishna Temple.

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And so I was really fascinated with that and—and my buddy is still at the Brick Store and we don't talk about it as much but I was trying to sort of—I think I wanted to show Judith like what some of the different interests folks from South Georgia might have. And I hadn't gone to check it out but you always see the Hare Krishna guys in Little Five Points walking around and sharing literature, so it was a really good time.

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SW: Is there a big community here in Atlanta, Hare Krishna?

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JR: I wouldn't say it's really big, not compared to other cities in the US. But—but there's definitely—there is one and I—I don't know if they're as active as they once were. I don't see them around but I—I don't know that we haunt the same places that we used to as—well enough to say for sure.

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JW: They're not in Five Points nearly as much as we were ten years ago. It's because we work all the time now.

00:23:06

SW: What's the name of your friend?

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JR: My friend's name is Ryan Tittle. And a lot of Krishna—and the farm that I would go down to—to do that research was in Gainesville, Florida or in Alachua and it was a—it was a Hare Krishna farm and they grew food out there. But once again, I hadn't really quite thought of a farming thing, it was just the food and the cultural perspective that I was searching out.

00:23:31

SW: So you guys both of you mentioned that you had these conversations and your interests around politics, you know you shared a lot in common but I'm wondering, I mean at the time—it's sort of a two-part question, I mean what took you guys to the next level in terms of you know getting involved and actually growing food and what was the scene in the Atlanta area like at the time? I mean was there a great—greater interest in local organic or was it pretty rare?

00:24:06

JW: [*Plane in Background*] I'm going to wait.

00:24:13

SW: It gives us a good time to think about this too.

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JW: It does, yeah. *[Laughs]* Okay, all I can think about is barbeque now.

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SW: What is the deal with Daddy's Barbeque? Is that any good?

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JW: Daddy D's?

00:24:46

SW: Yeah, Daddy D's.

00:24:47

JR: I don't know it's around anymore.

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JW: Is it not?

00:24:48

JR: I think they closed.

00:24:50

SW: I drove by the other day and I saw the—it looks like they have a—I don't know if it's a real pit 'cause you know how some people turn the gas on and it makes—I don't know.

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JW: Yeah, I don't know.

00:25:00

JR: I don't think they—

00:24:59

JW: I wouldn't—if you're looking for barbeque in Atlanta you should go to Community Q or Heirloom Barbeque which is kind of up out of the way but it's delicious and it's—they do this sort of Korean fusion stuff, so—. Yeah, it's pretty—it's good.

00:25:20

SW: So yeah, sorry. So you—you're both at Brick Star Pub. What happens next and why? I mean what—? [**More plane noises**]

00:25:29

JW: It's okay. I think you asked how—the question is how we got from hanging out at the Brick Store and going on dates at the Hare Krishna Temple to agriculture and working in agriculture and what was the scene like right? Okay, I have an answer. Once this plane goes away I'll give it to you. [**Laughs**]

00:26:02

Ready? Okay, so Joe took the first step into working in agriculture and you know small world coincidences, there was a woman who worked at the Brick Store who was somehow related to Nicolas' [Donck] wife. And she said, "Hey, I know somebody who has got an organic farm. If you're interested you should check it out." The scene was very, very small then. There were maybe two farmers' markets in operation in Atlanta at that time and to put it into perspective there are probably twenty now.

00:26:46

So we've come a long way in ten years, but Nicolas from Crystal Organic was growing out east of the city and selling at the Morningside Farmers' Market and [*Plane in Background*]—.

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JR: We don't care and—

00:27:09

JW: Well and I think they change the flight patterns too.

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SW: I should have called—.

00:27:17

JW: I know, we could sit in the van. [*Laughs*] Is it good or do you want to wait?

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SW: You know if it was just that—yeah okay.

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JW: All right, so and then I think what got us hooked was well, Joe really—I think—I don't want to speak for him but I believe that Joe likes to do hard physical labor like it syncs up with his energy really well. And so I think he sort of discovered that he liked the challenge of the hard physical work. And at that time he was a newbie, so every day he was challenging himself to keep up with the guys on the farm. And he would come home some days and be like, "Yeah. I hoed the row as fast they did!" And sometimes he would come home and be like, "Man, I'm never going to get that fast," which is funny to think about because now he's super-fast and I'm sure all the people that work with him think, "Man, I'll never be that fast."

00:28:27

But the other thing that really got us hooked was the food, it was delicious. It was some of the best produce we had ever had and starting to sort of experiment with different varieties and different flavors and learning about this whole new world of food and how to grow it and how it's all interconnected by plant families and all of those things were really intriguing. And then thinking about a farm system and how to guide that and influence that, it just revealed itself as really meaningful interesting work that could be explored for a long, long time without ever reaching expertise because it's this living dynamic system that's always changing too.

00:29:34

So I think that sort of is what got us there.

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JR: Plus your—your interest in all the food policy—. [*Plane in Background*]

00:30:02

SW: I have a question for you and I'm going to forget to ask you this so bear with me for a second, but—and I'm just playing—this is just playing the devil's advocate here, I mean you could have just said, "Okay, we're going to support these farmers for ourselves and we're going to do this." But what—why is it so important for you guys to provide something for other people and like expand that to the community? Can you kind of talk about that? I mean some people would—would just want to you know make sure that they're very conscious about what they eat, but instead this—this thing is greater than just the two of you, you know.

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JW: Hmm.

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JR: That's a good question.

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JW: I think that that's just sort of who we are and how we're wired. I think some people are passionate about different things. One of the things with Joe and I both are really passionate about is community and direct action. So I think that's part of what was really exciting about farming was you can do it yourself. There's this DIY element to it and it's enriching not just for yourself but also for—now you have a spider.

00:31:26

SW: Oh thank you.

00:31:27

JW: Sure, you can do it for yourself but it's also you can enrich an entire community and you can use it as a way to provide—there's something about the meaning of it, too. Like it's to me part of what makes this work and this movement so important and exciting is that it's about defining your values and defining how you want to interact with the world as a consumer—is one way to look at it, as a human being is another way to look at it. Do you want to have a relationship with nature or not? Do you want to have a relationship with your neighbors or not? Do you want to have a relationship with what you eat?

00:32:26

I guess that might be the germ of the point is that it—for us relationship was really key and being able to have a genuine and authentic relationship with it as much of our lives as possible. Our work being meaningful and authentic, our—what we eat being meaningful and authentic and the people that surround us, all of that—farming is able to give you all of that.

00:32:59

JR: And at the time we didn't—I mean there are words that we use for some of these feelings but—like ideas like stewardship or servant leadership, you know. At the time I just think it's—it's just—it seems cool to do something that was meaningful and had a positive impact and was productive and subtly really revolutionary. And—and so all that was really neat but—but you know maybe just like in every—it's maybe like this in every business. I don't know, I—doors

opened up for us and some of them one at a time, some of them at the same time and—and we just tended—we just walked through most of these doors. We—we just said, “Yeah, I’ll try that,” and sometimes it worked out really well and sometimes it didn’t but we always had a lot to learn from the experience. And—and I—I don’t know, it’s—I think to myself sometimes why—like I can see the—the trajectory for why things happen and why we got involved in what we did but it—you know at least from my point of view like there was no pre-ordained plan. There was nothing systematic about you know this step begot this step. It was mostly like, “Oh, well, this is—this is cool and this is fun,” and like I think we’ve learned to adopt new things that have to do with this and keep—keep making it more passionate, all the while realizing that we have to make it financially successful to sustain the energy to keep doing it. And we’ve had to get smart about diversifying our skills, but we’ve taken on other passions like heirloom seed varieties or growing new growers or trying to be—it’s kind of fun. Judith and I often get to joke around about the fact that we’re kind of like the adolescent gap in our food system or the—for us, you know the old-timers, the folks that were doing it before the huge explosion of, you know, the local food movement happened and the huge media celebration and then we got to work with some of these old—old-timers, not that they’re all old, and—and then you know like this sort of new crop of young or sort of folk—growers or folks returning to land. And they’re kind of new to the marketing system and we get to interact with those folks too and be, you know, this intermediate role.

00:35:52

SW: Do you think there is something special about Georgia or this region in particular that's drawing people, younger people into this work? I mean from the time you guys have been involved how—how have you seen that change? I'm just interested in you know the—the trends that are particular to this region and to Georgia.

00:36:13

JW: I don't know that it is a regional trend. I think it's a national trend. I think maybe because we in Atlanta are, you know, the largest city in the Southeast. Maybe we just have a few more young people who are interested in taking up this work than they have in other places, but they are everywhere. I mean they're in Little Rock. They're in Birmingham. They're in Mobile. They're in Knoxville. There—there are young people all over the Southeast and all over the country doing this work.

00:36:57

I think that we do have great community support here and we also have an educated and well-resourced public who is willing to invest in purchasing the food. And I think that is something that some of our friends who are in more rural areas struggle with a little more. But I see that as an opportunity for them, they get to know that their time is coming. It just comes a little later.

00:37:33

SW: Can you—I don't—I want to go back and ask a couple of follow-ups but I might do that then just because this is the trajectory of the conversation, but I mean a lot of the farmers I talked to, I guess I expected it to be the—I mean obviously cities, sometimes you have people who are

more progressive in—in their policies toward things. But you know especially the neighbors around some of these farms where, well some of the farmers have said that the neighbors aren't so interested in what they're growing but the people in the city are. Can you talk a little bit about why that is or why you think that is? It's just—I just assumed that it was in their backyard so they'd have first—you know they'd have such great access but a lot of the farmers have said that there's not as much interest in the rural areas as there is in Atlanta.

00:38:20

JW: Do you have thoughts on that?

00:38:20

JR: Well—well I would bet—I would think that there is maybe a little less interest, like Atlanta is one of those—because of like this—the population size and the—the opportunity, the number of restaurants that are here, the sort of—sort of recursive kind of cultural institutions that are here like our farmers' markets or a lot of CSAs around here, I think folks are just having an easy—maybe a greater opportunity to sell more in a single trip than they might if they were to have to diffuse that interaction over the course of maybe something like a farm stand where you would rely on drive-up customers. But I'll be really excited for you to go to the Jenny Jack Sun Farm. But—but I don't think it's the unique formula. I think that the—you know we often go to farmers' markets and we'll tell people that we market in the Atlanta area and they'll—especially like farmers conferences for folks all over the Southeast and they'll say like, “Oh that must be so easy to have such a big market and you know you don't have—you don't have to struggle for it like we do.”

00:39:46

But I do think that a lot of farms that are in rural settings do have really interested neighbors. It's just—maybe a couple of things have happened. One for farms that have been marketing for a little while, they've already established their marketing patterns and it's really hard to break that and—and then you know it—it also just takes a lot more time and farming in and of itself is just a lot of—it's just a lot of physical energy. You know there are only so many hours in the day and if you—I mean you—you can only simplify so many things in your work day on the farm, but with your marketing the more you spread it out the less time you have to do the actual farming piece of it. And so you know insofar as having a strategy you just have to pick the simple ways to make it work. So I think that you know to—to build a community around your farm where it is—is something that's totally possible but it's just one of those things I think that takes a lot of time and I feel like it might like—I think Judith was saying, I think it's something that is coming through on the waves of change that are taking place, but it's—it hasn't—it's not one of those easy things to settle with.

00:41:10

You know for example I'm from South Georgia and I'll have a lot of people from Valdosta ask me why we don't go down to Valdosta and start a farm. You know there are a lot of farms that are trying to find markets down there, you know, and it's just not something that is developing as easily and smoothly. But you know it's—it would be hard for me to—to take and reinvent ourselves somewhere else. I don't—I wouldn't say it's impossible but I—one thing that I really love about local food is that you can develop a home for yourself which is something I really didn't have much of when I was younger, but you know here in—in Atlanta, you know I'm—we're Joe and Judith. You know we're sort of synonymous with farms and local food groups and—and you know just the—what's going on here and you know and—and you know

for folks that are somewhat in-the-know and respected. And I think it would be really tough to take all of that work and transition it to folks that don't know who we are or what we've done and—and every—I guess every farm just kind of has a path and sometimes those paths seem clear.

00:42:30

But I do think that we're going to see a lot more farmers, especially as the—as Atlanta becomes more saturated with growers. I think we're going to see farmers looking for more localized markets and farmers are going to be looking for like unique strategies or food aggregation. We've got a good friend and former employee that went to work up in Burlington, Vermont which is a little bit the opposite of Atlanta. It's a place that's not got a very large population and it is loaded with farms. There might be 100 farms that market in the Burlington area but they've all had to get really creative in their marketing strategies or find things that are niches for them. And I just think right now here in Atlanta, we're just—people are starting to do that but we're not—we haven't seen it codified just yet.

00:43:25

JW: I think—I think there is something also to the fact that in rural areas people are usually a little more connected to agriculture. So it's not novel or exciting to them and then a lot of times people that are growing the kind—the way that we are growing organically diversified is very—it's different than the way a lot of agriculture happens in rural areas. And people are uncomfortable with it because it's not familiar or they feel like there's some judgment being passed on the way that they're farming and so there's this defensiveness to it that you just don't encounter in a city because usually people are so removed that there is just this nostalgia to it for

them. They're like, "Oh, I remember when my grandfather farmed," or—. [*Plane in Background*]

00:44:34

SW: Okay.

00:44:54

JW: You think the cicadas are calling out to the planes? "Stop making all that noise." [*Laughs*]
So another sort of nostalgia that we find or something we run into a lot here is people who grew up going to the country or they still have their grandfather's farm out in the country and they would love to find someone to come and work that land for them. And you know I think that is part of what we encounter that people don't encounter so much in rural areas. Also, people are I don't know, they're just—there's not maybe the romance to it that you find in the city.

00:45:46

SW: And Joe mentioned your interest in food policy and you know you went to work for Nicolas and during that time I'm wondering, can you talk—I mean were you farming too Judith or you—can you talk about your involvement in food policy or—?

00:46:02

JW: Well, I went to work for Georgia Organics which is—the state's sort of sustainable ag-group. They put a big conference on every year and I—it's interesting, I have a love/hate relationship with policy. It's important and I appreciate its importance but one of the things that I discovered is that I actually absolutely hate policy work. It's really, to me, boring and detailed

and compromising sometimes in a way that I don't ever want to be. **[Laughs]** And I'm grateful, I'm so grateful for people in organizations that do policy work but I—I didn't enjoy the food policy council work I did particularly.

00:47:01

But like I do think it's important and when I was working for Georgia Organics, it was also you know a step along the path that really encouraged Joe and I that we were moving in the right direction because we were able to meet people all over the state and then all over the country who were also doing this work and impassioned about this work. And then we started interacting, I worked for a while for this other organization called the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group helping them with their conference. And that you know just the scope kept broadening and we kept seeing more and more people out there like us. And that's encouraging.

00:47:51

SW: And so what kind of work were you—I mean when you—when you talk about doing work I mean were you essentially organizing? Was that—?

00:47:58

JW: Yes, but not necessarily community organizing. I definitely spent some time doing community organizing work but a lot of that I did in a volunteer capacity. I did that through Slow Food, through Community Farmers' Markets which is an organization that I helped to start that really leverages the power of community around farmers' markets and the ability of a farmers' market to transform a community.

00:48:34

And so there definitely was organizing work at Georgia Organics but it was mostly organizing files and sometimes organizing volunteers, organizing conferences—is a big job. The SFA knows. **[Laughs]** They do it so well. So and then also with SSAWG, the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, yes organizing but organizing again volunteers and people and um, getting that kind of work—sorry. It doesn't matter. **[Laughs]**

00:49:14

SW: And so I'm just—I just want to ask you this and then I want to ask about the Glover Family Farm. Can you just—you—can you tell me about what it was like to start working at Crystal Organics, like can you—do you have any stories about starting and how—how you sort of evolved over time as a farmer?

00:49:38

JR: Sure, well my favorite story about just how I came to work at Crystal Organic Farm was that I had ultimately thought that—that sort of an experience would lead to this international experience abroad, like I would go work with farmers in Central America or the Middle East or—I had a lot of fantasies. But I really quickly realized that I had landed at the most cosmopolitan farm I might have been able to in this area. Nicolas is from Belgium and his mother Helen [Dumba] is from Austria. And I got to work every day with this guy from Veracruz. And so in any one day we would speak English or Spanish or I would get to hear French or German and it didn't click with me right away. But—but over the course of time I—I just came to realize that I really didn't have to go very far to find all of the differentness and the

otherness and the unique experience that I was looking out for or the—or the sort of the revolutionary spirit. It was—it was not in our backyard but fifteen miles east of Atlanta nonetheless.

00:51:05

And as—as Judith was saying, you know it was a lot of hard physical work, I liked that work but I was a little bit clumsy at it in the beginning and I—like any newcomer on the farms I got the jobs people didn't want to do and—.

00:51:21

SW: What are those jobs?

00:51:22

JR: Well—well those jobs included doing all of the greenhouse seeding which is a little meticulous and it's hot because you're underneath a plastic-covered structure and you have a lot to keep up with and there's not a lot of moving around. You just sit there more or less and you work off a list. So I did all of—all of that and then I also was the person in charge of the herb garden which wasn't hard by any stretch but it was—there once again it's a perennial garden and there's not a whole lot of—you're doing a lot of weeding and a lot of like harvesting and cutting herbs but you know it was just sort of my area of responsibility.

00:52:13

And then I got to show up on Friday mornings really early to be Helen's assistant cutting flowers and I guess a lot of the jobs that I did weren't mostly what the dudes wanted to do and so I got the—I wouldn't say it's necessarily feminine jobs because all farm jobs have their masculinity and femininity associated with them but I got to do all of the jobs that the dudes

didn't want to do. And only towards the end of my career at Crystal Organic Farm did I start to graduate to some of the more dudely arenas. Oh, and I got to go to market, this was for me probably one of the—one of those formative experiences that I might not have found myself here without it. I—I got to sit in front of people and talk about the food and how important it was and share some of the passion with them and—and you know the—the farm work is definitely something that's really rewarding but it's not as glorified as the marketing work. And that was really reaffirming to me. You know it was a little bit like a pat on the back at the end of the day. You got to see that the end-result of you know the—of the work and you know translating into a sale or you know a lot of people were just saying like, "I'm so glad you're doing this." Or, they would you know—"I wish I could do that, if I didn't have to make a living I would go out there and farm with you too."

00:53:43

So—so all those things kind of happened but you know Nick—I think all growers have this thing where they're always growing but Nicolas was one of those folks that was very easy going about discussing his—his sort of educating himself to be a better farmer or learning like about you know technologies that were out there that we just didn't know about and—and because there's not—there aren't a whole lot of people to talk to he would just talk about those ideas and share them with me. And so while I didn't necessarily have a direct apprenticeship I really got to see him grow and build his business and—and not necessarily mature as a grower. He was there for sure, but become a more mature grower in that process.

00:54:32

And so you know we—I don't know, it's—it's really interesting. Every farm I've ever been at I've thought I couldn't really see myself anywhere but—but there, but you know our—the truth of our story is that we've moved around a little bit. But for me it was just really special

and Nicolas remains my mentor. I might call him once, twice a week if I ever have any crisis that arises. He's the first person that gets a text and—and he's always responsive and supportive and nurturing.

00:55:10

SW: And Joe what year did you go to work for Nicolas and how long were you there?

00:55:16

JR: I went to work for Nicolas in 2004, and I think I worked with Nicolas until around the end of 2007.

00:55:27

SW: And Judith, I'm wondering on that end you know when Joe started working on the farm in Newborn how did that affect you? I mean what—what kinds of things—how did that impact what you were doing if it did? I mean, how it influenced you just hearing the stories—

00:55:48

JW: How did it influence me? Well the food of course was delicious and that was fun and exciting to be a part of. And I think the excitement of market trickled in a little bit. I didn't work market that often but sometimes I would go and work market.

00:56:21

SW: What was that like for you?

00:56:24

JW: Well it's really energizing. Market is—I suppose I'm an extrovert. I enjoy being with people and I enjoy talking to them about things we share in common and common interests and you know it's just really fun to have that exchange and Helen has eggs or at that time had eggs that she sold that were like coveted by everyone. They really were magical eggs. And it was fun to be a part of that mystique. Helen had a very mysterious system to decide who did or did not get the eggs. And people were always trying to crack the code and I was never really able to help them [*Laughs*]. I was like, "You just have to ask Helen, I can't help you," but it was still fun to see the excitement and of course it was really fun when you yourself got the eggs because they were incredible.

00:57:34

SW: What was so incredible about those eggs?

00:57:37

JW: Those eggs were so rich [*Emphasis Added*] and the yolks were like this dense thick orange and they just had tremendous flavor and it's because she paid such great attention to not just what those chickens ate but she gave them all kinds of supplements and treated them homeopathically and the eggs were really magical. I don't know that I've ever had better eggs than those eggs. And we had good eggs, we did. But those eggs were pretty exciting and so it—you know Joe working there sort of—. Could you distract Levon for a moment?

00:58:24

Joe working there opened my world to all of those things as well and also the community of growers that we haven't talked about that much but Morningside was well established at that time and the growers there were encouraging and you know he's not on a leash? [*Laughs*] The growers there were encouraging and they sort of opened their arms to us and I'll never forget the first—they had an end-of-season celebration at Woodland Gardens and we got to go and it was just so fun to be there with all of these people who care about really good food, who produce really good food, and who know really good food. And you know we haven't said anything about that yet, but really once you start to eat this food that tastes so much better than anything you've ever had before it's hard to imagine ever going to anything different. And you—I do think that's part of why people get pulled in and stay in because you go other places. Like you think about it a lot when you travel, you go other places and—really Clementine, really is that what you're going to do—play with the table with your tail?

00:59:56

And the food just has no substance, no deliciousness, no vitality and you just think why bother, why would you even bother eating that?

01:00:11

SW: Do you remember—this is sort of for both of you but do you remember the first time that you noticed the difference, like and what it actually was you were eating?

01:00:22

JW: Hmm, I—I mean the eggs, Helen's—those egg yolks were amazing. Arugula, yeah, the fresh arugula, the tomatoes of course—I sort of hate that I have to say that but really the

tomatoes. There's a huge difference. Everything, I mean literally everything we ate from Crystal Organics was better than anything we had ever had before. There's hakurei turnips—

01:01:08

JR: We learned to eat seasonally which I think was different. It spoiled us for you know going to places that didn't obey what was seasonal and around at the time. We you know—when it's the time for leaves and roots you know what time of year it is and when it's the time for flower and fruit you really easily know what time it is. And you can taste the seasons on plants, so—. It was another really big thing—for me at least you know.

01:01:38

JW: Well and the joy of the seasonality too is that you get to celebrate things when they're here and then they go away. You know, it's like a family reunion or a homecoming, like you just—you don't get to have this thing all the time. You just get it this one little special period of time and then you just revel in it until it goes away. But you know it's going to come back and I think there's something—well there's just something really celebratory about eating that way.

01:02:11

I—I will confess that sometimes winter gets a little boring. **[Laughs]** I'm like, “Swiss chard again? Okay, here we go.”

01:02:24

SW: Is summer your favorite? Do you have a favorite season to eat?

01:02:29

JW: I don't—I don't know that I do. I mean that—I think my favorite time to eat is any time there's a transition like I love when the new thing comes like we had the very first figs today. That's the first fig I've had all year. And that's so fun and exciting. You get to reawaken all those tastes and memories that come with that particular thing.

01:03:00

SW: Do you have a favorite season to eat Joe?

01:03:03

JR: I—no, I don't necessarily have a favorite season. There definitely are things that I put in my mouth here more than others, so I'm sure I have preferences but—. Gosh, I—I kind of like it all. But I mean you know I spend like you know—we—we do try to produce food for most weeks of the year and lower volumes in the wintertime for sure, but you know I still totally celebrate those sweet greens and you know like surviving lettuces and roots that are inside the walk-in cooler. But—but yeah, I just—I spend most of the first thirty minutes of my day just walking around and eating things as I plan for what we need to pick. So I'll walk around and you know the beans might have just now started—like I notice when they bloom and then I start to pay attention as the fruit is forming and then when we're—we've got enough fruit of the right size and you know for every day for the two weeks leading up to that window I go and I eat a couple of beans and I—you know and it's something to celebrate.

01:04:30

It's the same when we sow carrots and I start to pull them up and I think you know are they ready yet and I'll search for the biggest one I can find and I'll pull it up and it may be really dinky. And okay, not just yet but I'll still always eat what I can find.

01:04:46

JW: You should talk about the bitter greens?

01:04:49

JR: Oh so—so I—I've had to really calm my interest in this but when we first started the farm on our own I loved endives and chicory so much because I worked for Nicolas and Helen and they grew so many of them and especially in the—I mean it really was just in the wintertime. It was the—the preferred lunch salad for the farm crew. We would eat a mix of escarole, frisee and radicchio and then later on we found this one called sugar loaf or zuckerhut and they were all really, really good. And I—they really called to me. But the first year that we farmed I thought I could convince my customers that they were as good as I thought they were. And unlike Nicolas and Helen I didn't sort of dip my toe into it a little bit at a time and introduce people to it. I inundated them with bitter greens. And so the—and I tried to switch the seasonality a little bit. I grew a lot of them in our first spring and one of the first responses from our CSA group was wondering if we could get less bitter greens in the CSA share. It was a very polite request but it was one of those heartbreaking moments where I realized I would probably need to learn to grow slightly different things that Nicolas had grown while I was there.

01:06:14

SW: I'm wondering can you talk—I wanted to ask you guys this, why is it so important to diversify your crops, because I want to ask you both about starting at the Glover Farm, but just in terms of diversity why is that so important?

01:06:28

JR: Well diversity on a farm plays a lot of roles. From our perspective diversity keeps things really exciting for us personally because we eat off this farm just like our customers do. And then because our marketing model is primarily community-supported agriculture we really want to have a very rounded group of crops that we can offer to those CSA members. I mean additionally when we take our food, you know, and it's sort of for display and you pick and choose what you want like the East Atlanta Market or when we sell to restaurants we tend to find that people gravitate to displays that have more different things and look fuller and also look really colorful. So we grow about forty different crops on this two acre farm and it's a pretty signature poly-culture compared to you know what you might find in sort of larger scale more conventional agriculture.

01:07:36

But amongst that we grow multiple varieties of some crops so we might have 100 different varieties annually grown here as well too. And—and so it keeps it interesting. One thing is like putting a seed list together is kind—for me it's kind of like putting your dream team together. It's like we have the winter time to look at catalogs and think about what worked well the year before and what we think could work well the next year. And so basically we enlist all of our successful veterans, you know, that have done well and that work well in our particular

microclimates and you know the—the way we grow things you know with the tools we use. And then—and then we look for things that are new and interesting or that we've, you know we hesitated on the year before and they sort of show up in the lineup. And I never played sports so it's kind of a funny thing to sort of discuss it from this point of view.

01:08:44

But I—I do often think like that we—you know, we—basically I want to have things that are really unique but I don't want them to be so un-user friendly at the same time too so it's finding that fine line. And all this is once again from a marketing perspective and like, you know, keeping things interesting and viable on the farm but honestly from a—just a sustainable—sustainability perspective we find that different crops do better in different years. And by having the diversity we—we can basically insure a successful overall harvest where I might have you know a bumper crop of winter squash. My sweet potatoes might suffer a little bit in one year and then that easily reverses itself from year to year and it could have very little to do with my planning or the timing of the planting or even like the insect or disease pressure. But all that stuff shows up but it could be like we're ten degrees different than we were the year before or we're twenty inches up on rain. I mean a lot of these things have sort of compounding effects and we sort of think that there's success in the—in the diversity.

01:10:06

SW: Can you talk about Judith mentioned the community when you guys started how welcoming and supporting it was. Can you talk—you know we talked about Nicolas and Helen, can you talk about some of the other farmers in that community at the time?

01:10:25

JW: Yeah.

01:10:27

SW: Who they were?

01:10:28

JW: Well Wes and Charlotte Swancy from Riverview Farm, Celia from Woodland Gardens, Celia Barss—

01:10:41

JR: Celia started to manage Woodland Gardens in the time that we were at the Morningside Market.

01:10:48

JW: They were—they were very encouraging and excited for us when we started to farm on our own. Daniel Parson who used to farm at Gaia Gardens where we farm now was very supportive and excited. I'm trying to think, I mean obviously the Glovers played a huge supporting role in our becoming farmers. They gave us the land to farm.

01:11:23

SW: Can you tell that story, what year it was, and how that happened?

01:11:27

JW: I'm not good with years, but—

01:11:30

JR: Two thousand and seven.

01:11:31

JW: —2007? So I was working at Georgia Organics and you know I—I have to go back and say that we have not ever given credit to one person who really deserves a lot of credit [*Laughs*] for getting us interested in farming, for moving us along the pathway to farming, and that’s Angie Mosier. I mean she really was—she’s a good—a dear friend of mine and has been [*Plane in Background*]—

01:12:11

SW: Does she live across the street from you?

01:12:12

JW: She does.

01:12:13

SW: Kate Medley told me that.

01:12:17

JW: She does, it’s true and Kate Medley used to live in our house.

01:12:20

SW: Oh she did?

01:12:20

JW: Uh-huh.

01:12:22

SW: Oh cool.

01:12:23

JW: Yeah, I know. So Angie was really one of the first people that I remember being interested in organics and interested in small agriculture. Way before I met Joe she was talking about it and she had—was sort of introducing the idea to me and she in fact is the one who introduced our names, Joe and my names to Skip Glover. Angie had talked about Skip for a while and how cool he was and how much she wanted us to meet him and how beautiful his farm was and Skip and Cookie really were some of the stalwarts of the Organic Movement in Georgia. They were founding members of Georgia Organic Growers Association which became Georgia Organics and had been farming organically in Douglasville for—on family land for twenty-plus years.

01:13:32

JR: They were founders of the Morningside Market.

01:13:34

JW: Oh yeah.

01:13:35

JR: And a story that we really loved about them was that when the organic certification was nationalized they—or it became a Federal program, when it became USDA organic instead of a growers association certification they rejected the idea of being certified with the Federal government.

01:13:58

SW: How come they rejected it, do you know why?

01:13:59

JR: They thought that the standards would be watered down and they also thought that when the standards were out of the hands of growers that they wouldn't mean what they—they had. And you know they were—you know they were the—they were some of those trailblazing folks and they didn't want their work to be co-opted. And so even though it meant walking away from a wildly successful and very profitable market they made the decision not to certify with the USDA and it led to them being disqualified from being able to sell at the market, at the Morningside Market.

01:14:41

SW: The one that they helped start?

01:14:42

JR: Uh-hm, but it was just one of those—it's just one of those—it was one of those transition times and I—we always liked that you know that—that—that contrariness.

01:14:57

JW: Yeah, I mean I think—I think what we like about that story is that it—it tells you that the Glover(s) are highly principled people and that was exciting to us. And also exciting to us was we had—we knew that they had done some work with Heifer International. They had done some international farmer trainings on their farm and we thought that was really interesting. We liked that idea of working with international community locally since we had realized that farming was not going to take us all over the world. We thought maybe the world could come to the farm.

01:15:35

So I was working at Georgia Organics and Skip Glover who was like this legendary person in my mind at that time—

01:15:43

JR: Semi-retired?

01:15:44

JW: —yeah, he was semi-retired and he walked in the door and he put his card on my desk and he said tell, “Joe Reynolds to call me, I’ve got a proposition for him.” And I was so excited. You would have thought that card was made out of solid gold the way I carried it home with great attention. And I gave it to Joe and he called and he went out to visit the farm and he came back from that visit and he was completely in love. I mean he was starry-eyed and beaming from ear-to-ear. And I was like [**Laughs**], “Well I guess I know what we’re going to be doing now.” And I joked a lot at that time that I—the way I would say it was that Joe had a new baby and that the farm was his baby and I was going to have to like, take a backseat to the farm. So at least I could also have a relationship with the baby. [**Laughs**] And that’s part of what led us to farming

together was Joe was just so completely in love with this farm and this opportunity that for me to be able to continue to have a relationship with him I was going to have to sort of go and be a part of the farm as well. And I wanted to do it, I'm not trying to say that I didn't want to do it. I really did.

01:17:34

But we decided very soon after that we would move out to the farm in Douglasville. We—Skip and Cookie had a little camper like a pull-behind camper that we moved into and we lived there for two years, two longgggggg years. *[Laughs]*

01:18:01

SW: Do you—Joe can you talk about just what that going out there for the first time when Skip left his card with Judith like what—can you talk about what that was like to go out there and what happened and what he said to you?

01:18:14

JR: Sure, well Skip had been a hero of ours because of all these stories we had heard about him and our interactions we hadn't seen much of him. We just knew he was out there. But when I went out to visit he told me the story of the farm and he can tell this much better than I can but how it was family land that was his and he had moved abroad and gotten really interested in organic farming and his dad and his mom lived on the land and—and managed the land and did—always had a big kitchen garden but mostly like raised horses and they had—it was a timber farm in his childhood.

01:19:04

But his dad was—was like a conventional timber farmer before like “conventional” was the word folks would use of course and both him and his dad had read Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* and that it had developed this dialogue between them about the usage of that land that it was interesting—that brought them closer together and also connected them because Skip was living with his wife and his family in Australia at the time. And I—while Skip and his wife were in Australia Skip’s dad passed away and Skip and family moved back to the farm to care for his mother and they started growing vegetables as a career out there.

01:19:54

But there were things you know when I pulled up to the farm it was very obvious that it was a place that a lot of visitors came to. There was sort of a somewhat designated parking area and this cast of characters that were all around the farm and—and later on we learned a little bit of it might have been slightly staged, but I went out there and there wasn’t a huge amount growing. But Chris—or Skip had just worked with a couple of apprentices the season before and the season before that—that farm in Pine Mountain, Georgia, now that Chris and Jenny Jackson of the Jenny Jack Sun Farm and—but Skip showed me some of the things that they were doing and he you know showed me this variety of arugula that he had been saving the seed on for a long time that was this Italian strain that he really, really liked a lot and he even had some of the wild arugula, the Sylvetta type and he had these black locust trees which were planted and aligned along the farm and he sort of talked a lot about how old-timers used to grow the trees because they grew pretty rapidly and the wood was next to indestructible so the—at some point they would top the canopy of the tree and leave the trunks and ground roots and all and that would become a future fence line.

01:21:29

And Skip just kind of had this connection to like old-timey ways of doing things, but he wasn't like caught up in the old-timey nature. He had participated in a lot of experiments with UGA [University of Georgia] and had fun legumes growing all over his farm like to help fix nitrogen and—. And he had—he was really into this like seed-saving and preserving varieties so he had this collard green that was a blue collard, Jenny Jackson still saves the seeds on it and she just sent me a packet of them, the Alabama Blue Collard I think is what we determined that it might have been. And you know the farm is like it's—it's really—it's a very personal-looking place. It looks like folks live there and you know and that it's—their home and really special and it's in a holler. So it's got a huge steep hillside going up, sort of to the—I guess what would have been the north side of the property and then it—the bottom land that they farmed on was in between a creek bed and that—and that hillside or that—yeah that hillside and it was just really beautiful and—.

01:22:44

Skip was really—

01:22:46

JW: Don't forget to talk about the barns!

01:22:46

JR: Oh yeah, and there were all these old barns out there and—and sort of Skip told the story about how like his dad erected it and then you know and then like they had done different things to maintain it including pouring this slightly slanted concrete floor which doesn't do as good of a job running off the water as was advertised. But Skip brought me to this trial garden that he had

and he was growing this herb called papalo and I would have never known what it was but Judith had studied in Mexico for six months before that and Pueblo, Mexico and we—and she had come back and we’d—we’d done a lot of Mexican cooking after that. So we had tried a lot of things that we had never heard of. And this plant, papalo is grown and it’s grown as an herb to like season beans and—and I only knew what it looked like because we had bought it before. And he was like, “I bet you don’t know what this is?” And I was like, “Is it papalo?” And there was like this connection because I don’t think anybody had ever gotten that before. But I mean it was very random. I didn’t—I didn’t study Mexican cuisine or anything. Judith just had wanted to cook with it one time.

01:24:01

But it all just seemed like—you know things were coming full circle you know and that—you know and there was this opportunity they were going to like at some point, you know they wanted the land to stay agricultural and their heirs didn’t want to farm and they were looking for somebody to buy the farm from them. And so there was kind of this really early and—and you know not—not incredibly well thought or spelled out understatement but it was—you know it was that you know this land—this could be your home too. And I—I was hooked. I was pretty sure that I wanted to do it. And so I just stopped working for Nicolas a couple weeks before that and taken my first job-job, like my first career-oriented job as a nutrition educator for this foundation and I literally just started working with them. It was like my first salary that I ever got and I got health benefits and Judith—I mean she’s all very proud of me and it was going to be a lot less work and it was going to be closer to the city. Most of the—

01:25:15

SW: Like, the Cadillac plan.

01:25:16

JR: Yeah, it was—and—and it was sort of new like the farm-to-school stuff was really new and so this organization was hiring—I wasn't a grower but was hiring somebody with farm experience who was really cool and a lot of people were excited about it, but it didn't take me too—. You know I knew by the end of walking around that farm with Skip that I was going to give my notice and go try to make a run of it farming out there.

01:25:43

SW: Was—was getting access to the land the biggest challenge? I mean was—would you have started farming immediately after working for Nicolas if you had access to land? Was that what you were waiting for?

01:26:02

JR: Well I—no, I actually—after working for Nicolas I wasn't—I didn't think I was on the path to becoming a farmer. My—I didn't quite know what path I was on but I once again—I just kind of walking through doors this nutrition education position opened up and—and I went with it because you know I had thought my—maybe my time with Nicolas had kind of concluded and so I wasn't actively looking to work as a farmer, but if I had been the access to the land would easily be the first hurdle to overcome and then—and then you know you have to overcome the access to resources which is really a capital question. So one really great thing about the Glover Farm and equally as great here at Gaia Gardens is somebody like myself that really is just

bringing their sweat equity into the business of managing and making a production on a farm has access to infrastructure and resources that are already affixed to the farm. And so you know when we went to the Glover(s) they not only had you know barns and they had fields laid out, they had an irrigation system in place, they had a hoop house that we could grow in, a greenhouse for starting seedlings, a tractor that they were willing to let us in our experience operate and use as well as lots of tools behind that. And then a whole tool shed filled with, you know, an assortment of things that if you could identify what they were and what they did they could probably help you in your day.

01:27:48

And so and then like—and then I guess all farmers hit the next barrier which is gaining experience. Working for a grower is a lot different than working for yourself and so becoming like the organizer and the planner and the—really like the work horse for the business as well as like a business person those were sort of the next big hurdles for us to overcome.

01:28:15

SW: Judith what was it like for you, could you tell us some stories about what it was like when you guys started farming on the Glover Family Farm?

01:28:23

JW: [*Plane in Background*] Yes, [*Laughs*] it was—it was exciting. There were—it opened up so many possibilities that we overwhelmed ourselves a little bit in the beginning with wanting to do too many different things at once. And I think that's something I see a lot of young farmers struggle with—sorry—when they first get into farming. It's—it's funny to identify that as a

pattern, but I suppose it's partially just a pattern of youth, right, like you—the great thing about young people is they have so much energy they can tackle so many things. The terrible thing about young people is that they have—very rarely do they have a concept that older people have also once been young and felt energetic and have tried many things and so the young don't often avail themselves of the experience and wisdom of the old.

01:29:52

They tend to just want to tear those things down and build something new.

01:29:59

And I don't think that Joe and I were interested in tearing anything down per se, but we really just were like full speed ahead, interested in doing as many different things as we could and it tripped us up a little bit. You know we got a little too spread out. We worked way too hard in the beginning and I think most beginning farmers do have to work very, very hard but I can remember some nights we had market on Saturday morning. And Friday night at two o'clock in the morning we were still up shelling peas and we had to be up at five to get to market. And that was not a healthy way to live. **[Laughs]** It's like someone just is setting us up, they're sending every loud thing they can.

01:30:55

SW: The airlines—

01:30:58

JW: The neighbors, yeah. This—this giant—the truck I’ve never seen it before. I think they’re getting close to parking. We could have had like the sounds of chanting behind us, it might have been better.

01:31:29

SW: Especially during the part where you guys went on your first date.

01:31:33

JW: Right. [*Laughs*]

01:31:41

SW: There was a tire—I didn’t park right in front of it but there was a tire on the ground and I’m wondering does that mean I shouldn’t have parked—.

01:31:46

JW: No, you’re fine where you parked. They put that tire because they don’t want people parking in front of the mailbox.

01:31:51

SW: Okay.

01:31:53

JR: In front of the mailbox.

01:31:57

SW: Is it my car?

01:31:57

JW: No.

01:31:58

SW: Okay, I'm like—.

01:32:08

JW: Is it loud? Do you want to move?

01:32:11

SW: Well I know—

01:32:12

JW: You probably have more than you can use.

01:32:15

SW: I really do want to talk just about how this farm got started though and a little bit about the whole idea because this is all about women, work and food so just about like what it was like for you to start farming like getting in the dirt, you know and why—?

01:32:35

JW: Well let's go sit somewhere else because I think that's going to take a while. I'm watching them and he's not going to turn that truck off. Is it too loud?

01:32:43

SW: You know what? Yeah, let's just—

01:32:49

JW: We're going to move a little bit.

01:32:49

SW: Because I still want to get just a couple quick portraits of you guys too like standing—.

01:33:45

JR: So it's really cool about the mosque like the call to prayer is—when I was in college I got to go to Jerusalem and stay on the east side of Jerusalem in like on the Palestinian side and we would always hear the call to prayer all the time. I thought it was so magical.

01:34:01

JW: Well and you said to yourself then you—

01:34:07

SW: Can you talk about how long you guys were at—?

01:34:10

JW: Joe and I farmed together and lived there for the first two years and then Joe stayed for an additional year and farmed but we moved back to our house in the city. And I went to work off-farm. One of the things that we realized through our time farming together was that [*Laughs*]—well one thing we realized is that we don't really work very well together [*Laughs*] because we both like to be in charge. And we have some very different ideas about the way jobs should be done. I—I really like division of labor. I like to send four people in four different directions and I feel like we've got four tasks accomplished that way. And Joe likes to tackle one task at a time and put all the energy into it and—. So we—we were butting heads a lot and we were in a lot of conflict and we were working hard and we were tired and hot and we were living in this camper. Joe couldn't even stand up in the shower. It was so—the ceilings were so low and it—just it was very—it was tense. And we were not completely happy. There were aspects of what we were doing that was making us very happy and there were aspects of our lives that were very happy, but overall we were in a bad place.

01:35:52

And so in the fall of 2009—all right.

01:35:58

SW: We're just going to go with it.

01:35:59

JW: Okay, in the fall of 2009 we flooded badly, the entire farm for the most part was under a moving river of water and it gave us an opportunity to pause. I know that it doesn't sound like

that was an opportunity, it was devastating and we lost a lot. But that community that we had been rallying for—so hard for two years rallied for us and helped us get through.

01:36:30

[Interruption]

01:37:04

SW: And this was a flood that—I mean this was a massive flood that affected a lot of the region?

01:37:10

JW: Yes, a lot of the region and somewhere around thirteen other farmers lost a significant either part of their crop or part of their infrastructure or livestock in some cases. So it was—it was a huge flood and it affected us because of where we were farming right at the crux of the—where the Anneewakee, which is a pretty major tributary to the Chattahoochee comes into the Chattahoochee, we were probably a quarter mile from that intersection. And you know the river couldn't take all of the water and so it came up onto the farm.

01:37:57

And that experience was devastating and traumatic and heartbreaking but a lot of good came out of it. And one of the things that was really good was that we did get a moment to just hit the brakes and ask ourselves what's working, what's not working, through going through the experience of the flood we realized that everything—having everything at stake based on whether your crops make it was a little too much for us. So I went—I had an opportunity to go back to work with a restaurant group that had been customers of ours, and it was a group of

people I really respected and I was still able to be in food and in a different way. And it gave Joe and I a little space and Joe—one of the things that became apparent through our working and farming together was that Joe liked the physicality of the work a lot more than I did. Joe looks at a 150-foot row that need to be hoed and is like, “Yeah, let’s do it,” and I’m like, “Oh my god, there is more after this one.” *[Laughs]*

01:39:28

So it made a lot more sense for Joe to stay on the farm and do the work because he loves it and he’s very, very good at it. And it made sense for me to play a supporting role. And now I mostly offer emotional support and laundry services to the farm.

01:39:51

SW: And can you talk—tell me the name of the restaurant group just for the—?

01:39:55

JW: Yeah, the name of the restaurant group is Resurgence Hospitality Group. They manage—own and manage Restaurant Eugene, Holman and Finch Public House and we also have a bakery, H&F Bread Company and a liquor store, H&F Bottle Shop and a burger stand, H&F Burger. I forget, that’s the newest one.

01:40:17

SW: And so how long did you stay at the Glover Farm after that—the flood, Joe, and can you talk about how you guys ended up here at Gaia Gardens?

01:40:30

JR: Sure, after the flood in September of 2009 we were at—we stayed at the Glovers for the 2010 season to make sure that we were there to help rebuild and that the—the farm and the people that sort of helped bail us out of that hard time and the Glovers knew that we were serious about getting the farm in working order. And but nonetheless by the middle of the year we—we realized that our sort of long-term aspirations to be on the farm weren't really working out and so I was connected with the—the previous grower here at Gaia Gardens and she had told me that she didn't plan on staying for another year and thought that it might be a good fit for us to—to apply for the lease out here. And so I didn't really know until—for sure until the early fall of that 2010 year that we would definitely be moving here. But the—we got really lucky. I feel like, you know, insofar as getting the farm in working order we got the—a lot of the infrastructure back into place. We got the—we got the irrigation system fixed and we got the majority of the fields that were the main fields back into production. We had a fun year of experimenting with a lot of things that year. We—we did this thing called conservation tillage where we basically grew big grain cover crops over that winter after we got flooded and folded them over or crimped them by breaking the stem in multiple places. And basically we planted into that folded over mulch of cover crops that we had grown on almost all of the land that was affected by the flooding because the creek's riparian was still pretty destroyed. So any—it didn't have to be a significant rain moment, any large rain moment could have caused us to re-flood again, and so we thought the best way to make sure that the farm would be okay and that the ultimate resource, the topsoil wouldn't be in jeopardy—was to make sure there were roots growing in all of it. And—and we did this with almost every crop we planted that year that you could do it—that you could put a transplant into a hole that you dug with a post hole digger. So me and my ragtag team of folks

[Laughs] basically dug I don't know—8,000 holes that year and filled them up with compost and plants and just tried to make it work with what we had and really rallied behind it.

01:43:49

And then so many of our CSA customers had stayed with us which was—which was really kind. We did to close out the season we opted to—the year we flooded to close out the season because we saw it an obligation to our CSA group. We decided to purchase food from other farmers to make it work and some of the flood funding that we got helped us cover that. And so our CSA had a large interest in seeing that we survived as a farm business and—and so that—you know that year was really just like working with a really raw, hurt piece of land and trying to get it back going and—and the—the move here was interesting. It was something that happened really quickly because the farming year didn't really close out at the Glover(s) until December and then to be respectful we wanted to make sure that we had removed everything that we planned on taking by the end of the year. So literally by the last week of December we had finally gotten shiitake logs moved and anything—plastic and tubs, anything you can imagine just van loads of stuff moved over here. And then the planning for the next year and the jumping into it all happened really quickly. There wasn't a big transition time.

01:45:37

So a lot of our CSA customers stayed with us because the incoming growers at the Glover(s) were not interested in maintain the CSA like we had done it, so we brought those guys with us and basically merged them with the group that was already here and sort of in a trial by fire made a way—found a way to make it work, production-wise, and like shuffling our marketing just a little bit. But what I was skipping over—it was really important to us when we left the Glover(s) was that we really wanted to make sure that if the Glover(s) still wanted it to be

a farm accessible to growers like us that we could leave it in the best way possible for the incoming farmers.

01:46:23

So we tried to leave a plan in place and we definitely—we—we left the farm in cover crop for the—for the next year and did our best to make connections with the grower that was coming along and—and did our best to sort of do what other growers had done for us just kind of nurture that grower and—and now that—that particular grower is not there any longer but the—the couple that is currently there we've been fortunate to be able to continue that same relationship with those folks, too.

01:47:00

SW: What are their names and then you also mentioned the woman who farmed here before you guys got here?

01:47:05

JR: Oh okay, sure, Rachel Kaplan is the name of the farmer that was here before us and I don't know what their last name is—

01:47:18

JW: Lauren Cox and Luca something Italian, Luca something Italian [Luca Caffettani].

01:47:29

JR: Oh and—yeah.

01:47:33

SW: And I don't want to take too much more of your time but I do want to ask you guys two more things and then if you want to add anything you've—I've taken a whole bunch of your time this evening/afternoon. Is there something—I mean in terms of farming here how have things changed like what are the greatest changes that you've noticed in yourselves since you've come to Gaia Gardens in terms of the work or your values or mission?

01:48:01

JW: You know [*Laughs*] I think well I—it's hard to say, I mean a lot has changed and I don't know how much of it is related to being here. There is something really wonderful about the support that the community provides. This community did a fantastic job of setting this system up. They thought through a lot of the questions and the problems on the front-side so that when things happen like equipment breaks we know—there is a process in place. We know what to do. There is a fund to help with those kinds of things and that makes navigating crises easier.

01:48:58

I also think that we're just—Joe is a better grower than he was six years ago. He understands how to manage the system better. He understands how to manage teams better and the impact of all of that improvement is that it makes life more manageable and less daunting. And I think you know had we stayed at the Glovers we probably would still see those results. But it's nice to be back in the city and one thing that I see as a real benefit of being in an urban area is access to people and volunteers. And I know sometimes it's overwhelming the number of people that want to interact with this farm. But it's way better than being isolated I think and

feeling like there is no one to help you because almost any day Joe gets a phone call or an email or someone just stopping by who wants to help. And that's—that's really valuable.

01:50:13

JR: Sure, yeah I—like Judith was saying I don't know that it's exclusive to being here at Gaia Gardens but one thing I think that we've learned really well is that there needs to be sort of a plan in place for managing the relationships on the farm. And the big one that calls to me is the relationship between the land owner and the land steward—or the land user and—and it's interesting. I feel like we learned just as much at the Glover Farm as we have here at Gaia Gardens. It's just that the order of things put us you know being on a family farm that hadn't really transitioned like total control of the farm—or hadn't done it as much as they did with us in the past so it was a very new experience and even though it was really thought through on the part of the Glovers I—there is just a lot that we just couldn't figure out without you know like experience and relationships and happenings unfolding that—.

01:51:34

And then here at Gaia Gardens the—we're the fifth people to lease the land and so while they—they don't have like a perfect recipe, they've had a lot of cooks in the kitchen on the—the relationship side to figure it all out and so I feel like we've become not experts but maybe just like a counseling service for folks that are you know whether—that are dealing with sort of that dual relationship of like wanting to take care of land but also being responsible to owners of land or owners of resources or you know living on grants or you name it. I mean we—we get to sort of help with the HR side of navigating that for folks. And that's really—that's really great.

01:52:24

Another cool thing is that we got to—like at the Glovers there was a lot in place and there—there were a lot of systems that were there and in place and things to use but there wasn't a whole lot written down. So I think we really—we really neglected early on the—the value of sitting down and being in dialogue with the Glovers because that's how they wanted to share their knowledge. They didn't want to hand over a plan per se, and we were just so new and young and—and then probably more ambitious than we should have been, and naïve. You know we just didn't make the time to sit down and talk about it and sometimes it felt like an intrusion to just getting the litany of things it had to get done—done.

01:53:23

And here because there is less—there's so many folks, there's not a whole lot of that interaction going on. I mean sometimes it happens independently with people just walking around the farm or you know every once in a while somebody has a real big complaint. But there is a lot written down that's from the previous growers like, here is how we use the land, you know here was the plan that was used, here is the amount of space used for it. You know here are the records and some of it has to do with being certified organic. Those records are just in existence you know. But I meet with the community just once a month and it's a real clean easy meeting and—and it's scheduled so that there is no surprises. You know, like I know I can't make plans for this one particular evening every Monday, the first Monday of every month. And so that's another really neat thing to sort of see on the backside is like I think you know had we had just a little more time and maybe a little bit less ambition we might not have ended up where we are but we—we might have been able to have that relationship a little bit stronger from the get-go.

01:54:38

JW: We should show you the well house. I think it's a brilliant example of how well-documented the systems of this farm are.

01:54:51

SW: The well house?

01:54:51

JW: Uh-huh, yeah the pump house I'm sorry.

01:54:54

SW: I just have one more question and then we can wrap this up. Sorry guys, we talked—I asked you guys a lot. You guys talked about the younger farmers, but and I had to ask this because this is about some of the—you know some of the—most of the farmers are women that I talked to—is there—are you—'cause you work with people here like you—you—Erin [Cescutti] is a product of your farm. Are you seeing more women farming—you guys or is it—is there anything particular to this area and women farming or is it—?

01:55:29

JW: I have a theory on that. No, it's—

01:55:37

SW: I'm going to someday mail you back two hours—but the two hours that I lied about.

01:55:47

JW: It's fine, it's so pretty today and pleasant. I think I believe that here in western civilization well and in many, many places women keep the culture. And they keep the culture of the home and they keep the larger culture and women often times are more sensitive, more in tune, and I do think that in sustainable agriculture there are more women farmers than you would find in conventional agriculture. And I think—do you want me to wait for the plane? [*Plane in Background*]

01:56:45

SW: If you wouldn't mind.

01:56:46

JW: I don't mind. [*Off Mic Conversation*] I wonder—did I tell you that I—when I—where did I fly last? I don't remember—New Orleans—that I saw the Glover Family Farm from the plane?

01:57:17

JR: No.

01:57:18

JW: I didn't? I always look for it but I know—I know—I know I saw it.

01:57:23

JR: Oh that's—

01:57:24

JW: It was exciting. I was like there it is.

01:57:25

JR: We got to go—

01:57:28

JW: To New Orleans?

01:57:29

JR: Yeah, just as long as we fly over that.

01:57:32

JW: Okay, [*Laughs*] so I think—I think there are more women in sustainable ag, more women farming, more women willing to do this work because (a) this work is available to them in a way that it's not from conventional ag. But I also think that women are sensitive to the fact that this work is needed right now—that our relationship with the earth needs to heal. And this is one way to do it. And I—when I go to ag-conferences, sustainable ag-conferences, I do feel like there are more young women farming, and it's not to say that there aren't young men farming. There are and it's not to say that men can't be sensitive, they can. I just—I do feel that there is something about this work that appeals to certain women for really big deep reasons. [*Plane in Background*]

01:58:38

And that said you should tell the story about how Helen told you that she had a dream that you—and you represented her feminine side. *[Laughs]*

01:58:47

JR: I learned that during the flower cutting. Do you want to hear that story? Well, when I was at Crystal Organic Farm one day I was cutting flowers with Helen Dumba and she said that she had—had a dream and I was in her dream. And in her dream, she was represented by her masculine side and her feminine side. And she was representative of her masculine side and I was representative of her feminine side. And she would make often lots of interesting comments. I'm a—my horoscope is—my sun sign is in Leo but I'm really close to the cusp of Cancer, so she would call me a gentle Leo all the time. But that's all about—that's about all there is to that story.

01:59:47

I mean it's—it's you know—I don't know that I have a big statement on once again masculinity and femininity on a farm. I feel like every grower regardless of whether you're male or female has to wrestle with these—they're not opposing sides but sometimes the energies can oppose one another. But—but here on the farm I was just doing a quick count, I've had as many males working for us as we have females, working for us. But when I look at the number of—it's interesting, at the Glovers when I look at the number of dedicated volunteers that we have I think we had slightly more males than we did females. But once we moved here to Gaia Gardens in the metro area we've had an overwhelming—overwhelming is not the word I meant to use—we've had an abundance of—of women that have wanted to volunteer more so than men. And I don't know what that might speak to—.

02:00:48

But the neat thing about—I mean and—and for me the neat thing about the agriculture is that especially sort of this sort of new organic agriculture that we’re doing is that it requires you to wear a lot of hats. And you know everybody wears hats differently, so—and then has to wear different hats at different times. And there’s sometimes strengths and sometimes weaknesses. And it just makes it for the—a person that is—you know the person that is the most dynamic is the most successful at this. And I feel like folks that are striving for that tend to do better.

02:01:26

SW: I don’t have any other questions for you at this time. But do you guys want to—is there something else you want to add that you think is important that I didn’t ask you or anything else that you think would be good for the tape?

02:01:40

JR: Am I the only guy that you’re talking to? Oh, feminine side here it comes Helen Dumba.

02:01:51

JW: I can't think of anything, can you?

02:01:55

JR: Uh-um.

02:01:56

JW: I’m getting really hungry too so I’m getting a little bit spacy, and I know you are, I can tell.

02:02:04

JR: You can see it in my eyes.

02:02:04

JW: I can see.

02:02:05

SW: Well thank you for doing this you guys.

02:02:08

JW: Yeah, absolutely.

02:02:09

[End Judith Winfrey & Joe Reynolds]