TRANSFORMATIVE LABOR AND TRANSFORMING ENVIRONMENTS: OREGON COUNTERCULTURES AND ENVIRONMENTAL LABOR, 1960-1980

by

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Work in the environment conjures images of violence against the earth: tractors chewing through dirt, logging trucks lumbering with a full load of harvested trees, and clearcut landscapes featuring barren land and debris scattered everywhere are somewhat stereotypical examples. On the other hand, environmental workers have largely conceived of environmentalism as virulently spreading anti-labor values that contributed to the slowdown of their industries. These tensions were present during the countercultural boom of the 1960s and 1970s in Oregon as "hippies" and environmentalists sought to get away from mainstream pressures and connect with nature. Many members of the counterculture did not avoid environmental work, however, and instead sought it out as a means to express their countercultural values while building a community that valued them for who they were outside mainstream ideals. The Hoedads, a treeplanting cooperative, and WomanShare, a lesbian land commune, are both exemplars of this practice. This thesis studies both of these groups as built communities that centered on strengthening identity, regenerating the environment, and performing work in nature as a practice of their values.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction

Will the real pot-smoking, rock-loving, hikes-the-Gorge Oregonian please stand up? Stereotypes like these about Oregon prominently rely on imagery historically associated with hippies and the countercultural movement. This reputation is not unearned: the 1960s saw the explosion of a brewing storm of opposition to the status quo across the United States. Oregon was a foci for hippies, leftists, environmentalists, and others who sought to create a new culture. It was a release of tension that was transformative for Oregon and influences the modern images of urban centers like Portland and Eugene. For the vast majority of Oregon's history, however, and during the time of this transformation, status quo work in the environment, such as logging in the timber industry, was the backbone of communities' economic and personal survival. Further, this stereotyping ignores the countercultural contributions made to that exact work during the 1960s and 1970s—a history that deserves examination and recognition.

Conceptions of work in the environment normally bring to mind visions of destruction: tractors tearing up earth, chainsaws splitting trees, or pickaxes chipping into stone and mountains. Many Oregonians (especially urban inhabitants) do not see their relationship with nature as one that causes such violence and instead desire for a static nature, one they can seamlessly enjoy both within and without it. In this perception, we ignore the work that goes into providing materials for our houses or cars, the labor that brings food to the table and ensures the lights stay on. It is not a random occurrence that this conception took hold. Visions of nature, and human interaction in it, have been subject to change throughout history. A complex array of inputs that

include the second World War, automobile culture, and changing work situations for urban residents contributed to this new perspective and helped it take root deeply.

Another change that impacted conceptions of nature was the countercultural and environmentalist movements that were so hot in Oregon during the 1960s and 1970s. Any attempt at a broad-brush explanation for or description of these movements is merely a pipe dream, but there were important dimensions of these movements that came into play for conceptions of nature. Anti-capitalist sentiments meant that new language about exploitation, labor, and capital were entering discussions of many variations: a new way to see the world and society. Spiritualism made human connections to nature more complex than actor-reactor and made many feel that work in nature was exploitative of nature as well as the workers. This, however, did not spark a revolution of environmentalist loggers and farmers. Instead, hatred of the work itself became a mode to communicate environmentalist attitudes and gave the counterculture a reputation from environmental workers that environmentalism and counterculture were their adversaries.

The counterculture and environmental labor, however, did mix in terms of historical actors who sought transformative experiences as well as work in nature. The Hoedads, a countercultural treeplanting cooperative, and WomanShare, a lesbian land commune, reckoned with their countercultural values through working in the environment. They did so through envisioning the possibility of work in the environment being regenerative rather than destructive: we manage our forests through logging and replant the trees, we make our lands productive for survival while also stewarding them. This work also provided individual members the opportunity to

escape from oppressive cultural and social forces and have the space to form their own communities and strengthen their identities.

In this thesis, I will explore both of these groups as case studies in the combined space of counterculture and environmental labor. I will explore the Hoedads as refugees from mainstream culture and WomanShare as a space for lesbians to have a men-free space for their discussions and shared experiences. I hope to illustrate that the tension between the counterculture/environmentalism and work in nature is possible to overcome. It is much easier to overcome when specifically regarding the focuses that both the Hoedads and WomanShare had on community and personal identity. Building community and strengthening identity are shared values between environmentalists and environmental workers.

I relied on a variety of materials in order to shape my case studies and inform my argument. Books were primary sources that provided first-hand experiences of work and community as well as secondary sources that gave dimension and context to the stories shared by members of both groups I study. Archival materials, both from the University of Oregon Special Collections and online, inspired the project and were foundational to my understanding of the groups. The following review gives short backgrounds into the works that were most central to this project and the historiographical context they require before accepting my usage of them.

Birth of a Cooperative by Hal Hartzell is an incredibly valuable resource on the Hoedads, both for the narrative Hartzell organizes and mostly for the collected interview material that makes up the body of the book. Published in 1987, it is easy to read this book as Hartzell reflecting on his experience as a Hoedad and reckoning those

reflections with a larger history he wanted to tell. It is important to note that Hartzell is not producing an officially academic endeavor and had the authority to shape the history with the material and quotes he saw fit. If one is suspect of Hartzell's story, the interview material (which I defer to the majority of the time in this thesis) is still a valuable inclusion for this project.

Empire of Timber: Labor Unions and the Pacific Northwest Forests by Erik Loomis is an academic affair and is more responsible for responding to the concerns Hartzell's work may bring up. Published in 2015, Loomis' book does not focus solely on the Hoedads but uses them in a comparative argument with environmental labor unions. Loomis' work has been critiqued for inconclusively tying organized labor to the historical environmental movement.[1] However, the quotations from Loomis' work to this one are used sparingly and largely speak to the context rather than give specific experiences of work or community.

Country Lesbians: The Story of the WomanShare Collective was written by the founding members of WomanShare and edited by Billie Miracle, published in 1976. This book carries similar purposes and pitfalls as *Birth of a Cooperative*: a collection of experiences, stories, and opinions stored in a story organized by Miracle that has to be taken with a critical eye. The process of creating the book and collecting the stories is a material history and housed in the University of Oregon Special Collections and may detail responses to any potential concerns the book brings up.

There were several books about 1960s that informed my argument and provided needed context to the experiences and perspectives of those this thesis studies. *Imagine*

[1] Beda, Steven C., Empire of Timber: Labor Unions and the Pacific Northwest Forests by Erik Loomis, *Journal of American History*, Volume 104, Issue 2, September 2017, Pages 558–559, https://doi-org.libproxy.uoregon.edu/10.1093/jahist/jax287

Nation: the American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s edited by Michael William Doyle and Peter Braunstein and *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s* by David Farber and Beth Bailey were the most central out of these. *The Columbia Guide* is a standard institutional text that combines the scholarship of several academics to inform a larger story. *Imagine Nation* provides solid histories but the editors have been criticized for being too focused on hewing to the countercultural values (such as anti-logic and anti-reason sentiments) espoused by the focus of their study rather than providing clear commentary on the essays they compiled.[2] This is valid criticism of the accompanying introductions but does not apply to the historical essays within the work. I rely on the histories rather than the commentary for both of these books.

Finally, the archival material referenced throughout this review is located both at the University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives at Knight Library and online through legacy websites offered by and for the groups I studied. The Special Collections, both as a space for research as well as a collection of content, was an inspiration for this project as a whole. Its materials are the ones that I began with and expanded upon for this project. Part of that expansion was on-boarding online resources like Hoedadsoline.com, which hosts materials that have been digitized from the days of the Hoedads' work. This includes *Together*, a newsletter that started in 1974 as a way for crews to communicate their experiences and advice to one another. The stories from those issues informed much of the Hoedads chapter and gave much needed perspective that was missing from the Archives as well as *Birth of a Cooperative*.

[2] Wiener, Jon. *The Journal of American History* 89, no. 4 (2003): 1617-618. Accessed May 19, 2020. doi:10.2307/3092696.

As previously mentioned, this thesis is split into two case studies that each respectively concern the Hoedads and WomanShare. These are individual narratives that are meant to, in tandem, illustrate the arguments in different ways. The conclusion will feature some comparative thoughts, but comparison is not the goal of this thesis. These groups have plenty of differences to discuss, but the similarities they share with each other and other environmental workers are central to this argument. Work in the environment is hard, being outside the mainstream is hard, and these hardships are shared between the countercultural groups I study and other environmental workers.

The Hoedads case study provides context into Oregon's deep relationship with its forests and forestry. This context supports the argument that working as a treeplanter was made an attractive option for countercultural youth for two reasons: economic viability and the capacity for self-management. Treeplanting was rationalized as a regenerative form of environmental labor and considered valid within the countercultural views of Hoedads. Further, working in nature was an opportunity to seek the space to transition away from a mainstream life and understand the counterculture in a different way. Working as a Hoedad was hard and required an in-depth commitment to cooperative management and its associated workings. Within that hard work, Hoedads still attempted to apply their values to their work and fight to secure their rights as workers and countercultural cooperative members.

The WomanShare case study dives into specifics of the experiences of women and queer people in the counterculture, demonstrating why separatism and rural land were the solution to patriarchy and trauma for many lesbians during the time. Community was particularly important to the founders and members of WomanShare,

as the space was the only one in which they felt they could have an authentic identity while performing rewarding and transformative work. The fact that their community allowed them to steward for and care for lands reflects their attitude toward the work and nature. Namely, work in nature was an alternative to urban patriarchy and repressive social constructions—constructions Hoedads sought to struggle against as well.

Ultimately, I conclude that the larger implications of these case studies involve the importance of understanding community and identity for workers in the environment. Considering environmental workers as just opposed to environmentalism ignores the positive connections they have with nature: its capacity to sustain their community and host the basis for their identity. This thesis gives specific examples for how such an analysis of these communities and individuals could look, hopefully resulting in deeper understandings between environmental workers and those with environmentalist concerns.

Chapter 1: The Hoedads

Labor in Oregon has been famously tied to forests—World War II and the spike in production, the highs of the 50s and 60s, and issues like the Spotted Owl controversy have shaped the way Oregonians have long understood the relationship between work and nature. Though the timber has long been Oregon's largest and most recognizable industry, it's also perhaps been the state's most controversial industry. Many of these controversies emerged in the late-twentieth century, when environmentalists sought to restrain those who would operationalize the forest: loggers, developers, and other forestry workers who helped with harvesting Oregon's timber supply. Regenerative work, however, was and is an integral part of Oregon's forest industry and it allowed lands to continue to be productive after harvests. Groups of treeplanters would take contracts from companies and state/federal governments to restore cutover plots to their forested state. One such group was the Hoedads, an Oregon-based treeplanting cooperative that operated from 1971 to 1994. Hoedads made impacts on the environment and labor relations, within and without their cooperative, establishing communities of workers who held values and concerns that would permeate throughout Oregon forestry. Their self-education and dissemination of information would help build planning practices that ensured continued forest regeneration as well as push anti-pesticide stances that contributed to a new national conversation on toxins. This process and slate of experiences facilitated a melding of countercultural experiences with labor-oriented values that proved to be a transformative endeavor for the individuals involved and their communities.

Hoedads was started by three University of Oregon Students: Jerry Rust, John Sundquist, and John Corbin. Rust and Sundquist, who were looking for work in the winter of 1969 after serving for two years in the Peace Corps. While they were drawn to treeplanting out of the desire for a wage, Rust and Sundquist were transformed by their early experiences: "I had never had a work experience like it," Rust said, quoted in *Birth of a Cooperative*, "It was like going out and playing an athletic contest in the snow,".[3] The pair's first job was with Weyerhaeuser , as the pair would later describe it, an eye-opening experience for several reasons. The pair found the work pleasant. More than that, they came to believe that Sundquist the entire industry was mismanaging then. Sundquist remembered that, with the large company, "People were responding to those ads for work, showing up for a few days stuffing a lot of trees into the ground, while the contractor was getting away with a lot of money,".[4] Those trees largely died off due to poor planting, and Rust and Sundquist saw potential to improve their practices if they formed an independent crew to field contracts with. They recruited John Corbin, another friend from the University of Oregon, and formed the Triads as their means to obtain treeplanting contracts.[5] They worked for the next two years as a trio, fielding the work they could and improving their craft.

In 1971 the Triads worked a project at Lake Tahkenitch, about one hour north of Coos Bay, OR. There they met Bruce Gurrino and Tony Cole—young workers like themselves who stuck around the coast when there wasn't treeplanting work to do. Bruce and Tony fit in well and joined the Triads for future jobs, forming the Hoedads in

[3] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative: Hoedads Inc. A Worker Owned Forest Labor Co-Op*. Hulogos'i Publishing, Eugene. 1987. 40.
[4] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 42.
[5] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative*. 40.

Summer 1971 due to their expanded size.[6] Named for the treeplanting tool, the group settled on shared ownership and cooperative management from the get-go. From there, the new group set to recruitment and fielding more contracts. Hoedads would go on to become a cooperative boasting a labor participation rate of about 1,000 workers. Understanding the attraction to the work, other than its potential to be enjoyed, for this number requires understanding the context of Oregon and the counterculture that found an established home there.

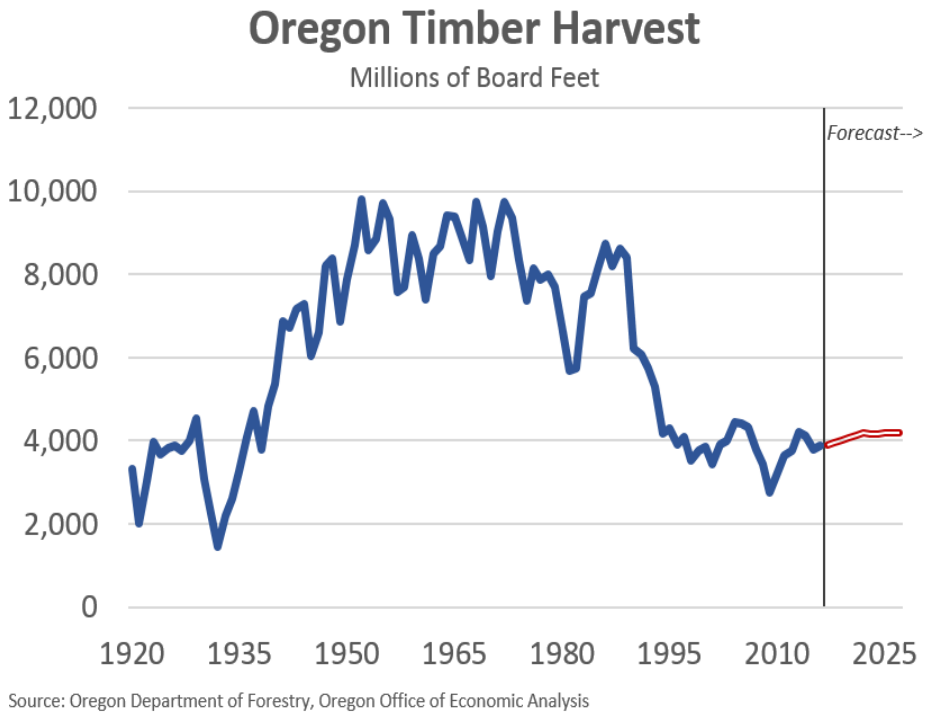

Figure 1: Oregon Timber Harvests from 1920-2012

The Hoedads became active during a time for Oregon when timber was at the center of the economy. As illustrated in the graph above, timber productivity maintained a high following World War II until right about the time the Hoedads formed in 1971. In Oregon, jobs in forestry were widely known to be available and lucrative. Treeplanting

[6] Ibid.

and non-logging work was in abundance because these harvests were met with regulations from the state that ensured the necessity of those jobs. The 1972 Forest Practices Act was passed by the Oregon legislature and signed by Governor Tom McCall in order to mandate best practices in forestry, especially surrounding infrastructure, labor, and tree replacement.[7] Combining the historically high production rates with these new standards meant that, for Hoedads and other crews, "Wage returns increased every year, and by 1980 top cooperative forest workers were hitting $25 a hour and $25,000 a year [$76,898 a year after inflation],".[8] Such a competitive wage was attractive and those who could handle the work found great enjoyment in it. The wage does not explain, however, the level of attraction young people had to the work and Hoedads in particular.

Hoedads came from around the country and were not exclusive to Oregonians. While Rust was a rural Oregon native, Sundquist came from Hawaii/Nevada and discovered the work largely through his study at the University of Oregon and friendship with Rust.[9] This relational style of recruitment was standard for Hoedads and made community a very important aspect of their experiences—without a pool of people outside themselves, Hoedads would not be able to grow their operation. One particularly important community for their recruitment was the countercultural movement that was flourishing in Oregon through the 1960s and 1970s. Figures like Ken Kesey legitimized Eugene's countercultural bonafides as well as events like the Oregon Renaissance Faire (started in 1969 as a fundraising effort by the Eugene

[7] "Oregon Forest Practices Act: Adaptable and informed by sound science", Oregon Forest Practices Act: Adaptable and informed by sound science § (2018).
[8] Mackie, Gerry. "Rise and Fall of the Forest Worker's Cooperatives of the Pacific Northwest." Master's Thesis, University of Oregon, 1990. 111.
[9] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 112, 40.

Children's Community School), which brought thousands of hippies and countercultural connoisseurs to the area each Summer.[10] The Faire is now more famously known as the Oregon Country Fair and is still considered a site for alternative lifestyle seekers as well as a more general audience. These newcomers saw the Hoedads as a potential space to actualize their visions of culture and work. Their new viewpoints on nature would inform this interest as well.

Countercultural conceptions of work in the environment were colored by a new vision of nature. These views ranged and so did their respective philosophies. Deep Ecology, for instance, placed moral equivalence between man and nature. This was taken to the conclusion that harm against nature should be fought like harm against man. The thread between these views was a conception of the relationship between man and nature, specifically man's work in nature, as an exploitative one.[11] Hoedads, in large part, did not share these views. At the least, not the most extreme that would preclude any work in nature at all. Hoedads valued "productive work which benefits society" and were concerned with the economic and physical well-being of environmental workers.[12] Hoedads' desire to work outdoors came from a more spiritual conception of the connection between man and nature: logging was harmful but necessary, planting trees was a necessary outcome of logging and not harmful.[13] And for Hoedads as a part of a regional context, Erik Loomis in *Empire of Timber* argues: "Emerging from the Northwest's robust countercultural movement, cooperatives represent how a new

[10] Ibid.101.
[11] Eder, Klaus. "The Rise of Counter-Culture Movements Against Modernity: Nature as a New Field of Class Struggle." *Theory, Culture & Society* 7, no. 4 (1990): 21–47. https://doi.org/10.1177/026327690007004002.
[12] "Illegal Aliens." *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. Winter 1978-79. 4.
[13] Crew Report. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. 1976. 12.

generation of Northwest residents conceptualized the forests as places to labor and to play, where work sought to regenerate rather than degrade the forests,".[14] The Hoedads took a negotiated approach in which they applied their values to their work, as work in nature was a necessity both for Hoedads as well as the larger community. This larger community's desire for a productive forest is tied largely to the situation described above: replanting was mandated and timber work was still important to the economy. For Hoedads, the necessity of work in the environment had both economic and personal aspects.

Economic volatility on a larger scale made work in nature attractive from a practical perspective. Especially for young people, the hard work of treeplanting (discussed in more detail below) meant that jobs were available and pay was good. Gerry Mackie, a former Hoedad and University of Oregon Master's student, described the perception that young people had about treeplanting and joining the Hoedads: "Youth from the flourishing new counterculture began to enter the work because it was outdoors, casual, and high paying; such workers were less desperate but also more healthy than their usual predecessors…".[15] Mackie posited that the Hoedads, and those like them, were different both for their countercultural links and their relative youth and energy. This youth and energy were not the only reason young people joined Hoedads. Treeplanting was a potentially lucrative job market for young and ambitious people. As Mackie argued, "Other special conditions [for joining the Hoedads] were the simple desire to make a living as the baby-boom labor-glut choked off customary routes of mobility, and the spillover of relatively educated workers into a primitive labor

[14] Loomis, Erik. *Empire of Timber: Labor Unions and the Pacific Northwest Forests*, Cambridge University Press, 2015. 160.
[15] Mackie, Gerry. "Rise and Fall of the Forest Worker's Cooperatives of the Pacific Northwest.". 76.

market…".[16] The Hoedads were young people largely cut off from established economic order of the time. Participating in environmental labor through treeplanting was a decision that coincided both with their social station as well as their cultural outlook.

The more personal reasons came from the fact that members participated in the Hoedads as countercultural 'refugees' from the mainstream culture. Restoring the land satisfied their countercultural visions of nature and work and offered a unique opportunity to build community away from the mainstream in a time of cultural divide. As reported by a member of a Hoedads crew by the name of Natural Wonders, "The philosophy which has developed as we have become more aware of ourselves as a crew is one of unity rather than individualism. We are all aware of the hard times ahead for each of us in this country... we can depend on each other throughout the good and the bad times, co-operatively, not alone,".[17] Seeking non-traditional experiences as a means of personal transformation was key to these individuals and made the Hoedads a natural refuge. These transformations came in a variety of forms and were often focused on nature, work, and politics. For example, a member by the name Caud found that working with the Hoedads gave him a new perspective on work and politics: "I'm tired of luck, administration, inspectors, National emergencies, etc., determining my value as a worker/owner. We need well thought out worker evaluations...".[18] For those who saw a need for these changes or sought to change themselves, the Hoedads became the space for it. This was necessary because, as described by Gerry Mackie, the situation held that "Disillusioned in the established order, people throughout America were searching for

[16] Mackie, Gerry. "Rise and Fall of the Forest Worker's Cooperatives." 80.
[17] Natural Wonders Crew Report. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. April 1974, Volume 1. 10.
[18] Board Member Report. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. Fall 1982. 10.

alternatives in their daily lives and work places,".[19] This desire, borne of new cultural understandings as well as economic necessity, led to new conceptions of work in nature and participants' identity in community. Cooperatives like the Hoedads allowed those looking to escape from the economic and social realities of 'normal life' to explore themselves and nature in a new context.

Hoedads' cooperative structure was almost as unique as the people who joined the group. The planned role for members as "individual contractors" ensured that each Hoedad was their own boss. Communal living, group-oriented decision making, and individualism within a larger whole were the countercultural values that most members brought with them to the group. Hoedads did not fit the countercultural mold, however, when taking treeplanting contracts with large companies and the heavily bureaucratized Forest Service. Mackie points out "Perhaps through the sheer pressures of operational need, the Hoedads were more friendly to centralized and specialized administrative roles than their countercultural peers,".[20] As the following discussion on labor will illustrate, these operational needs were borne out of the Hoedads' work experiences and the infusion of work into community and identity. Treeplanting was an incredibly difficult task and the Hoedads' dedication influenced both their attitude toward environmental work as well as reflected their values surrounding nature.

Every workday began at dawn. Depending on the season and site, Hoedads could wake up soaked and freezing and have a full day of planting ahead of them. In descriptions of Hoedads' work experiences, waking up and getting out of the tent is often described as the biggest challenge of the day. This may have some psychological

[19] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 39.
[20] Mackie, Gerry. "Rise and Fall of the Forest Worker's Cooperatives." 113.

truth to it but does not compare to the everyday working conditions described here by Tim Clancy, who joined the Hoedads from 1976-1977:

> Strapped to each planter's waist was a sturdy neoprene bag, loaded with about two hundred Douglas fir seedlings. In addition to those thirty or forty pounds of seedlings, he or she (a quarter of the crew were women) carried a ten-pound planting tool, the hoedad: an axe handle, joined at a right angle to a thick steel blade, fifteen inches long and four inches wide. Thus encumbered, a tree planter scrambled across clear-cuts—called units—many of which were so steep the hoedad doubled as an anchor to keep the planter from slipping downslope. If someone kicked loose a rock or a log, and it started rolling, it was that person's responsibility to immediately shout, "Rock!" or "Log!" One of the crews was, in fact, called the Log Rollers. Though many planters wore hard hats, many did not. And, anyway, a hard hat wasn't much good against a log or a boulder that had picked up a head of steam on a seventy-degree slope.[21]

The weight of the tree-bag was a constant because tree runners, who carried three times the weight a planter did, would come to refill the saplings as they were low. The dangers that Clancy enumerates in the second half of the quote, and how the Hoedads incorporated them into their communities and in-jokes, illustrate both the realities of work as a treeplanter and the positive attitude Hoedads came at this reality with.

The realities of treeplanting are simply the dangers that came with the work. Units were not in an easily traversable condition when Hoedads arrived on site. Once they arrived, the landscape offered plenty of obstacles to navigate. While not an exhaustive list, the dangers of work as a treeplanter included: rolling rocks and logs, eye injury from debris, unstable ground, rock/mudslides, lightning and storms in general, getting lost on a unit, pesticides (more on this later), back strain and injury, and encounters with wild animals.[22] Many of these dangers were mitigatable and crews took

[21] Clancey, Tim. "Hoedad Life: Planting Trees in the Majestic West and Pacific Northwest Backcountry." *Catamaran Literary Reader*, Spring 2017. 34.
[22] Safety Primer. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. Winter 1978-79. 30.

great lengths to ensure the safety of their membership. Injuries and sickness were common, however, and became a consideration for anyone who sought to work in treeplanting.

The landscapes that featured this work and these obstacles were dynamic and occupied the minds of Hoedads working on them. Coastal units, because of the mountain range, were considered the worst by far and made other units look flat by comparison.[23] These landscapes were the aftermath of clearcuts and had slash, the debris and mud mixed on the ground, to wade through. The Hoedads took slash in stride and developed their own term, "slashconsciousness", as a way to communicate the state of mind/focus where your body can do anything it needs to do—in this case, wading through slash.[24] "Gravy" was the term for good ground that was easy to traverse as well as dig into and plant a sapling.[25] There were also romantic conceptions of these landscapes as they featured in the work experiences of Hoedads. Carol, of the ACME crew, reminisces about an experience looking out at her workspace: "[We] stood on the slope, getting high for the first time while working. Ron rolled out a join and we [smoked] it, staring out at the mist scattered over the mountain canyons. The fog was crawling slowly, like a cat into your lap, up the next ravine,".[26] The mountains and ravines were common features of the units Hoedads worked and logging crews were able to harvest. While the units were clearcut, trees were often visible and worked into the environment as a reminder of what was to come from their work. This romantic

[23] Crew Report. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. April 1974, Volume 1. 3.
[24] Ibid. 5.
[25] Terminology Primer. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. Spring 1980. 20.
[26] Crew Report. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. Spring 1981. 10.

vision of nature was in addition to Hoedads' enthusiasm for the competitive and outdoor aspects of the work.

Chris Bond, quoted in *Birth of a Cooperative,* gives voice to this enthusiasm in a reflection on a particularly rough landscape to work on: "We charged into those horrible vine maple and salmonberry units with 20 people and did 40 acres a day. Suddenly everybody was happy and singing and making money – getting high on being the toughest treeplanters around. We did it – we planted every single plantable spot we could find. It was fun,".[27] Their work is centered on a pride in efficiency and completion —finding every plantable spot—as well as a sense of overcoming the inherent difficulties of treeplanting through their community.

An internal desire for higher-quality treeplanting came from Hoedads' collective experiences with ineffective work being done prior to their arrival at a forest. Take a 1972 Weyerhaeuser job they had in Cottage grove: "We ended up with some shitty units. We had one that had been replanted eleven times and still wasn't growing—real bad ground… I remember [the inspector] was right out of the military and had a bad attitude, a real condescending attitude,".[28] It was a disappointment both for the sorry state the forest was in and the work they would have to do in order to clean up others' mistakes. These experiences taught the Hoedads that if they wanted to match their hopes for regenerative work with the realities of treeplanting, they would need to be the change they wanted to see.

This change came in the form of new work styles, a dedication to educating themselves, and working within the system to make improvements from above and

[27] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 233.
[28] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 54.

below. Treeplanting standards in Oregon were reactions to trends during the time: the previously mentioned 1972 Forest Practices act as a response to present low standards and the 1941 Forest Conservation Act required replanting of trees in the first place. This did not stop some workers from trying to benefit from the pay-by-the-tree system, dumping saplings or planting quickly and ineffectively. In assessing their own work, the Hoedads emphasized a comparison between their work and that of the laziest tree planters: "We were consistently amazing the BLM authorities; their estimates of numbers of trees for the units were so far off. We were planting fifty or sixty percent and turning the rest back… No contractor had ever returned trees before,".[29] A desire to 'one-up' the Forest Service and competing companies is present in a lot of work from Hoedads, such as a variety of *Together* articles that describe confrontations between Hoedads and inspectors. This does not mean, however, that the Hoedads were not trying to improve their method of getting trees into the ground. Given the hardships that come with the baseline work of treeplanting, imposing standards on themselves was a burdensome task.

Being able to actually make change meant understanding where the mistakes had been made and where the Hoedads could continue to improve. "We became better educated as far as getting a better tree alive in the ground…. There was a powerful impact by the cooperatives on the contract itself, many changes came because of that,".[30] These changes were a response to the Hoedads' own dedication to their work and to restoring nature. This desire for restoration followed many of them to the upper levels of forest management in the Northwest, including Larry Gangle—a Hoedad who

[29] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 73.
[30] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 324.

became a BLM inspector. From him: “I think I am a good inspector, and a fair one. I’m tough because I think you have to be. I don’t back off. It gives me a sense of pride. I’ve planted trees and was a damn good planter. I was always conscientious with the trees. I have an appreciation for trees. The way I always tried to approach it was to plant trees that would grow,”.[31] These individual experiences and perspectives were shared by the majority of Hoedads and these changes had a widespread influence within the cooperative. Working together strengthened the Hoedads’ internal community through the perceived, and real, increase in quality of their own work.[32] Having an influence over forest management strengthened their internal senses of solidarity and communal power. Understanding this community and its relationship to work is possible through understanding the effects their communal management had on the community.

Communal Management built internal communities through the organizational structure of the crews and collective experiences the structure exposed Hoedads to. The cooperative process was actively seen as a relationship builder within and between crews.[33] This is due to the function that self- and peer-management had in facilitating collective senses of fairness, cooperation, and personality. As Mackie puts it: “Crews had very strong identities, and clearly differed in collective personality; stronger crews had stronger identities,”.[34] Some of the biggest crews’ names include: Cougar Mountain (largely considered the ’lead’ crew), Mudsharks, Cheap Thrills, and Natural Wonders. These crews differed from one another largely in management style and payment structures. Other crews were more focused on representation of their members: Full

[31] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 145.
[32] Health and Safety Report. Hoedads Cooperative Inc. Records, Coll. 322, Box 19, Folder 2.
[33] Member notebook. Hoedads Cooperative Inc. Records, Coll. 322, Box 20, Folder 13.
[34] Mackie, Gerry. "Rise and Fall of the Forest Worker’s Cooperatives." 94.

Moon Rising was a crew managed and worked solely by women. Reflections by members of Full Moon Rising stress the importance of having the space both to work in nature and to do so with fellow women.[35] The crew structure afforded more personal experiences of management and allowed for the development of divergent philosophies toward work and management. Natural Wonders, the crew that developed the philosophy of unity quoted above, furthered their own ideals regarding pay and work speed: "We will never plant at the same speed, but we refuse to pay [per tree] (that's what got us into this mess—it's called capitalism),".[36] Members of Natural Wonders were able to exercise their personal visions of capitalism/socialism and apply their values of equality through management. The cooperative structure combined with the forms of solidarity developed through the hard work of treeplanting coalesced to form a sense of internal community for crews and the cooperative as a whole. Working together meant facing up to difficulties of and seeing the value in their community beyond the money they make. In large part, this value came from the end result of their work: a regenerated forest and freer work for the individual. The natural setting influenced the values and the cooperative structure ensured they were widely held.

The natural setting also required management beyond logging and replanting. Herbicides and pesticides, chemical compounds designed to kill off pests and invasive plants without killing the tree, are widely used in forestry as a means to keep harvests healthy. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, there was little information about the effects of these chemicals on environmental workers who came into direct contact with them. What was known by the Hoedads was that "Often, herbicide effects will manifest as

[35] Full Moon Rising Report. *Together,* Jack Rabbit Press. Spring 1978. 4.
[36] Natural Wonders Crew Report. 20.

general fatigue, flue like symptoms... irregular menstrual cycles in women... low morale.[37] The Hoedads first encountered Thiram, a common herbicide/fungicide, in Roseburg in 1973, which spurred major concern when crew members began to fall ill. Following a period of research and investigation, the Hoedads learned how untested and unsafe Thiram was. As the Hoedads grew concerned about herbicides, they began applying tactics to measure its effects. They shared information such as: "[Responsibility for the] documentation of adverse health effects has been placed largely on the people who fear they may be subject to such damage. We are all exposed to some amount of herbicide when tree-planting, both on the unit and through the water we drink...".[38] This meant that Hoedads would have to be responsible for establishing their own case against herbicides. Hoedads worked internally to track pesticide damage by having individuals keep symptom journals, coordinating case tracking and sourcing origins, photograph and keep evidence of herbicides when harm is obvious, and coordinating blood tests for those who were exposed.[39] These measures helped the Hoedads begin to paint a picture not only of the link between Thiram and the harm it caused, but their rights as workers in nature as well.

By fall of 1974, due to a job at Siuslaw using Thiram, the Hoedads poised for Boycott. "Joe Earp: 'We were writing letters to the editor… We were trying to suspend its use in treeplanting,".[40] Sick workers were the opposite of what the Hoedads wanted out of their employers. According to notebooks kept by crewmembers, the Hoedads believed that proper land management required little to no herbicides.[41] In order to

[37] Herbicide Primer. *Together*, Jack Rabbit Press. Spring 1978. 12.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 288.
[41] Crew notebook. Hoedads Cooperative Inc. Records, Coll. 322, Box 17, Folder 13.

spread this belief wider than their own organization, the Hoedads continued to work on getting Thiram banned. “Joe Earp, especially, began to cause a furor in the [State Pesticide Board] ... They required that boxes of Thiram trees should carry a warning…”.[42] This minor victory would be one of the only ones—Thiram is still in use with certain professional precautions. This activism, however, would not come without its rewards: the local community knew about these pushes and saw the Hoedads as a net positive force. This goodwill would not, however, shield them from the coming economic and political changes that would sweep the region and change the landscape of forestry in Oregon.

The end of the Hoedads is inevitable with hindsight into the status of the Oregon timber industry. Contracts became rarer, work was farther away, and competition for a paycheck was tight. Mackie claimed that “The sustained collapse of market supply and of legal standards laid bare any hidden weaknesses of the reforestation cooperatives. Only the most wicked or most able reforestation firms survived,”.[43] Positing their competition as ’wicked’ avoids the fact that, for the active good Hoedads worked toward, their centralized structure and continued push to incorporate as a more legitimate firm worked against the countercultural values many individual Hoedads held. Leaving the cooperative made sense for more and more members, and payments had to be cashed out. This does not mean, however, that they abandoned the lessons they learned or new values they held about work and nature.

Reflections by Hoedads on their work illustrate a great appreciation for nature and work in it, as both served in restoring a sense of self in a world that was imbalanced

[42] Hartzell, Hal. *Birth of a Cooperative.* 292.
[43] Mackie, Gerry. "Rise and Fall of the Forest Worker’s Cooperatives." 131.

for their needs and desires. Loomis explains: "The reality of the hard work and terrible weather might have driven many prospective Hoedads back to the cities, but for those who stuck it out, driving their bodies for the regeneration of the forest became a point of pride, a dream made true through hard labor for oneself,".[44] As Hoedads dispersed and their organization was no longer viable, the individual lessons followed former members. As put by Loomis: “Hoedads and reforestation cooperatives might not have survived in the 1990s, but their ideas about a forest that had a greater economic value standing than harvested, and the power of the forest to regenerate people and a region, were alluring and remain influential in the twenty first century,".[45] While Loomis’ prediction of an environmental worker-philosophy catching fire has largely remained untrue, the Hoedads highlight a median space where work and nature are both held in high regard.

The Hoedads attempted to teach themselves how to be more effective within their own cooperative work in nature, spread their values through communities beyond their own, and built a legacy based on transforming themselves through regenerative environmental labor. Their vision for cooperative work and values toward nature were informed by a countercultural mindset that came to them as a relief from the misgivings of the surrounding world. The community they built allowed individuals a space to develop and understand their identity outside of the pressures associated with the outside world. In turn, Hoedads realized their visions for their work and nature through modeling their own vision of best practices—both in their work and in their activism toward the external community. Doing so allowed the Hoedads to realize a legacy of

[44] Loomis, Erik. *Empire of Timber.* 168.
[45] Ibid. 191.

change and still maintain countercultural and nontraditional roots in the organization and reasons for their work.

Chapter 2: WomanShare

The social and political upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s did not isolate themselves to cities nor a single movement. As countercultural spaces developed and discussions wore on, the desire for new experiences became a lasting theme—specifically for marginalized participants. Participants such as women and lesbians specifically, who saw that even countercultural spaces still held remnants from the patriarchal society they worked against. One of the reactions to this reality was the women's separatist movement, a large portion of which took off in southern Oregon. One of these communal experiments was WomanShare, a lesbian-run commune located near Grants Pass, OR. Carol Newhouse, a founding member described the impetus for WomanShare as such: "We wanted to create something different, a different world for us as lesbians… and we did not know what that was."[46] Lacking any guide or experience, these women would come to understand their creation the longer they spent with it. WomanShare became a community that prided itself on environmental labor and their connection with nature—the results of which became the strengthening of individual women and lesbians' identities through work.

The women who founded and nurtured WomanShare at its inception decided to collect their early experiences in a central document to the history of WomanShare and Oregon Lesbian Lands as a whole*: Country Lesbians: The Story of the WomanShare Collective*. The reasoning for this, according to Billie Miracle, was simple: "Once we got together, were working together, we got politicized and decided we could spread

[46] Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. "Panel: Womyn and Grrrls, Riot!". *YouTube*, 7 May 2013. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmAjPtDARZU. 8:30.

that out,".[47] *Country Lesbians* is a creative and literary space in which the five original residents of WomanShare—Sue Deevy, Nelly Kaufer, Dian Wagner, Carol Newhouse, and Billie Miracle—could both share their narrative and reflect on their experiences. These five women were at the center of discussions about work and rural living at WomanShare and had their experiences shaped by the contexts they came to Oregon with.

Sue, 29 at the time WomanShare was founded, came up from California after confronting her disenfranchisement at her grocery job through a women's festival.[48] Escaping homophobic parents, Sue's experience at WomanShare bares many similarities with similar gay countercultural activists of the time.[49] Nelly was 27 and from New Jersey. The youngest founding member, she has a similar escape narrative as Sue—except from a bad relationship instead of parents.[50] Dian's relationship with her parents was less fraught, for the 31-year-old had the means to purchase the land WomanShare would grow on via her father's stocks.[51] That said, Dian's unhappiness with life and/or society was her motivation and she sought out WomanShare as a "community for emotions".[52] Carol was tied with Billie for oldest of the founders at 32 and came from New York—similar to Sue, she sought to escape her homophobic family.[53] Billie came from Wisconsin and shares little about her past—a department

[47] Ibid. 28:10.
[48] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians: The Story of the WomanShare Collective*. WomanShare Collective Records, Box 4, Folder 5. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR. 1976. 19.
[49] Ibid. 179.
[50] Ibid. 21.
[51] Ibid. 68.
[52] Ibid. 26.
[53] Ibid. 179.

store job is a small piece of her history that she ties to her own dissatisfaction with urban work and desire to work in nature.[54]

In 1962, Dian and Carol met in college and began sharing their experiences of womanhood, lesbianism, and work. The next 10 years were a blur of relationships and moving around until they met Billie (who had moved to Montreal as a conscientious objector to the Vietnam War[55]) and traveled to a variety of Canadian land-based collectives in 1972. There they had their first real experiences doing environmental labor and living a communal lifestyle. They found, however, that the gendered tasks and hierarchy within the commune was just what they were trying to escape from in urban life. This spurred them to start a women's craft store, which was unsuccessful and did not help them in achieving their goal of having a community of women. In 1973, the three women travelled west for the summer in search for inspiration. They worked their way south through California and back up north to Oregon, where they found two important things: the pre-existing lesbian lands in Southern Oregon and the land available near Grant's Pass to set up their own intentional community. With Dian's stocks secured, the 23-acre parcel was the women's for good.[56]

Before the women bought their land and began to transform it, there was a cultural and social context that paved the way for them to get to Oregon. The 1960s and 1970s gave birth to a moment in which gay pride, women's liberation, and countercultural activism were public and heard on new scales. On the other hand, communalism and intentional rural living traced back further and had more traditional practitioners as well as countercultural ones. As the cultural revolutions of the time

[54] Ibid. 24.
[55] Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. "Panel: Womyn and Grrrls, Riot!". 7:15.
[56] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians*. 14.

wore on, lesbian women's separation from movements led by men became more common.

The space that gay men and lesbians occupied in the 1960s is one of the main reasons why queerness is important in understanding identity for the members of WomanShare. The Closet Culture Thesis posits that an increasingly urban and heteronormative world constrains the space in which queer people can exist safely, let alone with pride.[57] As a political artifact, space itself became central to many queer activists of the time and for arguably good reasons. As Farber and Bailey point out, "In the 1960s, gay men and lesbians risked arrest, expulsion from school, and loss of employment if their sexual orientation was discovered,".[58] In a world that also hosts racial and gendered discrimination, the secretive and severe experience of queerness had little corollary. In other words, women and people of color were more immediately identifiable than queer people and hence intentionality in creating spaces for them was clearer.

There were, however, similarities between queer people and people of color in regard to space in the 1960s into the 1970s. As Carl Wittman opines in his "Gay Manifesto": "San Francisco is a refugee camp for homosexuals… we have formed a ghetto, out of self-protection. It is a ghetto rather than a free territory because it is still theirs. Straight cops patrol us, straight legislators govern us, straight employers keep us in line, straight money exploits us,".[59] Like people of color in America, queer people were segregated and policed by an oppressive outsider. There may have been different

[57] Onkey, Lauren. "Gay gatherings: reimagining the counterculture" from *Imagine Nation: the American Counterculture of the 1960s and 70s*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013. 167.
[58] Farber, David and Beth Bailey. *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s.* Columbia University Press, New York. 2001. 134.
[59] Wittman, Carl. "A Gay Manifesto". *Liberation* 14, no. 11 (February 1970). 18.

emotions and experiences attached to these segregated spaces, but the dynamics of those segregated spaces ultimately produced political awakenings in both groups. For queer people, a space to exist that did not require secrecy and shame became a goal in opposition to this experience. For queer women, this space would also be colored by the dynamics of being a woman in the counterculture and the trend of women's separatism that came into prominence.

Women's separatism and the counterculture have a complex and close relationship throughout the 1960s and 70s. Countercultural spaces were often male-dominated or patriarchal in their operations. Such spaces were political and activist rallies and public demonstrations, where women's participation was sometimes viciously opposed. As described by John Blum, "When Marilyn Salzman Webb addressed an antiwar rally, men there shouted: 'Take her off the stage and fuck her.',".[60] Webb, a prominent New Left activist, was shown that her womanhood made her unwelcome in some countercultural spaces. Women across the country were experiencing this, and the separatist movement for women took off. Services and spaces by and for women began to take hold within the movement: "With amazing speed they spawned not only theory but practice—a web of women's health collectives, clinics, legal centers, newspapers…".[61] These organizations and services spawned all over and were still largely tied to the countercultural spaces nearby. The 'hump' of the countercultural movement, however, was a difficult one to get over. As unsavory and illegal associations led to the downfall of the early countercultural movement of the 1960s, the 1970s saw that "The counterculture did not completely disappear… as many

[60] Blum, John Morton. *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974.* WW Norton, London. 1991. 274.
[61] Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage.* Bantam Books, New York. 1987. 374.

seekers of an alternative way of life moved into rural parts of America in a -back-to-the-land movement',".[62] I posit that this transition was largely what guided the founders of WomanShare, especially Dian, Carol, and Billie (the original three) to a rural expression of the space they desired. This desire for space came both as queer individuals in larger society as well as women within a patriarchal counterculture. The fact that they found this space in Oregon is worth exploring, as the context in which rural land in Oregon existed in the 1970s is key to understanding why WomanShare developed there.

An urban planning transformation was taking place in Oregon just as WomanShare came into being. Governor Tom McCall was instituting major land use reforms and guidelines aimed at protecting rural land and environmental work through Senate Bills 100 and 101. These produced a space in which acquiring and working agricultural land for prescribed rural purposes was a cheap and easy process.[63] Oregon lands were historically accessible to white settlers and those who sought a separatist lifestyle as well. The Aurora Colony is commonly cited as an original communal space within Oregon and represents a connection between the colonial settlement of Oregon and a more modern communalist movement.[64] The attraction to rural spaces specifically, and the reason to chase cheap rural land in Oregon, came from the separatist fervor the women were operating under. The cities in which these women grew up and contextualized their womanhood in were a major symbol of their oppression. "Man

[62] Farber, David and Beth Bailey. *The Columbia Guide to America in the 1960s*. 60.
[63] Corinne, Tee. "Lesbian Communes, Communities and Cultural Institutions in 3 Rural Oregon Counties", Tee A. Corinne Papers, ColI. 263, Series III: Literary Manuscripts, Box 3, folder 34. Special Collections & University Archives, University of Oregon, Eugene, Or.
[64] Kopp, James J. "Research Files: Documenting Utopia in Oregon: The Challenges of Tracking the Quest for Perfection." Oregon Historical Quarterly 105, no. 2 (2004): 308-19. Accessed April 27, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/20615425.

energy" was attributed to urban spaces and corporate environments. It was directly correlated with bureaucracy, inaccessible jargon, hierarchy, and shame.[65] The ability to detach from that energy and work in a rural space was a historic opportunity for the queer women that made up the founders of WomanShare.

WomanShare was not the first lesbian communal space in Oregon, however, and contributed to a growing trend of lesbian communes in the state. The growth was so rapid that even those who partook were shocked. From the words of Zarod Rominski, a participant in several Oregon lesbian communes: "And so that word spread. And I think that southern Oregon was always, you know — strangely, magically, there were always a lot of women's lands. It's just like all of a sudden — boom! There was OWL Farm. There was Cabbage Lane. There was Rainbow's End. There was Fly Away Home. There was Womanshare. Just boom! boom! boom! Boom! boom! — you know, in the course of four or five years! It was kind of astounding,".[66] In establishing one space, the others were able to follow quickly. Of course, these projects required initial investments and resources of the women in order for them to be viable. The ability to afford and maintain these spaces was a responsibility that different groups managed differently, and sometimes became a source of internal conflict.

In WomanShare, the ability to own collective land came from the stocks Dian's father gave her and her willingness to exchange that kind of material wealth for a new experience. Once the land was purchased, it was in Dian's name. For them all, however, the singular ownership was incongruous with their vision of open land for women. A

[65] Miracle, Billie. "Building with Women,". WomanShare Collective Records, Box 4, Folder 5. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR. 1978. 14.
[66] Burmeister, Heather. "Interview with Zarod Rominski." *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 115, no. 1. May 13, 2011. 36-37. 37.

sense of communal ownership was an emotional necessity. As Dian pointed out about her role as the original owner of the land and how she felt about relinquishing control of it: “I am glad we own it all together and that consequently we all have an equal voice about what happens here... I am no longer alone with the total responsibility of the land on my shoulders,”.[67] This responsibility involved the ownership, labor, and restoration of the land they bought. Spreading this responsibility among her fellow lesbians was key to Dian and the other women’s personal journeys.

It is important to understand the state of the land that these women worked in order to measure it against the perceptions of and work done by WomanShare. Upon purchase, the 23 acres that the founders of WomanShare held was largely forested and unproductive. Over the years, they would build a main house, cabins, a garden that Billie used, and camping grounds.[68] These projects were spread out across time and women, giving a large number of lesbians the experience of working in nature and with it. An example of how the personal, laborious, and communal factors interacted through these projects is the house fire that the founders of WomanShare open *Country Lesbians* with.

In the early morning of August 8, 1976, the second house the founders of WomanShare built together burnt down. It was where Sue and Nelly had been staying and the experience shook them—they left the land for a short amount of time after the fire.[69] At this time the women were still transitioning into their new lifestyle and had not expanded their operation beyond the two houses for the five of them. They were

[67] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians.* 27.
[68] Retreat Advertisement. Ruth Mountaingrove Papers, Series 8, Box 55, File 17. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR. 1984.
[69] Miracle, Billie. “Building with Women,”. 4.

learning the skills to work within nature and survive and this was a major setback materially and emotionally—as evidenced by the debate the women had about how the new houses should be constructed. This debate focused on materials: which wood the house would be built with. Billie advocated for using older wood that was already available and had been used to build the still-standing house. Sue and Carol specifically wanted to take the opportunity to use new wood—it felt classier and closer to what they were comfortable with.

Jealousy about the cost and newness, interpersonal anger, and the women's exposed class values revealed that these women had a tight relationship between their work and personal desires. This relationship comes out in Billie's emotional reflection on the debate over the wood: "How do I know when my needs are going to help me grow and change and when they are trying to stop me, make me hold on, become more and more selfish? I want to feel like I am working on something greater than myself but I also need to feel taken care of…".[70] Having a connection to individual labor and desires within a community, especially surrounding decisions on the houses they were surviving in, was important to these women. The connection to labor and desire for it is illustrated further by Carol, who described the fact that she was "freaked out I won't be able to live in this thing I'm creating,"[71]. Creating a space away from the urban and masculine world required a level of work that explicitly tied their ultimate goals with the daily work they were performing. It was an emotional imperative that, especially after the house fire, the women felt a continued connection between their work and the fruits of their labor.

[70] Ibid. 7.
[71] Ibid 9.

A consistent theme for this continuation and connection is the importance of community. For WomanShare, there were two ways community was built: internally and externally. The internal forms of community-building often looked like the interpersonal negotiations about the new house enumerated earlier. These interactions and forms of work were not all so confrontational. In some cases, the simple work of observing and knowing fellow women on the land was a significant part of a woman's experience. At WomanShare, women kept track of each other's intimate relationships in drawn webs and written logs in notebooks—a form of emotional labor.[72] While not the environmental labor this thesis focuses on, these forms of labor provide more depth to the context of the work in nature by WomanShare. Environmental labor and community were closely tied to external forms of community building, which provided both the need and opportunity to further restore and render the land more productive.

This external community building came through what this project was known for, the WomanShare Retreats. These varied in length and topic, including sex workshops, craft/skill shares, and cultural encounters—such as Carol's psychic readings.[73] These workshops were also spaces for political and social activism. In fact, it was the June 1975 workshop "Money, Class, and Power" that led to the formation of the Oregon Women's Land trust.[74] As these workshops were advertised across lesbian communes and spaces across the Northwest, making the land more productive became a

[72] Personal Notebook. WomanShare Collective Records, Box 4, Folder 7. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR.
[73] Retreat Advertisement. Ruth Mountaingrove Papers, Series 8, Box 55, File 17. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR. 1984.
[74] Burmeister, Heather. "Women's lands in southern Oregon: Jean Mountaingrove and Bethroot Gwynn tell their stories." Oregon Historical Quarterly, Spring 2014, 60. Gale Academic OneFile. https://link-gale-com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/apps/doc/A372095352/AONE?u=euge94201&sid=AONE&xid=ab9f0010.

necessity. This included building cabins, producing food, and generating resources like firewood. The founders and permanent residents managed this labor and found it stressful, largely because visitors needed to feel "productive and equal,".[75] This meant that coming to the land carried the expectation of performing environmental labor and having that as an integral part of the WomanShare experience.

This expectation was set up both by the residents of WomanShare themselves as well as the social conditions the women named as the reason for separatism in the first place. In an advertisement for a WomanShare retreat, there is an explicit setting of expectations: "Work and other energy are appreciated while you are here,".[76] Spaces to sleep, food to eat, and water to drink were not a given and required work in order to produce them from their land. Asking for work as a baseline made sense for the women staying at WomanShare. In many other situations, the expectation came from an excitement to move past the energy women put into the heteronormative world. The residents reported that "We find that most women come to WomanShare at times of important change in their lives, when they are searching for answers, ready to move on,".[77] Being able to find those answers through environmental labor built the women's confidence and sense of self. This is evident in Billie Miracle's experience, as she offers a glimpse of what working the land meant to individual women:

> Taking control and gaining power over this aspect of my life has been very valuable. It has given me the confidence that I can take power over other traditionally male-identified work. It repeatedly strengthens and renews my image of myself as a strong dyke. What's more, my body always feels good after a hard day's work in the woods. I hope to be able

[75] Miracle, Billie. "Building with Women". 12.
[76] Retreat Advertisement. Ruth Mountaingrove Papers, Series 8, Box 55, File 17. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR. 1984.
[77] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians.* 164.

> to responsibly and safely continue to share this knowledge with my sisters.[78]

Performing environmental labor at WomanShare became both a wider political statement against the 'man energy' mentioned earlier as well as a deeply personal exercise in validating the identity lesbians fought so hard to build throughout the 1960s and 1970s. A separate space and the ability to transform it: the power that these women felt previously unable to grasp was now their everyday life.

This everyday life was filled with the work it took to sustain WomanShare, both as a residence and a communal project. As previously asserted, work at WomanShare was largely based on necessity, a direct result of the lesbians' focus on environmental protection and stewardship.[79] Food is a major concern for any commune, and WomanShare was no exception. The garden that Billie managed helped with produce and other food was largely bartered for or brought by incoming women.[80] Cooking and cleaning as associated with the food was a contentious issue compared to a general willingness from the women to perform environmental (traditionally male) labor. For Carol, this came in the form of abstaining from any domestic labor—an untenable position in a community where no one wants to be reduced to the traditional domestic role. "I had been fighting to maintain a privileged place within our women's commune… My sisters had lost their patience. Especially Billie and Dian who had been struggling with my kitchen phobia for two years,".[81] Producing the food and working a

[78] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians.* 110.
[79] Anderson-Minshall, Diane. "Back to the future: in Oregon and other states, the land dyke movement continues to flourish." Curve, July-August 2011, 34. Gale Academic OneFile. https://link-gale-com.libproxy.uoregon.edu/apps/doc/A264273726/AONE?u=euge94201&sid=AONE&xid=1ecc5563.
[80] Burmeister, Heather. "Women's lands in southern Oregon: Jean Mountaingrove and Beetroot Gwynn tell their stories." 60.
[81] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians: The Story of the WomanShare Collective*. 18.

garden were desirable because of their connection to traditional male roles. This offered a direct means of escaping the sense of womanhood imposed by urban society and replacing it with one more validating of individual identity.

Of course, producing food was pertinent only if they had permanent shelter to keep them on the land. Building their houses and cabins became a process of learning, skill sharing, and reckoning with the realities of the labor—personal and practical. Carol Newhouse shared in a retrospective that the founders of WomanShare lacked the skill to build but made up for it with a willingness to learn: "We were not those people… they came, and they helped us so much,".[82] "Those people" were those with the skills to survive in a rural environment. Fellow women were the source of skills and resources for building the original houses on WomanShare. Once they were taught, they found that "Building is not as hard as men would like us to believe,".[83] The women came to terms with their previous misperceptions about male-associated labor and were empowered for it. As this process continued, this extended to a more personal realm for some of the women—like Nelly, who found value in "learning to tell the difference between what is real danger and what is fear - fear due to the conditioned intimidation women have been taught to feel around dangerous tools…".[84] The women understood the difference between the reality of male-centered labor and their perceptions of it as a byproduct of their conditioning under the urban patriarchy. Once they learned to build, that conditioning wore away for a new understanding of labor in nature—a newfound confidence in their abilities as women.

[82] Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. "Panel: Womyn and Grrrls, Riot!" 17:15.
[83] Miracle, Billie. "Building with Women". 15.
[84] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians.* 109.

The women's desire to spread new experiences extended to this new understanding as well. *Country Lesbians* became a collection of lessons surrounding construction, such as a guide on how to build a shelf.[85] The sense of empowerment that came with this previously closed-off knowledge is a key outcome of the labor performed on WomanShare. Environmental labor at WomanShare produced a stronger understanding of what the self is capable of. This came in both the personal and communal senses that Billie Mentions above: a stronger body and self-image as a "strong dyke".

Building a women's community open for lesbians through the WomanShare retreats was in and of itself a major form of labor performed by these women. The skills for construction and gardening mentioned above were a major selling point. Fliers for retreats advertised new shared skills: Farming, cabin management/winterization, carpentry, construction, other "country skills" and tutorials for the use of "country tools".[86] Here, 'country' refers to both the rural/survivalist dimension of the skills as well as the male-coded aspect of them. Asking other women to perform environmental labor extended beyond a simple desire to have the work done; a deeper wish to share an experience of strengthened identity and community empowerment was a through-line for WomanShare's vision. The outcomes of this goal are evident in several notebooks housed in the University of Oregon WomanShare archives—notebooks from women filled with appreciation for the experiences WomanShare gave them. Many of these passages write of WomanShare as a product that performs as advertised, producing a novel experience. Others shared a deep appreciation of the effort and skill sharing—

[85] Ibid. 180.
[86] WomanShare Workshop Flier. Carol Newhouse Papers and Photographs, Coll. 431, Box 1, Folder 1.

being made "more whole,".[87] The ultimate function of WomanShare was to build a community in which the process of being made whole by work was a safe and enjoyable experience. Participating in workshops and the sexually open nature of the commune made the opportunity for openness and authenticity readily available.

As previously mentioned, such authenticity was largely unavailable for women and queer peoples in the 1960s and 1970s. In the outside world, the experience for WomanShare participants was still qualified by this basic oppressive reality. As they note: "We live in conservative southern Oregon… We hope people from the outside community will ask [about us] only when they are ready to know…".[88] Having a space to not only have a female or lesbian identity validated, but expanded and explored, was internally perceived as not available away from WomanShare's lands. WomanShare offered this in exchange for proceeds from workshops and the requested labor from their visitors. A new countercultural space to experiment, learn, and grow in.

WomanShare was both a reaction to the patriarchal realities of American counterculture in the 1960s and 1970s as well as an experiment in utopia for women who had not had their identities validated or strengthened in any meaningful way prior. Dismayed by the lack of opportunities for women to expand their cultural consciousness, the founders of WomanShare joined a separatist movement that sought to empower them through labor. They achieved this through environmental work: country skills that were shared as a means of identity-strengthening and community building. As the project grew, WomanShare was able to reach more and more women through their in-person workshops and informative book. These practices were the

[87] Messages Notebook. WomanShare Collective Records, Coll. 269, Box 11, Folder 3. University of Oregon Special Collections and Archives, Eugene OR.
[88] Miracle, Billie. *Country Lesbians.* 172.

means by which these women could enlighten as many other women as possible to urban patriarchy and its rural alternatives.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to provide a history of countercultural environmental labor in Oregon and understand the dynamic contexts which influenced Hoedads and WomanShare members alike. In doing so, I attempted to reject the idea that environmental work and countercultural environmentalism were solely at odds during the hippie-boom of the 1960s and 1970s. Spiritual connections to nature can coexist with necessary work that takes place in it. The countercultural and environmentalist conceptions of nature mean that presenting environmental labor in terms of regeneration, community, and identity is key. The Hoedads and WomanShare each sought to create spaces in which they could be sheltered from the realities of mainstream culture and patriarchy. This was restorative for their identities and the lands they worked on.

The Hoedads were refugees from a larger culture that did not see their values as legitimate and seemingly offered only economic and social pressure. They planted trees instead of logging projects, performing environmental work that also aligned with their environmentalist values of regeneration. Work in nature was particularly accessible for Hoedads because it provided a relief from the pressures of 'finding a job and getting a life' while also giving an opportunity to be in nature, apply their values to work, and build communities of like-minded people. They negotiated a space where they aligned with stereotypically conservative workers while pushing for and winning changes that hewed to their countercultural mindsets. While not always successful or able to complete their entire vision, Hoedads found a balance between their work and values.

WomanShare and its founders were at odds with patriarchal hierarchies within countercultural spaces and sought to build their own. Their construction, agriculture, and stewardship ensured that a swath of southern Oregon land avoided becoming barren or unused. Alongside this work, the lesbian commune provided workshops and get-togethers where they shared country skills and experiences. These events strengthened many women's self-conceptions in terms of capability to do work and outward conceptions in terms of which work actually belongs to men or women. This allowed the members of WomanShare to spread their values and illustrate the rural alternatives to urban patriarchal life.

This thesis relies on holding these two groups as similar in order to draw a larger picture regarding environmental work, the counterculture, and the space where the two meet. The groups are obviously similar for the fact they were in Oregon, performed environmental labor, and had links to the counterculture. They were also similar because their self-perceptions required opposition: the Hoedads struggling against bureaucracy/social stigma and WomanShare members against patriarchy. This is a similarity also shared by anti-environmentalist environmental workers, as the collapse of industries like timber correlated with rising environmentalist sentiments and government regulation. Environmental workers form communities which act to protect their members: the Hoedads against pesticides, WomanShare members against male oppression, and environmental laborers in general against economic destitution.

Hoedads and WomanShare members also had plenty of differences. While feminism was central to WomanShare's social activities and way of life, Hoedads' views were more mixed. While some crews were women-only or had feminist flavor,

many members (including women) rejected feminism outright. WomanShare had a feminist connection to a certain piece of land and the work they did on it—building houses, planting gardens, digging a well. Hoedads had a more general connection to nature and trees, having more special relationships to each other and their crews. Lastly, in this non-exhaustive list, is the fact that Hoedads did not practice urban-rural separatism in the same way that WomanShare did. Camping in nature and living on the job was an iconic aspect of working as a Hoedad. Also returning to Eugene for the Renaissance Faire was a part of the Hoedad experience. WomanShare members avoided such excursions. Another whole thesis could be produced with these groups just looking at their differences and what they imply about the counterculture and environmental work.

Other future research on these groups could focus in on a variety of aspects and ignore others, instead of giving a more general review like this. As mentioned previously, the role of womanhood in environmental work is a fascinating difference in the views of Hoedads and WomanShare members. A deep dive into the experiences of women Hoedads has not been done and could shine a light on the attitudes and understandings that members of both groups held. Looking to the future, applying counterculture and environmentalist values to ‘green jobs’ and new conceptions of environmental labor will also be important. If we value the communities that perform environmental labor, but also value nature and preserving the earth from climate change, we will need new work for them and new ways of seeing the work they do.

That new way of seeing is the ultimate goal of this project, and much of history in general. Hoedads and WomanShare members are accessible and relatable examples

for environmental workers to understand how applying environmentalist thinking to their labor is not a contradiction. They are also a good example for environmentalists who see work in nature as disruptive and exploitative. The space in the middle is a mutual understanding of and respect for community building, personal identity, and work done in—and out of—nature.

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