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Woodstock: The creation and evolution of a myth

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WOODSTOCK:

THE CREATION AND

EVOLUTION OF A MYTH

by

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, the 1969 Woodstock festival will be studied as a myth which has been perpetuated by the media. To show that Woodstock has indeed become a myth, this study looks at the way the festival has been reported in the media and understood by the public.

First, Woodstock is analyzed as a cultural event of the 1960s. That decade is described in order to give the reader perspective about the political and sociological influence that Woodstock has on American culture.

A number of scholars, including Eliade, Braden, and Rowland, have theorized that myth is an important cultural event. The journal articles and books are used to create a definition of a myth. Woodstock is compared to the deductions of these scholars to show that the myth follows their rules.

Newspaper articles from August, 1969 are examined to see how reporters depicted Woodstock. Current articles, starting from 1989, are analyzed to show the influence of Woodstock on American society.

Results of a survey conducted about the average person's perceptions about the festival is discussed. Personal interviews with two men who attended Woodstock are also mentioned. The information from these people are examined in order to show that the Woodstock festival has become a myth.

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Chapter One

Introduction

When most people think of Woodstock they envision hippies, drugs, and peace. The Woodstock Music and Arts Fair, held in Bethel, New York in August of 1969, left a legacy that can be described as an icon of the 1960s counterculture. Famous musicians like Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, The Who and The Grateful Dead performed at the three day concert. Much of the myth of Woodstock was based on the music those musicians produced but a positive image has also grown of the people who spent three days patiently suffering inclement weather, lack of food, and poor sanitation. A typical description of the festival is offered by Robert Hillburn:

> But the real star of Woodstock was the audience, the estimated 300,000 to 700,000 people whose odyssey 20 years ago became one of the 20th Century's most dramatic and widely celebrated symbols of social change. The colorfully garbed hippies and the far larger, sympathetic legion of young people who shared some of the hippie idealism were no longer some wayward fringe; they were the new voice of young America.
>
> Lou Adler believes the human story of the half a million or so people huddling peacefully together in primitive, rain-swept conditions was the most powerful aspect of the Woodstock story and mystique (Hillburn, R., [1989, June 18] The Irony of Woodstock. Los Angeles Times).

This study focuses on the impact that the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair has made on American culture. That impact from the

festival is particularly apparent because of the public interest in Woodstock that has continued since 1969. As the twenty-fifth anniversary of the concert nears, the media increasingly is focusing on reunion concerts, the 1960s, and the counterculture.

In order to begin to understand the public's interest level, an informal survey was conducted on perceptions of Woodstock. Interest in Woodstock was apparent in the study which surveyed respondents whose ages ranged from 17 to 52. The study revealed that younger Americans, ages 17-21, perceive Woodstock to be an event where the people who attended hung out, smoked pot, dropped acid, and listened to music. One respondent replied that Woodstock was "One of the first biggest concerts ever" and it makes people think of "peace, love and LSD" replied an 18-year-old male. Older individuals in the group did not have the same ideas of grandeur about the concert. For example, one respondent, a 51-year-old female, wrote that Woodstock was "a bunch of hippies running around doing drugs in the name of peace."

The focus group revealed that many Americans learned about Woodstock from different types of media: television, movies, and the radio. Although performers like Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jefferson Airplane were only popular for certain groups during the 1960s, their music continues to be played daily on classic rock radio stations. For example, there is a recent tribute album to Hendrix. The younger generation is listening to these radio stations, therefore gaining an increased awareness of and reverence for the artists who performed at the festival.

This thesis outlines the history of the 1969 concert and then shows the impact the concert had on American culture. The study explains how Woodstock has evolved into a myth.

Review of Literature

Scholars and other writers have attempted to describe the influence of the counterculture and Woodstock on later generations. The works of these writers are examined in an attempt to understand the Woodstock phenomenon. Sources of information include books, journals, magazine and newspaper articles concerning the 1960s counterculture, the Woodstock festival, and myth.

Books

Roszak's The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections of the Technocratic Society and Its Youthful Opposition offers a definition of a counterculture:

> A counterculture must be significant enough both in numbers and in critical force to merit independent attention which is required so the counterculture can transform this disoriented civilization into something a human can identify as home (Roszak, 1969, p. xii).

Other books, including Tipton's Getting Saved from the Sixties, Kenniston's Young Radicals : Notes on Committed Youth, and Miller's The Hippies and American Values provide descriptions of the counterculture. Their descriptions will be helpful in detailing the counterculture's lifestyle and beliefs. Koerselman's The Lost Decade:

A Story of America in the 1960s discusses why the hippies attended music festivals. According to Koerselman, music festivals were a kind of pilgrimage or crusade for the hippies.

The best descriptions of the festival are found in Wavy Gravy's The Hog Farm and Friends and Hoffman's Woodstock Nation. Both writers describe the entire festival--from setting up the hospitals and feeding the patrons to cleaning up the field at the conclusion of the concert. The books are helpful because these two men had hands-on experience organizing the hospital and the kitchen of the festival.

An oral history has been compiled from the promoters of Woodstock. The book, Woodstock: The Oral History, describes the stages of the concert, from the inception of the idea of holding the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair, and describes Woodstock based on interviews with the promoters and their crew.

Magazines

Magazines will be used in order to describe Woodstock and the counterculture. A 1967 Time article, "The Hippies: Philosophy of a Subculture," described hippies as:

> Young Americans who are unable to reconcile themselves to the stated values and implicit contradictions of contemporary Western society and have become emigres, seeking individual liberation through means as various as drug use, total withdrawal from the economy and the quest for individual identity (p. 18).

Two years later, the hippies converged at the Woodstock festival. The effects of the counterculture was exemplified at Woodstock, where between 300,000 to 600,000 people lived on a farm in upstate New York, surviving with a minimal basic necessities like food, water, and shelter. The conditions were described in magazines which will be used in this thesis like Time, Life, Newsweek, The New Republic, and CD Review.

Newspapers

Articles found in the New York Times contained statistical information about the event like the number of casualties at Woodstock, and the estimated number of people who attended the fair. The newspapers contained reports about the traffic jams caused by people traveling to the gathering and reactions to the festival and the attendants from local police. Other newspapers with similar information include The Virginian-Pilot, Boston Globe, San Francisco Examiner, Detroit Free Press, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post.

Motion Pictures

The movie Woodstock is a useful vehicle to study the event. It shows the entire process of setting up the festival as well as including interviews with townspeople, hippies, police officers and the owner of the farm, Max Yasgur.

Journals

Writers often refer to Woodstock as a myth. The cultural aspect of myth is discussed in Braden's "Myths in a Rhetorical

Context" which appeared in The Southern Speech Communication Journal. The writer proposes that myths are the result of memory and imagination and are the result of a collective effort (from a culture) over time.

In an article found in the 1970 issue of The Journal of Communication titled "Myth in Communication," Sykes takes a concise look at myth. Sykes gives concrete examples about what myth should include, such as: "Myth is used consciously and deliberately, to arouse emotional responses; in communicating the perceptions of a situation it also communicated the emotions aroused by that perception" (Sykes, 1970, p. 20).

In a 1990 Communication Studies journal article titled "On Mythical Criticism," Rowland gives a description of what a myth should entail in terms of classification:

> Myths rely heavily on archetypal language and answer basic societal needs. Because archetypes function as the most powerful symbols in a society it makes sense that they would be present in a myth. The main characters in a myth must be heroic in order to fulfill their function. Myths usually occur outside of the normal world or in a real place possessing special symbolic power because heroes should act in a truly heroic place. Myths usually occur outside of a normal historical time or in a period that, because of the great symbolic power associated with it, has been transformed into a mythical time (Rowland, 1990, p. 104).

These articles help define myth as well as provide a methodology for this study.

Methodology

Woodstock will be studied as a historical and rhetorical event. This study describes the concert in order to show the influence that the concert has had on American culture. The influence of Woodstock on American youth defines its power as a myth which has grown and changed over time. Using the works of Rowland and Braden, Woodstock is analyzed as a powerful event that has become an American cultural myth.

In this thesis, myth is used as an analytical tool for examining Woodstock. Rowland's definition of myth is used in describing Woodstock:

> While apparently there is a disagreement over the functions served by myth, a closer look reveals that all of the functions I have mentioned can be treated as part of a larger function, answering human problems that cannot be answered discursively. The key point is that through myth we define the good society and solve problems, not subject to rational solution (Rowland, 1990, p.102).

Woodstock can be seen as an example of the good society that Rowland discussed. Over three days, thousands of people lived communally without any of the violence that defined much of the 1960s. Although the Woodstock community could not exist permanently, the people who took part in the event proved that the

problems of the 1960s could be curbed for a few days. The legacy of Woodstock, the myth of Woodstock is the society that was created during the concert.

According to Rowland, myth is not a subject of rational descriptions. The myth of Woodstock is not rational, but it does project the good society that was sought by members of the 1960s counterculture.

This study will also use the ideas from "On Mythical Criticism" to examine how Woodstock became a myth. The study utilizes the images of the event and describes how these images grew and changed in the minds of the public to become a modern myth.

According to Braden, myth "represents an oversimplication of events, persons, and relationships that contain both reality and fiction" (Braden, 1975, p. 116). In order to understand the myth of Woodstock, it is important to understand what transpired at the concert. The description of Woodstock `includes the organization of the festival, the number of people who attended the festival, the inclement weather, and providing first aid and food to the patrons.

In order to comprehend the significance of the festival, it is necessary to understand the people who were the inspiration for the concert--the counterculture. These youngsters were going through a stage of rebellion that was new to the United States. To understand Woodstock, the counterculture also has to be understood. The history and the philosophy of the counterculture will be discussed in this thesis.

Braden says that myth "gains acceptance and strength through repetition" (Braden, 1975, p. 120). The myth of Woodstock has

grown through repetition which has not been in the traditional manner. Instead of children learning about Woodstock at a young age such as Johnny Appleseed, the myth of Woodstock has been perpetuated by the media to teenagers. For example, the movie, released by Warner Brothers, shows the people listening to music and playing in the woods. The movie was shown repeatedly on MTV during the summer of 1989, the 20th anniversary of Woodstock. Other media, such as rock radio stations, play the music of the Woodstock musicians for the younger generation.

Why would Woodstock become an important mythical event, while during the 1960s rock festivals were prevalent in the counterculture music scene? The Rolling Stones concert in Altamont, California ended in tragedy due to a stabbing of a young boy. Other festivals, like the Monterey Pop Festival, did not have the significant numbers of people like Woodstock. Even though a multitude of famous musicians performed, Woodstock is renowned for the harmony between the people. Some say that the rain made Woodstock important while others, like Abbie Hoffman, say it was the multitudes of people. Whatever the reason, Woodstock may be the most famous music festival of the era.

Chapter Two

Woodstock: A Mythic History

We are stardust, we are golden
And we got to get ourselves back to the garden
Caught in the devil's bargain
And we got to get ourselves back to the garden

Time we got to Woodstock
We were half a million strong
And everywhere was song and celebration--
"Woodstock" by Joni Mitchell

The purpose of this chapter is to create a feeling for the 1960s, a decade that cumulated in a music festival that became one of the defining events of a generation. In this chapter, an overview of the events of 1960s provides an understanding of the counterculture. This will be accomplished by discussing key events in a chronological order to understand the era that created a political, musical phenomenon, Woodstock.

After the events of the sixties are detailed, the Woodstock festival will be analyzed. A description of the concert includes a list of the legendary performers who drew the mass audience to the farm in the Catskills, the steps the promoters took to organize Woodstock including their use of the media, and a feeling for the conditions that the people who spent time at the festival encountered.

The Sixties

One of the major influences of the sixties was the counterculture. In this section, the counterculture is analyzed, then the protests and riots that rocked the 1960s are discussed. These events changed the state of the world in terms of recognizing freedom for the counterculture and other groups. In the late 1960s the counterculture became appealing to a large group of people, according to Albert and Albert,

> In campus towns and large cities across the country, a dissident community emerged; it was called by many names but most frequently was referred to as "The Movement." This phenomenon was rooted in many sources, including the Student Non-Violent Co-Ordinating Committee's early idea of community, new left participatory democracy, Black Panther anger, and the Haight-Ashbury's experimental attitude towards drugs, sexual freedom, and exotic fashions of dress.
>
> The Movement was ecumenical in its social composition; it consisted of individuals who were usually separated from each other by class, age, racial and cultural differences. Although students continued to predominate, the Movement came to include GIs, older radicals, gay rights activists, disabled people, high school students, women's liberation militants, youth culture dropouts, senior citizens and alienated children of the very rich and of the working class (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 28).

College students on different campuses across the country protested against the Vietnam war, university rules, and the policies of the government. They protested in order to change the archaic rules of the systems. The philosophy of the counterculture, which included drug use, was new and disarming compared to the rigidness and conformity of the 1950s.

The 1950s is discussed in order to understand the mentality of the country. According to Albert and Albert, "Throughout the 1950s, powerful public and private groups waged campaigns of censorship against political and sexual nonconformists, purging present and former communist party members, freethinkers and homosexuals from institutions of government, education, and culture" (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 2). Students in the 1960s began to rebel against the 1950's lifestyle. There was rebellion in all groups in the youth culture: blacks, homosexuals, students, etc.

The counterculture eventually evolved into separate groups. One of these groups was the hippies. Miller describes the hippies: "The hippies were mainly considered children of privilege, and their outlook reflected their heritage. They glorified poverty and sometimes lived in it; they championed the rights of racial minorities and, to some extent, women. But the movement came from a prosperous, white, male-defined segment of society" (Miller, 1991, p. 15).

Members of counterculture could be distinguished from the rest of the youth by their lifestyles and their attitudes. According to Albert and Albert:

> An increasingly vapid rock and roll was being replaced on the hit charts by "folk rock" and protest songs. Driving on the radical folk tradition of the Weavers and Woody Gutherie, groups like Peter, Paul and Mary, and the Kingston Trio began singing "songs of social significance." The young poet and musician Bob Dylan gained overnight fame with his timely and bitter ballads excorcating war makers and racists. His prophetic "The Times They are a Changin" would become akin to a national anthem for Sixties protesters (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 14).

Music of the 1960s became more outrageous than that of the 1950s. In the 1960s, the musical lyrics and on-stage performances by the bands were more sexually explicit and angrier than in the previous decade. The hippies listened to groups like Jefferson Airplane, Led Zepplin, the Rolling Stones and The Who. The antics of the performers and the long outrageous performances helped to define that generation. According to Haskins and Benson,

> The music of the 1960s can be distinguished from other periods of music by three main characteristics. First, it reflected the new sexual permissiveness by including obviously sexy lyrics. Second, until the mid 1950s, pop music was aimed at both teenagers and their parents. Third, both pop-music musicians and their audiences were overwhelmingly middle class and white (Haskins and Benson, 1988, p. 81).

Haskins and Benson describe the sounds of the sixties as "harsh." "The country's musical center has shifted from Motown to San Francisco. The solid establishment of the new drug culture had

combined with the revival of rock to produce acid rock, the aural equivalent of an LSD trip" (Haskins and Benson, 1988, p. 100). Members of the counterculture of the 1960s were often involved with the drug scene, generally with marijuana and LSD--the two most prominent drugs at Woodstock.

Before Woodstock occurred, racial turmoil in different regions of the country caused uprisings and riots. At the beginning of the decade, four black students staged a sit-in in North Carolina protesting racial segregation:

> On February 1, 1960 four black college students sat down at a lunch counter in Greensboro. Because they had located themselves in the "whites only" section, the young people were refused service. The store manager declared that he would not accommodate "colored" since doing so would violate Woolworth's policy of adhering to local segregationist custom. The four remained seated until the store's closing. Growing numbers of students, mostly blacks and a few whites, joined in the nonviolent protest (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 6).

Students united against the establishment. They were angry about the injustices and conformity that were commonplace in the 1950s. According to Albert and Albert,

> In June 1962, Students for a Democratic Society, an organization of radical college students, collectively wrote and published the Port Huron Statement, a document that offered the vision and philosophic rationale for the New Left. The term New Left was loosely used to distinguish its advocates from the

> traditional or "old" left, which was composed of the Communist party, etc. Both the "old" and New Left had in common a declared passion for social justice, but New Leftists believed they were more concerned that the old radicals with arriving at political decisions by democratic means and not manipulating those whom they were trying to organize (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 10).

Students also rebelled against university administrators. One of the most famous incidents began at the University of California at Berkeley. In the fall of 1964, student organizations were trying to raise money for the civil rights movement in the San Francisco Bay area. University officials banned all political activity that was not directly concerned with campus affairs. This decisions caused protests and sit-ins by the students. Similar protests eventually erupted on campuses all over the country, including Columbia in April, 1968 and San Francisco State in November, 1968.

At the same time, the blacks continued to protest for civil rights. On August 6, 1965 the Voting Rights Act passed and a comprehensive Civil Rights Act was passed in 1966. Legislation like the Voting Rights Act was an attempt to abolish legal segregation in the South. These acts did not end the injustice the blacks faced. Blacks responded to the injustice with violence. According to Gitlin, "By the end of July 1967, 83 people were dead and thousands wounded in scores of black riots" (Gitlin, 1987, p. 244).

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee. That night eighty riots broke out around the country. According to Gitlin, "By the time Martin Luther King was

shot down, there was no way to resurrect the nonviolence he had stood and died for" (Gitlin, 1987, p. 305).

The Vietnam War was a major cause of protest marches, and sit-ins, by the counterculture. According to Gitlin, "On April 17, 1965, when 25,000 students marched in Washington against the Vietnam War, there were about 25,000 American troops in Vietnam. At the end of 1965 there were 184,000 troops. By the end of 1967 the number was 486,000 and 15,000 had been killed" (Gitlin, 1987, p. 242). The increase of American involvement in the war escalated the number of protests all over the country.

As the war continued, protests increased. Young men burned their draft cards and riots took lives of protestors all over the country. In October of 1967, a sit-in to protest the draft took place in Oakland, California. According to Gitlin, "124 were arrested, including Joan Baez, all walking sedately into the paddy wagon" (Gitlin, 1987, p. 249). This sit-in started the Stop the Draft Week where six thousand students protested the draft.

In the spring of 1968, Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not run for a second term as President. According to Albert and Albert:

> Leaders of the antiwar movement viewed the president's decision as a partial victory that created for them a tactical dilemma. They had planned to demonstrate at the upcoming Democratic convention in Chicago, but since the nomination would probably go to Senator Robert Kennedy, a peace candidate, many antiwar activists were no longer sure that their protest would serve a useful

> purpose. When Robert Kennedy was gunned down after winning the California primary, the political situation changed dramatically. Now there was little likelihood that the Democratic party would give its presidential nomination to an advocate of peace. Many activists became convinced that demonstrations at the Democratic convention were imperative. For them, it was "On to Chicago" (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 30).

The protests at the Democratic convention in Chicago caused riots and the arrests of hundreds of the protestors. According to Gitlin,

> Given the movement decision to go to Chicago, Daley had by far the greater latitude to keep the peace, and infinitely the greater armament: the purported demonstrators' weapons he displayed afterward were largely improvised (the piece de resistance was a black widow spider in a jar) or decidedly nonlethal--not a single gun. Therefore by far the greater responsibility for the spilling of blood was the mayor's (Gitlin, 1987, p. 319)

The next large protest was in Berkeley in 1969. Thousands of students and citizens of Berkeley built a park on property that belonged to the University. People built benches and swings, and planted flowers and grass in a formerly empty lot. According to Albert and Albert,

> Campus officials declared that this unauthorized use of property would not be tolerated. With the active support of Governor Ronald Reagan, they directed police to build a barbed wire fence around the park. For a week, thousands battled with local police, Alameda County sheriffs, and eventually the

> National Guard. The People's Park supporters were beaten, fired upon with deadly force, or arrested en masse. Police helicopters dropped tear gas on the entire city of Berkeley. For the first time in the Sixties, police received official sanction to use guns against white demonstrators. An estimated 100 protesters were wounded by shotgun blasts and one youth, James Rector, was killed (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 39).

The spring of 1969 was relatively uneventful after the incident at People's Park. The next event the counterculture would experience was the Woodstock festival in August 1969. That spring, four men were planning a music festival in New York, headlined by The Who, the Grateful Dead, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin.

Albert and Albert and Gitlin concur that Woodstock was the Festival of Life, a celebration of being young that the counterculture wanted to happen at the Chicago convention. Albert and Albert argue that "Woodstock exemplified the peaceful aspirations of an entire generation of young Americans" (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 40). Gitlin argues,

> If the youth culture was too squishy to become a people's army, surely it was at least a luminous prefiguration of the cooperative commonwealth, Abbie Hoffman's "Woodstock Nation," People's Park writ large, that possible and impending good society the vision of which would keep politicos honest (Gitlin, 1987, p. 406).

The Woodstock Music and Arts Festival

> It was the world's biggest traffic jam. It was thousands of tents and twice as many sleeping bags under the open sky. It was a hazy cloud of sweet-smelling, or a water shortage, or a leisurely swim--often without swimsuit--in a brown pond or stream. It was slogging through mud created by heavy rains after Friday's opening seven hours of music, an evening unforgettably concluded when Joan Baez, sensing the discomfort of many of her listeners, lulled them to rest with a solo performance lasting more than two hours (Schart, 1969, p. 7).

Woodstock was the brainchild of four men: John Roberts, Joel Rosenman, Michael Lang, and Artie Kornfeld. Roberts and Rosenman were roommates in New York City. Roberts inherited money that he wanted to invest in a business. The men put an ad in the Wall Street Journal that said "Young men with unlimited capital looking for interesting and legitimate business ideas" (Makower, 1989, p. 24). According to Roberts:

> Miles Lourie knew that we had been putting together this studio operation and he called us in February 1969. Miles was an attorney in New York and he had Michael Lang as a client. He said, "I have a couple of clients who are very interested in building a recording studio in Woodstock, New York. Would you meet them?" We said, "Sure. What's on the table?" And Miles said, "Well, they are looking for some advice and some capital, and I don't know what could come of it but the guys are about your age. They are a little different then you are." I

> remember Miles telling us, "Don't be put off by the long hair and the garb. But why don't you guys see what comes of it?" (Makower, 1989, p. 24).

Kornfeld, vice president of Capitol Records in New York, and Lang, who organized the Miami Pop Festival, were business associates and friends. According to Lang,

> I had been thinking about doing a series of concerts in Woodstock. Sort of making it a summer, like Newport. And I had mentioned it to Artie. We used to kick it around every now and then, and then the idea of opening a recording studio up there, because it was such a good area for that. Bands liked it and there were a lot of people living there--The Band and Janis Joplin and her band and Dylan and parts of Blood, Sweat, and Tears--just lots of different producers and a lot of musicians coming in and out (Makower, 1989, p. 26).

Miles Lourie introduced Roberts and Rosenman to Lang and Kornfeld. Roberts and Rosenman became involved with Lang's business, Media Sound. Roberts explains "The basic agreement that we came to was that Joel and I would provide the seed money [for the festival]" (Makower, 1989, p. 36). The original corporation, Woodstock Ventures, was the production vehicle for the festival. The profits from the festival would provide the money to finance the studio.

One of the problems the group faced was finding an ideal location to hold the concert. According to Roberts, "Michael had told us we had a site up near Woodstock, in Saugertis actually, but then we all went up to negotiate with the landholder, and he had

absolutely no intention of letting us use his property for this purpose at all" (Makower, 1989, p. 55).

Another site was found near Wallkill, where planning of the festival began in April. Woodstock Ventures sent some employees from New York to Wallkill to arrange for lighting to prepare the area for the festival. According to Rosenman, "The presence of longhairs in town brought some reality to the theory of the Woodstock festival to these [townspeople]. At one point we were advised that [our group in Wallkill] was under surveillance for drug use" (Makower, 1989, p. 88). The town's people became hostile. Eventually the show had to be relocated because the Wallkill zoning board rejected the permit for the festival in June.

The men of Woodstock Ventures kept searching for a location. An associate of the company, Mel Lawrence, described how they found the final location:

> I don't know how it happened, but the next was the Yasgur farm. Oh, I know how it happened: there was a middleman who somehow got wind of this. The middleman, in the old Central European tradition, is the guy who puts deals together; he just keeps his ears open. So he takes us to Max Yasgur's house and Yasgur comes out and he hops in the car and we're off. And there it is. It's like a lake and a natural amphitheater and roads and woods. Michael and I looked at each other and said, "This is it." We were happy, we were smiling (Makower, 1989, p. 115).

The next step involved finding people to help clear the land, get the area ready for the concert, find security, and help to clean up

after the gathering. The men decided on a group that lived on a New Mexico commune called the Hog Farmers. The commune had two "leaders," Wavy Gravy and Tom Law. The Hog Farmers left New Mexico for New York three weeks before Woodstock began. According to Wavy Gravy:

> An initial group left to clear the land. Hog farm recruits, about 80 people from communes all over the state [New Mexico], were sent to handle the trails, the kitchen and crowds. Woodstock Ventures charted a plane for the group. There was a lot of press there when the plane landed. One question [from the reporters] was "I understand you guys are here for security. What will be used as weapons?" I replied "Seltzer bottles and cream pies" (Wavy Gravy, 1974, p. 68-69).

The event and ticket sales were mainly promoted through advertisements in newspapers and magazines across the country. Woodstock Ventures hired people to deal with radio stations, local papers, and local TV. One woman, Rona Elliot, went to local community groups in towns near Woodstock, to tell them how beneficial the festival would be to the area. Tickets were sold for $7 a day and $12 for the entire weekend. According to Roberts, "I think we had a very modest idea that maybe we'd have 25 thousand people, at six bucks a day. There was a pie-in-the-sky budget that showed if 75 thousand people could be induced to attend, that we would all be on Easy Street forever" (Makower, 1989, p.36).

Youngsters were attracted to upstate New York from all over the United States. The festival had been advertised on the radio, in

newspapers and magazines. Posters advertising "Three Days of Peace and Music" with copy that talked about fields, streams and crafts were distributed around the country. There was Mail-Order information and a ticket-order form that was available in magazines. The contracting of movie rights to Warner Brothers had been publicized. According to Rosenman:

> It translated itself into what we wrote for the advertising copy. We decided that we would slant this festival in such a way that it gave the kids what they were dreaming about. It was easy, because it wasn't so hard to find a place in the country; they all liked that. It wasn't so hard to promise them that they would be free from hassles from their parents because their parents weren't invited. And on and on like that. There was something exotic that they all wanted. They had simple dreams, pleasant ones (Makower, 1989, p. 104).

The audience may have been attracted to the festival for a number of reasons. The list of bands that were scheduled to perform was extensive. The performers included Joan Baez, Blood Sweat and Tears, The Paul Butterfield Blues Band, The Band, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Canned Heat, Crosby, Stills and Nash, Country Joe and the Fish, Joe Cocker, Arlo Gutherie, the Grateful Dead, Tom Hardin, Jimi Hendrix, Richie Havens, Keif Hartley, the Incredible String Band, Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, the Joshua Light Show, Melanie, Mountain, Quill, John Sebastian, Ravi Shankar, Sly and the Family Stone, Bert Sommer, Santana, Sweetwater, Ten Years After, Johnny Winter, and The Who.

So many fans showed up that warnings were released by security and police that Sullivan County was "a great big parking lot" (Collier, 1969, p. 1). According to the New York Times, the young people were leaving their cars on the roads, which were packed with traffic, and walking to the festival. Apparently all the roads leading into Bethel were closed due to the traffic for the festival. According to the New York Times, "The police and the festival's promoters both expressed amazement that despite the size of the crowd--the largest gathering of its kind ever held--there had been neither violence or any serious incident" (Collier, 1969, p. 31).

The people attending the festival were "carrying sleeping bags and tents, canned food and guitars, dressed in beads, leather, and bandanas, and long gowns. The young people spoke of sleeping under the stars and possible riots" (Collier, 1969, p. 22).

The promoters were shocked that the festival drew such a huge crowd. The calculations the promoters had for the number of people attending the concert were tripled. The area was not prepared to handle such a large group. For example, the promoters were unable to handle the number of people who walked into the festival without purchasing a ticket. People just walked into the area without paying. The movie shows teens tearing down chain-link fences to open the area. According to Albert and Albert, "Although the festival promoters had intended to charge admission, it was the gate crashers who prevailed. In accord with the movement's anticommercial values, the decade's most significant rock concert was free" (Albert and Albert, 1984, p. 40).

The concert started at around 4:00 Friday afternoon on August 15. All the performers had to be flown in by helicopter because the roads to the festival were closed due to traffic. The first performer was Richie Havens. According to Blum, "Folklore has it that Woodstock was his big break. He was the first performer on stage, thanks to a twist of fate. 'I went on first because there was no one else there to go on,' he said. All the other groups were stuck in traffic" (Blum, 1990, p. 5). According to Havens, "I did about four or five encores, till I had nothing else to sing, and then 'Freedom' was created right there on stage. That's how 'Freedom' was created, on the stage. It was the last thing that I could think to sing. I made it up" (Makower, 1989, p. 188).

Country Joe McDonald was next to perform. He went on the stage solo, without his band because they were stuck in traffic. Later that night John Sebastian performed, along with Swami Satchadinanda, an Indian guru. According to Lang, "Friday, the programming was sort of easing in. It was Ravi Shankar and Joan Baez and Tim Hardin and Arlo Gutherie and Sweetwater. And Sly was sort of to build the evening a bit. You needed some sort of excitement in there. Sly provided it" (Makower, 1989, p. 193).

On Friday night it rained. According to Stanly Goldstein, an associate of Woodstock Ventures, "Friday night was a real whipper. We were confronted with an unusual run of weather. It rained considerably more than what the averages indicated. And there were a couple of freak storms, particularly during the show" (Makower, 1989, p. 196). Abbie Hoffman describes the night of the rain storms, "Friday night late when the rain came pouring down in

the bucket kids came running into the woods down 'Gentle Way' and 'Groovy Lane.' They were shivering cold and sneezing to the tune of Joan Baez 'We Shall Overcome' " (Hoffman, 1971, p. 98-99).

The morning after the rain, the area was a disaster. According to Hoffman,

> The morning after the rains came was the most chaotic sight you could ever imagine. The performance area had turned into a huge slide of mud, people, collapsed tents, overturned motorcycles, cans, bottles, and garbage galore--man there was more fuckin' garbage than in the Lower East Side during the entire garbage strike (Hoffman, 1971, p.134-35).

During the night, there was one death. A boy was sleeping in a field and was run over by a truck. According to Hog Farmer Tom Law:

> The first thing that happened the morning of the festival was that this kid died in my arms. I got a call on the walkie-talkie, "Some kid's been run over by the honey wagon" (truck designed to clean Port-O-Sans). Some local farmer had just hopped in and hooked his tractor to the honey wagon . . . and rolled over this kid instead of looking underneath. But this young, rather frail probably sixteen or seventeen-year-old boy from the Bronx had his last few breaths in my arms while I tried to hold his head and tell him everything was going to be OK. They took the kid away in an ambulance, but he was already dead. Stupid, totally unnecessary mistake (Makower, 1989, p. 359).

On Saturday some of the Hog Farmers and other counterculture "leaders" designated an area for a hospital and a kitchen. According to the New York Times, about 400 people were treated for bad reactions to drugs during the three day event (Collier, 1969, p. 1). The army sent medical teams, supplies and equipment for the festival, which was designated as a disaster area by local authorities.

The hospitals at the concert were run by people from the counterculture. According to Hoffman, "We took over a pink and white tent that had been used to feed the staff and divided it into two sections. Food section to the left, hospital to the right" (Hoffman, 1971, p.135). According to Gravy, "Abbie Hoffman organized the hospital tent (Big Pink it was called) almost single-handed. He sorted out the doctors from the patients and the operation was a success" (Gravy, 1974, p.77).

The helicopters that were flying in performers were also flying in food from local wholesalers and merchants. Some locals ran their wells dry giving water to the festival goers (Makower, 1989, p. 216-217). In the movie, local merchants, such as restaurant owners and market owners, are quoted as saying that the festival was good for business.

One of the the situations stressed by the media was the lack of food for these hundreds of thousands of young people. Locals were giving away food and Yasgur gave away some dairy products. According to Hog Farmer Lisa Law, "If people wanted to eat, we had the food, if they wanted to walk over to the Hog Farm. There was this talk about hunger and I said, "What hunger?" If they didn't

want to get up and walk over then that was their problem. But there was no lack of food at Woodstock" (Makower, 1989, p. 214).

The performances continued throughout the weekend. Jefferson Airplane, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Janis Joplin, and The Who performed Saturday night. The music festival was concluded Sunday with performances by Joe Cocker, Crosby, Stills, and Nash. Jimi Hendrix was the last performer. He concluded the festival with a rendition of the "Star-Spangled Banner." According to Rona Elliot:

> There were moments where the event overwhelmed anything the music could say. The morning of the end of the show, and I was up in the operations trailer, I can remember hearing this unbelievable guitar lick. It was four-thirty in the morning, and I came out to a deserted sea of mud with maybe ten or twenty or thirty thousand people left--a sea of mud which had been turned over because of the rain and smelled from the manure that had been fertilized in the alfalfa. And I mean turned-over mud: you put your foot in it and you went down six inches, eight inches, you know, with the smell of manure wafting up at you at four-thirty in the Catskills. And it was Jimi Hendrix playing "The Star-Spangled Banner." It is burned into my memory. I mean it was a remarkable experience (Makower, 1989, p. 287).

The festival was a phenomenal experience for some of the participants, and horrifying for others. People lost the friends with whom they came with to the concert, others got sick from too many drugs. Abbie Hoffman puts the concert in perspective:

> Two days ago (the day after the whole Woodstock thing was over), I realized I had badly misjudged the event. See, if you consider the event as a festival in the traditional sense of the work, like the Monterey Pop Festival, then three people getting killed, a few thousand injuries, lack of food and water and hundreds of bum trips led you to bad conclusions about what happened. If, on the other hand, you consider that the sheer number of beautiful people struggling against the inclement weather, and basic needs of survival, turned the festival into a Nation dedicated to Victory, then the bummers get put in quite a different perspective (Hoffman, 1971, p.4).

Even with all the hassles the local police and townspeople went through, such as traffic, and strange kids infiltrating their city, most had positive things to say about the counterculture. "Not withstanding their personality, their dress, and their ideas, they were and they are the most courteous, considerate and well-behaved group of kids I have ever been in contact with in my 24 years of police work," said Lou Yank, head of Monticello's 25-man constabulary (Kaufman, 1969, p. 25).

According to the New York Times, after the festival was over, "Waves of weary youngsters streamed away from the Woodstock Music and Arts Festival last night and early today as security officials reported at least two deaths and 4,000 people treated for injuries, illness and adverse drug reactions over the festival's three-day period" (Collier, 1969, p. 1).

The Hog Farmers stayed after the festival to help clean the field. According to Gravy,

> We tried like hell to pick up that garbage but the trucks and the mud didn't mix. There was a lot of extra stuff, like 20,000 muddy sleeping bags, just layin' there on the infield. We wanted to take them and have them dry cleaned and passed out to people who couldn't afford them, but we couldn't convince some dry cleaners to do that (Wavy Gravy, 1974, p. 79).

What happened to the promoters? According to the New York Times, "Even with ticket sales that went over $1.3 million, [Lang] pronounced the fair a financial disaster" (Reeves,1969, p. 25). Profits from the movie helped Woodstock Ventures, but eventually the men sold the rights to the movie to Warner Brothers.

After the festival, Woodstock epitomized what the sixties generation desired. The festival was a microcosm of what the hippies lived for--peace, sharing, and the basic necessities of life. The hippies believed that communal living was the wave of the future, the next logical step society had to take. Hippies believed that Woodstock was a foreshadowing of the future, rather than an end of an era. According to Hoffman, "While I try to sort out the most remarkable event in our history, the creation of Woodstock Nation. It was a phenomenal burst of human energy and spirit that came and went like a tidal wave up there in White Lake, Bethel, Woodstock. I took a trip to our future" (Hoffman, 1971, p. 13).

The Woodstock festival has become possibly the most memorable music concert in recent history. The most prominent

images from the festival, hippies, a desire for peace, music, communal living, and drugs, are also the most prominent references about the generation. The young peoples' experience at Woodstock is a microcosm of their situation during the turbulent decade of the 1960s. It seems appropriate that the images of peace, drugs, and music tied with communal living, a free concert, and surviving with mother nature are shared by the counterculture and their musical celebration--Woodstock.

Images of the concert can be divided into two basic categories: images that connote a happy, enjoyable experience and images that signify a miserable experience. From a description of these images, one can get some understanding of what the concert-goers experienced at the festival. In the following section, the experiences that the counterculture had will be grouped into two simple categories to show different aspects of the festival.

The good news.

Although initially Woodstock was suppose to cost $7 a day, or $12 for three days, the ticket-taking process was discarded. Woodstock became a free concert, headlined by 1960s greats like Joan Baez, Jefferson Airplane, Janis Joplin, The Who and Jimi Hendrix. People who chose to smoke marijuana in the area of the festival were not in danger of being arrested. According to the New York Times, "In explaining the few arrests on the fairgrounds, one policeman said there were not enough jails in the county to hold those breaking the law" (Collier, 1969, p. 25). For those that did drugs, they could do so in public without the fear of being arrested.

The polite youth who traveled from all over the United States and Canada to attend the music festival spent three days together in a make-shift city. They lived communally, sharing blankets and food, sleeping under the open sky in the rain, listening to the music of the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and Joe Cocker, and swimming (sometimes nude) in a nearby lake. Some of the local residents were at the festival to help the youths, by giving food, like dairy products and fruit, and water, and helping in the make-shift hospital. At the festival, there was only one fight. According to Wavy Gravy:

> There was only one actual fist fight. These two guys were really into some thumpin' and bumpin' and stood up and squared off when hundreds of thousands of folks that were watchin' broke into chorus, "Peace. Peace." I mean, these guys were just lookin' to punch each other a couple of times, but Peace. Peace. It really scared them. I mean, all the attention. So they shook hands and everybody cheered and on to the next frontier (Wavy Gravy, p. 79, 1974).

The bad news.

In order to get to the festival, the thousands of concert-goers had to drive in bumper to bumper, standstill traffic. Many of the drivers left their cars at the side of the road and walked to the concert. Although there was not a specific count of how many people attended the festival, estimates ranged from 300,000 to 500,000 patrons.

During Friday night the torrents of rain turned the green field into a sea of mud. The weather caused some major discomforts for the people who chose to stay at the festival.

Due to the surprising number of people who attended the concert, the area was unprepared for thousands of visitors. Not only was there a lack of food and water, but restroom facilities were scarce and overused. Drugs, however, were plentiful at the festival. In fact one youngster died from a drug overdose while hundreds of others were treated for bad trips.

There were other injuries. Some of the injuries were minor like cut feet from barbed wire. There were more serious accidents. One person broke his back when he fell from a tower. There was one death of a teenage boy who was run over by a sanitation truck. Another person died from a drug overdose.

Some people were trapped at the fair. They lost their friends and did not have a way out of the festival grounds. Woodstock was proclaimed a disaster area--the only way in and out was by helicopter. The performers were flown in, as well as medical teams. The crowd was so large that only a few hundred people could see the stage and hear the music.

Woodstock could be analyzed from only its positive or negative aspects. Realistically, the festival held positive and negative experiences for those who attended. In order to fully understand the festival, one should understand it in terms of what really happened, not just the rose-colored version of the story.

In the following section works from scholars, like Eliade, Braden and Rowland, will be discussed in order to study the festival

as a myth. These scholars have studied myth in a cultural context; both ancient and modern myths. The works will be analyzed in order to show that a myth is a significant event in a society. Then the Woodstock festival as it is described here will be analyzed in terms of these works.

Chapter Three

Roots of the Myth

The concept of myth is ambiguous and difficult to define. Generally, myth signifies a mental image shared by a group of people that is transmitted through their culture. In this section, a working definition of myth is established to serve as a vehicle to analyze the Woodstock festival.

Through analysis of myths, scholars have created their own definitions of myth. The works of some of these writers, Hatak, Rue, Eliade, Braden, Sykes, and Rowland, will be discussed in order to focus on the influence myth has on American culture. These individuals also discuss certain characteristics an event must posses in order to be considered a myth. These characteristics are reviewed to find a common link between the Woodstock festival and myth. Next, the Woodstock festival is analyzed as a myth by using the works of these scholars.

When studying myth, it is necessary to understand the culture which produced the myth. A society can be defined as having similar rules governing myths. Hatak, Rowland, Rue, and Eliade discuss the effects that a myth has on a culture.

According to Hatak, in a culture some myths may be viewed as sacred: "The sacred is more important than the profane, leading to myth's extraordinary importance in a society" (Hatak, 1990, p. 35). Eliade concurs with the assertion by Hatak: "myth tells a sacred history and supplies models for human behavior and gives meaning and value to life" (Eliade, 1963, p. 2). A similar cultural definition is

offered by Rue: "a cultural myth represents a shared vision of realities and human ideals that are available to all members of a culture and can stand the test of time" (Rue, 1989, p. 47).

In order to understand a culture, its mythology should be understood. The cultural aspect of myth is discussed by Braden: "myth must be drawn upon from memory and imagination and results from a collective effort over time" (Braden, 1975, p. 16). Braden explains that "a myth must be accepted without reflection or questioning if it is to continue" (Braden, 1975, p. 121).

Rowland gives a precise description of what a myth should be in terms of classification. "A culture defines its society through the stories of myth" (Rowland, 1990, p. 102, 103).

The difficulty of defining myth can be caused by the great variability of themes, images and meanings within a myth (Hatak, 1990, p. 17). In order to judge if a myth has been accepted, the myth has to endure in a culture for a period of time.

Sykes takes a different look at myth. He tries to define myth and gives concrete examples of what myth should include as opposed to using abstract, ambiguous examples. For example, Sykes describes myth as "whole perceptions of social situations and a story about a particular incident that contains a general truth" (Sykes, 1970, p. 17-18). Myth cannot be broken into separate categories: "It is a concise way of conveying a perception, but is imprecise as well" (Sykes, 1970, p. 18,19).

Braden and Rowland take a similar approach to the study of myth. Both look at a myth rhetorically and set certain standards that a myth should include.

Braden explains the functions of myths in a rhetorical context. "Drawing upon imagination, [myth] strives to elicit what is pleasant, romantic, soothing, satisfying; it gains acceptance and strength through repetition" (Braden, 1975, p. 121). Those who listen to rhetorical myths find some kind of concrete foundation on which they can base their emotions and security. The myth gives listeners a romantic notion that is strengthened every time the myth is heard. Braden ascertains that writers "pull together threads from various sources, including social and intellectual historians, that will be helpful in evaluating the rhetorical methods of speakers who repeatedly turn to myths to bolster their causes" (Braden, 1975, p. 115).

Braden explains that the main function of myth is to:

> Confirm, intensify, and amplify sentiments and attitudes. It acts upon beliefs already possessed. For those who cannot or do not wish to face reality, it suggests rationalizations, escapes. and fantasy. In many instances the myth is like a blank check into which the listener may fill in any meaning or feeling that he abstracts from what is pleasant while he ignores or forgets what is disturbing (Braden, 1975, p.122).

According to Braden, a myth's "substance is more emotional than logical" (Braden, 1975, p. 116). Braden argues that myth "combines both reality and fiction . . . it results from considerable abstracting on the part of many persons" (Braden, 1975, p. 116).

Braden's use of myth demonstrates the persuasive power that myth has over individuals, while Rowland sets rules that can be used

in analysis. These rules limit the way a critic would analyze a myth. Rowland argues "for the importance of a narrow functional and structural approach to myth that is tightly grounded in research concerning the character of the myth both in primitive and modern societies" (Rowland, 1990, p. 101). Rowland uses a narrow approach to analysis of a myth in order to effectively pin-point the myth. Rowland believes that a society weaves its foundation around myths. Myths are the most important stories that a society possesses. Rowland argues:

> And while modern societies may be more technologically advanced than primitive societies, myth remains important. Over the last half century most anthropologists have concluded that myth is not a primitive form, but a key aspect of all human culture (Rowland, 1990, p. 102).

Rowland believes in a narrow definition of myth that would help curb the mis-application of specific theories and obscure simpler explanations for a given work. For example, Rowland argues that the movie ET should not be used as an example of a myth. In his article, Rowland outlines specific rules that a myth should follow, and the film does not meet the limits that he outlines. According to Rowland:

> It is the power of myth that leads rhetorical critics to search for mythic elements in a work of rhetoric. The danger in mythic criticism is that the power of the symbolic form will encourage critics to stretch their definition to include works that more

> appropriately could be treated from another perspective (Rowland, 1990, p. 113).

Rowland outlines a format that is useful for a critic in examining a myth. First, he explains that the critic should understand the function of the myth. Then he outlines the structure that a critic should make sure a myth follows. For example, a myth has to be a story that occurs outside of normal historical times or in a period that, because of the power associated with it, has been transformed into a mythical time (Rowland, 1990, p. 104).

Rowland argues "the main character in myth must be heroic" (Rowland, 1990, p. 104). According to Rowland, "myths usually occur outside the normal world or in a real place possessing special symbolic power, such as Jerusalem because heroes should act in a truly heroic place" (Rowland, 1990, p. 104). Rowland argues that "myths rely heavily on archetypal language, functioning as 'archetypal dreams'" (Rowland, 1990, p. 104).

Through the combination of Braden and Rowland, the story and the facts about Woodstock which has been perpetuated through individuals and the media can be described as a myth. Woodstock complies with the descriptions that Braden, Rowland, and other scholars set to be considered as a myth.

Woodstock as a Myth

Woodstock is a significant event in American culture. But how was it transformed into a myth? According to Hatak, a myth needs to be repeated in a culture for a period of time. Braden concurs by saying that a myth gains acceptance and strength through repetition.

The sixties culture, as discussed earlier, was a time of political and societal upheaval among young people. The Woodstock festival can be considered sacred to the people who attended the festival and those who are currently influenced by the festival. People who attended the festival have returned to the site as a pilgrimage. Much of the sixties philosophy was defined through the Woodstock festival.

During the twenty-five years that has passed since the festival, the image of Woodstock has been continually reinforced through the media. For example, the movie and record were popular in the 1970s. That popularity served as a bridge to carry Woodstock into the 1980s. In the 1970s, the 1980s, and 1990s, musicians who performed at the concert remained popular, even after the deaths of Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. The popularity is probably influenced through the appearance of radio stations that play the popular music of the 1960s and 1970s.

Woodstock has remained a prominent topic in the media, both print and broadcast. Recently, papers and magazines contain articles about reunion festivals. For example, in the fall of 1993, Rolling Stone featured an article about the location of the Woodstock reunion festival. Radio stations play songs of the musicians who performed at the festival. Television shows documentaries on the 1960s and makes references to Woodstock in their programming. For example, in recent Murphy Brown episode, the main character reflects on her radical past, which included a trip to Woodstock.

In analyzing the festival, Woodstock is examined in the context of the whole festival, not just a performance of a musician. The

situation as a whole is analyzed, not just one small aspect of the festival. As Sykes argues, a general truth about the concert also limits the details that make Woodstock endure over time. For example, Woodstock can be describes as a great musical happening with a large crowd, but that description limits the real truth about Woodstock. A Time article said, "The festival turned out to be history's largest happening. As the moment when the special culture of United States youth of the '60s openly displayed its strength, appeal, and power, it may well rank as one of the significant political and sociological events of the age" (1969, p. 32-33).

Woodstock draws upon the memory of Americans, which reflects Braden's theory. The frequent use of the Woodstock festival in magazines and newspapers shows the country's acceptance of the concert. Woodstock also draws upon the imagination of the readers by asking them to imagine a field during the 1960s where 400,000 hippies are peacefully gathered, listening to music and living together.

The legacy of Woodstock has been perpetuated from a collective effort of the media broadcasting the images of the festival, especially the movie, Woodstock. The effort of the people who attended the festival and those who listened to the music has spread the tale of the Woodstock festival into mainstream America. The festival took place 25 years ago, which is enough time for a myth to develop.

According to Sykes, messages from a myth tend to be oversimplified. The images that are prominent about Woodstock are oversimplified. People don't see the strife that occurred due to lack

of food, the rain, and drug overdoses. They don't seem to understand the camaraderie that happened due to necessity, such as sharing food and blankets, and helping people through bad drug trips. People see hippies listening to popular musicians in a green pasture with their friends. The perceptions by American society has simplified the festival into a celebration of music and drugs.

Braden suggests that myths are more emotional than logical. The perceptions of Woodstock are definitely tied to emotions rather than logic. People seem caught up in the idea that Woodstock was "cool" rather than having respect for the conditions that the people endured. Recently the media, through radio and television, show the youth having a great time in the field. The media only report the positive side of the festival.

Braden argues that myth combines both reality and fiction. The myth of Woodstock is linked to stories told about the concert. These stories are combinations of fact and fiction passed down from years of news reports. Some stories, such as the report that two babies were born at the festival, are partially false. Two women were flown to nearby hospitals after they had gone into labor and one woman gave birth in a car en route to Woodstock. Peoples' perceptions about the fair is based on reports by the media. When stories get passed from one person to the next, the story loses some meaning. What some people believe about Woodstock is based on a combination of fact and fiction learned through friends, family, and the media.

In the myth of Woodstock, as Rowland argues, there can be a variety of heroes. First, the promoters could be considered heroes.

They implemented their idea to have a festival in upstate New York. The promoters persevered after being denied a couple of spots to find the Yasgur farm. The musicians could be considered heroes. The musicians performed in adverse conditions in front of thousands of people. They had to be flown in to perform, many were stuck in traffic for hours, and some had to perform at early hours of the morning, like 3 a.m.

Certain people involved in the counterculture could be considered heroes. Abbie Hoffman organized the hospital tent. Wavy Gravy and his group gave away free food and helped heal people in the hospital. Many people in the counterculture distributed food and supplies. The hippies also helped each other through bad drug trips.

The locals who helped the hippies with food and medical supplies could be considered heroes. A New York Times article reported, "Medical clinics were set up, hundreds were fed by townspeople, and a park was thrown open to youngsters with no other place to sleep" (Kaufman, 1969, p. 25). They gave away their own food, water, and time to help the youths. Local Max Yasgur, who provided land and food could also be considered a hero. Another article in the New York Times about Yasgur reported, "Yasgur's red barn displays a big sign reading 'Free Water.' He put up this sign when he heard that some residents were selling water to the youngsters" (1969, p. 25).

The hippies themselves could be considered heroes. They peacefully braved adverse weather and physical conditions to become part of Woodstock.

Rowland argues that a myth occurs outside of a normal period of time. The sixties, due to the hostility towards the government, has become an exceptional period in American history. This was the first time that large numbers of young people rebelled against their parents, the government, the war, the schools, and discrimination. The sixties have become renowned as a time of upheaval and change, which can be exemplified by the mass of people at the festival. The sixties was a symbolic time in the American culture.

As Rowland argued, the alfalfa field has become a sacred place. Even analyzing from the newspaper headlines, the area of Woodstock, New York has become a special place in America. People make pilgrimages to Yasgur's farm, where there is a special plaque commemorating the location of the festival. For example, Jerold Zaro, an attorney, has children who attend camp in the area of the Woodstock fair. He said, "I was taking my kids up there, so I'd stop off and see the monument. You can't believe the sheer peacefulness of the site" (Peet, 1989).

Through the analysis of myth by Hatak, Eliade, Rue, Sykes, Braden and Rowland, myth should be a bit less ambiguous. Woodstock fits into the conditions that these scholars set for a myth. Woodstock has become a pervasive event in American culture. The festival defines a generation. In accordance with these scholars, Woodstock has also become an American myth.

Chapter Four

The Woodstock Legacy

From the historical analysis of Woodstock as a myth, the impact of the festival on American society should emerge. In this section, the festival will be analyzed by looking at the way the print media reported the concert in 1969. Articles written in the 1960s will be analyzed and then compared to recent articles about the fair in order to understand the impact Woodstock has made on American culture.

A survey conducted for this study will also be detailed. The survey was conducted in order to understand the perceptions the general public holds toward the festival. Interviews with people who attended the festival will be discussed in order to show a different perspective about Woodstock other than the media's perspective.

In order to understand the pervasiveness of the Woodstock myth, stories from 1969 articles can be compared to the stories from articles concerning Woodstock from 1989 to the present. These reports will be used due to an increase the coverage of the festival in 1989. This increase in exposure was due to the twentieth anniversary of Woodstock. The comparison will include the articles, photo captions, and the headlines in newspapers. The newspapers analyzed include the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, the Las Vegas Review-Journal, the Los Angeles Times, and the New York Times.

In the stories from 1969, Woodstock was referenced with terms like "festival," "rock concert," and "jam session." A 1969 headline from the Chicago Tribune reported "Jam at Jam Session," to

describe the traffic problems en route to the festival (August 16). The caption under a photo which shows a road with traffic at a standstill reads, "Rock music fans jam highway leading into Bethel, N.Y., where week-end concert of pop music is being held" (August, 16).

The Las Vegas Review-Journal printed a headline "After Days of Music, Peace, Beauty: Rock Festival Patrons 'Split'" (August 18). The article stated that, "The great rock festival ended today in the same spirit of peace and sharing that enabled 400,000 young people to gather for three days of music, marijuana and mod living without a major incident" (August 18).

The day after the festival began, newspapers were filled with articles describing the number of people who traveled to New York for the festival. On that Friday, the Washington Post reported that "Thousands Rolling in for Woodstock Rock" (August 15). The article began, "It's not exactly the classic way to hitch a ride. The hitchhikers who dot the Thruway leading upstate from New York City don't 'thumb.' They stick out two fingers in the V sign" (August 15).

The next day the Post headline read "That Rocky Road" (August 16). The story described the concert-goers waiting to get to the festival. One part said, "so they broke out guitars and drums and tambourines, sat on the hoods, trunks and roofs of cars and tried to make the best of it" (August 16).

The Las Vegas Review-Journal observed that "Rock Fans Jam Roads to Festival"(August 16). The caption under a photo of festival-goers walking to the concert through hundreds of abandoned cars

read, "Young people abandoned their trucks, buses and cars and start to walk as 200,000 persons try to reach the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in a cow pasture at Bethel, N.Y., Friday. Cars were backed up for more than ten miles" (August, 16).

A New York Times article described "200,000 Thronging to Rock Festival Jam Roads Upstate" (August 16). Their caption, with the same picture previously described, reads, "'Sullivan County is a great big parking lot,' said Wes Pomeroy, security director of the Woodstock Music and Arts Fair, as people heading for the event at Bethel, N.Y., clogged the roads in the area, such as this one, for miles" (August 16).

The estimates of the number of people at the festival varied among newspapers. The Washington Post said that "400,000 Jam N.Y. Rock Festival" (August 17). Other reports stated that, "A rock music festival which had threatened to choke itself with an influx of more than 300,000 persons slogged ahead yesterday despite warnings of epidemics and shortages of food and water" (August 17).

The Los Angles Times reported that "Drugs and Mud Plague 300,000 at N.Y. Music Fair" (August 17). The article said that, "More than 300,000 persons wandered about in a sea of mud, sickness and drugs Saturday at the hippies-style Woodstock Music and Art Fair. Officials asked Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller to declare the festival site a disaster area" (August 17).

The New York Times concurred by reporting that "300,000 at Folk-Rock Fair Camp Out in a Sea of Mud" (August 17). Part of the article read, "Despite massive traffic jams, drenching rainstorms and

shortages of food, water and medical facilities, about 300,000 young people swarm over this rural area today" (August 17).

During the festival, some papers focused on the people at Woodstock. For example, the Los Angeles Times reported that "Music, Mud, Misery Make a 'Happening'" (August, 18). The article described the people at the festival:

> bearded boys, bare-chested wearing big hats and blue jeans, healthy-looking girls wearing everything from peasant blouses with ankle-length skirts to chic sportswear, bell-bottoms and beads. Some of them looked too young to be out after 10 at night, yet here they were, thousands of miles from home, traveling with old friends and new (August 18).

The New York Times devoted a number of articles to the festival. For example, the paper did articles like "Offstage Shows Are 'Out of Sight' at Music Festival" (August 17). The article describes the patrons staking their territory at the festival: "They talked as they sprawled on blankets on the muddy hillside, listening to rock and folk music. They chatted as they shared food generously and swam--sometimes in the nude--in a murkey lake" (August 17).

The New York Times published an article headlined, "Rock Audience Moves to Dusk-to-Dawn Rhythms" (August 18). The article talks about the performers who were participating in the festival,

> The group [Sly and the Family Stone] appeared early in the morning and by the end of its hour-and-a-half stint had almost everybody within earshot dancing or clapping. Spotlights made great

> swoops across the crowd and people threw sparklers into the air every time the group shouted 'Higher!' as part of one of their songs (August 18).

The New York Times published an article titled, "Generation Gap Bridged as Monticello Residents Aid Courteous Festival Patrons" (August 18). The article reported, "What happened in Monticello in the last two days resembles a family reunion in which crisis has brought estranged parents and children together. Ever since the trouble of the mud-spattered youngsters became known here, volunteer bands have been bringing aid to the sick, the hungry, and the marooned" (August 18).

The New York Times also contained an article about the festival's promoters titled, "Fairs Financier Calls It Success" (August 18). The article reads, "The four young men who organized the festival said that they estimated their loss at $1-million to $2-million. But they talked about the three days here with deep pleasure" (August 18).

The paper devoted an article to the field's owner Max Yasgur titled "Farmer With Soul" (August 18). Part of the article reads,

> Until a few days ago Max Yasgur was just another dairy farmer in Sullivan County. Now he gets phone calls threatening to burn him out. And even more more calls praising him and asking how the callers can help. He is trying to do his bit to bridge the generation gap by giving large amounts of dairy products to the youngsters at the festival, sometimes at cost and often free (August 18).

The New York Times described the drugs that the patrons at the festival used in an article, "Bethel Pilgrims Smoke 'Grass' and

Some Take LSD to 'Grove'" (August 18). The lead paragraph of the article says, "A billowy haze of sweet smoke rose through purple spotlights from the sloping hillside where throngs of young people--their average age about 20--sat or sprawled in the midnight darkness and listened to the rock music" (August 18).

The papers reported on the festival-goers departing from Woodstock. The Chicago Tribune reported "Music, Art Fair Ends; 2 are Dead (August 18). A photo shows packed roads with a couple asleep on the hood of a car. The caption reads, "Festival Exodus: With the festival at end, rock fans start journey home from week-end event in White Lake, N.Y. Crowds jammed highways for miles in all directions from festival" (August 18).

The Los Angles Times reported that ""3 Dead as Weary Youngsters Head Home from Rock Bash" (August 18). The first paragraph read, "Tired, thirsty, hungry and dirty, thousands of youngsters began the wary trek Sunday from the rock music festival here to their homes. They left behind three dead plus 200,000 hardier fans who ignored the lack of food, water and medical supplies to hear the rest of the music" (August 18).

The New York Times headline said "19-Hour Concert Ends Bethel Fair" (August 19). The article read:

> Undaunted by rain, mud, wet clothes and chilly mountain breezes, thousands and thousands of youths sat on a rural hillside here for a marathon 19-hour session of folk-rock music that ended at 10:30 a.m. today and brought the Woodstock Music and Art Fair to a close. Within minutes after Jimi Hendrix, an electric guitar player, and his group

> played what was called a searing, "mind-blowing" rendition of the national anthem, the hillside cleared for the first time in nearly four days of the hordes of youths (August 19).

The papers that reported on Woodstock took care to report certain specific items. These items include the number of people who attended the concert and the traffic problems due to the festival. Papers like the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times also published articles about the festival-goers. For example, the article about local residents volunteering to help distribute food at the gathering to the audience members.

Woodstock in the 1990s

The legacy of Woodstock has been a popular topic for discussion in recent papers. A 1990 article in the New York Times asked, "Who Will Control the Legacy of the Woodstock Nation?" In the same issue a writer wondered, "Who Will Control the Legacy of Yasgur's Farm?"(August 18, 1990). The article reads:

> For 21 years this rural Catskills town has lived peacefully with its legacy as the site of Woodstock, the music festival that defined an era. But eras change, generations grow old and new ones come along. And as thousands of Woodstock pilgrims gathered at Max Yasgur's farm this week to commemorate yet again the anniversary of the festival, Bethel is grappling with how to deal with its past without forsaking its future (August 18, 1990).

Regional papers have been concerning themselves with local accounts of the festival. For example the Providence, Rhode Island Journal published an article, "Your neighbors may be natives of Woodstock Nation" (August 13, 1989). The article summarized the history of the concert, adding stories about residents who trekked to the area: "Hope High senior Joseph Caffey and his friends took the bus to New York City, planning to catch a bus to Woodstock. There was no bus, but there were 250 kids. They improvised: 'We rented U-Haul trucks and hired bus drivers to drive them' said Caffey, now director of rental rehabilitation for the City of Providence" (August 13, 1989).

The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot reported: "Dusk has come for age of Aquarius, but the kids are all right." The article says, "Ruth's planning a Woodstock pool party this summer. Zeno will be invited, of course. After all, it was 20 years ago that the two of them hopped in a van and took off from Norfolk to New York, headed for a bigger bash than they could imagine" (March 5, 1989).

The Virginian-Pilot also reported that "Two decades later, Woodstock doesn't give easy answers" (March 5, 1989). The article begins:

> Woodstock was an accident. They expected 50,000 people. They got almost half a million. They expected a rock concert. They got an experiment in absolute abandon. It was suppose to happen in a village called Woodstock. It ended up 40 miles away at a place called White Lake. It threatened to collapse under its own weight to degenerate into a riot of drug-riddled madness. It became instead a fantastic glimpse into the fleeting soul of the '60s, a

> three-day blowout that brought down the curtain on a decade of apocalypse (March 5, 1989).

The fame of the festival is apparent from an analysis of the the recent writings on the subject. Reporters are comfortable using the name of the concert, showing that a three day music festival that was not even in Woodstock, New York, has found its way into the everyday vocabulary of the country's readers.

The significance of the articles can be compared to the perceptions people currently have towards the Woodstock festival. Generally, people perceive the gathering as three days of peace, love, and harmony. Many people tie Woodstock to the music of the 1960s, drug use, and hippies. The primary images used when describing the Woodstock festival are combined with the realities of the concert to make a substantial base for a myth. In order to add to the information in media reports, an informal study was done to gauge the perceptions that the average individual has of the festival in the fall of 1993. In this study, 23 people were asked to answer questions about the festival. These 23 participants, who ranged from age 17 to 51, are either high school students, graduate students, or have a white-collar job with a college degree (See Appendix A).

The respondents to the study were people that the author encountered in daily life. Many of the respondents were fellow students, co-workers, and family members. Teenage respondents were accessed through family members, such as the authors seventeen-year-old brother's high school friends. The rest of the population was comprised from friends of the family whose

occupations include: two school teachers, a sales representative, a stockbroker, a freelance photojournalist, a retail-store manager.

The survey asked the respondents to give the first words or images that came to mind when they thought of Woodstock. Many people responded with words like peace, war, drugs, love, hippies, music, and the 1960s. Other popular responses included crowds, tie-dye, sex, happiness, and nakedness. A 51-year-old female said that "dead beats" came to mind. A 41-year-old male described Woodstock as "Naked people in the rain and mud" and a 28-year-old female said "groovy naked people." According to one 18-year-old male it was "One of the biggest rock and roll events in history." A 28-year-old male replied "It was a get together of musical talents that are now considered legendary." Another 18-year-old male said Woodstock was "One of the first biggest concert ever." A 17-year-old female concurred that Woodstock was "the greatest concert ever."

The knowledge that people gained about the event has been mainly perpetuated by two means: the media and personal accounts. People responded that listening to music and publications tied to the music industry have increased their knowledge about the Woodstock festival. For example, one 26-year-old female responded that she learned about Woodstock through, "television programs which referenced it and musicians who mention it." A 39-year-old female mentioned that, "I had the album and watched it on the news. Everyone talked about it. I listened to the music all the time."

Old film clips from documentaries about the 1960s and stories from both print and broadcast media have helped disseminate

information about the festival. The movie and record of the festival have helped inform people about Woodstock.

Some schools have classes relating to Woodstock. One 21-year-old male said that he "learned abut the festival from a rock history class." A 32-year-old female said, "I took a 60s class in college. We talked about the festival in it."

Relatives who listen to the music, generally older siblings and parents, increase some people's awareness about the festival. It seems that those who learn about Woodstock from another person have more respect and reverence for the concert.

The people who were interviewed in the survey were introduced to Woodstock by the media or by someone they knew. The influence of the concert on American culture can be described in both a positive and negative light. Some argue that Woodstock was a place where rebellious youth were highlighted. For example, according to a 51-year-old female, Woodstock "taught a certain element it's OK to be irresponsible." A 37-year-old female thought Woodstock's main influence was "immorality." A 41-year-old male said that Woodstock was an "attempt at a political protest against Vietnam by using antisocial and nonconforming tactics such as public displays of drug use and some nudity as nonconformity to government's indifference to issues."

Others believe that Woodstock was a positive influence on music and fads like clothing, jewelry. A 27-year-old female said that Woodstock influenced "freedom of expression." A 17-year-old male said that the festival, "let people express themselves more freely."

Woodstock helped to perpetuate the ideas of the hippies. For

example, a 28-year-old male replied "It gave a different perspective on traditional views." A 28-year-old female aruges that Woodstock "made people think about love and freedom." A 26-year-old female wrote that Woodstock was " a major event in our history--socially, musically". A 32-year-old male wrote, "I believe it changed the younger generation of that time, which in turn affects our culture." A 28-year-old male felt that Woodstock "gave a different perspective on traditional views." A 27-year-old male felt that Woodstock had a "huge impact on generational change--youth had opinions." The influence of the festival on American culture depends of how people view the hippies, which includes their choice of drug use and flamboyant clothing styles.

Of the twenty-three respondents, twenty replied that the festival was held in New York, although only two said it was in Bethel, New York and one replied that it was on Yasgur's farm. Nine responded that the festival was held in Woodstock, New York. The respondents were asked which bands or individuals performed at Woodstock. The most popular responses included Jimi Hendrix with 14 replies, Janis Joplin with 11 replies. Joan Baez (6), and the Who (4), came in a distant third and fourth. Interestingly, four people thought that 1960s music icon Bob Dylan performed at the festival, although he did not.

Some of the respondents have noticed a rise references to Woodstock in the media today. One individual mentioned the new Pepsi commercial which aired during the Super Bowl. A 24-year-old male said that he, "saw a commercial about a Woodstock reunion commercial done by Pepsi."

The impact of the concert can be measured by peoples' memory of specific images like hippies, crowds, music, and drugs. Most of the people surveyed had a favorable attitude towards the festival.

What really happened at the festival? One can only understand so much by reading papers and books, listening to music, and watching television. Accounts by people who attended the festival might be the best way to get a grasp of what really happened. For this study, two people who attended the festival were asked to fill out some questions. One respondent, Bob Carney, 42, is a food server and personal fitness trainer. The other respondent, Ralph Sonnors,34, is a neighbor of the author who is the custodial supervisor at Humana Hospital Sunrise.

Neither of the respondents paid for tickets. Carney replied, "We had money and would have [bought tickets] if necessary." Sonnors, sans tickets, went to the concert with his older brother and sister. Sonnors said they "drove then walked about 75 miles from Newburg, New York." Carney, who went with five friends, got to the festival from northeast Ohio in a green and white Volkswagon van (personal interview).

Sonnors spent two days at the festival. He remembers watching the Grateful Dead and Janis Joplin perform. Carney spent a day and a half at Woodstock. He remembers, "There were some people over by the creek/river singing and playing guitar. One was keeping rhythm with some sticks on a log that was half out of the water."

Sonnors remembers that the best part of his experience was "watching happy people, tripping or stoned, dancing." Carney said that "Everybody got along with everybody else. Everybody shared. We all helped each other."

Sonnors remembers the worst part of his Woodstock experience was seeing "O.D. cases and people lying in puke." Carney said that "We got there two days late. It rained some. It didn't last long enough."

The images that Sonnors remembers about the festival are "no violence, tie dye and everyone got along." He said that he went to Woodstock for the experience. Carney went to the festival because "We heard about a happening/event/ concert. We played in a group called 'Ray' and wanted to check out what was going on." He remembers incidents that are similar to a big party.

The ideas that the festival projects seem to be consistent with the images of the people who attended the festival discussed. The ideas, perpetuated by the media, include peace, love and sharing.

Although the media cannot print each individual experience about the festival, the important images are represented in the articles. The papers were consistent in reporting the number of people who attended the festival.

The legend of Woodstock, perpetuated by the media, has become an important part of the American myth. Instead of portraying the 1960s as a time of social chaos, the Woodstock festival shows the hippies as a patience and tolerant group in a time of chaos. It is better that the sixties youth are partially defined by this music

festival rather than the deaths at People's Park or the Vietnam War.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Research for this thesis fell into three general areas: myth, the 1960s, and the Woodstock festival. In this chapter, the most significant areas from the research will be discussed. The discussion includes the coverage of the festival by the media and the results of the survey. Weaknesses were found in some areas of research which is examined. This thesis concludes by offering suggestions for future research.

Woodstock

In the process of doing research for the festival, it was necessary to also study the 1960s. The uprisings of the 1960s influenced the free speech movement, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement. The counterculture influenced the legacy of American morality as much as it did American music and fashion.

Woodstock was a manifestation and celebration of the beliefs of the counterculture. The festival became an event that defined a generation. From the research, it became clear that Woodstock had deeper meaning than just a bunch of hippies listening to famous musicians. Beliefs that the counterculture idolized, such as peace and love, were epitomized at Woodstock. Many left the festival believing that Woodstock was a glimpse into the future of America.

Studying Woodstock, one learns that it was more than just a rock concert. The Woodstock festival gives insight into the culture

of the 1960s that was manifested at the festival. No other event in the 1960s defines the culture and their generation like Woodstock.

Reading the books about the festival by Wavy Gravy, Abbie Hoffman, and the oral history by Joel Makower gave insight into the actual working of the festival from a promotions standpoint. Looking at the promoters, Lang, Roberts, Rosenman, and Kornfeld detailed the process required to organize and run the festival.

The way the different newspapers reported the festival was fascinating. For example, the Chicago Tribune devoted three articles to the event on August 16, 17, and 18, 1969. On the other hand, the New York Times devoted thirteen articles to Woodstock, the counterculture, and the residents of the area between August 15 to August 19, 1969. The variation in the coverage helped understand the importance the New York Times placed on Woodstock. The other papers placed Woodstock on a lower level of importance, resulting in less coverage. Since Woodstock took place in New York, it makes sense that the Times placed a higher priority on a local event.

The papers from across the country reported a general description of the festival. The New York Times gave insight into the lives of the residents and the festival goers. Information from these articles was imperative for this study.

Current articles about the festival portray Woodstock as a mystical event. Many articles contain stories about local residents who attended the festival and rumors of reunion concerts. Freedom that the people experienced at Woodstock is apparent in the articles. In the current papers, the media is spreading a myth about freedom as well as a story of the festival.

The survey that was conducted about the festival found some important answers about the myth of Woodstock. The results showed that most people learned about the festival through other people, generally older relatives, or through the media. Respondents who were educated about the festival from others people have a deeper respect for Woodstock. The younger generation, especially high school students, possess a higher regard for the festival than the older generation. Many of the older generation looked at the festival in a condescending manner.

One can speculate that in the future, the myth of Woodstock will continue to increase in the younger generations. There is a dramatic increase in the amount of admiration from the respondents in their twenties and the teenagers. The teenagers are enamored with the Woodstock festival. If the legend of Woodstock continues to be perpetuated by the media, younger generation's admiration of the festival will also increase. The admiration will be acquired through the influence of the media and the respect that the older generations have for the event.

Most of the respondents replied that the festival took place in New York state. Many incorrectly thought the festival was held in Woodstock. N.Y. This shows that part of the myth has been perpetuated incorrectly. Braden said that a myth "combines both reality and fiction and results from considerable abstracting on the parts of many persons," (Braden, 1975, p. 116). The perceptions of those in the survey showed the result of abstracting from a myth.

Personal accounts of the festival fulfilled two purposes. The accounts looked into a special event in two people's lives. The

interviews gained a different perspective of the festival. Both men retained specific memories about the festival that media reports might not have revealed.

There is a lot of information about Woodstock that was accessible for this study. The variety of information about the festival was limited. The next section will discuss some of the obstacles in the research for this study.

"Holes" in the current research

There is surprisingly little research on Woodstock in the Communication field. Currently, there no any published articles on Woodstock. There has yet to be a mythic analysis of Woodstock. Also, there are no concise, chronological studies of the history of Woodstock. None of the literature gives a day-by-day description of the festival.

Although The New York Times reported 300,000 people attended Woodstock, the numbers are still very vague. Other papers and books cited a different number of attendants. Either nobody really knows how many people were actually at Woodstock, or the publications are basing their information from different days and times. The rest of the statistics are also jumbled. Supposedly two women gave birth at the festival and two people were killed, but those numbers are not from reliable sources. None of the articles gave exact numbers for fatalities, births, or injuries. It seems that there should be a way to come to an agreement on some concrete numbers dealing with the festival.

While Wavy Gravy and Hoffman describe the only thing close to a play-by-play summary of the festival, there should be more influential people who were at the festival who could detail events during the three-day period. Although some newspapers had short stories about certain individuals experiences at the festival, there needs to be more documented history of regular peoples' experiences to get a feel for the event. Also, it would be interesting to have commentary by different performers from the festival. Although some of the key people have passed away, like Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, bands such as the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, and the Who should have some interesting stories to tell about their experience at Woodstock.

Directions for future research

There are many ways that myth and Woodstock could be studied. There are different events in American history, particularly in the last twenty years, that could be analyzed as a myth. The analysis could include individuals like James Dean, Marilyn Monroe, Jimi Hendrix or John Kennedy. Events like the first man on the moon could be analyzed. It could also be argued that there are not any modern myths, the last part of the 20th century has been uneventful and definitely not mythical.

The ideas of oral histories from bands or regular people would let insight into the festival from a historical perspective. There are other ways that the festival could be studied.

The concert could be studied from the inception point, looking at the process as a kind of public relations and/or advertising case

study. The concert was a financial disaster, even with the movie rights. What could have been done to prevent the financial problems? Apparently the promoters had no idea that there were going to be roughly half a million people attending there concert. How could they have pre planned for this? Could there actually be a free concert in the 1990s--a tribute to Woodstock perhaps? Is it possible for even 100,000 people to hang out together for one night to listen to music without any shootings or stabbings? Why or why not?

Many aspects of Woodstock could be studied rhetorically. For example, the musical lyrics performed at the concert could be analyzed. Songs written about the festival could be looked at from a rhetorical stand point. The media's reports about the festival could be analyzed rhetorically. Books written about Woodstock, such as Hoffman's Woodstock Nation, could be examined rhetorically.

If someone wanted to study the concert from an psychologist's perspective, there is a lot of opportunity here also. Why would someone drive form California to go to a concert in New York state in the middle of August? Especially if the concert site had been changed three times? Would that not lessen the credibility of the promoters to make it rather risky to drive a few thousand miles to see a three-day concert that might not even take place? Most of the people who attended the festival had the opportunity to buy a ticket in there own town. From the financial problems of the promoters, hardly anyone bothered to purchase a ticket. Why would someone drive to upstate New York to attend a concert without a ticket or money?

There are many aspects of Woodstock that have yet to be studied. Information about the concert is plentiful, so enough is available to develop a strong foundation for a research project.

Appendix A

Woodstock Survey

Age-

What are the first words or images that come to mind when I say Woodstock?

What do you know about Woodstock? How did you learn about it?

Did you attend Woodstock? If not did you try to go?

(Ages 26 and under) Do you think you would have tried to attend Woodstock?

What, if any, are the main influence from Woodstock
a) on you

b) on our culture

Which bands or individuals performed at Woodstock?

Where was the festival held?

Do you feel like you have missed out on something by not attending Woodstock?

Have you seen the Woodstock festival used on any commercials or in newspapers or magazines lately? Please explain

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