

1960's Project:

Woodstock



By Rachel Clift

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Thesis Statement

Woodstock stood at the end of the 1960's as a perfect symbol of the nearly decade-long peace movement and series of anti-war and anti-discrimination protests.

Historical Background

The Woodstock Music and Art Fair was a rock festival held on the farm property of Jewish farmer Max Yasgur in Bethel, New York from August 15, 1969 through August 18, 1969. The festival was organized by four inexperienced promoters (John Roberts, Joel Rosenman, Artie Kornfeld, and Mike Lang) who managed to bring several big-name musical acts to the fair to perform. Some of these acts include Jimi Hendrix, Sly and the Family Stone, the Who, the Grateful Dead; Janis Joplin; Santana; Crosby, Stills and Nash; Jefferson Airplane; Ravi Shankar; and Country Joe and the Fish. In a time of war and distress, Woodstock was important because it brought people together for the simple purpose of celebrating love, peace, and togetherness. Woodstock was also important in concluding and celebrating the end of a decade that stood as a cultural revolution in politics, music, and society as a whole.

Personal Journal

I chose Woodstock because of my love of many of the artists that performed there and also because of my strong love of and belief in the peace movement of the 1960's. My parents were both young children in the 1960's, but have made jokes about and references to Woodstock repeatedly throughout my lifetime, so I already knew a bit about it and was curious to learn more. I also gained immense interest in the festival after watching Jimi Hendrix's performance of the Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock a couple of years ago. I am immensely happy that I chose this topic, and have had a lot of fun watching various concert videos from the event, and learning various facts about the festival itself.

Visuals

Hendrix playing the Star Spangled Banner at Woodstock:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKvnQYFhGCc>

“Breast in Peace” (Female attendee of Woodstock ‘69):



Jerry Garcia of the Grateful Dead walking through Woodstock '69:



Male attendees selling LSD at the Woodstock festival '69:



Interviews

Karin Clift

Q: Growing up in Denver in the 1960s, do you remember your parents talking to you about the peace movement/civil rights movement at all?

A: “Well I do know my dad told me about who MLK was and about the civil rights marches. I don’t recall either parent actually participating personally in marches or rallies. I remember Nixon being the most despised person in our home. My dad did play guitar and taught my sister and me some protest songs. We also had a tape of a folk radio station and one of the songs on it was by Pete Seeger called The Big Muddy and it was all about Vietnam.”

Q: What do you remember coming from the media as a kid?

A: “I remember the news on TV was always filled with videos of soldiers in Vietnam.”

Q: Did your teachers in school talk to you about any of the big movements going on at the time?

A: “I have no memory of any of my elementary school teachers discussing anything political with us. This was public school so they may have been protecting their jobs or they may just not have been very political individuals. In

middle school in the mid-'70s they talked a lot about the horrible treatment of native Americans and we read Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee.”

Bruce Clift

Q: Growing up in Denver in the 1960s, do you remember your parents talking to you about the peace movement/civil rights movement at all?

A: “I knew they were against the war but I don’t remember conversations about it. I remember my dad feeling hopeless reading the election day newspaper forecasting a Nixon re-election landslide. As for Civil Rights, definitely. I don’t remember the day MLK was shot but I remember hearing about it from one of my sisters watching TV and how devastated she was. I also knew my dad’s stories from his corner of the Civil Rights movement as a Vicar of a black mission in Houston. The ordination at the nice white church where he refused to let his white parishioners force the blacks to sit in the back.”

Q: What do you remember coming from the media as a kid?

A: “I just never watched the news. Too young to care. My only memory of news was the 1973 Arab Israeli War, coming home from Sunday School and exclaiming ‘Are they *still* fighting?!’”

Q: Did your teachers in school talk to you about any of the big movements going on at the time?

A: “Not that I remember. I don’t think they did much of that in grade school. My first direct memories of news is probably late ‘70s: No Nukes movement, Iran hostage crisis, rock vs. disco.”

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