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Interview with John Marsh(2)

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L: This is Liz Lewis. I am interviewing John Marsh on February 5th and we're talking about food and politics.

J: Uh-oh.

L: You didn't know what you were getting yourself into?

J: No…[laughter].

L: No worries. First of all, how did you… when did you become interested in agriculture?

J: Phew. I would say when I was a kid. I was surrounded by agriculture. I grew up in rural Maryland. Um, I was very aware - we had a lot of dairy farms and canning tomatoes, green beans, green peas, all that stuff. It was a really big deal where I lived, because we used to go out in the fields afterwards and glean the fields, you know, especially tomatoes. So, there were canning fields right across the field from where my grandmother lived, and that's… And, we always had a garden and my grandmother had horses, and chickens, and I think that was it.

L: You learned how to can at a young age too?

J: Canning? Yeah, my grandmother taught me how. I mean I helped her, I never really did the whole thing by myself. [laughter] So then, um, when I left there I didn't do any of that when I was in high school. Then, I came here and I always wanted to be involved. It's kind of ironic, you know, I didn't get to do it the first time now I did. I wanted to be involved in farming around here but there really wasn't like, you know, connection between the college and the outside. And, I really didn't pursue it that hard.

L: What year was that?

J: '73. '72. There were a lot of farms right here. There was a dairy farm, what's now Kenyon property, going out 229. That was a dairy farm. I just wanted to out do chores and stuff like that, but I didn't uh…

L: So, has the landscape changed a lot since '73?

J: Ummm… yes. To a discerning eye, yes it has. To somebody, you know, at first glance, no it hasn't. But, when you go by you realize that the farms are being farmed by absentee farmers now. There's nobody. I mean, they're leasing the land, their not farming in the

traditional sense of integrating cattle and grain and hay. It's more monoculture, bi-culture I guess: corn and soybeans.

So, then when I left here in 1975 after knocking around a bit, I guess by late 1976 my father bought a farm. Maybe it was '77, yeah it was '77, okay [laughter]. And, um, actually it was the spring of '77. So, that's what we did. My dad bought a farm that hadn't been farmed since the late 40s. It had just been mowed, it had not had any crops on it or anything like that, so it was kind of over-run. We lit into that thing, and after that we bought another farm, and I did that until 1983 when I lost a whole bunch of money farming – corn. The corn price went down, everything else went up. It was really bad inflation at the time.

L: Why did it go down?

J: I don't know, world market, over-production. A lot of farmers got stuck. So, anyway when it was all said and done I had a $27,000 production bill that I couldn't pay. I paid some of it but not all of it and my dad said, "Well, if you can't pay your bills you can't do…" Tough love, whatever. [Laughter] "You can't pay your bills you can't do this anymore." So, I said, "Okay, well, I guess I gotta move on." That was that. Then I hadn't done it since '83. But, we had livestock, hogs, cattle, chickens, goats, sheep. We had everything and I also had three markets I went to in the city in Baltimore: one in down-town Baltimore and one in the suburbs of Baltimore and I had a roadside stand. So, I had over 20 acres of vegetables that I grew. It was crazy.

L: Very diverse.

J: Oh yeah, we were so diverse it was nuts. But I had the energy then to do all that stuff.

L: [Laughter] But you grew corn too?

J: Mhmmm. Yeah, my grandmother had a farm and my aunt and they asked me to farm it. That's where I got in trouble because I just started… I tended, I always tended to be more toward the organic side because when I did my gardening and everything I always did that organically, when I grew a lot of my vegetables. The only time I remember using anything was spraying herbicide. I did do that, because I raised a lot of pumpkins and we were right along the road. And so it was just, you know, spray the herbicide put the pumpkins out, they grow and that's the end of it. [Laughter] Then school kids came around in October, you know, and picked through them and then we had a bit of others where we sold them. And I figured no one ate those anyway. [Laughter] It was a good rationalization, anyhow.

L: You had a little stand, and where did you sell your corn?

J: The corn? Well, we sold it to a local grain elevator. I mean, I wasn't big enough to be into… I mean, we kept selling it for feed, but we had a lot more than what we needed, because my grandmother used to have a farm that was integrated, I mean it was

everything, it the same thing that I was just talking about. But then as everyone went on, and you know, she tried renting it out and then what they did was someone came out and they turned it all into a horse farm and they had hay. Then she still had a whole bunch of more acreage that she wanted to turn into, um, she wanted to get some more money back. She thought she was doing me a favor, actually.

L: Uhuh.

J: That was my own fault. I kind of got greedy. I shouldn't have done that. And, um, if I hadn't have done that I would have been fine. I don't know what would have happened then. I mean, there are a lot of things that could have happened. I mean, what we were doing was kind of ahead of its time. People didn't even care about organic. You said organic that was a bunch of hippies living in a commune out in California or something. That's the kind of connotation it had. So, you know, you really couldn't get top dollar for it, unless you went to specialty restaurants, which I just, you know, given the scope of everything I just told you, it was kind of hard to do that in addition. I liked selling, my specialty was actually watermelons and cantaloupes, that's the thing I could always get people to buy, because mine were different, mine tasted good. [Laughter]

L: [Laughter] That is a huge difference.

J: Yeah, it was a big difference. I had sold real little baby watermelons and people… nobody had ever seen them before. So, older people loved them. They were nice and sweet and you didn't have to open up and have a 20 lb watermelon that you had to eat in a couple of days.

L: So, what brought you back here to Kenyon?

J: Well, primarily, I had lived in the area where I grew up and I didn't like it anymore because it changed so radically. I mean, the farm, one farm that I had when my dad died it was sold. And, they took the 120 acres we had and sold it off in 15 acre, you know, McMansion estates, I guess.

L: Oh wow.

J: And, um, that's really depressing. That whole area, that happened to. Now, the other farm we had was actually closer to the city and that one hasn't been developed yet. Although, I did look at an aerial, you know, Google, when you can see down the aerial, the satellite photographs of the place. You can see their laying roads out for it. I looked at the assessment on the county website down there and it was listed as being worth (they hadn't done anything to it, it's all still owned by one person) and it was listed as having a value of $7 million dollars, so… we sold it for $300 thousand. [Laughter]. Oh, $330, I'm sorry. Wo-hoo.

L: Oh my gosh. That's a lot of money.

J: Well, now you see what the pressures are that people are up against. I mean, okay, so you bought a farm or you've been sitting on a farm that's your family farm for all these years. And, all of sudden someone comes a long and says, "Hey, guess what? I'll give you $5 million dollars for this, $7 million dollars, $10 million dollars, when you never in your wildest dreams believed that you could make that much money. So what do you do, well if you like farming, you sell it off and you go buy another one farther away, you know.

L: A lot of these farmers aren't making that much to begin with, right?

J: No, no, no way. No, you've go to be farming tens, maybe tens of thousands of acres, at least thousands of acres to have that kind of gross. Not in that, for sure. But, see, what our goal was… I wasn't going to be much different from that, I was trying to develop the land, we were going to take the hilly land, which was the best building sites, because that's the kind of, you know, they want to have the view. I wanted to take the land that had the hills on it and sell that for building lots, pay for the whole farm, and then have a farm scott-free, keep on doing the produce and everything and just sit there in the middle of all these people and just sell directly to them, you know. And, that was the goal, but here again it didn't work. It could have worked, it could have been pretty awesome actually. Um, because it had a great roadside stand, with tens of thousands of people went people by there every day.

L: There are still lots of roadside stands here in Knox County, aren't there?

J: I don't know too many. I mean, there are still people that sell off their farm, but as in a 'roadside stand'…

L: More off-the-farm?

J: Yeah, lots of off-the-farm.

L: Right. Um, So what led to this huge consolidation of farms, like you said 10,000 acres?

J: Oh, I didn't answer your last question.

L: Oh, the one about…

J: How did I get here? So, anyway I went through all that and hated it so badly, and my wife and I came here on a trip. I just was going between point A and point B in my job, and I happened to be going by here over a weekend. So, I decided to come here and my wife said, "Well, can I come with you?" And, so I met her at the airport in Columbus and we stayed at the Kenyon Inn for 3 nights and just kind of drove around and walked around and it was in the Fall, October. It was beautiful, never a cloud in the sky the whole time. And, we were living in Southern California at the time and my wife was like, "Wow, this is really beautiful here." You know, so, I said, "Yeah, but it isn't like this all the time." But, she wondered how much land was. And, I said, "Well, in comparison to

California it's free," because the bargains you can get here. So, she was tired of California. I never enjoyed it. I hated Southern California. I mean, it's okay. It had its place and its time, I guess, for you to visit, but I never wanted to live there.

L: Really?

J: And, it's gotten way to crazy there. I mean, all the area here again where she lived, um, had been in flower fields, ranches, and produce farms, you know, orchards. And, it was all, every time you flew into San Diego, you could see a whole other plot – gone. And they build this whole infrastructure of eight-lane highways all around.

L: Just becoming monocrops, or just all becoming highways?

J: Oh it's just all becoming development. Everyone wants to live in San Diego County in California. There was still plenty of land there. We lived in Carlsbad, where they actually take their water from the ocean. But they had bought water from a long time ago, um, so they sold the water to other places. But they got their water out a reverse osmosis plant from the ocean.

L: Gee. Takes a lot of energy.

J: Yeah, takes a lot. But, see, then they'd take the water from that and they'd actually reuse all the grey water coming out of the wastewater treatment plant, and recycled that back for watering all the grass and shrubs and everything. So, you have purple pipes in California. You see a purple pipe that's nonpotable water used for irrigation. So, after all that we hated all these other places. I said, "This place really hasn't changed. Let's look into it." So, we did, we looked into it, and ended up with the house I least liked, that's the house I put a bid on and we got it. I wasn't thinking about farming or anything else when we came back. I thought I'd still do what I was doing. That's why I liked being close to Columbus, because I was flying a lot, but then again this place here had 11 acres with it. It's kind of like in my face, the temptation. I hadn't even gone out and walked the fields to see what kind of dirt was or anything. So, I was just praying that there was good soil there and sure enough there was! There was some really good soil there.

L: That's great.

J: Yeah, I don't know what it is, like glacier type, I don't know what it is, you know, there's sort of residue left over from when the glaciers melted and all that stuff. So there's an area there that's just really really flat, yet it's elevated, so it's not swampy. And it really grows. Great stuff.

L: So, what is your position now at Kenyon?

J: Ah, I work as the liaison between the farmers, the food service, helping Howard out… I'm kind of a jack-of-all trades, master of none kind of guys. [Laughter] I mean, I help

Howard out with whatever he's over-loaded with as far as the Rural Life Center stuff is concerned. So I give talks, I give interviews. [Laughter]

L: You're trying to create a local food system pretty much, right?

J: Well, yeah, there is a food system existing, and I say, "We're trying to create a local, sustainable food shed, which could equate to a local food system."

L: Okay. It's how you define sustainable.

J: Right, right. That's exactly right.

L: It's a really tricky word…

J: And I got caught up the other day at a talk, because people were saying, "Well, some of the things you're proposing are actually 'unsustainable…'

L: Like what?

J: Well, I mean, one of the problems with working with getting more food in the food service here is the challenge of economics on one hand and existing infrastructure on another. So, let's take chicken for example. I can find people around here who can grow chicken that we can grow here. Um, my problem is a place to get it slaughtered, butchered, dressed, whatever is 5 hours away. No, yeah, it's 2.5 hours away, so it's a 5 hour round-trip. But then when you figure in your time and everything, you basically have to spend all day, because once you kill them you're not going to drive back again, you know, that would be two trips. So it's an impractical thing. We were very excited about the prospect of having a fully inspected poultry facility here in Loudenville, but it fell through. There's a guy who has one that could be fully inspected, but he uses it now for his own birds.

L: What about Zanesville?

J: They don't do chicken. Poultry is sort of a whole other level of inspection, whole other way of doing things.

L: The one up in Loudenville is state-inspected?

J: It's state-inspected. The name of it was "T-Hills." You can still Google it, the name it is thills.com or something, T-Hills poultry.

L: What's the difference between in regulations between state and federal slaughter-houses.

J: Um, well the state can't be any less stringent. It has to be at least equal to or better, you know, than regulations for the federal. So you're still required to have a hazard plan, a

hazard analysis and critical control plan. And you still have to do that. They have full inspection, inspectors are there for every animal that's killed and they tend to run a heck of a lot less through-put than a USDA plant. The other thing is that, when they test for things, they test on a batch basis. Like if you prepare food, say your killing chickens and then making chicken salad. Um before the chicken salad, or whatever, sausages or something, you have to test that product before you can release it. You have to have a confirmation that it's clean, okay. That's one thing that's in excess of the way the federal does it. There's no real recall program in the state, because they've already tested it. So the only way that there could be a recall is if someone got sick. You know, it went through testing, it was okay and then somebody, um, in the local health department, you know, there were enough people who called, which only takes two people having a similar symptom to have a definition of an outbreak. So if you had two people who went in and bought 'Joe's Bologna' or something, and they got sick and called the health department, or the health department got the report from the hospital, then they would say, "Okay, we have an outbreak." And then they'd start tracing for all that stuff. They know it'd have to be a recall but its never happened in the state of Ohio, so… People tend to look at a state program and think its got to less than what, but there's never been any recalls. So if you're going out there and you're going to eat lunch meat, look for the Ohio inspection label instead of the USDA, because the USDA… Well, there just dealing with larger numbers. I mean, that's the reason why you become the USDA. You can't… with Ohio inspection, you cannot sell outside the state, unless it's an exotic breed like say elk or buffalo or something like that. The state inspection can then inspect it and ship it outside.

L: So, how does this relate to some of the obstacles you've had with creating a sustainable food shed here?

J: Well, one of the problems has been, um, many of the larger corporations like AVI or Aramark, they have no room in their inspection criteria for safe plants. I mean, it's like, "Are you USDA inspected?" The answer they're waiting for is: "Yes, we are." [Laughter] If you say, "No," well then it's like *bing, bing, bing, bing, bing.* Okay, the end of that interview, you know. You don't stand a chance. So that was just, there was a bias against the state inspections so we had go through all the stuff I just explained to you. We got a letter for the Ohio State Department of Agriculture, Meat Inspection Division, from their chief that said, "This is what we are in comparison to an USDA inspection." So that was one of the first hurdles. So finally okay, then there was the question of if somebody gets sick and we're not getting it inspected by the feds, will we open up ourselves to liability because we haven't done what's prudent in not having the federally inspected? Then we had to prove to them that no we don't have to worry about that because it's just as good. You're not being the bad guy. It's not like it's been inspected by somebody less or you're trying to cut corners, you know, so that's not wrong. Um, we haven't really had an issue of trying to get things from out of state, obviously, because it's a local food problem. [Laughter]. I mean, if it's state inspected in Pennsylvania, we can't bring it in here, um.

L: So would you say that some of the federal programs are to your advantage or kind of going against this idea of trying to buy local/sustainable food?

J: Well, anytime anybody is prevented from selling their product across the state line that tends to impede a person's capabilities to grow. So, um, where I lived in Maryland we were only one county…the state was only one county wide at that point and we were surrounded, touching contiguously three other states. Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Virginia all touched our county, so to not be able to sell, I mean, that's another state example but still exemplifying the same point. I mean, if I lived on the Pennsylvania border, if you just cut off geographically over 2/5 (depending on how your county's orientated and depending on your population density on both sides), but I mean, you could cut off a substantial portion of your potential business. I mean, especially if there's a big metropolis right across the line or something. You know, if you're living in the lower part of Michigan and you want to sell to Toledo, oh well, you've got to become federally inspected to do that.

L: Mmmm.

J: So then everybody who deals… now not only that but the people who have distribution, um… we were using Lannings and they're federally inspected. Technically they can't put a state product on their federally inspected truck and deliver it to somebody. They can put a state product on a federally inspected truck, take it their facility, and sell it out of their retail, but they can't sell it out of their wholesale.

L: So, does this lead to… I guess, on the larger scale, does this lead to a consolidation of agribusinesses because there is no other way to deal?

J: Absolutely, right. You're a 'second class citizen.' That's the reason people have that perception, because well you can't ship across state line. Now there's a court case, and I don't know what it is, I just hear this second hand, because the meat producers were suing the USDA for not allowing them… I mean, you can get meat from Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, New Zealand, Canada, and that can come across, and there's no federal inspector standing in those plants, but you can't sell in your own country. I can't sell in Pennsylvania. So they were saying, "This is discrimination! Why should we… we're Americans. This is our country. It's inspected. Our guidelines are just as equal to or better than yours, so why aren't you allowing us to sell?" So you want to talk to something that's biased against the local producer?

L: Why are we encouraging the importation of products?

J: Well, who controls the importation? The same people who basically control the domestic. Now you only have four producers, three producers that go (depending on what area you're talking about – from beef to poultry products to pork), you have three producers or four that control anywhere from 70-80 percent of the market. So there the ones importing the stuff.

L: Who are the main companies?

J: Well, Tyson's is close to the top in pork, beef, and poultry, because they own IBP. They bought… so they have top-ranking… you want to talk about meat, you know, they're number one. I guarantee you they are. I mean, there are lists out there that you can find. I can point you in the direction that can answer that question, but Cargells another one. So you have this domination of the marketplace by three fully integrated companies – they own grain silos, railcars, trucks, everything from soup to nuts. They do it all – they do the processing, the marketing, they own the plant, and they buy the corn. So… and they sell the corn lots of times. [Laughter]

L: Speaking of corn, these companies actually have patents on seeds?

J: Yeah, yeah. Monsanto does. Well, anything that was to do with Round-up ready stuff, which is where you spray herbicide that should kill the plant, doesn't kill the plant because they've grafted in some frog or toad gene or something. It's… god, Frankenfood they call it, you know. It's not even food as far as I'm concerned. But, um, what they do is they are able to patent it… this was never allowed before because basically anything that grew was kind of like okay well anybody can do this, so how can you say, "This is a new life form." I mean, there's been corn around for tens of thousands of years, I guess. At least 10,000. Um, so, this isn't anything new, but then they changed the law and said, "You can do that. You can get a patent on it." So now obviously there are a couple of things that being able to spray this Round-up-Ready stuff on soybeans as well as corn, um, that's a patent by Monsanto, who also owns Round-Up seeds, so they own the whole thing.

L: What is your opinion of that system?

J: It's really scary to me. I mean, anything that doesn't work the way it was 'naturally' created to work seems to be you're playing with fire where you don't understand what the repercussions could be. I mean, it's almost like, I know this is sort of an over-exaggeration, but… when we first started out with nuclear, you know, technology, and of course, very quickly ramped up into nuclear weapons. And, I mean, there were a lot of people who felt as though the radiation was safe to be in, you know, and exposed a lot of people in this country (soldiers who were around, um, military personal who were around the testing, there was all this other stuff, people thinking they were safe, and then people who lived down wind from the fall-out that took place in Nevada, you know, came over Utah and things like that) and found high incidents of all kinds of stuff. So I think it's kind of along those lines, I mean, but that goes right along with so many of the 'modern' things we have – all the plastics and additives and things we're exposed to. It's almost so much that we can't ever quantify it all.

L: How long in our history have these things been around? Like when did agribusiness…

J: My lifetime, 50 years. I mean, come on, this stuff hasn't been… I mean, there were still farmers farming when I was a kid who didn't use anything. I mean, they just used manure, they went out and plowed and did all the things, you know, they rotated their crops, they had cows, and everything else going on, so they hadn't changed. But over the years as

they died off and new farmers came along, they would start doing the same thing I did that I got in trouble with, you know, trying to consolidate more land in their interest, you know, grow more and get bigger, and get bigger, and get bigger, and get bigger, and there's a national attrition rate. I mean there is. It's like a game of musical chairs – every time it goes around one of the chairs is taken away, so somebody else is going to be eliminated. Survival of the fittest, whatever you want to call it. But the problem is that, ultimately, the game ends with only one person in one chair. And that's kind of the way I feel about agriculture. I mean, there's less than 1 percent of the population involved in agriculture. More people in jail than there are farmers in the United States. So it's such a radical and dramatic shift, I can't imagine… You know, there's so many things about community that are lost, um, you know, when you don't have 300 farmers congregating around a small town, coming in using the mill, using the hardware store, using all the things, and now you only have 30 farmers because they're farming 10,000 acres each – you've just lost your community, because those guys are buying directly from the fertilizer company… Yeah, there might be somebody that still has a fertilizer facility but all the little incidentals, all the things that kept the community going are gone. So, um…

L: So why can't farmers make a living?

J: Food is too cheap. We produce too much food. Over-production of food, um, primarily. The problem is that food – I say "food" – a lot of food substitutes have come along and they might taste good but they're not healthy, but they're cheap, relative to fresh food.

L: And they're subsidized…

J: I mean, in other countries where they don't have big business that generates more food or generates finished, processed food, um fresh food is actually cheaper than processed food and that's the way it used to be here. But I just paid $1.50 for a grapefruit yesterday. I mean, I know the citrus thing, there's a whole problem with that, but, I mean, I used to get 6 for $1.50 not too long ago in a plastic bag. Um, fresh food, it has almost become like an elitist category. Um, people can't afford it and if they can afford it they wouldn't know how to cook it even if they did, if they could buy it. So when it comes to calories, and you're looking and you have a family to feed and you have a limited budget, well you can go get some white bread rolls and some hot dogs and some backed beans or something, and you know, through all that together and call it a meal.

L: And that's due to the consolidation of farms and the rise of agribusiness?

J: Yeah, the fact that you can make a hotdog pretty cheap when you consider how they pull everything out of whatever it you put in there, whether it be animals, corn, whatever you're feeding into the system, they get every nanogram of pay out of it. I mean, there's no waste, which is supposed be a good thing from an economic standpoint but they also end up using things that might not necessarily be good for you by processing them to make them last longer. By processing them, taking out elements out of the corn to use in the production of something else to stabilize it or make it appear as though it's something that it isn't, or to keep it. And one of the biggest problems I think that we have is that we

have a lot of availability of pretty high-intensity calories and we're also trying to process this food that's created to ship and store and not to eat. I mean, it was originally created to eat, you know, when you've got it. It was there – all the enzymes are there – I mean, they're breeding now like plants so that they last a long time, they look good, and they last a long time. It's got nothing to do with taste and nothing to do with nutrition, nutritional value. So I went through a period myself personally, and I think many people are in the same boat I am that I can't eat a lot of food that's processed. White bread just blows me away. There's a lot of proliferation of people's problems – # 1 is diabetes, # 2 is digestive issues. I went through the digestive issue thing and that's primarily, you know, you've got your nexum and all these anacid things, and also reflux. You know, acid reflux, there were people periodically who had that issue, but now it's everywhere. Along with all kinds of other things – fiber myalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome. I mean, those things didn't happen. Issues with allergies. Problems with kids – sinus infections, ear infections, all those things didn't exist 50 years ago. I mean, they existed but not to the degree at which they exist now.

L: So I'm still confused about 50 years ago… why this system started being created? Why agribusiness started to take over? Not just agribusiness, but why we started moving toward cheap food? Started having that accessibility…

J: Mmmm, because people wanted cheap food. [Laughter]. I mean, and also, it's tasty. I mean, come on, I still love to eat Oreo cookies and stuff like that.

L: But, take corn for example, I mean… you read Michael Pollan.

J: I was just eating corn grits this morning… okay, here's a good example, now there's nothing more elementary than corn grits. I mean, it's just (for all intensive purposes) ground up corn. And I thought here I bought this whole box of corn grits for $2.00, which is probably way over, I mean, I could get my own corn and do the same thing to make grits out of it. You do take the endosperm out of it, I think, and do something, I don't know how they do that, but there's some way, I'm sure it's not that complicated. But I could go do that, I mean, the bushel of corn, 50 pounds of corn costs $4.00 now. So, um, but then, why did it become cheaper? Well, we're built on a premise for society and as far as I'm taking this corn, value-adding it, I make grits out of it and got $1.50. Now, I could have gone and made Cornflakes and I would have got $2.50. Or I could go make Frosted Flakes and now I got $3.50 or something. You know, you see where I'm going with all this. [Laughter]. And, um, obviously the one you make the most profit on is the Frosted Flakes. So what do you sell? The Frosted Flakes. And you say it's part of this nutritious breakfast where you put the milk and the orange juice and the toast together.

L: So I guess you couldn't do that without fossil fuels.

J: Oh my gosh no. Just the consolidation of everything, mixing it all together, pushing it over here and pushing it over there. I mean, where's the closest flour mill? I don't know. I don't even know if there is one in Ohio. I don't.

L: Where does our corn go from Knox County?

J: Anywhere. I mean, it's a commodity. It flows around just like oil, around the world. It can go overseas. It just goes in a big bin and from there it can go on a truck and be put on a barge and go down to Mississippi and away it goes. Or it can be taken to all these ethanol plants that are being built around here now. Or it can just go to a feed lot or it can go to a big Tyson chicken feed-processing area where they don't grow all their corn. So people started looking, they wanted convenience, you know, rather than sitting there stirring my grits. By the time I was done cooking my grits I could have been done eating my Frosted Flakes and been out the door. So you had the price, that allusion that I saved time, because I saved time, I saved money.

L: But why did corn become that staple instead of another commodity?

J: Oh, because you can grow so much of it on an acreage. 12,000 pounds out of an acre? That's pretty good. And plus it lends itself to transport. You know, it's pretty user friendly. And it grows a lot of places. It takes a lot more water than say wheat does. But there are just many things you can do with it. I mean, when you refined it you get high-fructose corn-syrup, which in the course of 20 years has replaced the sugar in all of the soft-drinks. That's all other story…

[End of Side A]

When you legislate something it's going to cost your constituency more money, but the only it's costing more money is because you're actually putting the cost where the cost resides, which is on production of food. Right now, it's a smoke-in-mirrors. I mean, people don't understand how much of the money they pay for this food system that we currently have is coming from back-pocket due to taxation. They don't understand how much of it is going out in terms of increasing cost of medical insurance (caused primarily by a food system that is broken and feeding people a bunch of garbage that manifests itself in a myriad of different ways). And I just know that if it wasn't the food, why is it that under-developed countries don't have people just lying sick all over the place. If you took away all the people that were sick in the United States, and for people my age, I would say the average is 3-4 medications for a 50-some year old, and when you get to be in your 60s and 70s, there's a lot of people taking 6,7,8.9, 10 medications to alleviated symptoms that they have as a result of things that they eat. If it was this bad in other countries and this was a systemic problem that just man-kind in general that was suffering from and we were transmitting these diseases that were distributed equally over all the countries, then your third-world countries that don't have the medical system that we have, those people would all just be lying around. I mean, everything would just... it's an epidemic, right? So, if there's no treatment of an epidemic what often happens is that people are unable to function. Well, that's not the case. So, what does that mean? If the undeveloped countries don't suffer from the same things we do, then there's something wrong in our lifestyle that's causing us… there's something wrong with our system. The systemic problem is not a humankind problem, it's a specific country's problem or local's problem. When I went to (if you want to see something completely different) I went to

this sustainable farming conference over the weekend and the amount of obesity vs. the general population was nil. I mean, they looked like people… look at photographs of people, watch movies from the United States during right after WWII in the fifties. Number one, you'll see a lot of people smoking, but the other think you'll notice is that there's no obesity. I mean, there's a genetic statistical population of people who are obese and always will be. I mean, they tend to be on the obese side. That's part of the statistics, you know, there's people who are really thin, there's people who are really fat, but by-and-large it's been a bell-curve where everyone kind of resides in the middle. Well, where is that bell-curve now when you walk around? Oh my gosh, it has shifted so far. I mean, you go to a foreign country and just – Bingo! Their profile, their body types.

L: But, couldn't that be remedied by some kinds of regulations that prevent junk food from getting into the market in the first place?

J: You mean like trans-fats?

L: Yeah, but even reforming the subsidy system so we're not like having corn be really cheap and have it be used in all kinds of substances?

J: Okay, but how do get people to make the decision? Well, yeah that would work…

L: But the problem is that the people making the decision aren't farmers.

J: No, I mean, so if I feel comfortable getting a Pepsi, and having a bag of Doritos, and maybe some cheese tip from FritoLay as well. All those products are from FritoLay. And I got all those and I'm going to eat them, and someone comes along and says, "Hey, that's all junk food, you can't have that anymore." Well…

L: I guess it takes a culture shift too, and people have to not want it because they realize the health implications.

J: Right. But then I say, "Well, I want you to have a glass of juice, instead. Real juice, not corn syrup flavored water." Well, go buy a glass of orange juice and in reality for it to be nutritious it needs to be fresh orange juice, un-pasteurized, or else you're going to miss a lot of benefits there.

L: We just don't have the infrastructure anymore because…

J: Yeah, it's gone, plus it's impractical. I mean, you used to get citrus. It used to be a real special thing to have citrus. I can remember when tomatoes first showed up in the grocery store. Can you believe that? I remember when there were no tomatoes this time of year. Why would you want a tomato, it's not the time of year you get a tomato.

L: When was that?

J: I remember they used to come in a little tripack, you know, with the cellophane wrapped around. I mean, I remember the conversations I had. You say, "Wow tomatoes!" You buy, you take them home, and you're like "*Blehhh.* This isn't a real tomato!" So you never buy them again. We never bought them. You know, the space in the grocery store was about two foot long and whatever the thing was wide, that was it. That's how few anyone would buy. Iceburg lettuce, people would buy that. Of course, there weren't a lot of the greens and things like that you have now. It was pretty sparse. But citrus fruit, hey come on, that's been delivered to the northern part of the United States since steam power. I mean, there were accounts during the Civil War of them having oranges and things like that delivered to the soldiers. And I remember reading this one account where the Confederates raided a Union supply train and they had citrus fruit on it. I mean, isn't that… I mean, this is war! So it obviously wasn't a luxury, it must have been something people got. Bananas, citrus fruit… When you look at the local newspaper articles here for advertisements back in the 20s, 10s, and those times, you'll see oranges and things listed with prices on advertisements of grocery stores. So it's been around and it came via trains, you know, ships and trains and stuff.

L: So back to this moving away from the industrial food chain… You think that the only way that's going to happen is if people take on that responsibility for themselves? Like a paradigm shift?

J: Yeah, it's a paradigm shift. I don't see it happening without a disaster of some sort. I mean, the whole thing with people's health is the frog in the water and you turn it up five degrees and eventually the frog is boiled. But he doesn't realize it, he just thinks, "Hey, it's getting hot in here." [Laughter].

L: [Laughter]

J: Before he does, you know, he's passed out from the heat and he's unable to make his own decisions and then, of course, he's gone. I think sometimes we're at that point where we're just so intoxicated with our way of life, never being able to actually stop and analyze it. Or analyze anything. I think that's one of the problems, there's just so much to see so many choices to make. We're just busy, busy, busy, busy all the time. And we're not really realizing what's going on. I mean, I was very busy last week. Normally when I go away, I get myself a little care package. I go to the health food store, I load up with some cereal and things like that that I can eat when I'm away. Well, we ran out the door, didn't get a care-package, didn't make sure we had something to eat. So what did we do? We end up eating at a fast-food place, which is good, because I hadn't eaten at one for a long time. And I was just like "Wow, this really is just crap." [Laughter] It really is. I'm not missing anything. I mean, it's like the French fries are kind of cool for the first couple and then you can start tasting the oil.

L: It just starts tasting bad…

J: It was local though, because I bought from Wendy's. Okay. [Laughter]

L: [Laughter] That's great.

J: So I didn't feel bad. That's what I told my wife, "Well, let's go to Wendy's because that way it's local food, because they're right here in Ohio."

L: I don't know… I'm going to the "Farm-to-Table Conference" at the end of Spring Break and it's talking about the farm bill. And..

J: The one in Baltimore?

L: Yeah.

J: Mhmm.

L: I'm still kind of unsure what I feel about it – whether you work within the system because we already have the system in place so you have to do something, or whether you…

J: You have to do both. You have to work within the system to try to… unfortunately, the way the world works, the politics works, if you don't scream and shout for what you want you're not going to get anything. And the agriculture bill has become this huge omnibus deal between every faction – you have food stamps, rural development – if you want to do something to bring business to Mount Vernon, you can go get a USDA grant to do that. It's got nothing to do with agriculture, but because it's in a rural community.

L: Can you explain what the farm bill is?

J: Oh gosh… Well, it's a huge bill. It's 700+ pages or something like that. I mean, I wasn't going to print it off, you know. [Laughter]

L: [Laughter] Thank you for not wasting paper.

J: Right, the ten-thousand trees I'd have to kill to print that off. That's kind of ironic that you'd have a bill that's that big. Well, that's in there. So all your crops are covered, everything. I mean, just about everything. And there's a lot of subsidies that still get through, you know, like a honey subsidy (I don't know if really is one, but there has been). And silly things like that. Mole hair wool, mole hair producers, you know. So there's lots of stuff like that that are stuck in there and it's all give-and-take. Well, I'll support you're bill if you give me this over here. So that's what they've done. Now, we'll put food stamps in there. So I'll support your farm subsidies to the farmers, which is really subsidizing agribusiness, if you give me food for the hungry, if you give me some assurance that we can make a token gesture to the kind of farmer. So it appears as though it's a valid thing. You know, when you list all the items and you look at them all, you're like "Wow, this is a really balanced bill! It's really helping people and the poor." Then you go look at the pie chart and then you'll see this huge piece of the pie, which is the farmers subsidies, another pretty substantial piece that is for food stamps, and then you'll

see a bunch of tiny little slices, you know, for everything else – forests, development, all kinds of stuff. Because the forest system comes under the USDA, so the national forests, how they're regulating them and what they do with those.

L: What do you think of the USDA?

J: Well, I heard this for the first time. Joe Salon spoke at the conference I was just at and he called it the "US-Dah." [Laughter] So that kind of summarized my feeling on it. He said, "How many organizations actually encourage the reduction of its members, of its constituents?" And that's what they've done. They haven't encouraged farmers, regular farmers or anything. If anything, they've encouraged things to get bigger, bigger, bigger. The Land Grand University's many cases have just become research institutions or research arms of a corporation, you know. They're not there. Certainly, there's always this little side by, "Well, yeah, but we have this farm over here and it's doing some work and we have some PhDs." Yeah, but where is the bulk of your focus? It's a token. Well, like you were saying, take the token. Try to get more, try to double the token. Maybe it's a less than 1 percent movement, I don't know, maybe at some point in time there's some kind of tipping point when you get 3 percent and all of a sudden it will become 30 percent. All I can say is, when people talk about the future, thirty years ago, no forty years ago, it was during the 60s, oh, let's go all the way, fifty years ago there was no way anybody would ever say that there would be no smoking.

L: Mhmm.

J: No way, absolutely none. So I always said, "Food production in this time period will be the tobacco of the future." They're going to find out that there are so many related diseases to it. People are going to get on it. I just kind of hope the whole thing holds together long enough for all that to happen. But, um, you know, what happens if there is a suddenly imposed oil embargo? I mean, have you ever been or lived through an oil shortage for whatever reason like we had in the 70s? Have you ever lived through a blizzard? Have you ever visited a grocery store that's received no deliveries in 3-4 days? There's nothing there. It's gone. So that's how fast – 3-4 days, make that two weeks – then what happens? Or we'll just, you know, we'll get to the point where the truck comes into the parking lot and people just mob it to get the food off of it? That's a pretty scary thought. From my stand point, yeah, I'll have my food. How long do you think I'll last? I mean, in a state of emergency basically the government can come take your food from you.

L: That's why I think this upcoming farm bill needs to start either subsidizing new farmers to get into small-scale agriculture or… I mean, I don't know if that's even realistic at all.

J: Well, what we look at here is… this is the way we look at our situation here. We're trying to build an infrastructure that will help farmers. And we're trying to do more direct consumption. We're not talking about growing more grain, more corn, you know, so we can have more Corn Flakes locally. [Laughter]. You know? We want more locally

produced milk, and eggs, and meat, and cheese, and all the things that you can consumer all year round. And then you want to encourage people to grow more produce and also to try to widen the windows as far out as you can – extend the seasons a month or two in each direction. I mean, I was talking… I sat through a guy now… we're in zone 5 maybe 5b or 6a, and he was in zone 7, warmer. And he was growing greens outside all year round, outside.

L: Where?

J: It's in Southern Maryland, below D.C, which is dramatically different. [Laughter]. Especially right now. I mean, right now it's probably only 15 or 20 degrees, as opposed to 6 or whatever it is here today.

L: Wasn't Tim Patrick growing greens throughout the year?

J: Yeah, I know. Well, he was growing it, but now I don't know what's happening when things slow down. But you've got to be really careful. If your talking about doing sustainable… if could grow things with hardly any input during the winter that's okay, but if you've got to sit there and have the propane truck back up through the heater to keep things going, that's not a doable thing. But I'll tell you what, this guy had these greens that were so delicious. It was just incredible. Just incredible. They tasted raw, like they were cooked. Like they had seasoning in them. The one, I could have swore it was cooked with a ham-hawk or something. I mean, it just had that flavor. He talked about his greens like a person talks about tasting wine. Oh, it has an after taste, you know, of bayberry or some, you know. The smell… you know, I don't know how they talk but you know the guys that do wine tasting. That's the way he sounded.

L: So enthusiastic.

J: He was so in love with what he was doing.

L: That's so refreshing.

J: Oh it's very refreshing. To be around people who really believe in what they're doing and are so excited in what they're doing. And then to have it be such a small part it's really sad, because a lot of people are missing out. Food is an incredible thing. Eating is an incredible thing. Other cultures appreciate it. Ours has turned out to be, you know, we just want something to through in the whole to keep us going, you know, just like filling up the tank at the quick-serve or whatever. So, and that's kind of how we look at food. And most people have never even tasted good food. And most people, younger people never even had canned food or have grown up in the environment where you cook a meal. Many of them have lived off of fast food and if they didn't have fast food they threw things in a microwave. Either one of those, as far as I'm concerned, is no way to live. And there are people who eat fast food every day, between breakfast, lunch, and dinner, one way or another. It's really difficult, I mean, I'm very fearful of what the potential for

disaster is. When there's no food locally. When people don't know even if it was local they wouldn't have any idea what to do with it. I mean…

L: It's the loss of knowledge. But it's also that the consolidation leads to a real safety issue.

J: Oh, a food safety issue? Big time. I mean, we're fortunate that we have some infrastructure here, but we don't have nearly enough. And a lot of it is in centrally located, centralized infrastructure. The goal is to make the centralized infrastructure, which then realizes the burden of producers. To have that infrastructure on their farm to get started. And then once they ramp themselves up, they get to a point where they can afford to have the infrastructure. Um, I want to raise produce, my wife doesn't understand, "Well, why don't you just plant more fields? Get some people to help you." I said, "That's one aspect of it. Where do I store it? Where do I plant? Where do I process it? Where's the truck I'm going to drive around with that's covered?" I said, "I'd really like a refrigerator truck, but where's one that's just covered to keep it out of the sunlight when you're delivering things?" I said, "These are the things you need to think about." I said, "I already did this one time."

L: It would require so many inputs and start-up cost are high…

J: Oh yeah, exactly. I said, "So now I need a refrigerator, I need a building that I can do the washing in, and if I want to do it where people can perceive this to be processed to the extent to which they can eat it, meaning I've cut or I've done anything, then I have to do it according to the local health department. So now I need to have a relatively clean place. I need to have certification. My well-water being okay, and on and on and on. I have to have check-lists." And that's okay, I don't have any problem doing that, but that's not something you just, you know… okay, it's done now you gotta go back and forth, you know, just in sheer time. I could build a building but you're not going to walk through the inspection process just one time. You've got to be prepared, have them come, build the dialogue back-and-forth. Regulators always want to feel important, so you've got to go through this several times so they feel like they've done something.

L: So that's one of the hardest things about recreating the system, is trying to convince people to putting in the money and the resources?

J: Well, the object is to relieve that burden from them and have them a nominal user's fee. That's the idea behind having this food center. It's a place to store, wash, process. Hopefully once people started to use it, it would then become a distribution point as well. You know, have a truck. I can take Farmer A, Farmer B, and Farmer C's products and move them through the truck to other places, locally, so that the farmers don't have to go to all these stops. We can just have one person do it within a cooperative type of environment. That is so far in outer-space for most people that they can't even grasp it. They don't even know what you're talking about. And you can tell they don't know what you're talking about in the questions that they ask. You know, they just don't get it. And besides that, when you use the "C Word," because it is a "C Word" around here, when

you say "cooperative" it immediately sounds like some Russian, you know, were all going to be peasants living in some government dominated farm that they're telling us what to grow. That's the connotation it has around here. You know, you start talking about this stuff in Mass, Wisconsin, or Ann Arbor, or Berkeley, or some place like that and people are like "Yeah, I want to be a part of that!" You start talking about cooperation here, and they're like "I don't know. You guys might do something to me and you probably just want to know who my customers are so that you can steal them." You know, that kind of mentality. Or, "You're going to put all the burden on me and I'm going to have to pay for everything and I'm not going to get anything out of this and you're going to skate along just like somebody on welfare." Well, if that's your attitude then that's probably what's going to happen. You stand up in front of people, you try to engage them and get them excited about something like this and it's like talking to a bunch of toadstools. Everybody's sitting there talking with their arms crossed, their body language, you know, they kind of have their heads tilted. And there's no real acceptance. There's no brightening of a face, no body language that says, "You know this is a cool idea, I think I'd really like to try this."

L: And there aren't a lot of younger generations around here.

J: There's none around here. That's why I'm really excited about what's going on around here at Kenyon because this is really truly the opportunity. I mean, I came back to Kenyon, to Gambier, because it was some place I'd never seen before, never seen since. I mean, I'd never seen in the course of the thirty years I was away from here, I went to a lot of places and I never saw anything like this.

L: How is it different?

J: Well just the fact that you have a college that's out in the middle of corn fields. I mean, in an agricultural area, in close proximity to a city, and there's a lot of things the area offers. I mean, you can become involved in politics and you're making your voice heard pretty quickly. All you have to do is show up to a couple meetings and you're pretty much in politics yourself at that point. I mean go sit in a couple county commissioner or city council meetings and you get to know everybody. I mean, the mayor, all the council, they'll know who you are, they'll want to talk to you, they'll want to know why you're there. What do you do? What's your interest? So, you know, there's eight of them and there's five people in the audience. Sometimes it's just me and the reporter. [Laughter]. That's it! And this is Mount Vernon. I mean, there's 16-17 thousand people there. I mean, there's not five people that show up – that's all that care about their government? Well, if you have a government that's run like that, there's an opportunity to change some things. You know?

L: So you think that getting involved locally is almost more important that nationally?

J: Yeah. You have to start from a local stand-point to make anything happen from a national level, I think. Um, but your inputs here have a much greater impact. I mean, I just know from living in a place where there's so many people. I mean, there could be a

city council for a million people and there's still only seven people in a city council. So, whether there's 17,000 or 1.7 million, there's still the same number of wars because it can't get much bigger because it become unfunctional at that point. So where do you think your voice is going to be heard? Where can you actually affectuate changes? I would say here. Unless, of course, the politics are different. Like I said, if you're in a Mass, Ann Arbor, a Berkely, or somewhere like that, you know, your constituency tends to be more liberal so you can probably move some of those things quicker. Here you really have to be patient and you really have to build… And I think this is one of the problems we've had so far… We haven't built a coalition of people. We haven't gone to the health department and local service groups and really talked to them about what we're doing. What we're doing to them still appears to be a fringe thing. It still appears to be "Oh look at those academic people," you know, "They're just embracing this liberal idea but it's really just a flash in the pants. It's not for us around here." So I'm writing my grant letter of intent to try to get some money for next year to fund my life… [Laughter]

L:…To fund your life? What are you trying to do?

J: Hopefully benefit the community at the same time. Well, from a Rural Life "Food for Thought" stand point, what we've tried to do is kind of the top-down pull people up. I haven't discussed this with Howard yet, but I'd really like to see more from the bottom-up, because I think it works better. It's hard to build a consensus when you've never engaged people in the decision-making process. The food council has several meetings per year, and we have no broad base support. Basically, it's been people who are interested in dealing with Kenyon when it comes somewhere around this Kenyon sphere somewhere. We haven't gone out in the community, and I understand his reluctance because it's a messy place. It really is. When you start getting into dealing with all these different organizations it's very difficult. You have lots of personality clashes, you've got to have some savvy about dealing with people who are in this area. Often times the savvy that does not come having lived in an environment like Kenyon, if you understand what I'm saying. You kind of have to relate to the other people. And if you've never grown up here, it's kind of not in your paradigm, if you will. And it's really hard to come across with a genuine sincerity. They always say, "Well, what are you really doing?" I got accused the other day of just using this whole thing as a means to number one write grants, to fund grants for things that we do at Kenyon so that we'll get more money, and number two we were just using people as an experiment. That we weren't really interested in changing anything, we just wanted to analyze it so that we could then talk about it and then further our own glory in academia and not really effectuate any change in the community.

L: Do they agree with the changes that you are purposing too?

J: Well, if you're talking about the Farm Bureau guys, no. They just kind of shake their heads at you like you don't understand boy, you don't know what you're talking about. Maybe we'll run out of oil, but there's always something out there that we could use instead. They believe in technology, well they've bought into technology so how can they go back? Once they've made that decision everything you've done – your mortgages,

your car payments, your tractor payments, the fact that you go borrow hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to buy all the input for your crops. How do you just wean youself off of that and say, "I'm not going to do that anymore." Well, what year do you do that in? How do you get rid of your tractor? Once you fall into the trap of "I'm going to have a home and I'm going to have a mortgage," the next thing is like "I'm going to have to pay $1,500 a month, every month, not just this month." How am I going to do that? Well, I'm going to have to have a job. Once you have a job then how can you change from that job to another job unless you know that there's going to be some continuity there? How do I become a sustainable farmer when I've been farming my land? You're literally a junky. You can't get off. How can you take the land and turn it back into something that used to be in a symbiotic relationship with its environment? And take it away and it's got so much chemical residue in it that it's going to take you years to heal that. So, you're a junky. They're junkies just like somebody who has an addiction. And if you have an addiction how do you… you can admit that you have an addiction, but then the ugly part comes… how do I get off this? Well, that's where a farm bill would be nice – to transition people off because right now I'm planting cover crops. I'm more concerned about green manure than I am about growing something because I know that my land needs to be worked. There's no earthworms or anything like that going on. As I'm putting on more humus down, making more humus and reincorporating in the ground, as I put my red clover in so that its roots go down, it starts to get all that dynamic working again and introducing bacteria back into the ground that was… Long-term chemical usage turns the land into an inanimate object like asphalt or concrete, literally. And, yes, if you ever let your sidewalk go you will see weeds that grow up in it. The same thing on a corn field, yes, you will see some weeds that grown up in it, but by and large they're weeds. They're not anything, and they're nasty weeds, they're not even indigenous to the area. They wouldn't even grow other place. Look at corn fields this summer and look at what kind of weeds there are in there. And then look at the fields around it, you wont see any weeds like that. There are these huge, gigantic things that the herbicide is not effective against that they just develop a resistance.

L: So the farm bill would be effective in…

J: I think transitioning would be a big deal. Building infrastructure, because you need to have the infrastructure. When I say infrastructure, I mean giving low-interest loans, even grants, to people who want to build meat-processing facilities, vegetable processing facilities, cold storage for farmers, helping farmers join co-ops, make cooperative venture. And then people who want to transition from conventional back, saying "Okay you have 300 acres and you want to turn it into sustainable farming, then you give, you know, when you meet this we'll pay you X number of dollars." You know, the opportunity cost of my continuing crowing corn versus my starting-up of doing it in a sustainable way. What is that opportunity cost? Have that program, but then realize that once you're into sustainable farming, you're not going to get anymore subsidies. Once you've made that transition, you're kind of on your own. But I just think that that's a better place to be. Now it's not for everybody. But we don't need to make it for everybody. We just need to make it for some of the people. I'm not saying that conventional agriculture has to be done away with. I believe that there are people who will continue to do that and I imagine

that it has its place somewhere. It just wont be cheap anymore if you take away subsidies. Cheap food isn't cheap anymore. Put the real costs where the costs are. That's the other thing, get rid of subsidies.

L: Getting rid of them completely?

J: You've got to wean yourself off of them?

L: What about natural disasters?

J: That's different. A natural disaster is crop insurance. And, so, having a crop insurance for people, I don't have any problem for tax payers, perhaps, helping with that or making it where you pay a fee for part of a program. Like right now, um, when we buy our animals for Kenyon, we do it in two ways. Either someone takes them directly to the processor or we take them to a central location and then company that has a location to livestock kill yard in Mount Vernon. They then ship the animals to the slaughterhouse. In the later way, method, we have a c overage of insurance. There's a whole bunch of fees that are associated with that. They have to pay a beef production promotion fee, and they also have to pay for insurance, but it's a relatively nominal fee, like 14 cents per thousand or hundred. So far a thousand pound animal it would be $1.40. Now if that animal is injured or lost by a wreck or whatever or just comes up lame when you get to the end and the guy can't kill it, then the insurance covers it. So, you know, that's a relatively minor cost and it's certainly something that could be built into a system. Crop insurance isn't that expensive and it might be something that the government could be involved in. So for natural disasters that's one thing. But, see, we've invested in a system, and the system unfortunately was the wrong one. At some point in time, we had a decision to make and we made the wrong one collectively as a society. Well, as in your own personal life, the nation making a wrong decision has to confront the situation the same way you do personally. So, say you decided that you wanted to invest in something and it didn't work out. Then, you have to pay the money back, you know. You're going to have to go through some hardship to regain the ground you lost by making the decision you made. We're going to have to do the same thing. Now, how do people do that voluntarily? They don't. They only do it… I mean, that's human nature. Typically you don't correct the wrongs until somebody stands there and says, "Okay, now's the time to pay me." You can make a decision that was wrong and morally change it, but that's not the way people want to work. I mean, if I borrow money from you to do something and I borrowed the money and I did something and I couldn't pay you back, most people wouldn't pay you back until you forced them to pay you back. Especially if what I did didn't work out for me. You know, if I went out and bought something and it didn't work and it was like "boy I really want to have this and then I got it and it wasn't what I thought it should be and now I have to pay you back," well not only do I not have the money that I paid for it, but I also probably can't sell it what I paid for it. So I can't recuperate my money there. I've made a mistake and how long is it going to take for me to realized I've made the mistake. There's also that factor. Oh, well I've been using this thing that way they've been telling me to use it for three years now and it's never gotten any better when I look at the numbers but I've already committed myself to it. So what do I do? And that level

of commitment… I don't know, some people are going to say, "Okay, I want out." Um, but you don't want them out to sell the land. I mean, that's the normal exit strategy now is "I don't' want to be involved in this farming anymore, I'll just sell my land for development." And, um, by the same token, you don't want them to quit, I mean, you want them to change. And change is the hardest thing in human nature. But I think there are a lot of things to be encouraged by, the number of young people that are encouraged by this and it's not for the money. Um, that should make their parents pretty proud because we used to say that we were going to do stuff not for the money but turned out to be the most materialistic generation ever.

L: Our generation seems pretty materialistic too.

J: Well, you've grown up in a materialistic society. How can you help it? You know what was very interesting, I was there for three days and I never saw anyone with an I-Pod.

L: Where? Oh, at the conference.

J: At Pennsylvania. Penn-State College. It was way cool, because people were engaged. You'd sit down or stand next to somebody and people would immediately say, "Hey, what are you doing here? How'd you like that guy? What'd you think?" You know, it was kind of neat. Rather than people being zoned out and couldn't care less what you were or who you were or anything else. I mean, obviously we had to collective goal, I guess, in being there, and you feel as though you're part of a movement. But still there was a lot of time where you just wonder around looking at displays, picking up information, or you could just be chilling out…

L: I feel like Kenyon is moving in that direction. At least the people I'm around are very engaged in the community and I hope there's going to be a movement that's going to be helping students get more involved with agriculture.

J: Well, I think the college is missing a heck of a good opportunity. I mean, look at our location. There aren't many colleges where you could walk down the hill and walk right out into a field and start farming. There aren't very many places like that. And you could basically continue to go four miles in that direction until you got to Mt. Vernon or whatever. You know what I'm saying, there's just a huge amount of potential here for them to develop it. And I think there would be a lot of people who were encouraged to come here even if they weren't participating in that just to be in a place where that was going on. Maybe farming isn't for you, and I don't believe it is. It's something that burns inside you. It's this desire that you have to be fulfilled by raising things. I think there's also desire in the people who have burning inside them to make things. Even if it's a factory setting, I think it's still... people are rewarded by making stuff, even if it's just a widget or whatever. You know, you turn it out at the end of the day. There are people who are proud of making their widget. You know, if you don't make things or grow things, a lot of your own, a lot of things that are uniquely human are lost. There aren't many entities in the universe that can make things or grow it, you know. And it's that creative aspect of it that I don't know what happens to a society when they don't have

that. I think you can probably see what happens to it, because it's happening right now. A lot of people are just disengaged.

L: They fulfill themselves with other things like television.

J: They define themselves with external things and nothing from their own. There's no self-value, no worth. Um, leading to depression and all kinds of other issues. It's more than just the food you eat, it's the lifestyle that you have that goes along with it. And the lifestyle that you support in the fact that when you do this kind of thing producing food locally, you're creating a community that you don't need if you have things happening locally. If you just go to the store and buy something or you have it delivered to you, and you have no relationship with anyone who *makes* anything for you or grows anything for you, you're detached from… from your reality. [Laughter]. Because, your surrounded by animate things that people make and if you don't know anybody who makes any of them, how do you see a connection?

L: I think that relates so much to the specialization of different trades…

J: Well, sure. It's all specialized. And the fact that…

L: People have their interests and they want to stick with what they do. You know, you have your art majors who want to do their art things, and you have your drama majors who want to do their drama things. So, they're not necessarily interested in what's going in food, because to them it's just some kind of specialized thing for other people to do.

J: Yeah, but everybody eats. And everybody should enjoy the arts too. Absolutely, it's just creativity channeled into that aspect. Arts is being creative. Growing food is being creative. Building a house is being creative. There are a lot of people that can't engage things at the level that Kenyon students can. They don't have the, I don't want to say it, but mental capacity. You know, they can't handle all that stuff. You have to simplify things for them, but they still have the desire to be fulfilled to doing something constructive, whatever it happens to be. And I'm sorry, I'm totally against the service industry. I mean, I know you can wait on a table in a creative way and I guess there's a place for it, but I just really thing we need to focus on people doing things that other people enjoy. And there's no enjoyment. Where's the enjoyment in food? I don't know, it's like it's been lost. There's no time left to do any of it.

L: Well, you should come to the local brunch next Saturday.

J: Yeah, I know, they're cooking my potatoes. Yeah, Arrington emailed me…

L: That's about all I had. I guess I'm supposed to talk to some corn growers
J: Yeah, there are lots of them. Rex Spray grows organic. Dean Maclevain. And then there's… I'm trying to find organic producers for grain for flour. The problem is that around here you can't grow a very good wheat. It's just too wet. It's just not a very good

area. I haven't learned that, you know, the subtleties of wheat production yet, but I guess I will. I also wanted to get organic oatmeal and that's not easy to find.

L: Okay, thanks very much.

[End of tape]