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2022

## **MF148 Margaret "Mimi" Killinger / Helen Nearing Collection**

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# Margaret "Mimi" Killinger/Helen Nearing Collection

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History

5729 Raymond H. Fogler Library

University of Maine

Orono, ME 04469-5729

Business Number: 207.581.1686

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## Summary Information

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<b>Repository:</b>	Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History
<b>Creator:</b>	Killinger, Margaret O. "Mimi", Ph.D.
<b>Title:</b>	Margaret "Mimi" Killinger / Helen Nearing Collection
<b>ID:</b>	MF148
<b>Date [inclusive]:</b>	1999-2001
<b>Date:</b>	2001
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 items
<b>Language of the Material:</b>	English .
<b>Material Specific Details:</b>	Audio files are the primary source material. Transcriptions are the transcriber's best effort to convert audio to text, but should be considered secondary to the audio.

### Preferred Citation

Interviewee last name, interviewee first name. Year. NA[unique series identification number], MF148 NAFOH. Raymond H. Fogler Library Special Collections Department, University of Maine, Orono, Maine.

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## Scope and Contents

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Interviews by Margaret "Mimi" Killinger about Helen and Scott Nearing whose lives as homesteaders in Vermont and Maine came to embody the simple living philosophy of Agrarianism that became the core of America's "Back to the Land" Movement of the 1960s, 1970s, and 2020s.

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## Arrangement

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NA3378 Nancy Berkowitz, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, March 3, 1999 and April 2, 2001, Blue Hill and Harborside, Maine, respectively.

March 3, 1999: Berkowitz talks about Helen's novels *Living the Good Life* and *Loving and Leaving*; Helen's relationship with her husband, Scott; Juliette of the Herbs; Helen's interaction with visitors to the farm; astrology and mysticism; Scott's death; Helen's relationship with Berkowitz and her family; Scott's granddaughter Elka Schuman and her Bread and Puppet Theater in Glover, Vermont; Scott's letters from Central and South America; Helen's relationship with Berkowitz's children; Scott's 100th birthday party; Helen's relationship with Dr. Lovell; Helen's relationship with her family; Elliot and Susan Coleman; Jean and Keith Hebron.

Text: 15 pp. transcript Recording: mfc\_na3378\_c2496\_01, mfc\_na3378\_c2496\_02 62 minutes

April 2, 2001: Also present: Rachel Glickman and Henry Zacchini, resident stewards of Forest Farm. Berkowitz talks about the history of Forest Farm; how she came to live there; her duties; Brett Brubaker, builder of the house; growing and storing their own vegetables; changes in Blue Hill; Sunday music nights and Monday meeting nights; speaker Alicia Bay Laurel; the interior of the house; Helen and Scott and their trip to Europe; the Common Ground Fair; University of Maine Environmental History professor Dick Judd; her neighbors the Burts and Dietrichs; the introduction of the telephone at Forest Farm; life at Forest Farm; artist Max Schuman; friend Bill Copperthwaite; Helen's practice of recycling cards; the Clivis Multrum Abby Rockefeller toilet; their Thorndike stove; painter Connie Caney; the Bread and Puppet people of Vermont; Pusso the cat; Helen's travels after Scott's death; Gail Disney; Paul Breedman; painter Cole Morgan; Rachel and Henry's experiences living in Africa; Cuban patriotism.

Text: 50 pp. transcript Recording: mfc\_na3378\_c2494\_01, mfc\_na3378\_c2495\_01 and 02 131 minutes

NA3380 Gail Disney, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, March 5, 1999, South Brooksville, Maine. Disney talks about the Nearings: Scott Nearing's (SN) participation in the Arden Community in Wilmington, Delaware in the 1930s; living with the Nearings at Arden; Helen's (HN) travels in Europe with Krishnamurti; separating HN and SN for Killinger's feminism class; HN's opinions on vegetarianism; HN's love of animals; SN's belief in communism; Forest Farm; HN's and SN's colleagues Elliot Coleman, Keith Hebron, Stanley Joseph and Greg Sommers; SN's Monday night lectures; HN's travels to Cuba; HN's publishing house, the Social Science Institute; SJ's suicide; SJ's contributions to the community; SJ's book *The Maine Farm*; HN's relationship with her family; HN's personality and idealism; HN's friend Nancy Cudde Johnson; the effects of SN's death on HN; HN's knitting; SN's mentorship of HN; the effects of HN's death on the community.

Text: 25 pp. transcript Recording: mfc\_na3380\_c2497\_01, mfc\_na3380\_c2497\_02 64 minutes

NA3381 David Trager and Merle Trager, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, October, 14, 2001, Jamaica, Vermont. Also Present: Joshua J. McCloud. Trager talks about Scott Nearing: Scott being fired from Princeton for his views; Scott Nearing's marriage to Helen; Scott Nearing's followers; the Norm Williams house and its history; realtor Jim Howard, who sold his house to the Tragers; the Trager's stone house; Scott Nearing's colleagues Wes Frost and Norman Williams; Ron Curtis's work on the Trager's house, colony member Pearl Buck; the history of the Trager house, its construction and work done to it.

Text: 20 pp. transcript Recording: mfc\_na3381\_c2498\_01, mfc\_na3381\_c2498\_02 44 minutes

NA3384 Jeanne Gaudette, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, March 3, 1999, Blue Hill, Maine. Gaudette talks about Helen Nearing (HN) and her life: Scott's (SN) mentorship of his wife; SN's paternalism towards HN; HN's travels and relationship with Krishnamurti; how HN met Krishnamurti; HN's book *Loving and Leaving*; teacher CW Leadbetter, friend of Annie Besant; theosophy; the disintegration of HN's romantic relationship with Krishnamurti; SN's unwillingness to have kids; German photographer Lotta Jacobi; SN's colleague Eliot Coleman; Peitra Mueleman, President of the Theosophical Society of Holland; friend Ellen Laconte; book *Making of a Radical*; HN's relationship with her family; SN and HN's relationship; HN and SN's astrological relationship under their signs; friend Diane Fitzgerald; Barbara Damarosch; HN's accidental death; friend Karen Frangoulis; the possibility that HN committed suicide; Gaudette's participation in the simple life; colleagues Stanley Joseph and Keith Hebron; HN's personality.

Text: 27 pp. transcript Recording: mfc\_na3384\_c2500\_01 and 02, mfc\_na3384\_c2501\_01 and 02 110 minutes

NA3385 Rebecca Lepkoff, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, December 29, 2001, New York City, New York. Also present: Gene Lepkoff and Sarah Pandiscio. Lepkoff talks about Helen Nearing (HN) and her life in VT 1950-1954: the Nearings' Good Life Farm in Jamaica, VT; neighbors and colleagues Norm and Natalie Fields, Norm and Winnie Williams, Hilda and George Wendland and the Smiths; the Nearings' exploitation of their neighbors; Hilda Wendland's braided rugs; colleague Charles Kent; Jewish neighbors Miriam and Herb Leider; Scott Nearing's (SN) lectures; John Saltmarsh's autobiography of SN; SN's debating skills; SN's views on capitalism; Jerry Goldman's views on SN; HN's friend Toby Goldman; how meeting and marrying Scott changed HN's lifestyle; the Nearings' dietary practices as vegetarians; SN's rules for living; the Nearing's choice to sell their land to George Breen; writer Pearl Buck; the Williams' and their home, which they sold to the Tragers; artist Peter Wendland, creator of the Stratton Arts Center; recluse Gary Washburn; Werden's history of Jamaica, VT; Lepkoff's photo display at the Deider Gallery in Chicago, IL.

Text: 33 pp. transcript Recording: mfc\_na3385\_c2502\_01, mfc\_na3385\_c2502\_02, mfc\_na3385\_c2503\_01, mfc\_na3385\_c2503\_02 82 minutes

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## Administrative Information

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### Publication Statement

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### Conditions Governing Access

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### Conditions Governing Use

Rights assessment remains the responsibility of the researcher. Known restrictions on na3862.

### Existence and Location of Originals

Located at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress: AFC 2012/047 <https://lccn.loc.gov/2013655211>.

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## Controlled Access Headings

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- Folklore
- Oral histories
- Farmers -- Maine
- Homesteading -- 1930-1970
- Land reform
- Nearing, Scott, 1883-1983
- Nearing, Helen Knothe, 1904-1995

## Collection Inventory

### MF 148, Collection Summary

Title/Description	Instances
MF 148, collection summary, 1999-2001 Digital Object: <a href="#">MF 148, collection summary: 1999-2001</a>	Text MF 148

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### Nancy Berkowitz, interviewed by Margaret "Mimi" Killinger

Source: Berkowitz, Nancy, 1937-

Creator: Killinger, Margaret O. "Mimi", Ph.D.

**Abstract:** 3378 Nancy Berkowitz, interviewed by Mimi Killinger on March 3, 1999, at Nancy's home in Blue Hill, Maine. Also present, Nancy's daughter. Nancy speaks about Helen Nearing's books *Living the Good Life* and *Loving and Leaving*; Helen's relationship with her husband, Scott; Juliette of the Herbs (Juliette de Bairacli Levy); Helen's interaction with visitors to the farm; astrology and mysticism; Scott's death; Helen's relationship with Berkowitz and her family; Scott's granddaughter Elka Schuman and her Bread and Puppet Theater in Glover, Vermont; Scott's letters from Central and South America; Helen's relationship with Berkowitz's children; Scott's 100th birthday party; Helen's relationship with Dr. Lovell; Helen's relationship with her family; Elliot and Susan Coleman; Jean and Keith Hebron. RESTRICTED: Interview may not be quoted or used for broadcast or other public presentation without the interviewee's permission. Transcript: 15 pages, dated June 1, 2002, by the interviewer. Recording: mfc\_na3378\_c2496\_01 and mfc\_na3378\_c2496\_02. Time: 62 minutes. April 2, 2001. Nancy Berkowitz, interviewed by Mimi Killinger on April 2, 2001, at Forest Farm, Harborside, Maine. Also present: Rachel Glickman & Henry Zacchini, resident stewards of Forest Farm. Berkowitz speaks about the history of Forest Farm; how she came to live there; her duties; Brett Brubaker, builder of the house; growing and storing their own vegetables; changes in Blue Hill; Sunday music nights and Monday meeting nights; speaker Alicia Bay Laurel; the interior of the house; Helen and Scott and their trip to Europe; the Common Ground Fair; University of Maine Environmental History professor Dick Judd; her neighbors the Burts and Dietrichs; the introduction of the telephone at Forest Farm; life at Forest Farm; artist Max Schuman; friend Bill Copperthwaite; Helen's practice of recycling cards; the Clivis Multrum Abby Rockefeller toilet; their Thorndike stove; painter Connie Caney; the Bread and Puppet people of Vermont; Pusso the cat; Helen's travels after Scott's death; Gail Disney; Paul Breedman; painter Cole Morgan; Rachel and Henry's experiences living in Africa; Cuban patriotism. RESTRICTED: Interview may not be quoted or used for broadcast or other public presentation without the interviewee's permission. Transcript: 50 pages, dated April 10, 2001, by the interviewer. Recording: mfc\_na3378\_c2494\_01, mfc\_na3378\_c2495\_01, and mfc\_na3378\_c2495\_02. Time: 150 minutes.

Controlled Access Headings:

- Blue Hill (Me.)
- Homesteading -- 1930-1970
- Berkowitz, Nancy, 1937-
- Good Life Center (Harborside, Me.)
- Schuman, Elka
- Nearing, Helen Knothe, 1904-1995

Title/Description	Instances
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NA 3378, transcript, March 3, 1999 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3378, transcript: June 1, 2002</a>	Audio NA 3378
NA 3378, text, 2002	Audio NA 3378
NA 3378, audio, part 1, March 3, 1999 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3378, audio, part 1: March 3, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3378
NA 3378, audio, part 2, March 3, 1999 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3378, audio, part 2: March 3, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3378
NA 3378, audio, part 3, April 2, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3378, audio, part 3: April 2, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3378
NA 3378, audio, part 4, April 2, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3378, audio, part 4: April 2, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3378
NA 3378, audio, part 5, April 2, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3378, audio, part 5: April 2, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3378

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## Gail Disney, interviewed by Margaret "Mimi" Killinger

Source: Disney, Gail

Creator: Killinger, Margaret O. "Mimi", Ph.D.

Abstract: 3380 Gail Disney, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, March 5, 1999, at Bucks Harbor Market, South Brooksville, Maine. Disney talks about the Nearings: Scott Nearing's (SN) participation in the Arden Community in Wilmington, Delaware in the 1930s; living with the Nearings at Arden; Helen's (HN) travels in Europe with Krishnamurti; separating HN and SN for Killinger's feminism class; HN's opinions on vegetarianism; HN's love of animals; SN's belief in communism; Forest Farm; HN's and SN's colleagues Elliot Coleman, Keith Hebron, Stanley Joseph and Greg Sommers; SN's Monday night lectures; HN's travels to Cuba; HN's publishing house, the Social Science Institute; Joseph's suicide and contributions to the community; SJ's book The Maine Farm; HN's relationship with her family; HN's personality and idealism; HN's friend Nancy Cudle Johnson; the effects of SN's death on HN; HN's knitting; SN's mentorship of HN; the effects of HN's death on the community. Text: 25 pp. transcript. Recording: mfc\_na3380\_c2497\_01, mfc\_na3380\_c2497\_02 64 minutes.

### Controlled Access Headings:

- Feminism
- Land reform
- Homesteading -- 1930-1970
- Disney, Gail
- Nearing, Scott, 1883-1983
- Nearing, Helen Knothe, 1904-1995

Title/Description	Instances
NA 3380, transcript, 2001	Audio NA 3380

Digital Object: [NA 3380, transcript: 2001](#)

NA 3380, text, 2001	Audio NA 3380
NA 3380, audio, part 1, March 5, 1999 Digital Object: <a href="#">NA 3380, audio, part 1: March 5, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3380
NA 3380, audio, part 2, March 5, 1999 Digital Object: <a href="#">NA 3380, audio, part 2: March 5, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3380

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## David Trager and Merle Trager, interviewed by Margaret "Mimi" Killinger

Source: Trager, David

Source: Trager, Merle

Creator: Killinger, Margaret O. "Mimi", Ph.D.

Abstract: 3381 David Trager and Merle Trager, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, October 14, 2001, at the Trager home, Jamaica, Vermont. Also Present: Joshua J. McCloud. Trager talks about Scott Nearing: Scott being fired from Princeton for his views; Scott Nearing's marriage to Helen; Scott Nearing's followers; the Norm Williams house and its history; realtor Jim Howard, who sold his house to the Tragers; the Trager's stone house; Scott Nearing's colleagues Wes Frost and Norman Williams; Ron Curtis's work on the Trager's house, colony member Pearl Buck; the history of the Trager house, its construction and work done to it. Text: 20 pp. transcript. Recording: mfc\_na3381\_c2498\_01, mfc\_na3381\_c2498\_02. Time: 44 minutes

### Controlled Access Headings:

- Trager, David
- Trager, Merle
- Nearing, Scott, 1883-1983
- Nearing, Helen Knothe, 1904-1995
- Good Life Center (Harborside, Me.)

Title/Description	Instances
NA 3381, transcript, 2002 Digital Object: <a href="#">NA 3381, transcript: 2002</a>	Audio NA 3381
NA 3381, audio, part 1, October 13, 2001 Digital Object: <a href="#">NA 3381, audio, part 1: October 13, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3381
NA 3381, audio, part 2, October 13, 2001 Digital Object: <a href="#">NA 3381, audio, part 2: October 13, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3381

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## Jeanne Gaudette, interviewed by Margaret "Mimi" Killinger

Source: Gaudette, Jeanne

**Abstract:** 3384 Jeanne Gaudette, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, March 3, 1999, at the Blue Hill House of Yoga and Wellness Center, Blue Hill, Maine. Gaudette talks about Helen Nearing (HN) and her life: Scott's (SN) mentorship of his wife; SN's paternalism towards HN; HN's travels and relationship with Krishnamurti; how HN met Krishnamurti; HN's book *Loving and Leaving*; teacher C.W. Leadbetter, friend of Annie Besant; theosophy; the disintegration of HN's romantic relationship with Krishnamurti; SN's unwillingness to have kids; German photographer Lotta Jacobi; SN's colleague Eliot Coleman; Peitra Mueleman, President of the Theosophical Society of Holland; friend Ellen Laconte; book *Making of a Radical*; HN's relationship with her family; SN and HN's relationship; HN and SN's astrological relationship under their signs; friend Diane Fitzgerald; Barbara Damarosch; HN's accidental death; friend Karen Frangoulis; the possibility that HN committed suicide; Gaudette's participation in the simple life; colleagues Stanley Joseph and Keith Hebron; HN's personality. **RESTRICTED:** Recorded interview may not be used for radio, television or web-based broadcast. Text: 27 pp. transcript. Recording: mfc\_na3384\_c2500\_01 and 02, mfc\_na3384\_c2501\_01 and 02. Time: 110 minutes

Controlled Access Headings:

- Astrology
- Mysticism
- Paternalism
- Suicide
- Gaudette, Jeanne
- Killinger, Margaret O. "Mimi", Ph.D.
- Nearing, Scott, 1883-1983
- Nearing, Helen Knothe, 1904-1995
- Good Life Center (Harborside, Me.)

Title/Description	Instances
NA 3384, transcript, 2001 <a href="#">Digital Object: NA 3384, transcript: 2001</a>	Audio NA 3384
NA 3384, audio, part 1, March 3, 1999 <a href="#">Digital Object: NA 3384, audio, part 1: March 3, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3384
NA 3384, audio, part 2, March 3, 1999 <a href="#">Digital Object: NA 3384, audio, part 2: March 3, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3384
NA 3384, audio, part 3, March 3, 1999 <a href="#">Digital Object: NA 3384, audio, part 3: March 3, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3384
NA 3384, audio, part 4, March 3, 1999 <a href="#">Digital Object: NA 3384, audio, part 4: March 3, 1999</a>	Audio NA 3384

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## Rebecca Lepkoff, interviewed by Margaret "Mimi" Killinger

Source: Lepkoff, Rebecca

Creator: Killinger, Margaret O. "Mimi", Ph.D.

**Abstract:** 3385 Rebecca Lepkoff, interviewed by Mimi Killinger, December 29, 2001, New York City, New York. Also present: Gene Lepkoff and Sarah Pandiscio. Lepkoff talks about Helen Nearing (HN) and her life in VT 1950-1954: the Nearings' Good Life Farm in Jamaica, VT; neighbors and colleagues Norm and Natalie Fields, Norm and Winnie Williams, Hilda and George Wendland and the Smiths; the Nearings' exploitation of their neighbors; Hilda Wendland's braided rugs; colleague Charles Kent; Jewish neighbors Miriam and

Herb Leider; Scott Nearing's (SN) lectures; John Saltmarsh's autobiography of SN; SN's debating skills; SN's views on capitalism; Jerry Goldman's views on SN; HN's friend Toby Goldman; how meeting and marrying Scott changed HN's lifestyle; the Nearings' dietary practices as vegetarians; SN's rules for living; the Nearing's choice to sell their land to George Breen; writer Pearl Buck; the Williams' and their home, which they sold to the Tragers; artist Peter Wendland, creator of the Stratton Arts Center; recluse Gary Washburn; Werden's history of Jamaica, VT; Lepkoff's photo display at the Deider Gallery in Chicago, IL. Text: 33 pp. transcript. Recording: mfc\_na3385\_c2502\_01, mfc\_na3385\_c2502\_02, mfc\_na3385\_c2503\_01, mfc\_na3385\_c2503\_02. Time: 82 minutes

Controlled Access Headings:

- Vegetarianism
- Adjoining landowners
- Marriage
- Homesteading -- 1930-1970
- Lepkoff, Rebecca

Title/Description	Instances
NA 3385, transcript, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3385, transcript: 2001</a>	Audio NA 3385
NA 3385, audio, part 1, December 29, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3385, audio, part 1: December 29, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3385
NA 3385, audio, part 2, December 29, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3385, audio, part 2: December 29, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3385
NA 3385, audio, part 3, December 29, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3385, audio, part 3: December 29, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3385
NA 3385, audio, part 4, December 29, 2001 <u>Digital Object:</u> <a href="#">NA 3385, audio, part 4: December 29, 2001</a>	Audio NA 3385

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