



An Interview with Fred Hellerman

Part II

May 26, 2016

*In this interview Fred is joined by his wife,
Susan Lardner.*

Ken Edgar: We are now back in Fred Hellerman's living room and we're continuing our conversation with Fred. We are joined today by Susan Lardner, Fred's wife, who herself has a very interesting background and career. Together they are going to help us remember their lives in Weston, starting in around 1970. Susan, welcome to the show.

When we last left our story we had talked about your arrival in Weston and how Harold Leventhal, the *Weaver's* manager, had purchased a home near Cobb's Mill and was influential in bringing you up here. As a result, you became interested in Weston and eventually bought the house in which we are sitting today.

Susan: I checked with one of Harold's daughters and found out that he had bought his house in 1968 and Fred bought this house in 1969. Although Fred had been up here before visiting other people, he had not been in the house purchasing business.

Fred Hellerman: Yeah, coming up there for a weekend. I just fell in love with that immediately. It was a very important place for me.

Ken: In the summer of 1970, you two were married right here on this property.

Fred: From here, yeah, at this house.

Susan: Under the tree, by Euclid Shook. [*A Weston artist a justice of the peace. -ed.*]

Ken: *The New York Times* did a very interesting description of your wedding.

Susan: It was written up because we were the vanguard of the new Charlotte Curtis *New York Times* social page. She decided to jazz it up. [*The article, "Susan Elizabeth Lardner Wed to Fred Hellerman" appeared in the August 9, 1970 edition. -ed.*]

Ken: We were honored [laughs] here in Weston to have been part of that. The description is somewhat colorful.

Fred: Oh, it was a wonderful, wonderful wedding.

Susan: There were a couple errors in that *New York Times* story. I won't specify.

Fred: Yeah, it was very well described in the newspapers at the time.

Ken: Is the rumor that the number of your guests went skinny dipping naked after the wedding, is that factually correct?

Susan: No, absolutely not. Harold Leventhal wouldn't do that. [*Harold Leventhal, manager of The Weavers and Fred's close friend. -ed.*]

Fred: No, but it a swell wedding.

Susan: It was a respectable bunch.

Fred: Alan Arkin was there...

Susan: That's right, and my uncle and aunt, Ring Lardner Jr. and Francis, and my sister and brother.

Fred: We had all kinds of other people there, I can't remember.

Ken: How did you know Alan Arkin?

Fred: We knew him through his singing. Actually I knew Alan from the time he was living in California. He wasn't an actor then. He wasn't a singer then. He wasn't anything then. He was a 17 year-old or 15 year-old living there. It was just a few years later that he came to New York and you know, the beginning of a...

Susan: Was it Almanac Singers, or what group was it?

Fred: I'm not exactly sure what he came into, but he did end up at Bennington College because of the drama school up there and they had no male actors. They were all girls, so they needed a male singer, Alan got a job. [laughs]

Ken: He was originally a singer?

Fred: He was a would-be actor.

Susan: At some point in his life he was part of a singing group, *The Babysitters*. A very successful singing group.¹

Ken: You mentioned that your uncle, Ring Lardner Jr., was there also.²

Susan: Yes, they had bought a house over in Stonybrook. It was very nice to have them here.²

Fred: Yes, it was very nice having them here.

Susan: They had lived in New Milford for a while during the time he was blacklisted.

Fred: That's after he got out of jail.

Susan: But they were basically New Yorkers and they moved here.

Fred: They moved because we were here and they would come and visit us. They knew a lot of people here, a lot of actors and a lot of people. It was a wonderful place for us to have them here all the time.

Ken: You mention that you still miss Ring Jr.

Fred: Yes, yes. They were very wonderful people. I played tennis with Ring a lot.

Susan: We have a picture out there of the whole family gathering for Ring and Frances' 80th birthday party.

Ken: I wanted to go back a little bit with you, Susan, and just trace your steps toward coming here....You had a career of your own. [How did you happen to end up in] Weston with Fred?

Susan: I would say the main incentive was that I reached a point in my life when I wanted to have children. I happened to know Fred at that time. [laughter] We had met around '66 or '67 and what with one thing and another, we decided to go for that. Fred wanted sort of an unparalleled thing; that is, to have a country house. He did some looking around, including at some in Stockbridge, where he had worked with Arlo Guthrie on the "Alice's Restaurant" movie [*Fred wrote some of the music and later produced Arlo's hit record. --ed.*]

But he eventually started coming down here because of Harold. I was prepared to move. I wanted to have a baby and that was it. I moved here because Fred moved here.

We didn't get married for a while because his mother was sick and we were waiting. We were four months pregnant. She was recovered enough so that she could come to the wedding.

Anyway, that's how I landed here and sometimes I say, "What am I doing here?" because I still think of myself as a New Yorker. I go to New York. My doctors are in New York. My dentist, my sister. I'm less of a Westinite than Fred is.

Ken: Obviously, you were indirectly affected by the blacklisting [because of your brother]. And Fred, of course, was affected big time. Was that a coincidence?

Susan: Obviously, Fred and I are generally on the same wavelength politically, but the blacklist is not really a connection. Well, it is a connection, but an accidental one.

Ken: Let's move on to Weston around 1970 when you all joined hands and were here. Tell us a little bit about Weston in that time. For example, Town Center was a little different than it is today.

Susan: I don't remember the market at all from those days, but I remember that on the corner, maybe, where the bank is now, there was a beauty parlor and there was a drug store. Who was running it at that time, I can't remember, but the drugstore had a soda fountain. Behind the fountain was Ethel Keene. I think Keene Park over on the river is named after her. [*It is. --ed.*] The only other thing I remember was the hardware store that was run by two brothers; I don't think they were twins.

Fred: That little field on River Road became a little park.

Susan: Playground. Children's playground.

Ken: They named it in her honor.

Susan: For whatever reason I don't know. I remember her as somebody behind the fountain.

Ken: Did you take your kids there?

Susan: We did.

Fred: We did?

Susan: Yeah. Not a lot.

Ken: How about the famous Lunch Box? Was that there at that time?

Susan: Yes, there was a Lunch Box. The dry cleaner was in a different place. That was where the market is, on the corner across from the liquor store. I remember the beauty parlor because it seems so strange now. [laughter] I never went to it, though. [laughter]

Ken: How about Weston schools? Did your kids go to the Weston schools?

Susan: Yes, the kids went to Weston schools. The first place we went to was the Westport-Weston Coop, the pre-school at the Unitarian Church. It's still there. They both went there. With Simeon, when he was three, I had to spend a year in the corner [of his classroom]. He was happy as long as I was just over there in the corner, but I could not leave without creating chaos.

It was a great place. And then yes, they did go to the Weston schools until 9th grade. Then we decided, Fred and I, that there was a bigger world out there and that when you become a teenager in Weston, you're pretty limited. We decided that they should go to Andover, which made them quite miserable. Of course, at the age of 12 or so you have a lot of friends and attachments. We had to battle them, but they went, and enjoyed it, and did well.

Ken: Were they commuting, or were they boarding?

Susan: The boarding school.

One of the things I remember about the schools here in Weston was running a carpool. This was I think, either for the nursery school or the elementary. I drove a Volkswagen Beetle. I had four or five children packed into it. I smoked. [laughter] I picked up kids along Good Hill Road, and one on Steep Hill, I remember. I can't remember his name now. Then, I kept an eye on things at the schools, just because the kids were both very bright, and I wanted to be sure that they were being taken care of. [*The eldest, Caleb, is a journalist and television producer and Simeon explores models of particle physics and gravity at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton. -ed.*]

Fred: The kids were very well taken care of...

Susan: For the most part of their life in the schools.

Fred: Because the schools here were just absolutely wonderful. Really wonderful.

Susan: There was a wonderful math teacher in elementary for Simeon, named Diane Vesh, who took him in and gave him special attention. The greatest of all the teachers I think, was Doris Fiotakis

Fred: She's so special.

Susan: She was just wonderful for Simeon.

Ken: She retired just a couple of years ago.

Susan: I've seen her recently, because I work for Literacy Volunteers now, and she came. I think she does, too. But anyway, she got in touch with me.

Fred: She's a wonderful character.

Susan: ...wonderful.

Ken: Any specific instances with Doris Fiotakis that you can recall?

Susan: Simeon was involved in drama. She had all kinds of special programs for certain kids, and she took care of the kids that would ordinarily have been bullied maybe, and she was just amazing. There was a thing called "Odyssey of the Mind" that Simeon and Caleb maybe both were involved in, and I went on a couple of trips. One to Michigan, and one to somewhere else.

Fred: Doris had always been very involved with little kinds of things, and has won all kinds of awards, and very deservedly. She's a very wonderful character.

Susan: The one other person I want to mention is Cindy Brown, who was Caleb's first grade teacher, and I still see her at the YMCA. [laughs] I say to people, "Cindy Brown... forty-five years ago or forty years ago she was Caleb's first grade teacher."

Ken: The population was about three quarters of what it is today. Do you have a sense of difference in the community, from then until now?

Susan: I just have a sense of gradually more and more gigantic cars and houses, but I don't have a particular sense of more people. But I am very struck by the size of the cars.

Ken: When you drive around Weston today, other than the big cars...do you have a different sense of the community?

Susan: Not really. I guess, it is more built up, somewhat.

Ken: I'm just wondering whether it's still the retreat that you experienced when you came here in 1969. If you came up today from New York City, would you experience it the same way?

Susan: I wouldn't say it's a big difference, but we have such a nice, long driveway. [laughs] We're tucked away a little more than some places might be. I'm much more aware of changes in Westport than I am of anything around here.

Ken: Of course, Fred, you built your [own recording] studio here?

Fred: Yes, and it was wonderful.

Ken: Would people come up from New York City to record?

Fred: Oh, yeah. They loved to record in here.

Susan: Remember, you did one with Pete Seeger.

Fred: I did do a couple things with them, with Pete Seeger and the rest, and a bunch of other people as well. It's a wonderful place for me to work.

Ken: It was in a separate building out here?

Susan: It started in a tiny room in back, which later became a child's bedroom. But Fred kept buying more and more equipment. [laughs] Then we connected the studio to the house.

Fred: Actually, that house out in the back was originally a garage, a dirt covered garage, and I turned it into a recording studio. That's the place where I wrote music.

Susan: It became his home.

Fred: Yeah. That was my musical home. I swear, anything I ever learned for myself about music, I learned it in there. I wrote some very important music in there.

Susan: He was in there all the time.

Ken: I've also heard mention of a theater workshop?

Fred: It involved a lot of people in the Weston who were in the arts.

Susan: Did it start with people like Keir Dullea?³

Fred: Keir Dullea was living here, and Keir was a good friend.

Susan: Ella Scott.

Fred: Ella Scott, of course, and her husband. I was very, very close to Ella. Wrote a couple shows with her. She was a wonderful, wonderful character and a wonderful actress. A wonderful everything. I think she was very responsible for getting together all the people [around here] who were trying to get into the theater industry.

The whole idea was for people to be able to try things. It was a wonderful. It was a place where you could go and you could fail, you could do things that you wouldn't have a chance to do anywhere else. It was a wonderful attempt of people to start.

Ken: Did you put on local productions?

Fred: No, no. The whole idea was not to. For example, at the beginning there were a few celebrities, some people from Hollywood who were living in the area. We were beginning to get some newspaper people who wanted to do interviews and the answer was, "Out! Out! That's not what it's for. It's our private thing to do, and we're not looking for publicity."

Ken: No audience?

Fred: No audiences. Absolutely no audiences.

Susan: [21:33] Did you develop the Thurber Show through that? [Susan is referring to "A Thurber Carnival," a revue by James Thurber, cartoonist, humorist and New Yorker staff writer and based on his work in print. It ran for 223 performances on Broadway. -ed.]

Fred: Oh, yes. No, no.

Susan: Don Elliott! [Elliott's jazz quartet was the musical group for the show. -ed.] He lived in Stonybrook. They were good friends with us in the early days.

Fred: Very good friends.

Ken: That's when you developed another one in the theater workshop?

Fred: A different one. He had developed music for a show that was running already; i.e *The Thurber Carnival*. He did all the music for it. Wonderful music.

After that was running, Helen Bonfils, who had put together that *Thurber Carnival* wanted to do another show full of a lot of Thurber things. But she wanted to have little musical shows inside the thing, not just writing some incidental music which she had done for the first show. [Bonfils also was part of Fred's artistic circle in Weston -ed.]

Ken: A show within a show.

Fred: Yeah. That's what she came to me for. I worked on the show...which was a very good show. We did it a couple of times, a couple of places. [Fred is referring to "The Beast in Me," which despite his enthusiasm for it, closed after four performances on Broadway in May, 1963. Don Elliott had done the music for that show as well. -ed.]

Susan: I think it was performed in Denver, which is where we had some kind of a base.

Fred: Yeah. We had done a big, big show.

Susan: Around here a couple times at least.

Fred: Yeah. We also did the summer theater. We did it here.

Ken: Would you perform in this?

Fred: Yeah, yeah.

Susan: You were performing?

Fred: Yeah. I was performing in it. Or was I? I'm not sure. I had written all the stuff for it. It was nice.

Susan: The theater workshop was very important to you.

Fred: Yeah. The theater workshop was something else.

Ken: In that vein then you worked on the "The Outliers," the movie produced here in 1987 to mark the 200th anniversary of Weston. It was even reviewed in *The New York Times*.^{4 .i} [The movie is available as a DVD at the Weston Historical Society is also accessible on YouTube. -ed.]

Fred: I did the soundtrack. It was a good movie with some good music.

Ken: Were you ever involved with Weston politics or joined Boards, like the Board of Education?

Susan: We were never on any boards. I think we went to budget meetings occasionally, at one stretch of time.

Fred: Yeah.

Susan: [26:08] Supporting the education budget which always seemed to be a precarious issue. I also remember going to a peace rally with Simeon in a little folding baby carriage and there was a photo of that in the paper.

Ken: A Weston Center peace rally?

Susan: Yes.

Fred: It was such a refreshing thing. I felt so good about being there. I felt so good about...this was just about the time that we had moved into the house up here. I felt very much at home. "Yes. This is our home!"

Of course, that was the same time that all my friends were getting subpoenaed. What I call sub-penis. Sub-penis envy. It happened to my friends. Exciting time.

Ken: That it was. That it was.

Susan: Definitely. I miss it.

Ken: Let's talk about your main social activities in Weston. In particular, some of the interesting people that you knew in Weston at the time. Some of whom you've talked about previously. Let's talk about Alice Delamar. How did you know her?

Fred: I never got terribly friendly with Alice.⁵ My most basic ties were to Sandy Jackson and Jean Watts. Jean Watts, the brilliant, brilliant painter who had a fantastic thing up there. [*Jean Watts also illustrated children's books, and was associated with the Weston Woods studios. -ed.*]

Ken: Did she know Alice? Is that how Alice became the connection?

Fred: Oh, yes.

Susan: As I understand it they were kind of tenants on the general Delamar property, right?

Ken: She was sort of a patron of the arts and she would put people up on her property, which I guess was very important to the development of [Weston as an arts community]....

Fred: ...and of course Alice was just across the road from Sandy and Jean. Sandy kept the stream all stocked with trout. That's the thing that he had to do for Alice. That's so that when it came time "Oh. What'll we have for dinner?" "Oh! Let's have some trout today." Sandy and I would go out to the stream right behind their house, pick up some trout and we'd have dinner. Sometimes we'd go over to Alice's house and we'd swim in pool there. But I never really knew her.

Ken: Tell us about Ralph Alswang.⁶

Fred: Ralph Alswang was a wonderful character. First of all, he was an architect. There are a lot of houses right along Good Hill Road that Ralph had built. Ralph had also been a scenic designer, a Broadway scenic designer. He was the designer for a lot of very significant productions.

Ken: He was in Weston?

Susan: When Fred told me that when he first knew Alswang, he lived up here in one of these houses on Good Hill but when we knew him together he was on Farrell.

Fred: He was introduced to me when I was with Sandy and Jean. It turns out that Ralph was a good left winger.

Susan: He was a great guy. Both he and his wife, Betty.

Fred: Betty was a swimmer. She was with the World's Fair...you know, whatever. [*She was also an interior designer of note. -ed.*] But they were wonderful people.

Susan: Their son Ralph, Jr. became the Clinton photographer [serving for eight years at the White House as the President and First Lady's official documentary photographer.]

Fred: I don't know what's happened to him since.

Susan: I'm sure he's fine.

Ken: Another name that's part of your life: Antonio Frasconi.⁷

Susan: Ah, the woodcut.

Fred: Yes, that woodcut of Woody Guthrie is his [pointing]. He was a famous woodcut artist. Also, he did a lot of stuff for the *The Nation* magazine. [A photo of the woodcut is part of the slide show accompanying this interview. -ed.]

Ken: How did you know him?

Fred: Because of that woodcut. But I knew him well even before that. Pete Seeger had a house on MacDougal Street in New York, and that's where I knew him.

Ken: You were in that neighborhood?

Fred: That's where *The Weavers* first got together, and it was a big center of a lot of good activity there. Seeger had different people living in there with him. [laughs] Frasconi lived in there with him for a while.

Ken: How about Keir Dullea. You mentioned him briefly.

Fred: Yeah, very friendly with Keir.

Ken: The way I would know the name is from "2001 -- A Space Odyssey."

Fred: It's one and the same.

Susan: I thought that Keir and Susie were key people in the foundation of the theater workshop.

Fred: Oh yes, and they were, very much so.

Ken: Here's another name for you. Fred Brooks.

Fred: That's me! [laughter]

Ken: Tell me about Fred Brooks.

Fred: Fred Brooks was [a pseudonym I used] for a long time when I was blacklisted, [laughs]

Matter of fact, it reminds me of a story involving Harry Belafonte. Belafonte was an old friend of mine. I worked for him a lot, and I wrote and recorded a lot of songs and other things. I'd go up to Harry's office if I had some new songs. I was up there one day and we were both sitting in his office.

We were talking and just then the door opens and some guy walks in and Harry says, "Oh Fred, this is Toby. Last month I was in Nairobi or somewhere for a month and I brought this guy with

me. [Michael "Toby" Tobias, a drummer/percussionist born in Trinidad and a major figure in Calypso music. -ed.]

He comes in and he said, "Hey, Harry, while I've been here, I've been going through a bunch of files and I came across a whole bunch of files here with another conductor. I found a lot of good scores here. A good conductor, some guy by the name of Fred Brooks." [laughter]

Harold straightened him out. "This is Fred Hellerman." "Oh!"

Ken: Eventually, you were able to give up Fred Brooks and become Fred Hellerman again?

Fred: Yeah, all over the place. [laughter]

Ken: Another name in your life: Woody Guthrie.

Fred: Woody, of course. I knew him very well. Half the time he'd be down at Pete Seeger's house on Bleecker Street and when he was away, Woody was all over the place.

Susan: You have talked about visiting him in the hospital with Harold [Leventhal]. That was sort of an interesting story.

Fred: Yeah, we were very close to Woody. Very significant guy. Wasn't well-known very much. [laughs ironically]

Ken: Tell us about the visit to the hospital then.

Fred: Anyway, Woody somehow ended up in New Jersey in a hospital, in a mental hospital in New Jersey.^{8 ii} As far as I knew, Harold and I were the only ones who knew where he was at first. On Saturday morning we got in the car and drove out to wherever it was to see Woody and that was an experience.

It went like this: We went in and, "Yes, yes, can we help you?" "We came in to visit Woody Guthrie. We're friends of his and we don't know anything about him because he has no..."

They put us with this doctor who was going to take care of him so we could go see him. Now, I don't know if you remember a character in a Hollywood movie at the time who was always "der German character" but that's who we got.

We got to see the doctor and he says "What's his name?"

We said, "Woody Guthrie."

"Very sick man."

"What's the matter with him?"

"Delusions. He's got delusions. He says he writes hundreds of songs. He can't write any songs." [laughter]

[Fred responding to the doctor;]"Oh yeah, he's got more songs in him. Very sick man." [laughter]

"He says he wrote 1,000 songs."

"Well, yes, he has!" [laughter]

Fred: We take him for a walk. "Do you have enough money for cigarettes? Do you have enough money for whatever?"

"Yeah, I'm having such a good time here. This place, I'm in heaven here and they all take good care of me, and we have good food, and good cigarettes, and good everything. But, hey, you don't have to worry about me. I could stay here forever. First of all, it's the best place in the world you could be because I could get here and I could say all kinds of things that I want to be said, and this is the place where I can say anything I want. [Otherwise] you say these things and they stick you in jail." [laughs]

Ken: Must have been very poignant.

Fred: Oh, it was. [But for him] it was a wonderful time.

Susan: But he was sick. That's why he was there. They picked him up.

Fred: They picked him up on the highway just as an alcoholic, which he was.

Susan: But he also had Huntington's.

Fred: He had Huntington's chorea, but nobody knew what that was.

Ken: Let's talk about Arlo Guthrie.

Fred: Arlo, he would come up to our office, he would be singing all day because where else did he have to do it? We had our office on 57th Street, our publishing office, Harold and I, so that's it.

Ken: Tell us about when you produced the recording of "Alice's Restaurant."

Fred: It was spread over WBAI constantly, constantly, constantly, constantly. [WBAI is the progressive and independent FM station in New York City. -ed.] Arlo was going to sell us that story. Since, ultimately, everybody knew it, Harold and I were able to get Warner Brothers to record it. I got all that arranged. We worked out a good deal so we thought that was clearly an easy thing [laughs] to get that recorded and I had produced and everything else. But I made a stupid mistake, and the mistake goes like this:

I was going to have to bring him into the studio, in this wonderful studio on 15th. It was a great studio, and so I said, "OK, look, we'll go in there and we'll record that. We'll get a bunch of people in there with him." But I made the mistake of getting all of his friends into this thing to do it. I set up two or three mikes and we recorded, and it wasn't quite as good. I realized the mistake I made was that he was singing this thing for a whole audience that had heard it a million times already! [laughs]

Susan: They were yawning a little bit? [laughter]

Fred: No, they weren't yawning, but they didn't have the energy.

Ken: You wanted to have a recording with a live audience.

Fred: Oh yeah.

Ken: As opposed to just a studio of produced recordings?

Fred: Yeah. So I got rid of them and just got a whole bunch of people who hadn't heard it, but still it came out better than it was the first time, but it didn't come out quite as good. I spent a month, because I had a lot of tapes, so I spent a month putting in all the laughs. [laughter]

Taking the laughs as they were there... but doing a little bit [of editing]. But one of the big things that I had there was that no one, no one, no one, ever, ever, ever should let any of those laughs be "canned." Because they were real laughs that I stuck in there.

Susan: You did that work in here. In this studio. I remember.

Fred: I did that work right in my home studio.

Ken: Let's move on and talk about Peter, Paul and Mary.

Fred: Peter, Paul and Mary. They really talked about themselves as the children of *The Weavers* and it was pretty accurate.

Ken: Yeah, if you think about it.

Fred: Mary, I've known since long before. Since she was about 15.

Ken: One last personality would be the obvious one: Pete Seeger and your collaboration with him. You've mentioned him several times obviously.

Fred: Oh yeah. No one has come close to what he's done. I've had big arguments with him. For example, I remember there was one point where kids were coming up to him and they wanted this, they wanted that and he got into some kind of kick where he was saying, "Well, forget about whatever you know. Everything you ever know, forget about it. Just go and do it." He went through the whole thing. "Don't go studying any of that stuff. Don't learn any of that."

I said "Peter, how can you say that? How can you tell kids to take books and to burn them?" [laughter]

We used to get into big arguments about that because it was the thing he was into. We had some pretty tough arguments, he and I, but at the same time, he was always into things, and I was very fond of a lot of it. He wrote one thing which I don't play anymore.

Susan: I don't remember. I do remember that you did a Bob Dylan joke thing with them about something related to "Blowing in the Wind." Some kind of a wind song, but that wasn't for Pete.

Fred: No, no that one wasn't for Pete. [It was related to] all the things about cleaning up the rivers, this and that, the other thing. I did a thing that made fun of it.

Ken: Maybe not now. [laughs]

Susan: A very sacred topic.

Ken: Last couple of questions. Do you listen to music today?

Fred: No.

Ken: OK. Why is that?

Fred: I find it is so anti-music. It's such crap.

Susan: It's inaccessible. That's why I don't listen. I used to listen to music on the radio. Music is not accessible anymore. It is another discussion, but I've lost connection with music. The music I hear where I learn about what's going on at all is at a couple of classes at the YMCA where somebody plays tapes that she's made of combinations of different things and there's a group called Playing for Change that I found on the computer that does wonderful stuff but it's not too accessible either. In general, music, the way it used to be...

Fred: Susan's been wonderful. She's been absolutely wonderful to me. All kinds of things she's discovered for me... That Steven Foster stuff, she came up with it.

Susan: Yeah, there's a wonderful CD that was put out of Steven Foster songs done by various people, including Mavis Staples and other folk singers. Wonderful stuff. I'm still searching for my Steven Foster songbook that's in your studio somewhere. [*Mavis Staples sang 18 Foster songs on her 2004 album "Beautiful Dreamer". - ed.*]

Ken: I think we should wrap up. Any other thoughts you'd like to share? Any thoughts of your legacy or any other profound thoughts that you might have?

Susan: Do you have a profound thought?

Fred: I don't have a profound thought.

Ken: OK. [laughs] .

Fred: Let me look under P. [laughter]

Ken: Thank you very much. We really appreciate the time and the memories and the sharing with us your experiences. It's great. It's been fun.

¹ *The Almanac Singers* was a New York based folk music group active between 1940 and 1943, founded by Millard Lampell, Lee Hays, Pete Seeger, and Woody Guthrie. They specialized in songs advocating an anti-war, anti-racism, and pro-union philosophy. While Arkin played guitar and sang with *The Tarriers*, a group that achieved fame in 1956 with “The Banana Boat Song,” and sang with the children’s folk group *The Baby Sitters* from 1958 to 1968, we could find no record of him singing with the *Almanac Singers* – although the connection is not illogical, in part, perhaps, because Arkin’s father had been blacklisted.

² Ringgold Wilmer "Ring" Lardner Jr. was an American journalist and screenwriter blacklisted by the Hollywood movie studios during the Red Scare of the late 1940s and 1950s. His satirical screenplays won two Academy Awards but his career collapsed in 1947 when he and ten others refused to tell the House Un-American Activities Committee if they were or ever had been members of the Communist Party or if they knew of any Hollywood colleagues who were. As a consequence he was convicted of Contempt of Congress and sentenced to twelve months in Danbury Prison and fined \$1,000. Two decades later he forcefully re-established himself with an Oscar for best screenplay for "M*A*S*H.

² “Stoneybrook” is a section of town near the border with Easton bounded by Easton Road, Old Easton Turnpike, and Fanton Hill road. Founded in 1935 as a summer retreat for New York City dwellers, the private Stoneybrook Owners Association features a shared beach and swim area on the Saugatuck River, a tennis court, a playground, and other recreational attractions.

³ Keir Dullea is an American actor best known for the character of astronaut David Bowman, whom he portrayed in the 1968 film “2001: A Space Odyssey,” and in 1984’s “2010: The Year We Make Contact. “

⁴ The film took a light-hearted approach. Nancy Hammerslough, a publisher or archeological slides, wrote the script, was quoted as saying, “A lot of it is meant to be funny – coating the pill. Historically, absolutely nothing happened in Weston whatsoever.” The program’s narrator, Christopher Plummer, proudly proclaims, “We have power failures when no one else does. We have no town water, sewers, garbage collection, industry, condominiums, sidewalks, street lights, community center – in fact, almost one of the amenities of 20th-century living. Most people want to keep it that way.” The video won an Emmy for the its director, Weston resident Harvey Bellin.

⁵ Born in 1895, Delamar [also spelled De Lamar, and DeLamar] was a wealthy Colorado mine heiress, having inherited \$10 million at age 23. She remained unmarried and was a long-term love and financial supporter of Eva Le Gallienne, who founded the Civic Repertory Theater in Manhattan. Alice’s support was instrumental in the success of the repertory movement in the US. In 1930s she bought a large piece of land that stretched along Newtown Turnpike between Route 30 and Norfield Road. In her house, Stonebrook, lived and partied frequently with friends and artists, most all from New York. She also built houses and let his friends live there. She sold her house in 1941 and remains one of Weston’s most distinguished properties.

⁶ Alswang was a theater and film director, designer, and producer. He designed scenery, lighting, and costumes for nearly 100 Broadway productions. Alswang also designed venues such as the George Gershwin Theater.

⁷ Antonio Frasconi (1919 - 2013) was an Uruguayan - American visual artist, best known for his woodcuts. Between 1981 and 1986 he created a series of woodcuts under the name "Los Desaparecidos" (The Disappeared). This series refers directly to the people who were tortured and killed during the civic-military dictatorship of Uruguay.

⁸ According to his official biography, Woody Guthrie was becoming more and more unpredictable during a final series of road trips. When he returned to New York he was hospitalized several times. Mistakenly diagnosed and treated for everything from alcoholism to schizophrenia, his symptoms kept worsening and his physical condition deteriorated. Picked up for "vagrancy" in New Jersey in 1954, he was admitted into the nearby Greystone Psychiatric Hospital, where he was finally diagnosed with Huntington's Chorea, the incurable degenerative nerve disorder now known as Huntington's Disease. He died in 1967.