



# Three Days at the End of the Tumultuous Sixties: August 15<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup>, 1969

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## Abstract

The purpose of this research paper is to determine if the 1969 Woodstock festival was truly a time of peace, love and equality. The Woodstock festival is popularized as an iconic period in popular culture history and often idealized in a bucolic and peaceful way. However, through research found in primary and secondary sources, it is evident that this 'peaceful' festival had its fair share of problems. This festival is a representation of the tumultuous 1960s in America which often had its ups and downs throughout the decade. Although August 15<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup>, 1969 may not strike most as a significant date in the decade let alone the twentieth century, this research is important because these few days justifiably represent a change in United States culture. This proves that the historical memory of certain events are idealized and popularized with seemingly no suspecting issues, however through closer analysis, there are many underlying problems that occurred at the Woodstock Festival.

## Introduction

Often, history is studied through the scope of great people or events. Dates such as Columbus Day, the fourth of July and Martin Luther King Day are engraved into people's minds as some of the most important times in American history. August 15, 1969 is not usually placed in this category. To most, it is another day that came and went. It does not tell the story of a great battle or discovery that changed American history forever and is often overlooked for this reason. From August 15<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup>, 1969, a small town in New York became host to one of the greatest music events and would change popular music forever. Counter cultural movements as a response to conventional life existed throughout United States history but Woodstock was a revolutionary event that responded to typical American norms that became more apparent throughout the 1960s and into the future.

## Research Question and Thesis

Research question: I am working on the development of newspaper articles about the Woodstock festival because I want to explore the reactions from different groups to determine if Woodstock truly was a time of peace, love, music and equality that it is often portrayed to be.

Thesis: This essay will argue that through the development of newspaper sources, the Woodstock festival was not a time of peace, love, music and equality that it is often portrayed to be. This is demonstrated through an analysis of newspaper including problems with the festival, local inhabitants and conservative reactions to Woodstock and social problems that occurred which are exemplified by race and gender.

## Results

The results of this paper would evidently identify the research question I posed before I began my research. However the links that I made in my three main arguments were not I was expecting. Through the research conducted in this paper, the results that I found through primary and secondary sources proved that the Woodstock festival from August 15<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup>, 1969, was not a time of peace, love and equality that is often portrayed to be. It instead threatened the conventional ways of life in 1960s American society, yet at the same time was nor revolutionary enough to completely change these cultural norms which is evidently found throughout all three main arguments.

## Discussion

1. I found it difficult to connect the financial difficulty argument initially to my research question and thesis. However I was able to do so by connecting the financial problems and exploitation of the event to the key term 'peace' in my thesis. For example the youth countercultural movement often preached to disown worldly possessions, yet the organizers of arguably the biggest youth movement in the world tried to make a profit.
2. The links that I made in the second argument are also significant because they tie to the conservative culture that existed in the 1960s which I did not associate with this decade in American history.
3. The most intriguing argument for me was the third argument in this paper. I was able to use some of the most well known musicians of the day such as Jimi Hendrix to prove the issues of race at the festival as well as Janis Joplin to show gender inequality for females.

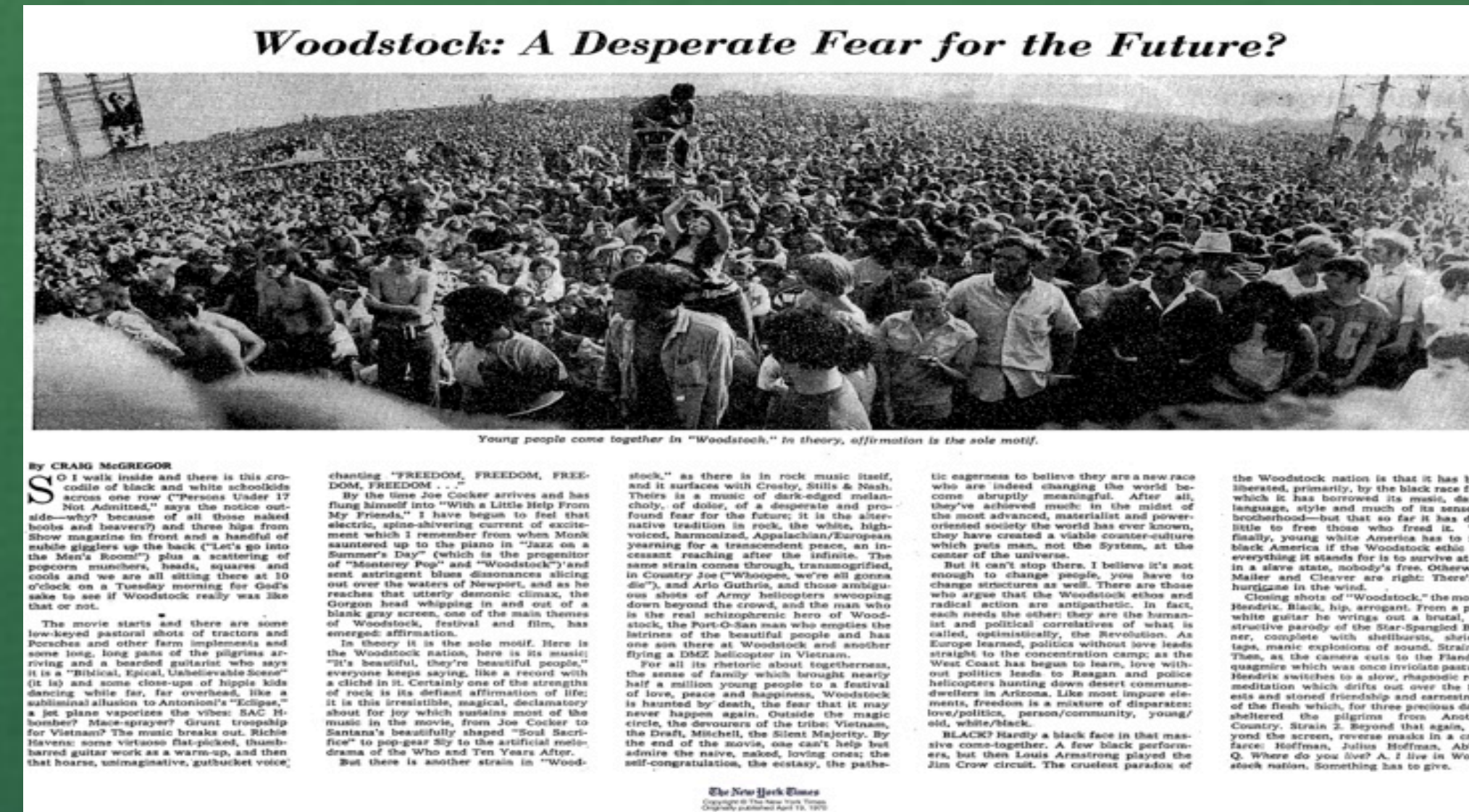


Figure 3

## Methods and Materials

The approach I presented in this research paper was a qualitative method . The materials that I used mainly consisted of a large number of primary reactions to the festival through a close reading of newspapers from this time period. Newspapers I used included the *New York Times* (national newspaper-found above in figure 3), *Toronto Star* (International Newspaper) and the *Sporting News* (Local Newspaper) all found through the Microfiche library at York University or through online access via York University. Once this research was completed, I formed my arguments and defended them through a variety of secondary sources including Ph.D. theses, Master dissertations and scholarly journal articles which were found through York University's Online library.

## References

1. Figure 1: [http://blogmedia.designpublic.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/il\\_570xN.244778195-520x661.jpg](http://blogmedia.designpublic.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/il_570xN.244778195-520x661.jpg)
2. Figure 2: [http://www.girlpower.it/pictures/20090819/woodstock-20after-20party\\_01.jpeg](http://www.girlpower.it/pictures/20090819/woodstock-20after-20party_01.jpeg)
3. Figure 3: McGregor, Craig "Woodstock: A Desperate Fear for the Future." *New York Times*, September 9, 1969, Accessed March 22, 2014.
4. Figure 4 (United States Peace Flag): <http://www.wallpapershd1080p.com/wallpaper/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/29/20288/Woodstock-Wallpapers-4.jpg>
5. Figure 5 (Woodstock Musicians): <http://www.wallpapershd1080p.com/wallpaper/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/29/20288/Woodstock-Wallpapers-2.jpg>



Figure 1

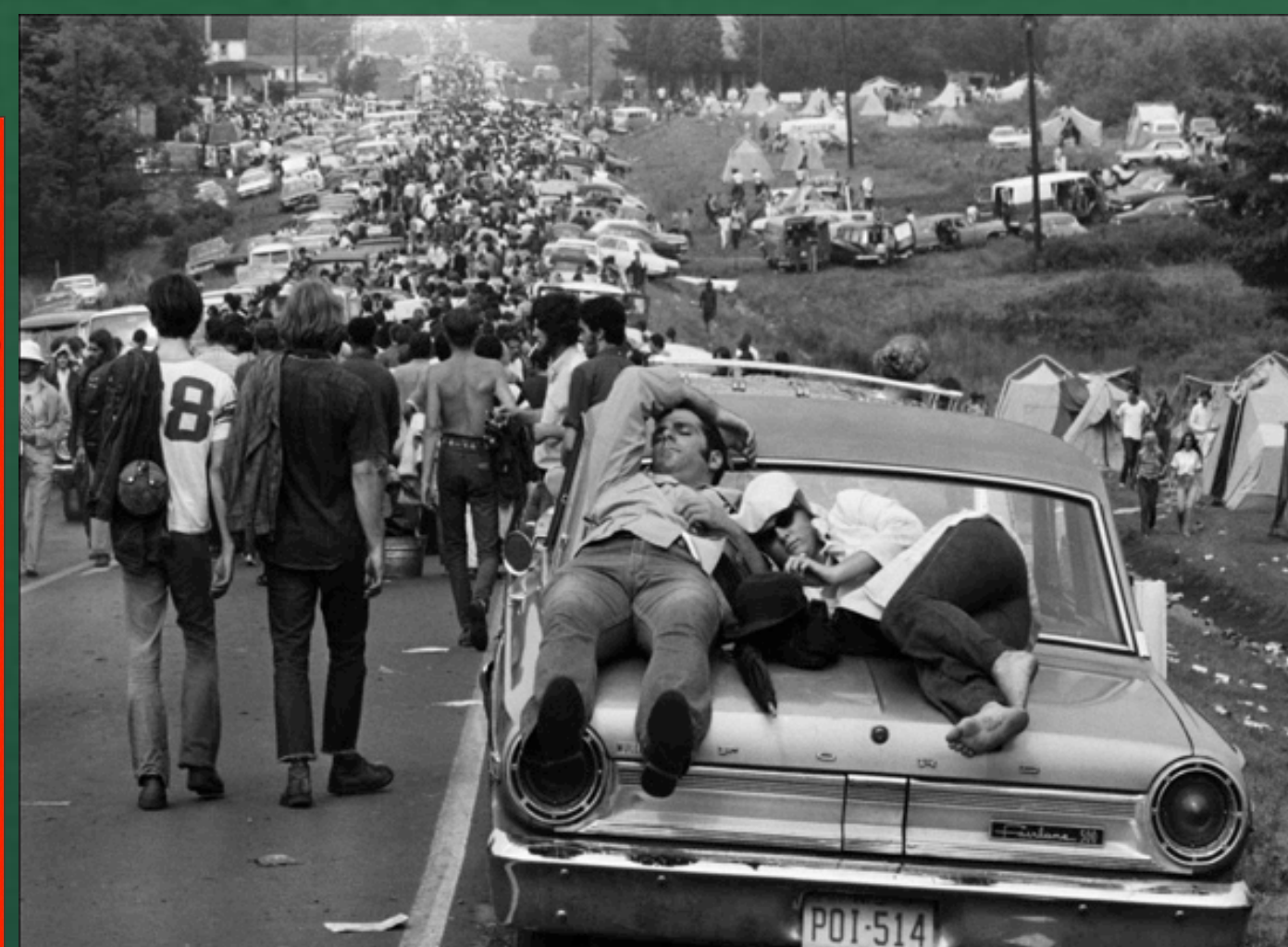


Figure 2

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