

Proposal

Title:

Smile, It Won't Hurt: a Diary of a Teenage Runaway's Journey of Discovery

Intent:

"To tell the story all the way through is an act of love."

Dorothy Allison

Subject:

This is my actual 100 page journal recorded in 1970 and 1971 while I was a teenage runaway. What is most compelling about the journal today is the juxtaposition of my physical on-the-road journey upon a deeply heartfelt, spiritual and philosophical awakening. A complete story within itself that comprises a beginning, middle and ending; it records my experiences of hitchhiking around the US, joining up with other homeless youth in urban areas such as Berkeley, CA., finding unconditional love and acceptance in a rural, open-land commune known as Wheeler's Ranch in northern California, and ends with the conception of my son, and return home to my parents.

intended Audience:

A literate, articulate and self-aware teen, the journal is a moving and accurate portrayal of that time in history. Its uniqueness is that few youth of that era documented their experience with such depth, honesty, passion and clarity. It holds universal appeal not only for baby-boomers of that generation, but also for teens today (specifically female), troubled youth and their families, as well as for professionals working with youth. Historians, academics and historical societies within northern California may also find it of value.

Contents:

I plan to include a forward, afterward and the journal itself which is comprised of 3 actual separate diaries. Journal One records my running away from West Virginia, travels across country and journeys to Berkeley. Journal Two is comprised totally of my time spent at Wheeler's Ranch back-to-the-land/open-land commune in rural Northern California. Journal Three continues with the Wheeler's Ranch experience, explores spiritual growth with a focus on Eastern religion and philosophy, records my travels to a rural enclave in New Hampshire and ends with my pregnancy.

Also included will be some photos, newspaper articles from a Berkeley newspaper about runaway youth in Berkeley in 1970, including an article specifically about me, a postcard I wrote and mailed to my mother while on the road and feedback/discourse/ follow-up from academics, historians, writers, authors and fellow communards who were there or who have an interest in the subject matter.