



# Buying the Farm: Peace and War on a Sixties Commune

*Tom Fels*

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## **Buying the Farm: Peace and War on a Sixties Commune** Tom Fels

This book tells the story of Montague Farm, an early back-to-the land communal experiment in western Massachusetts, from its beginning in 1968 through the following thirty-five years of its surprisingly long life. Drawing on his own experience as a resident of the farm from 1969 to 1973 and decades of contact with the farm's extended family, Tom Fels provides an insightful account of the history of this iconic alternative community. He follows its trajectory from its heady early days as a pioneering outpost of the counterculture through many years of change, including a period of renewed political activism and, later, increasing episodes of conflict between opposing factions to determine what the farm represented and who would control its destiny.

With deft individual portraits, Fels reveals the social dynamics of the group and explores the ongoing difficulties faced by a commune that was founded in idealism and sought to operate on the model of a leaderless democracy. He draws on a large body of farm-family and 1960s-related writing and the notes of community members to present a variety of points of view. The result is an absorbing narrative that chronicles the positive aspects of Montague Farm while documenting the many challenges and disruptions that marked its history.

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