This event reminded me that when I was a student at the University in Lexington, I either hitchhiked or took the bus to Louisville to go to the Filson club. I don't know what I was hunting for anymore, but I was treated kindly. And maybe I found what I'm looking for, I don't remember. But anyway, I was here that time by my own invitation and now I'm here by the Philippine Club's invitation and I recognize the difference and the honor for which I thank you. My talk is centered upon the thought that a proper economy would not exploit, siphon away, and finally destroy the life of the land and the people. A proper economy instead, would recognize value, cultivate and conserve, in any given place, everything in it that is good, and worth conserving. My subject is the history of the industrialization of agriculture. But my interest is in the possibility of changing the standards by which that history is judged. To make the economies of the land and of land use something like sustainable we would have to begin with attention to the difference between the industrial economy of inert materials and monetary abstractions, and an authentic land economy. That must include the kindly husbanding of living creatures. This is the critical issue. If farming is no more than an industry, to be unendingly transformed by technologies, then farmers can be replaced by engineers and engineers finally by robots, and the progress toward our evident goal of human uselessness. If on the contrary, because of the uniqueness and fragility of each one of the world's myriad of small places, the land economies must involve a creaturely affection and care, then we must look back three or four generations, and think again. From its beginning, industrialization has depended on its own and on most people's willingness to ignore everything that does not serve the cheapest possible production of merchandise, and therefore, the highest possible profit. And so to look back and think again, we must acknowledge real needs that have continued through the years to be real, though unacknowledged. The need to see and respect the inescapable dependence, even of our present economy, as of our lives upon nature, and the natural world and upon the need, just as important to see and respect our inescapable dependence of own the economies of farming, ranching, forestry, fishing and mining, by which the goods of nature are made serviceable to human good. To think well of such enterprises, and have the possibility of combining them in a diverse and coherent local economy is to think of the need for sustaining all of the necessary occupations. The cause a local, a placed
economy would be built in sequence from the ground up. From primary production, to manufacturing to marketing, a variety of occupations would be necessary, because all would be necessary. All would be equally necessary because of the need to keep them all adequately staffed. It would be ruinous to prefer one above another. by price, custom or social prejudice, there must be a sustained economic parity among them. In such an economic structure the land using occupations are primary. Until the farmers, ranchers, foresters, and miners have done their work, nothing else that we count as economic can happen. And unless the land users do their work well, which is to say without depleting the fertility of the Earth's surface, nothing we count as economic can happen for very long. The land using occupations then are of primary importance, but they are also the most vulnerable. We must notice to begin with that almost nobody in the supposedly higher occupational and social strata has ever recognized the estimable care, intelligence, knowledge and artistry required to use the land without degrading or destroying it. Farmers may be the last minority that even liberals freely stereotype and in sold if farmers live and work in an economic squeeze between inflated purchases and depressed sales, if they are priced out of the land market, it is assumed that they deserved no better. The problem we must deal with here is that the primary producers in agriculture and forestry do not work well. Inevitably. On the contrary, in our present economy, there are constraints and even incentives that favor bad work, the result of which is waste of fertility and of the land itself. Good work and the use of the land is work that goes beyond production to maintenance. Production must not reduce productivity. Every mind eventually will be exhausted, but a farm, a range or a forest, where the laws of nature are obeyed. In US, as given sufficient care and skill we know they can be will remain fertile and productive as long as nature lasts. Good work also is informed by traditional locally adapted ways that must be passed down, taught and learned generation after generation. The standard of such work as the lineages of good farmers, and of agrarian scientists has demonstrated cannot be established only by the market. The standard must be partly economic, for people have to live. But it must be also ecological in order to sustain the possibility of life. And if it is to be ecological, it must be cultural. The economies of agriculture and forestry are vulnerable also, because they're exceptional in this way to the industrial economy. owners and workers in the land economy who grow their own food will not likely be starved into mistreating their land, but they can be taxed and priced into mistreating it. And so the parody of necessary occupations must be supported by a parody of income. parody in this sense, is not a new thought. The Agricultural Adjustment Act defines parody as that gross income from agriculture, which will provide the farm operator and his family with a standard of living equivalent to those afforded persons dependent upon other gainful occupation. Perhaps the idea of parody does not need much explanation or defense. If, as now and always a sufficient staff of land users is necessary to the health of the land. And therefore, to the lives of all of us, then they should be afforded a decent livelihood. And this the so called free market cannot provide except by accident. The concept of parity is fairminded as it is necessary, addresses one of the problems of farming and farmers in the industrial economy. Another such problem more fundamental and more in need of understanding is that of overproduction. Other gainful employment in the cities escapes this problem, because the large industrial corporations have not characteristically overproduced, surplus production is a risk native to commercial agriculture. This is because farmers individually and collectively do not know and cannot learn ahead of time, the extent either of public need or have market demand. Given the right weather and the progressive application of technologies, their failure to control production, even in their own interest is almost certain. Either because the market is good and they are encouraged. Or because the market is bad and they're desperate. Farmers tend to produce as much as they can. In the absence of imposed limits, overproduction will fairly predictably occur in agriculture, as long as farmers and the land remain productive. It has only to be allowed by a political indifference, prescribed by the evangels of the free market. For the corporate producers, the low price attended upon
overproduction is the greatest benefit. As for farmers, it is the singular cruelty of the current agricultural economy. Farm subsidies without production controls further encourage overproduction. In times of high costs and low prices. Subsidies such subsidies are paid ultimately and quickly to the corporation's. The traditional home economies of subsistence, while they lasted, gave farmers some hope of surviving their hard times. This was true especially when the chief energy source was the sun and the dependence on purchase supplies was minimal. As farming became less and less subsistent, and more and more commercial, it was exposed evermore nakedly to the vagaries and the predation of an economy fundamentally alien to it. When farming is large, and scale is highly specialized, and all supplies are purchased. The farmers exposure to the economy is total. When agricultural production is not controlled by a marketing cooperative, such as the tobacco program once was in our part of the country, the market becomes from the standpoint of the farmers have sort of limitless commons, of which the inevitable tragedy is inherent in its limitlessness. In the absence of any imposed limit, that they collectively agree to, and abide by. All producers may have his larger share of the market as they want or can take. Only in this sense, is the market to them free to limit production as a way of assuring an equitable return to producers, is assuredly an abridgement of freedom. But freedom for what? For producers, it is the freedom to produce themselves into bankruptcy to fail that is by succeeding for the purchaser it is the freedom to destroy their producers as a normal and acceptable expense. The only solution to the tragedy of the limitless market is for the producers to divide their side the selling side of the market into limited fair shares for all by limiting production, which is exactly what the tobacco program accomplished. Just by preventing the farmers overuse of the market, it prevented as well, the overuse of the land. Another element of the agricultural tragedy of the market is political. And how was the by now entirely dominant political position on the agricultural free market defined. In the middle of the 20th century, think tanks containing corporate and academic experts laid down the decree that there were too many farmers. They decreed further, that the excess should be removed as rapidly as possible, and that the instrument of this removal should be the free market, all price supports and production controls being eliminated. The assumption evidently was that the removed farmers would be replaced by industrial technologies recommended by the land grant universities and supplied by the corporations. This would institute an evolutionary process that would unerringly eliminate the so called least effective producers, only the fittest would survive. In short, by granting a limitless permission and scope to the free market and technological progress, which is assumed to work invariably for the best. Politicians by doing merely nothing could rid themselves of any concern for farmers or farm land. Against this heartless determinism, it is useful to remember that it was the aim of the program for Burley tobacco to include and help every farmer even the smallest, who wanted to grow the crop. The difference was in the minds of the people who's worked during for decades at last shaped an effective program. Those people, unlike the experts of the mid century, think tanks. were thoughtful of the needs of farming and farmers, as opposed to the needs of the corporate free market known as the economy. The doctrine of too many farmers has never been revoked. no limit to the attrition has been proposed as evidence of the persistence of the doctrine of too many farmers. Here's a passage from a letter of October 3 2016, from John Logan Brynn, judge, Judge Executive of Henry County. I've taken a couple of afternoons to work on the accounting for farming cattle under the current terms. In close you will find that product based upon a real example, which is our 100 acre farm, and it's approximately 25 cow herd. The good news is that for a young man wishing to earn a middle to slightly below middle class annual salary of $45,000, farming cattle full time, he only has to have $3,281,000 in capital to get started. If he can find 780 acres to rent, he only has to have $551,000 for used cows and equipment. I say this is the good news because the reality is that this was based on a weaned calf price of $850 from June of this year. According to today's sales reports. That same calf is now $650 at best. Now, I did submit these figures, John Logan's accounting to Alan Gilbert,
whose columns some of you may have read in farming magazines. Alan says that they're pretty much on target and unlikely to improve soon, if ever. That may be a little dramatic. That alone John Logan figures out alone forgetting other adverse agricultural markets would be an excellent recipe for the elimination of farmers. And conservation is should take note, as mostly they have not done that in the absence of the eliminated farmers. And with the consequent increases of agricultural dependence on fossil fuels, and toxic chemicals, there will be more pollution of water and air. The related problems of low prices and overproduction were solved for about 60 years in my part of the country, in the only way they could be solved by a combination of price supports and production controls. This was the purpose and the work of the tobacco program. As a part of the Franklin Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. I need now to look closely at the Burley tobacco growers Cooperative Association, not as the brightest public occurrence in the history of my home countryside. But in terms of the super of the suitability of its economic strategy to farming everywhere. Here I must acknowledge that this organization, and more than the organization, its economic principles, have had the allegiance in the service of members of my family for 90 or so years. Under this program, support prices for the various grades of tobacco were set according to a formula for assuring a fair return on the cost of production. Production was controlled by allotting to each farm according to its history of production at first and acreage and later a poundage that will be eligible for price supports under the program. The combined some of the allotments for each year was determined by the supply of tobacco worldwide that was available for manufacturers. To buy a protected crop or a portion thereof, a purchaser had to be at a penny a pound above the support price. The government's assistance to the program consisted of a loan made annually against the crop, which permitted the program to purchase store and resell the portion of any year's crop that did not earn the extra penny a pound, which thanks to the loan would be purchased by the Association and the grower paid at the warehouse. The cost of the government was only administrative until in response to protests. This cost was charged to the farmers and the program then operated on the basis of no net cost. The point most needing to be made is that parody of pricing under the tobacco program was in no sense a subsidy. It did not involve a grant of money, a government giveaway or a public charity. The concept of parody was used by intention to prevent government subsidization. Its purpose was to achieve fair prices fairly determined, and with the most minimal help from the government. My father defended parody as an appropriate incentive. The it accords he said, with our way of life, and it gives real and tangible meaning to the philosophy of equal opportunity. He thought of direct subsidy payments, as virtually opposite to parity and in his words and abominable form of regimentation. During the six decades of its life, the Burley tobacco growers Cooperative Association, helped to keep farm families on their farms and gainfully employed in Kentucky, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio, and West Virginia. One measure of its success was the decrease of farm tendency among the growers from 33% in 1940 to 9% in 1970. Some of the population of tenant farmers undoubtedly died and some left farming during those yours, but most of them cease to be tenant farmers by becoming owners of farms. This was a defining event in the lives of a considerable number of worthy people whom I knew. The members of the association overwhelmingly renewed their support in referendum, after referendum. The Burley association was thus truly a commons and the common good based not only upon correct political and economic principles, but also upon the common history and culture and thus upon the understanding consent of its sharers. So complete was the understanding of the members that in 1955. Because of an oversupply of tobacco and storage, they the farmers voted for a 25% reduction of their loved ones. On April eighth 2016, my neighbor Thomas Grissom, by far the best historian of the association, wrote in a personal letter to me after years of research, he said, I have concluded that the most distinctive characteristic of the Kentucky Burley tobacco program is its design an application of an industrial agriculture commodity program, to the cultivation and production of an agrarian crop indigenous to an agrarian society. I think that
Tom's perception is exactly right, and that he found the right and necessary terms to describe it. In fact, his discovery of the right and necessary terms opened the door for me that I had not quite been able to get through. Burley tobacco, despite the dire health problems that it was found to cause and the consequent disfavor was very much an agrarian crop. It was characteristically and mainly the product of small family farms, produced mainly by family labor and exchanges of work among neighbors. It was for a long time, the staple crop of a highly diversified way of farming on landscapes that typically required considerate and affectionate care. As long as the market paid highly for high quality, which had finally ceased to do the production of Burley tobacco demanded, and from its many highly competent producers it received both conscientious land husbandry, and a fine artistry. industrialism, and agrarianism, are almost exactly opposite, and opposed. industrialism regards mechanical or technical functions as ideal. It rates its accomplishments by quantitative measures. The word values the prestige of public charity, it is motivated necessarily by the antisocial traits, that assures success in competition. agrarianism, by contrast, arises from the primal wish for a home land or home plays the wish, in the terms of our tradition, for the freedom and independence that come with dependence on a place a parcel of land, however small that one owns and is owned by, or has at least, the use of agrarianism grants its highest practical value to the good husbandry of the land. It is motivated to an extent effective and significant by neighborliness, family loyalty, and devotion to the coherence and longevity of communities, as long as it has a sufficiency of natural resources, and remains free of any imposed restraint. The industrial economy by its inevitable failure to restrain itself will dominate and destroy an agrarian economy. No matter that the agrarian economy is indispensable for our content Doing supply of resources. This defines precisely the need for the design and application of an industrial agricultural commodity program to the cultivation and production of an agrarian crop indigenous to an agrarian society. For a while, the Burley tobacco growers Cooperative Association, nevermind the deserved infamy of tobacco did preserve a sort of balance between the interests of industrialism, and agrarianism, which prevented their inherent difference and opposition from becoming absolute, and thus absolutely destructive of the agrarian society. This balance was fair enough to the industry, and it permitted the growers to prosper. They program worked, in fact, to the best interest of both economies. That doing nothing for farmers and almost nothing for farmland has been official government policy for the past six decades. There is no reason to doubt. In 1995, for example, President Bill Clinton spoke to an audience of farmers and farm leaders in Billings, Montana. He acknowledged that the farm population by then was dramatically lower than it was a generation ago. But he said that was inevitable because of the increasing productivity of agriculture. Nevertheless, he wanted to save the family farm which he helped to be alive and well, in Montana. He believed we had bottomed out in the shrinking of the farm sector. He said he wanted to help young farmers. He spoke with the need to make American agriculture competitive with people around the world and so on. He could not have meant what he said because he was speaking without benefit of thought. And why should he have thought when he was not expected to do so? He was speaking 40 or 50 years after politicians and their consulting experts had abandoned any effort to think about agriculture. Inevitable is a word much favored by people in positions of authority, who do not wish to think about problems. When and why did Mr. Clinton in 1995 think that the inevitable shrinking of the farm sector had ceased? In fact, the farm sector had not bottomed out in 1995. There is no good reason to think that it has bottomed out at less than 1% of the population in 2016. Mr. Clinton was talking nonsense in Billings in 1995. Because he had not in himself and could not have had from his advisors. The means to think about what he thought he was talking about. The means of actual thought about the use and care of the land had been intentionally discounted and forgotten by people such as themselves. But the people who decided in the middle of the 20th century, that there were too many farmers had, in fact no agricultural knowledge or competence upon which to base such a judgment. They and their successors
certainly had not the competence to assume any responsibility for or in any way to mitigate the totalitarian displacement of about 20 million farmers. Farming is one of the major enactments of the connection between the human economy and the natural world. In the industrial age, farming also enacts the connection far more complicated and perilous than industrialists admit between industrial technologies and living creatures. Some science certainly needs to be involved. Also, more and better accounting. But good farming is first and last, and art, a way of doing and making that involves human histories, cultures, minds, hearts, and souls. means it is not the application by dullards of methods and technologies under the direction of a corporate academic intelligencia. If we should want to revive or begin in a public way the actual thinking about agriculture, farming itself, farming as such, that is actually taken place in some cultures that is still taking place in some small organizations. And on some farms, what would we have to do? We would have to begin, I think, by giving the most careful attention to issues of carrying capacity, scale and form to issues of production, of course, but also injustice necessarily, to issues of maintenance, or conservation. The Indispensable issue of conservation would apply not just to the farms agricultural resources, but also to the ecosystem that includes the farm and to the waterways that drain it. It is immediately obvious that this effort of thinking has to confront everywhere. The limits both of nature and of human nature, limits imposed by the ecosphere and ecosystems, limits of human intelligence, human cultures, and the capacities of human persons. Such thought is authenticated by its compatibility with limits. Its willingness to accept limits, and to limit itself. This will not be easy in a time overwritten by fantasies of limitlessness, such as that of limitless economic growth. A market limitlessly usable by sellers and limitlessly exploitable by buyers is merely normal in such a time and limit listeners is the common denominator of both of the dominant political sides, both of which tend to refer to limit listeners as freedom. We have the liberal freedom of unrestrained personal behavior, and the conservative rate of freedom of unrestrained economic behavior. These two freedoms are more like more allied and more collaborative than either side will admit. Opposition to the industrial economy is ravaging of the landscapes of farming and forestry now comes from a small and scattered alliance of agrarians, not from liberals or conservatives. Whatever the justification, both the personal and the corporate programs are now popularly authorized to overrule any communal or social responsibilities. Conservatives and Liberals disagree passionately about climate change, for example, while mutually ascending to the waste, and pollution, that are the causes of climate change, and neither the conservatives who has steamed the fossil fuels, nor the liberals who deplore them have advocated rationing their use, either to make them last or to reduce their harm. For these people, the old ideals of enough and plenty have been overruled by the ideals of all you want, and all you can get. They cannot imagine that for farmers a limitless market share, like a limitless appetite can lead only to the related diseases of too much and too little. Science, apart from moral limit limits in the scientists seems to be limitless, for it has produced nuclear and chemical abominations, that humans with their limited intelligence can neither limit nor safely live with. Anything goes and stop at nothing, are the moral principles that some scientists have borrowed, apparently from the greediness of conservatives, and the most libertine of liberals. The faith that limitless technological progress will finally solve the problems of limitless contamination is at best indefinitely dependent on the future. The good care of land and people, on the contrary, depends primarily upon arts, ways of making and doing. One cannot be above all, a good neighbor. Without such a ways, and the arts, all of them are limited. Apart from limits, they cannot exist. The Making of any good work of art depends first about limits of purpose and attention, and then, upon limits specific to the kind of art and its means. And here we return to the very formidable paradox, in order to achieve the sort of limitlessness of the living world that we have begun to call sustainability. strict limits must be observed enduring structures of household and family life, or the life of a community or the life of a country cannot be formed, except within limits. Within Limits, we can think of rightness of scale. When the scale is right,
we can imagine completeness of form. The first limit to be encountered in making a farm or a regional or national economy is carrying capacity. How much can we ask of this land, this field, or this pasture or this woodland without diminishing the land's response. And then we come to other limits, each one, addressing directly our imagination, sympathy, affection, forbearance, knowledge and skill. And now, I must call demand Aldo Leopold, who unlike most conservation is since John Muir thought beyond Wilderness Conservation, to conservation of the country's economic landscapes of farming and forestry. His conception of humanity's relation to the natural world was eminently practical. He knew that land destruction is easy, for it requires only ignorance and violence. But to restore the land, and to conserve it requires humanity in its highest completeness since the Leopold family renewed the fertility and health of their farmed out Sen. County Farm, by their work, their pleasure and their great love for their place, and for one another. Aldo Leopold thought carefully about farming and forestry. Because he knew that far more land would be put to those uses than ever could be safeguarded in wilderness preserves, and an essay of 1945, the outlook for farm wildlife, he laid side by side, two opposing philosophies of farm life, as he called them. In these, this is his language one, the farm is a food factory, and the criterion of success is saleable products to the farm is a place to live. The criterion of success is a harmonious balance between plants, animals and people, between the domestic and the wild between utility and beauty. This is a statement about form, contrasting a form that is too simple and too exclusive with a form that may be complex enough to accommodate the interest of what is actually involved. Under the rule of the first form, Leopold wrote, the trend of the landscape is toward monotype. This form can be adequately described as the straightest shortest line between input and income. All else is left out are denied. The second form is described as a harmonious balance among a diversity of interests that in the absence of such a form might be randomly congenial, or merely different or opposed. On a farm made whole, by the high artistry of farming each part is limited and enabled by the others. This harmonious balance, I should not need to say cannot be prefabricated, it can be realized only uniquely within the boundary of any given farm, according to the natures and demands of its indwelling plants and animals. And according to the abilities, needs and wishes, of its resident, human family, wherever that is fully accomplished, it is a grand masterpiece to behold.

**Question 46:34**

Would you be willing to hear a few questions and see, yeah, I could hear him and you can decide. And you can decide whether

**Wendell Berry 46:40**

or not well, I'm deaf, but probably I can hear him.

**Question 46:43**

I think I'll walk around with the if you help with the microphone, and we'll be able to get over it. Anybody have a question? Pretty dried Mr. Berry. So pretty dry as fierce matoke fear of dust, the weather, fear of dust. Given that 91% of the counties in America just voted for a man who plans to do away with the Environmental Protection Agency? What are your thoughts on what's going on in this country? And weather seems like only people in urban
area? I don't know how many farmers there are in this audience. But it seems like the only your urban people are folks that appreciate a government that's willing to do the sort of things that intrusive sort of

Wendell Berry 47:44

question. Well, I was just saying that I'm not much inclined to encourage this epidemic, fear of the future. The future is wide open field and you can put anything in it that you are afraid of or that you hope for. And the present isn't roomy enough to accommodate all the so called Future. So there's that I don't understand what the matter is. And I spent my life trying to lay out as I have over and over again needed a ground of hope. And this is one of my efforts. All I have all I can say is that this problem of the rural, really the ruin of rural America thousands and thousands of dead and dying little towns all over the place. You got to get off the interstates to see them but they're they're all those respectable decent livelihoods that were once out there are gone and the people who were blaming the crisis of the present own stagnant wages need to take to go back a generation or two and see that these people were actually living in those abandoned houses that are all over the countryside. And I'm not much in patience with the liberals who've been enjoying blaming the Republicans for Donald Trump. I think those two versions of freedom are incarnated in Donald Trump and He's fiscally and sexually liberated. He believes that he can be anything he wants to be. And even he could grow up and be president. So if you put out that kind of poppycock, and it turns out that millions of people believe it, then the guilt is fairly general, it seems to me. And so we need to start where we are and go back to work. I'm very glad to say that I have work that I like. And when I'm doing it, I'm happy even when, even when I owe them to me. Another question here.

Question 50:57

So I know that when you return to your farm, that you've farmed the old fashioned way with mules, horses, horses, and did your cultivation, is that your rebellion from industrialization that you're talking about? That's the first question. Second one. Could marijuana be the future for the Kentucky farmer?

Wendell Berry 51:20

No. To answer your last question, first. Any unregulated crop that can be over produced will be over produced and will not be the answer that goes for him? It goes for recreational marijuana. It's much better for the marijuana economy if it's outlawed. Now about my way of farming, I'd have done the way I've done it the way I've done it, because I like to do it that way. But also because it's cheap. Also, it's it does little harm. I mean, a team of horses is solar powered to solar converters, using the free sunlight to do the work. And I like that very much. So cheap, is very high on my list of criteria. I just read up over Danville the other night, US duck sort of story that ended with the father's advice to his son, don't let the sons of bitches get a hold of your money. So I've tried to keep my hand my money out of the hands of the wrong people.

Question 52:41

On another hand over here, National Geographic Magazine recently did a rather in depth story
On another hand over here, National Geographic Magazine recently did a rather in-depth story about the pumping of the aquifer water at a rate that is not going to be sustainable, and that the farms in the Midwest are going to no longer be able to produce any product any crops, because there won't be any water left. Will one Do you understand that that could happen fairly soon. And if that happens, then much of the agriculture production in the United States will disappear. And perhaps the prices will start going up when there's not enough food to feed the population.

Wendell Berry  53:34

Well, starvation in a good way to raise prices. And I don't recommend it. But you're right. Soon in the National Geographic is is right about that. We've known for years that a lot of American farming has been mining, the Ogallala Aquifer. And I want to know where the economists are on this. This little talk I made comes from a much longer essay, it's called the thought of limits and a prodigal age. And it begins just with a review of articles, book reviews, and so on by economists who've never talked about nature, let alone farming. So if you've got an essential supply, and it's measurably decreasing year by year is in fact, the land itself is then somebody out to notice. The farmers notice they're measuring. They're also caught in that price cost, difficulty that's destroyed them more and more of them every year for years. For 70 About of my lifetime, oh, let's see since 1952, since that horrible pronouncement of Ezra Taft Benson Eisenhower's Secretary of Agriculture get big or get out, it's one of the worst things ever uttered aloud. And then the think tank that produce the idea that there are too many farmers. But somebody has to notice. And we're a society that doesn't believe in itself. It was full of people who don't believe in their own intelligence. So they need experts to notice things and give them permission and notify them. If it ever becomes. If we ever get permission from somebody higher up to think about agriculture, then we will begin to think about it again. It deals been just a little scattered bunch of agrarians, who've been worrying about it. Now they the rain does fall in some of those places, and there is such a thing as dryland farming, there is such a thing as conserving surface water, catching it in ponds, or cisterns, that sort of thing. And I assume that that land can stay in use without pumping air finally. But that'll have to be learned. And it'll have to be learned by what all biologists understand. In a lab we learned about process of local adaptation. And whereas the biologists we they understand that this applies to every creature except humans. We've never as a as a bunch, undertaken local adaptation, our record in Kentucky over the last What 240 or so years is horrible. We got less of everything in that shorter time. I mean, significantly less of everything. So so we need we need better critics. We need better economists we need more comprehensive accounting. And we need to study this issue of character lessness that invaded us now? Where did this idea come from that human life out to be effortless and even painless? Somebody's gonna if you can be persuaded that you buy anything and of course, plenty people want you to believe it. And for that reason, well as tribal Next up

Question  58:04

on that on that we promised you an hour and I'm going to take the last question myself what's the most encouraging and optimistic thought you've either observed

Wendell Berry  58:19

Oh, encouragement is all around the example that I'm have enjoyed the most lately is that the
On, encouragement is all around the example that I'm have enjoyed the most lately is that the black people in New Castle in Henry County had a large building that they bought for significant money soon after the Civil War, which itself is a wonderful thing to know. I don't know whether it can be figured out or not but anyway, they had it and then you know, the population their population has declined and so on and and a couple of winters ago, a heavy snowfall broke the roofing and, and they were going to lose this old building. And a white man wrestled out and one of my contemporaries gave them money to fix it. So I mean, that happened right lately. Words I've had enough words out saying thank you very much.