

2017

## Jamie Hutchinson

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### Recommended Citation

Hutchinson, Jamie, "Jamie Hutchinson" (2017). *Simon's Rock Institutional Oral History Project*. 13.  
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## **Simon's Rock Oral History Project**

Interviewee: **Jamie Hutchinson**

Interviewer: **Russell Miller, College Archivist**

Transcriber: **Russell Miller, College Archivist**

Date: **September 12, 2005**

Location: **Bard College at Simon's Rock, Great Barrington, MA**

Collection: **Simon's Rock College Archives**

Contact: **archives@simons-rock.edu**

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**Interview with Jamie Hutchinson**

**September 12, 2005**

**Simon's Rock of Bard College (aka Bard College at Simon's Rock)**

**Selected excerpts from the Oral History Project interview. The full transcript may be restricted. To request access please contact the [Simon's Rock College Archives](#).**

**Keywords:** seminar, David Emblidge, Robert Hahn, Bud Leeds, Sam Magill, Betty Hall, Elizabeth Blodgett Hall, Leon Botstein, merger, AEP, Acceleration to Excellence Program, Young Writers' Workshop, Eileen Handelman, John Paskus, Natalie Harper, Writing and Thinking Workshop, Marty Naumann, Martin Naumann

“In that first year, I managed to wedge my foot in the door, and the College never managed to close it after that.”

“I'd had eight years of experience in the classroom. Nothing prepared me for Simon's Rock. The contentiousness, the disputatiousness, the outspokenness, the critical eye that students would turn on you. I never felt so vulnerable, so exposed. Partly because of the size of the classes, and partly because of the nature of the students. Students came here because they weren't fitting in in high school, and they wanted something else. It persists until this day, I think, that even students who are in their very first semester think that somehow they own Simon's Rock, and a new faculty member has got to prove him- or herself. I think some new faculty arrive today maybe better prepared, in a sense. But it was rough. It was rough going. I felt really lucky they hired me to teach part time the second year. I must have been doing something right. I'd never been in a situation where if I handed back a set of papers in the morning, I had to go to the Dining Hall where the students who got Ds and Fs would be eating lunch. At the University of New Mexico, or Colorado State University, the students disappeared. There was this huge buffer between you and whatever outrage they were feeling about you. But here everything was so much more personal and intimate, and I wasn't used to that. So, it took a while to sort of develop a different kind of toughness, or resilience in the face of students saying to me, “I think that's bullshit!” “Oh!” [Laughter.] “Well, wait a second...” Nobody had ever spoken that way to me at other places.”