

7-1-1965

## Homesteading and Neurosis

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### Recommended Citation

Seymour, John (1965) "Homesteading and Neurosis," *Green Revolution*: Vol. 3 : Iss. 7 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/greenrevolution/vol3/iss7/23>

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## Do-It-Yourself Painting

By Ken Kern

(continued from last month)

Latex paints have proven to be the foremost choice for interior as well as exterior masonry surfaces. Styrene-butadiene (rubber latex) pioneered among latex paints in this country. It out-performs by far the best oil-based paints on the market. It is the least expensive of all latex paints and is best used on inside masonry basement walls, owing to its water-repellent and alkali-resistant qualities.

Cement-water paint has been the traditionally accepted waterproofing material for masonry surfaces, especially porous concrete block walls. The portland cement content should be not less than 65% by weight of the total paint. Fine, sharp silica sand and/or hydrated lime make up the balance. The paint must be applied to damp walls for proper adhesion.

Whitewash is an inexpensive, even older, and still used masonry coating. The National Lime Association suggests a formula having 5 lbs. of casein dissolved in 2 gals. of hot water, 3 lbs. of trisodium phosphate dissolved in 3 gals. of water, 3 pints of formaldehyde mixed in 3 gals. of water, all added to 8 gals. of lime paste (50 lbs. of hydrated lime mixed with 6 gals. of water). The lime coating is applied to damp walls, and dries to an opaque, hard, dust-free finish.

Polyvinyl acetate and acrylic have excellent color-retention and water-resistant qualities on outside masonry surfaces, asbestos cement, and asphalt shingles. Resin-based urethane is a new concrete floor varnish that is claimed to outlast other floor varnishes three to five times. Chlorinated rubber and phenolic are used where the floor is exposed to acids, alkalis, salt, and other corrosive elements.

There are a number of factors that influence the proper choice of masonry paints. Cement-water paints, for instance, are more suitable for new, and therefore damp, walls containing water-soluble alkaline salts and open-textured surfaces. Resin-emulsion paints are better for dry, close-textured surfaces such as cast concrete, asbestos-cement siding, tile, etc. Oil paints are best used on masonry surfaces that are dry at the time of painting and remain dry afterward.

Corrosion (rust) is a common problem when using exposed metal in building construction. Zinc-dust paint is about the only primer that will adhere satisfactorily to galvanized metal surfaces. In priming steel, "red lead," iron oxide, or zinc chromate in linseed, alkyd, or phenolic vehicles is satisfactory. A linseed or alkyd finish coat is then applied. The best preservative for tarpaper roofs is a commercial asphalt varnish mixed with aluminum powder. Upon application the aluminum flakes float to the surface and give a metallic finish. These paints combine excellent durability with reflective roof-coating features.

These recommendations on paint materials deal with only one small segment of the total painting problem. Equally important, a painter must understand the "paintable" characteristics of different surfaces. He must choose and use correctly the various tools of the trade. Finally, his method of procedure must be correctly established—such as painting the house exterior before the interior, and painting the ceiling before the walls before the woodwork before the floor before the baseboard.

A good-quality paint brush will have more long-length bristles than short-length bristles—to insure proper paint absorption. Stiff and soft bristles are correctly proportioned to allow for proper paint retention. Some of the newer quality nylon brushes are as good as the traditionally superior Chinese hog bristle ones.

In many cases the paint roller will do a faster and better-appearing job than the brush. It can be used for applying any kind of paint; but the surface to be painted will determine the cover nap (roller cover) size; the smoother the surface, the shorter the nap should be.

In view of the multitude of technical details covered in these chapters, the would-be owner-builder may throw up his hands and sigh that the stuff is all too much to take in. But consider. The details set down here are meant to meet the various needs and interests of almost all possible owner-builders. They are not all meant for you. You will select from this material just what will help you. Perhaps you need not one-tenth or one-twentieth of the observations these chapters offer. A student in a university architectural school must become familiar with all use-and-beauty building ideas in every country from the year one until the present. But that is not you. You are going to build, most likely, just one home for one family.

Building a home should not be the formidable project that it happens to be for some would-be owner-builders today. Land should be assigned without charge by the local community for house building and other improvements. Money should be loaned by the community bank without charge. There should be counsel and help from friendly neighbors who have already built their houses.

Lacking this home-owner's heaven at present, you may have to scout for desirable land at a moderate price, have some capital somehow to begin operations, and then perhaps work on and off for several years before you can move into your home. But that will be your family's haven in perpetuity and, if enlarged and adapted, perhaps for children's families. Building can be fun, especially if you are building together with someone. A house is not a home. Land is the home on which you erect a dwelling and several smaller buildings for work and appreciation. Your home should grow through your lifetime—and after.

There is nothing more desirable in this world than love; and nothing is better suited to cultivate love than a nature-based home of your own. Building your own home today, furthermore, is not a merely private affair. It belongs to the movement of freedom from America's religious, political, and economic strait-jacket comparable to the movement of our freedom-loving forefathers from Britain and Europe to these shores. We have grown accustomed to finding some sort of lodging wherever we can, if lucky, find employment, and to re-moving (on the average) every three years. This sort of thing cannot fitly be called human living. To-

(continued on page 4)

## Culled Chickens Produce Again

S. L. Jamison, D.V.M., of Poultry Consultation Services, Turlock, Calif., shares some experience that might interest home-poultry raising. He suggests selecting culls from commercial chicken ranches and bringing them into production.

In the average chicken ranch of 10,000 birds, says Dr. Jamison, there will be about 400 birds temporarily out of production. After a six month laying period, they go into molt and are termed

"culls."

A homesteader could go into a cage plant, cull out these birds, charge the chicken rancher 5c per bird culled, for the labor, take the culls home and let them run free, or put them in a floor type chicken house.

It will take about three weeks for these "culls" to come back into production again, and cost about 15c each for the feed in this period. You have a laying bird at a total cost of about 25c this way, deducting mortality, costs of moving, depreciation, etc. This is less than day old chicks cost.

These birds will lay at an average rate of 50% for several years' production. If all feed is bought, the cost of producing a dozen eggs would be about 19c. If you raise your own feed, the cost would be much less, probably around 8c, figuring in your labor.

Dr. Jamison has done this and knows it works.

## Letters, cont'd

I have four acres of wooded hills near a paved highway which I would like to let some organic people use. It is ideal for fruit and berries. All I hear about is poisoned food and soil, and hope other readers in our area can get acquainted and work together. — Calliope Columbus, 2429 N. Broadway Ave., Springfield, Mo.

## Homesteading and Neurosis

To the Editor:

I enjoyed your *Go Ahead and Live!* enormously. I wish there had been less psychological troubles in it and more homesteading. The latter is the only cure for the former. I don't say homesteading can cure a full-blown neurotic simply because such a one can't do the homesteading jobs. I've seen a couple try it after reading my *Fat of the Land*, and come awful croppers. A neurotic finds what goes on inside his head more real than what goes on outside it. A homesteader can't forgive this and is quick to punish it. A field of weeds may be a field of cabbage inside the bloke's head, but when it comes down to it he finds it doesn't feed his family.

The farm laboring people I knew as a boy were never neurotic. They never had time to be. Neurosis is a product of too much leisure. And with respect to *sheer who think differently* I don't think outside help can cure either. My cure for the young neurotic would be to go to work on somebody's homestead or farm for a year or two and get kicked into doing an honest day's work every day. Then, perhaps, start out on his own.

We've moved to our new place in Wales, and we love it beyond description. It is really beautiful country, all oak-bordered green pastures, little trout streams, rough woodland, and surrounded by rugged mountains. And as if all this isn't enough we can see the blue sea from the hill by our little stone house. We've been working 15 hours a day since we've been here, planting, fencing, making the house habitable. Our neighbors are as kind as can be, but hardly speak English. We will have to learn Welsh. We aim at a herd of multiple-sucking cows, beef followers, a small flock of sheep, a herd of 20 breeding sows, and some poultry. Besides of course a pit of plough.

What are we doing about Vietnam and the other war scares? Well my wife is up on the hillside hoeing onions and I am writing this letter. When I have finished I will go up on the hillside and hoe onions too. — John Seymour, Fachongle leaf, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Wales.

[Note. We hope to increasingly find insight into emotional disturbance. Other letters on this are welcome. We also hope to find help in operating a book loan and sale department in School of Living, and carry John Seymour's book, *The Fat of the Land*, and others.—Editor]

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## Miscellaneous

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