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## Animals On the Homestead

By Hal Porter

### Part I

It is possible to have a homestead without animals but most of the fun would be missing. Plants can be interesting. There is a thrill in seeing the little plants come up from seed; and great satisfaction in the harvest. But plants bring no tug to the heartstrings, no exasperated tenderness when they misbehave and get themselves in trouble, nor ever bring joyous laughter by their antics. It takes animals to do that.

Vegetarian, or vegan, homesteaders claim that it is wrong to own and exploit animals. I think they have it backwards. My animals never come into the house and put breakfast in front of me and then clean up the place. They never worry about my health, whether or not I am growing properly, or at least I don't think they do. The chickens, the rabbits, the goats all have me as a servant, constantly looking after their welfare. My wife and I can't both leave the homestead at the same time without worrying that perhaps a thundershower will come up and the goats will get wet because there is no one to put them in the barn, and not only do they hate to get wet but it isn't considered good for them. So who is exploited? Is it because I take milk from the goats which they can't

possibly use themselves, or eggs from hens that have lost the urge to set and produce young, or because regretfully I have to kill the young rabbits for meat, that they are exploited? Well, if so, they will just have to be exploited because without the animals the homestead would have little appeal for me.

### Search For Guidance

Growing them does produce problems, and very little help is available through books and literature. When I first got my flock of laying hens, discards from a commercial egg ranch bought real cheap, I got all kinds of advice as to how I should feed them and tend them. The difficulty with following this advice was that it consisted of giving them this and that chemical to either cure or prevent all kinds of imaginable diseases. The egg rancher usually found four or five dead hens a day in a house containing 1500 hens. I started off with 18, planning to dress out several a week after fattening them on corn and thus have a cheap supply of chicken for the table.

However they started to lay and I ended with keeping a dozen permanently. In a year I only lost one hen and the dozen averaged eight eggs per day. Since I was trying to have everything organic on my homestead I refused to give my chickens the worm medicine and tonics recommended. Instead I fed them a mixture of cracked corn and wheat, a laying mash which from the printed formula contained no poisonous chemicals or hormone additives, and lots of green grass and weeds. The most hilarious piece of advice I got was not to feed the hens the table scraps or kitchen garbage. I was assured by this lady that it would kill my hens. It wasn't until I got home that it occurred to me that I should have asked the lady *what, if the table scraps killed the chickens, it was doing to her and her family?* Since our scraps were organic the hens thrived on them.

This experience stood me in good stead when I got 25 sexlinks, a cross between Rhode Island Reds and Plymouth Rocks. There was supposed to be two roosters in the flock. There turned out to be four, which was lucky as three promptly died. Later I killed some pullets for the table as I didn't want too many and ended up with 15 hens and one rooster. A year later one hen got sick and died. So far, since they started laying this flock has averaged a dozen eggs a day, which is better than the commercial egg raisers do. The eggs have a very superior flavor. If I had a larger homestead I would raise all their feed. As it is, table scraps, grass and weeds from the garden account for about half their feed.

### Doubtful Advice on Rabbits

As soon as my first pair of rabbits were in their respective cages—large ones so they would have room for exercise—I wrote my daughter who at one time raised rabbits commercially, and asked for advice. She sent me a file of magazines devoted to the raising of rabbits. They were full of advice but I was very much dismayed. As in the case of the chickens, this advice called for feeding them all kinds of chemicals and listed so many diseases and medicines therefor that I was about ready to give up. But I remembered the writings of Sir Albert Howard and Louis Bromfield in which they said that animals fed organic foods grown in mineral-rich soil full of humus would be so healthy that they would resist disease.

So I read formulae at the feed store until I found one free from chemicals and started feeding pellets once a day and green stuff out of the garden, weeds and plants that had stopped bearing, or leaves which were too tough for salads and would be discarded. Neighbors who had rabbits promptly warned me

that cabbage leaves, turnip leaves and, in fact, most everything that grew would give the rabbits scours and would kill them. The first year I got very discouraged. It appeared that the advisors were right. But one thing puzzled me. I had a buck and a doe in parallel cages. They were both fed exactly the same food. The buck died and the doe lived. Or, I would have a litter of seven rabbits. Three would die very suddenly and the other four stay perfectly healthy. And all were getting exactly the same feed. I tried cutting out all fresh green feed and still they died. My advisors said that it was a disease carried by mosquitoes.

About to give up in despair I wrote my daughter again and she answered that probably I had started with poor stock. This gave me new hope and I started weeding out rabbits that got sick whether they died or not. After three years I got a strain of rabbits that appear to be immune to this trouble. I found that I could raise young on green food alone. I fed them garden wastes, Spanish needles (a weed), comfrey, and sweet potato vines. This last was represented as sure death by well-meaning friends. But it took twice as long for these rabbits to reach maturity as those fed either grain or pellets in addition to the green food. (to be continued)

## Letters, cont'd

Children of mixed ages ("vertical grouping") do what they choose in a room full of things to explore, play with, make things out of, and experiment with. Each child goes at his own pace in his own direction, with group teaching only when groups naturally form around interests or skills. I hear there is such a school in Bennington, Vt. Probably Montessori-influenced, in that learning and working and playing are not separated, and children seek their own courses. More creative, maybe. Makes use of the whole area a child can reach, in and out. Spring is coming!—Helen Ryan, Franklin, N. H.

### Eartha and the Good Earth To the Editor:

There's an item in the *World Journal Tribune* about the Negro singer Eartha Kitt buying 260 acres in California's Mojave Desert, and arranging for children of the Watts area (Los Angeles) to vacation and work there. She says her name comes from the good harvest her South Carolina parents had the year she was born; that as a child, "if I wanted to get something out of my system, I would cut out in the backyard and dig in the soil."

She says she got the idea for her farm when she saw how well children worked together on the Kibbutzes in Israel. "Wouldn't it be wonderful for other children to have this opportunity? I hope to start this summer—with each child responsible for his own patch of earth, his own small animal, to learn the meaning of responsibility."

This is another sign that farms will be more and more popular in our over-urbanized world.—H. Roseman, 1452 E. 85th St., Brooklyn, N. Y.

### Antidote to Decay To the Editor:

Our industrial civilization has upset the balance of nature, overpopulated the earth, and plunged nearly all of us into mindless regimentation and technological turmoil. The Computer Tape is said to be our ticket to Technological Heaven. But we seem to be using it to buy our way into a feudalistic materialism, dominated by Big Brother. For generations Statism has been winning all the elections. When we count the cost, the "anarchist" alternative begins to appear credible. I have found Irving Horowitz's editing of *The Anarchists* (Dell paperback, 95c) a stimulating and provocative treatment. He deals with anarchism as theory, as social critique, and as a style of life. He quotes from Dostoyevsky, Tol-

## Our Ideas Are In Public Media

Decentralist ideas, living on the land, intentional community and education for living, along with School of Living as an advocate of such ideas, have appeared in journals, books and air media more frequently of late.

In November '66 *Fellowship*, journal of Fellowship of Reconciliation, Nyack, N. Y., prominently mentioned School of Living in "The Creative Year—Who Will Build the Dream?" Crediting protesters, peacemakers and nay-sayers with courage, the author stressed the further need for positive, life-supporting patterns. "I suggest that the sophisticated of protest accord their country cousins respectful study. . . . The School of Living at Brookville, Ohio, and Borsodi's developments in New Hampshire and Florida have turned out many books and pamphlets describing a variety of personal and group experiments in living within the interstices of our economy. The latest, Mildred Loomis' *Go Ahead and Live!*, presents steps toward autonomous living in the context of an uncompromising analysis of the interlocking corruption of business, politics, disease, exploitation and war."

In the November *Liberation*, 5 Beekman St., New York City, Paul Goodman's analysis of "Urbanization and Rural Reconstruction" is very similar to Borsodi's of the past 30 years. He stresses enclosure of land as the chief cause of people crowding into cities. His solution (using available public funds to maintain victims of the system in rural rather than urban setting) seems to us secondary and inadequate. Goodman sees Borsodi and adherents of the green revolution as withdrawing and cutting loose from urban problems altogether. This is hardly factual, since we promote a new ethical land tenure, and widespread adult education to define universal problems of living; along with seeking and practicing basic, fundamental ways of dealing with all man's problems—rural and urban—in human, life-enhancing ways. We look upon Paul Goodman as an effective proponent of decentralization, a frame of reference which can use all persons of intelligence and good will.

### Germinal and Utopian

Dec. 28 *Manas*, Box 32112, El Sereno, Los Angeles, Calif., in "A Germinal Solution," described the plans of C. A. Doxidis, a designer of cities. He envisions humanly scaled communities (Ecumenopoli, cities of the world) which have no more than 50,000 people, each 150 miles from the other. *Manas* frequently presents this direction; see "The Crisis of Civilization" (Tolstoy, 1908) in the Jan. 11 issue, and often comments on the green revolution and allied efforts).

In early issues of *The Modern Utopian*, Box 44, Boston, Mass., an article on the School of Living is scheduled, and a review of *Go Ahead and Live!* This last is by Ferdi Knoess, entitled, "Say Yes to Life."

Dec. 30th *New Left Notes*, 1608 W. Madison, Chicago, Ill., carried a favorable review of *Go Ahead and Live!*, saying this book is addressed to the Holden Caulfields (in *Catcher in the Rye*), now grown and married. "It is the genius of the writers of this book that they see hope in the early despair of such people, and maintain confidence in the ability of the human spirit to chip footholds up the very mountain of despair. . . . Counsellors lay open the sores of society with startling precision . . . they help direct energies toward finding and building lives of satisfaction

stoi, Emma Goldman, Wm. Godwin, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tucker, Sacco and Vanzetti. Horowitz isn't too optimistic that anarchism will ever "exist," but he shows it as a necessary protest against repressive external authorities, God and the State. I recommend it be in the personal library of every libertarian. — Rev. E. W. Kreves, 5 S. 511 Radcliffe Rd., Naperville, Ill.

and simple dignity."

### KPFA and Playboy

A friend of decentralism and of the School of Living, Henry Anderson, often comments on KPFA, listener-supported station, Box 1173, Berkeley, Calif. (*Green Revolution* will quote from his commentary on Martin Buber and intentional community.) Mr. Anderson writes: "I plan to talk about School of Living and its ideas on KPFA in the near future. I do what I can to spread the good news of humanization as I see it."

In the January *Playboy*, 919 N. Michigan, Chicago, Ill., British scientist Julian Huxley discussed "The Crisis of Man's Destiny." He outlined serious modern problems: over-population, crowded cities, pollution, depleted soil, poisoned food, poverty, war; and constructive activities: birth control, genetics, conservation, peace plans. He concludes, "This is not enough. We need a new vision of man and his possibilities; a new concept of the Whole; a future of teaching and learning how to live." These are familiar terms in School of Living. Does our language mean what Huxley does? Let's increase exchange among those thinking and talking in similar vein.

### Encourage Dissemination

To that end, we invite readers of *Green Revolution* to commend the above media and ask for more; to introduce the School of Living to other editors, journals, news commentators, radio and TV stations. Some of them would find places for our challenges, analysis and proposed solutions. If you are willing to be 1 of 20 people who will write one letter a month in our behalf to some source of outreach, will you please let us supply you with usable materials for this campaign. Reaching other groups is an important activity in which you can help. And please let us know your results.

## Heathcote, cont'd

The answer is in the hands and efforts of those who associate to live and work there. *It will incorporate as many desirable features for good living as the resources and skills of the persons involved can achieve.* At the present, the following are possible:

Bill Anacker sees Heathcote becoming an outstanding demonstration in organic gardening, as does A. P. Thompson of Front Royal, Va. Both will do much to help attain this. Bill Anacker also plans to develop a sizable lake behind the now silted-in dam (placing much of the fine topsoil-silt back on the hillsides. His acres will feature good outdoor recreation and camping.

Herbert Roseman, associate editor of *A Way Out* and author, sees Heathcote developing an active libertarian publishing center. We have just purchased a good used photo-offset press on which to begin republishing important literature, and possibly the printing of *A Way Out*.

Mildred Loomis sees Heathcote becoming a viable community of families working at continued education for living, from birth to death; attentive to personal and public problems, none omitted, none overemphasized.

Harold and Grace Lefever see Heathcote primarily as a headquarters for the School of Living—which will receive all correspondence, issue and mail publications, offer courses, seminars and workshops to non-residents.

Hopefully, all these emphases will develop as the persons and funds appear to achieve them. It will take dedicated people, continually working and communicating, to attain these goals. But already we have had ample evidence that such people are available. Let's avoid over-confidence, but let's not be timid about our dreams for Heathcote becoming a center of real import.

Who will live at Heathcote? It could be you. Summer volunteers can be accommodated by arrangement.



FIVE CHILDREN of Mrs. Delores (Dee) Sprague: (back) Laverne and Gordon; (front row) Kieth, Lynn and Jerry.

### En Route to Canada

A whole household of goods and chattels had to be packed in a few days! And a School of Living meeting and dedication of Heathcote Center to take place in the midst of it. But this was accomplished. There came an invitation from relatives to spend several months in Florida; with plans to later go to British Columbia, Canada, for a new homestead adventure near other School of Living families (who had been visited in September, and a move planned there in May or June).

So we regretfully said goodbye to the Spragues, sooner than we had anticipated.

And we read about their "Resistance to Vaccination" in many columns. The *Baltimore Sun* had very accurate and sympathetic accounts of each court appearance (as it also had of our New Year's dedication of Heathcote). Since then, readers have sent clippings that indicate the story was carried by the *Washington Post*, *Miami Herald*, *Washington News*, and *Denver Post*.

The Sprague gave, and meant, much to Heathcote and the School of Living. We will miss them, but they assure us they "will be with us, wherever they are." With them go our love and fond wishes. We'll await news and reports of their future activities and progress.