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Ode to Sassafras

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Flight From The City

By Ralph Borsodi

Chapter 3 — Food, Pure Food, and Fresh Food

It is a mistake, however, to think of our experiments in domestic production purely in terms of economics. Particularly is this true of food. For ours was not only a revolt against the high cost of food. It was a revolt against the kind of food with which mass production and mass distribution provide the American consumer.

In common with the overwhelming majority of people, we suffered the usual run of digestive and catarrhal ailments. We all had colds several times each year; constipation was something every member of the family had to fight; between periods of biliousness, headaches, fevers, and similar visitations we enjoyed only what might at best be described as tolerable health. I would not give the impression that we were a sickly family. On the contrary, so far as health was concerned we were probably better rather than worse than the average family. Our ailments were almost never severe enough to keep us in bed. None of us had ever been confined in a hospital. But saying that our health was slightly better than average is not saying much.

Partly as a result of an accumulation of accidents and coincidences, and partly because of our own efforts to find the answer to the riddle of good health, we finally arrived at the conviction that most of our ailments, and probably most of the ailments of mankind, were caused by wrong foods and incorrect eating habits. I remember how amusing this idea sounded the first time it was propounded to me. Mrs. Borsodi and I, happening to meet Hereward Carrington, just as we were on our way to lunch in the city, asked him to join us.

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I seem to be catching cold, so I am eating nothing at all today."

I looked at him with astonishment. The old adage about feeding a cold and starving a fever came into my mind. What in the world, I thought, could eating have to do with a cold? "Join us, anyway," I said. "You can watch us eat, and the sight of food may tempt you to order something yourself. And besides, I'm curious to know upon what theory you cut out eating when you have a cold."

Carrington accepted the invitation and in the course of that luncheon Mrs. Borsodi and I listened for the first time to a disinterested exponent of the theory that improper eating is the cause of most disease. Up to that time I had always dismissed the idea as the vaporing of vegetarian and physical culture faddists. But I was by no means convinced by what Carrington said. I still argued valiantly for the orthodox medical explanation of disease in terms of germs. The luncheon failed to convert us to the extreme position which he maintained and which we have since come to accept. But the incident prepared us for real conversion shortly thereafter.

Among the books published by the corporation by which I was then employed were a number of volumes by a Dr. R. L. Alsaker. I had never read them, principally because they had seemed to me the works of a dietetic crank. But I brought some of them home after the Carrington argument and Mrs. Borsodi and I both read them. Alsaker's arguments seemed to us quite reasonable. We saw no reason why we should hesitate about experimenting with diet as *a means of maintaining health, the medical profession having signally failed to keep us healthy*. But we did not find this as easy as might be imagined. Indeed, it was only after a period of years and after we had moved to the country that we completely changed our diet from the conventional pattern to our present one. During this period Mrs. Borsodi made quite a study of the chemistry of food; we dug up what we could about the fight for pure and unadulterated foods which Dr. Harvey W. Wiley had waged back in President Theodore Roosevelt's administration and as a result developed a thoroughgoing distaste for the commercialized food stuffs which up to that time we had eaten.

One after another we gave up predigested breakfast foods, white bread, factory-made biscuits and crackers and cakes, polished rice, white sugar. But it wasn't easy to secure suitable substitutes for all the foods which we believed unfit for human consumption. What should we do in order to secure clean, raw milk, fresh vegetables, and decent chickens? The pasteurized milk which we had been drinking for years was a crime against the human stomach even though the germs which got into the milk in the course of its progress from the cow-stable to our back doors were all embalmed and thus rendered harmless. The fresh vegetables and fruits in the city markets were of necessity of inferior qualities; they had to be picked green, before they ripened naturally, in order to make it possible to transport them without too much spoilage. In addition, they withered and dried out while being shipped, stored and displayed for sale. Meat came to us from a spick and span butcher shop, but we could never forget that it had first passed through the packing-houses which Upton Sinclair had called "the jungle." After we moved to the country and acquired the habit of eating fresh-killed chicken, we could hardly force ourselves to eat chicken in the city. Nothing which a cook can do to a chicken in the kitchen can disguise for us the flavor which develops in a chicken after it has been kept for weeks and possibly for many months in cold storage with all its intestines intact inside. In the course of our studies of diet we became conscious for the first time of the fact that all these things were part and parcel of city living and the factory packing of foodstuffs to which industrialism seemed to have irrevocably condemned the consuming public.

Actually our moving to the country was inspired less by the notion that we could reduce the cost of living than by the conviction that we could live better than we had in the city. So far as food was concerned, better health was more in our minds than saving money. We sought pure food and fresh food rather than cheap food. The discovery that home production made it possible for us to enjoy better food *at a lower cost* than we had in the city, came later.

The Chayote, Good Nutrition

No, the chayote is NOT an animal but what is sometimes called the vegetable pear. So prolific is the chayote or climbing squash vine that a family fortunate enough to have one climbing a large trellis or a building need not starve. The chayote, much planted in sub-tropical America for its edible tubers and

whole chayote fruit is planted in the fall or spring and soon grows into a huge vine that somewhat resembles the grape. There may be little fruit the first year and not much the second, but after that the crops are amazing! The fruit is pear-shaped, 3 to 5 inches long when young and tender, apple green in color, and has one seed, edible and like a nut in flavor. The young shoots are edible too.

When young, the chayote is tender and crisp and should not be peeled. Its delicate flavor and texture make it ideal salad material. More mature chayotes are fine for baking or steaming and may be served with butter, oil, tomato sauce, cheese, onions, peppers, etc. They combine well with vegetables of stronger flavor and may be used in meat and fish casseroles. The mature chayotes can sometimes be stored for months.

Rich in iron, chayotes are virtually starch-free. They often contain only 1½% starch, compared with 14½% for potatoes. They have a strong alkaline reaction, are rich in Vitamin C, phosphorus, calcium and Vitamin B Complex. The high iron content is not offset by poisonous oxalic acid as is the case with spinach, chard and rhubarb.

The chayote fruit should be planted on a slant with the stem end exposed. The soil should come just to the sharp point projecting from the budding end. From that end grow a hardy green shoot pointing skyward and a root that burrows downward into the soil. Two or more chayotes should be planted together—from 8 to 12 feet apart—for pollination.—from the Santa Monica Organic Garden Club Bulletin

Financial Support For Heathcote

One of the very encouraging aspects of 1966 was the lively financial support of paying for, renovating and staffing a center on our Heathcote acres, near Freeland, Md. To every single person who sent so much as a fraction of a dollar goes the deep appreciation of all who wanted and worked for this center during the past two years.

We list below contributions not previously reported here.

On Jan. 1, 1967, James Iden Smith reported as follows:

Paid to W. D. Anacker	\$9000.00
Paid to the Heathcote Operating Fund (Ray Stevens, Treas.)	259.85
In the Down Payment Treasury	450.00
	\$9709.85

This is a very creditable accomplishment for our small membership. It bespeaks interest and commitment of a very high level. Now, in 1967, we should finish the goal — pay off the \$4000 loaned to us by Harry Kaplan and J. I. Smith and find another \$3000 to finish the full payment of the property which is costing us 6%. So set your own goal for School of Living Center, and keep the contributions coming. All are tax deductible.

Salary Fund

In addition, a special fund for a salary for new coordinators at Heathcote and payment of utility costs for 1967 has reached \$1600 in cash or pledges. The following made this possible by special contributions in late January: Jane Preston, R. A. Bays, Ruth Brickel, H. Lefever, Lynn Stone, Walker Evatt, Elizabeth Haswell, Clare Borsodi, Eleana Herrschaft, Wilma van Dusseldorp, Hermine Hurlbut, Marie Anderson, Martha Bale, Chris West, Wayne Werkheiser, Woodland Kahler, Vernon Hone, Eleanor Allen, Joe Moesel, and two other members who ask to be anonymous.

Gifts For Buying Heathcote

The following responded to a special appeal from Heathcoters (on green sheet with sketch of mill wheel): George Pelton \$5, John Sherman \$1, Marie Anderson \$300, Clinton Beachy \$1, Mildred Loomis \$100, Vernon

Hone \$25, R. M. O'Connor \$10, M. Shannon \$3, Dorothy Thomas \$1, Lynn Stone \$5, Wm. Lowry \$2.04, Chas. Raebeck \$10, C. L. Huckabone \$10, Paul Wingate \$10, Faris Lucas \$20, Will Willkamper \$3, Barney & Pat McCaffrey \$10, Earle McGue \$10, Anonymous \$5, Paul Goluboff \$5, Evan Lefever \$75, Mickey Warner \$5. Total: \$615.04

Those who continued to respond to earlier appeals, with contributions sent to Lane's End in late 1966 and early 1967, included: Lucille Ulrich \$10, Benj. Russell \$5, George Pelton \$5, Abe Bialatosky \$10, Darrel Cole \$5, A. W. Dietrich \$5, Carl Hann \$6.60, Joe Moesel \$10, Dr. H. M. Shelton \$10, Lamar Hoover \$40, Walker Evatt \$25, Jane Preston \$25, Hale Chamberlain \$2.50, Leo Kunick \$5, Ruth Brickel \$12.50, Steve Groff \$34.75, Howard Morris \$40, Alma Green \$7, Evelyn Weber \$7. Total: \$215.35

You see how many participated (some continuously each month); you see how small contributions mount up. Be sure to act on that impulse to send your help along to James Iden Smith, Heathcote Center, Freeland, Md.

Accolades, cont'd

with each other (Ken was in Illinois during this time on pre-Christmas pipe organ repairing). Their unplanned mid-winter trip to and sojourn in Florida added to their expenses.

Friends have set up a fund to assist them in this emergency. The family is now en route to Kaslo, British Columbia, Canada, on beautiful Kootenay Lake. Any contribution you wish to send will be forwarded to them (from Lane's End, Brookville, O.).

Reader Reactions

The Sprague action is most interesting. That the children have never had dental cavities is significant, and we should hear from Mrs. Sprague how they accomplished this. She must have something to share on nutrition with *Green Revolution* readers. — L. Appleberry, Yellow Springs, Ohio

Love to the Spragues — wish I could do something significant for them! — Rosetta Schuman, Columbus, O.

Big congratulations to Dee Sprague on her stand against vaccination. I'm glad the children didn't take the oral treatment either, and it's really tremendous about their teeth! My best wishes for her added understanding of herself and family and greater courage and conviction which they will need in the years to come. Best wishes to Heathcote and all strivers after the true, the good and the beautiful. — Kay Mathesius, Beaver, Pa.

We want to put a bit to a fund for the Spragues. The more we recognize the insanities of our present society, the more we tend to withdraw from it. We're not paying the 10% tax on telephone that supports the Vietnam war. Yet we feel some responsibility for the horrible things happening there. As long as we are part of this economy, how can we feel otherwise? We too want to live a simple life on the land in British Columbia. This may be part of the answer for us. — Darrel and Margaret Cole, Michigan

Here where freedom is stressed and preached more than anywhere else in the world, I was shocked to read in the January *Green Revolution* that vaccination is compulsory for children attending schools.

I am not opposed to vaccination or medicine as a system of health, but I am opposed to compelling this method on everyone. I am in favor of those who believe in vaccination having their "shots." But those who have good reasons for believing vaccination is not in the best interest of health and welfare should be free to use other methods. We must continue to work that the rights and freedom of minorities be protected. — Sherman Fong, 1109 W. Salvador, Napa, Calif. 94558

THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3 March, 1967

ADVERTISING RATES

Classified: 35c per line. Minimum 3 lines or \$1.05. Average line has 40 spaces.

Display: \$5 per column inch. No discounts on any ads. Payment must accompany order.

Deadline: 10th of preceding month (example: April 10 for May issue).

Send ads to: School of Living, Brookville, Ohio 45309.

WANTED — Someone to work in garden, house & health store in exchange for food and private trailer living quarters. H. R. Lefever, Rt. 1, Spring Grove, Pa.

BACK IN BUSINESS AGAIN. Organically grown citrus fruit: (per bushel) grapefruit \$4.50, oranges \$5; express extra. Shipping season through June, maybe later. No insecticides, fungicides or herbicides used. Fruit not gassed, unwaxed, no color added; washed in clear water, otherwise as they come from tree; in mixed sizes only, all grown on orange root stock. Organic method followed for 20 years. L. P. DeWolf, Crescent City, Florida 32012.

CHICAGO Intentional Communities group is being formed to do research and to establish an intentional community. Write Richard Simonson, 2459 N. Seminary. s(2)4-67

HOMEGROWN SEEDS for sale: Delicious winter squash, large; large pumpkin, thick salmon fleshed, pink rind, oblong; large pumpkin, thick salmon fleshed, heart-shaped; big red beans; white hominy corn, largest grains of any; sugar trough-bushel gourds; 3 to 4 foot dipper gourds; mammoth zinnia, mixed. All the above, 15c a pkt. plus postage. elephant garlic, cloves 25c. Aloes plants 15c, larger 35c. Tree of Heaven plants, 4 for \$1; 2 to 4 ft., 3 for \$1. Strawberry plants, 100 postpaid: Gem, \$4.50; Ogallala, \$5.50. Effie Neie, Box 1025, Alpine, Tex. 79830 n(2)4-67

SUNDRIED, unsulfured fruits, herbs, unbleached nuts, saltless olives, avocados. Frank Smith, 5685 Oak Knoll, Los Gatos, Calif.

HEALTH REJUVENATION. Fasting. Vacationing. Weight reduction. Nude sunbathing. Spring water pool. Gulf beaches. Delightful natural foods. Health lectures. Rates \$9 up. Cooperative employment available. Write SHANGRI-LA HEALTH RESORT Bonita Springs, Florida 33923-G

Enclose \$1 for book, "Fasting Can Save Your Life." (5-66)3

LIVING HIGH by June Burn. Joyous home-stead classic. New illus. edition, \$3. Wellington Books, 346 Concord, Belmont, Mass. (y4)

THE OWNER-BUILT HOME is now complete. Volumes I, II, III, IV are available (\$2 for each volume) from: Ken Kern, Sierra Route, Oakhurst, Calif.

COOPERATIVE LIVING aimed at a permanent community patterned after B. F. Skinner's Walden Two. Write Walden House, Box 8971, Washington, D. C. 20002.

WANT CONTACT with persons interested in gradually forming a joint family, large and stable enough to effectively and efficiently fulfill functions listed by R. Borsodi in Part III of *Education and Living*. Max M. Lund, Rt. 1, Box 174, Shelby, N. C. 28150.

ORGANIC GARDENER, vegetarian, desires position with salary and family quarters. Wife, executive secretary. Trustworthy, clean-cut, capable; highest references. Prefer a warm climate. Write RFT, c/o Green Revolution, Brookville, Ohio.

KERISTA'S erotic ethic and four etc's. includes a Kerista Reading List. \$1 from Kerista, Box 34708, Los Angeles, Calif. 90034.

BACHELOR, 33, in northwest, requests correspondence with sunpy girl who relishes raw food, classical music, organic gardening, and who values Thoreau, Krishnamurti, Summerhill. Aim: companionate union, RVM, Green Revolution, Brookville, Ohio.

INDIAN HOLY PICTURES, from India, 50c each. Indian shirts (Kurtas), thigh length, S.M.L., white embroidered, \$8. Double Happiness Traders Unlimited, Box 368, Santa Fe, N. M. He who loves has no time for hate.

living the good life

by Scott & Helen Nearing

Read details about their organic gardening, house and greenhouse building on a New England homestead farm. Clothbound Photos 210 pages \$3.50 FOREST FARM, HARBORSIDE, MAINE

Ode to Sassafras

Let others sing of signs of spring, the violet and crocus

That reappear in landscapes drear to springtime's hocus-pocus!

Let others toot their poet's flute in praise of birds and grass,

I twang my lyre with vim and fire in praise of sassafras.

The other guys may rhapsodize of fruit trees gaily budding, Of little drops of silver rain upon the windows thudding; Of pussy willows, skipping lambs, and chickens from the shell— I move and ode to sassafras that doth its virtues tell.

I gaze upon my winter face—the mirrors sadly frame it.

I say, "That face is a disgrace;

I do not care to claim it!

It does not match the springtime scene, so rosy and so splendid!"

And then I get some sassafras and all my woes are ended.

All those who say "Alackaday" and scorn this foolish notion

Would surely smile, and find worthwhile the world's most heavenly potion.

For Communists and other sects like Bolshevik and Fascist

Don't mean a thing in days of spring if one's a sassafrasist.

—Mary E. Bostwick from *Easter Ideals*, Vol. 3