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Chicagoans Produce Heavily on a Bit of Land Around Their City House

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THE GREEN

FOR HOMESTEADERS, ON-TO-THE-LANDERS,
AND DO-IT-YOURSELFERS



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A Lady Named Jess

By Robert F. Stowell

With a new haying season coming on, we began to talk about horses. My experience was limited to a few months when we had the loan of a riding horse. I also knew they were large animals with strong teeth that sometimes tried to nip your jacket and their hoofs were solid, real. For city people who had lived through one long Vermont winter we were certainly still dreamers. We wanted a mare, picturing long-legged foals in the spring flowers, and we wanted a horse that could work but would also not be impossibly awkward to ride. Those of you who know horses will realize that this is rather like trying to combine the utility of a pick-up truck with the pleasure of a sports car.

That spring I spent many hours peering through fences at a wide variety of work horses, thinking that we might learn something useful by looking and listening. Most of the horses seemed to me hopelessly homely or else they were very clumsy. Our adviser on horses told us that what we needed to find was a Morgan — or a part-Morgan. Vermont is rightly famous for this breed. They are on the small side for farm work but intelligent, hardy, stout hearted and durable. On a hill farm in a nearby town we met a farmer who still used and loved horses. He had a perfectly matched team of greys weighing about eighteen hundred pounds each, a painted pony that his grandchildren liked to ride and a half-Morgan named "Jessie."

She was chestnut brown with a white blaze on her forehead, "about twelve years old," and she had lively eyes. The owner said that she had been mistreated when a colt and was somewhat high spirited, but we watched the children at the farm crawl over and under her without fear. He said that she could cultivate and if you took it easy, pull a light mowing machine. I rode her half a mile up the road, and it felt good to be on a horse again. She seemed to breathe rather shrilly as I cantered back to the barn, but I liked her and the orchard grass in the lower meadow was already nearly to my waist. We knew it must be cut soon to have much value as winter feed. The year before we had made horses out of ourselves, cutting the two tons of hay needed for our cow by hand and carrying it to the barn in a two-wheeled cart. Some nights we had been so tired that we couldn't eat after a few hours of haying.

The week before I had learned a lesson. A stock dealer was showing me a large black gelding. He led him outside where he stood patiently waiting in the sunshine and the dealer said "slip on the saddle." As I started to swing the saddle over his back, he reared high on his back legs and then struck out viciously with his front — just where I would have been if I had not dropped the saddle and jumped aside. The lead rope was snapped from the dealer's hand and with a wild toss of his head, eyes rolling white, the gelding bolted from the yard. That was enough for me; I wanted most of all a gentle horse, one we could stay alive with.

"Jessie" came to us for ninety dollars and a purebred Jersey calf. She was homesick at first or so it seemed, eating very little and acting listless. We had bought her on a mid-summer day, anxious to finish our haying if possible before the first week of July. The first snow had fallen before the last of the hay was in the barn.

We had already bought various pieces of farm machinery, the most important item being a one-horse mowing machine. It was so old that the company no longer made parts for it, but they very kindly sent us the catalog that went with the mower (its pages were yellow and brittle). The cutter bar was only four feet long compared with modern machines that cut six and seven foot swathes. I had spent several days tinkering on the mower with the help of a book on farm machines, and Ann had painted it bright red. Even sitting on the driver's seat without a horse made you feel real important. We had been given a mostly worn out hay rake. I made the mistake of cutting a new set of shafts for it from ash, not knowing that while ash is excellent for axe handles it cracks and weathers badly when left outdoors.

Let it be known that you are interested in horse drawn farm tools in Vermont and you are apt to be given more of them than you can use. We had two excellent cultivators and a walking plow (continued on page 4)

The Bhoodan in India

By Mathew Davis
Mill Valley, Calif.

The Bhoodan (land gift) movement and its alternative to centralized industrial development are discussed in *Portrait of India* by Bradford Smith (Lippincott, 1962). Smith mentions Gandhi's dream of a "rural, self-governing, decentralized society," and tells of Vinoba Bhave and J. P. Narayan's efforts to further this. He then quotes some of Narayan's critics, who charge him with being unrealistic and "obsessed with ancient and outmoded village institutions." And it is clear that the Congress Party leadership had opted for strong industrial emphasis.

Over four years later, the December 11, 1966 *San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle* headlined an article, "India Reaps Lean Harvest of Nehru."

In the opinion of the article's writer, "A series of fertilizer plants in 1955, or even in 1960, could have saved India in 1966." And, "Millions of pounds and dollars were spent on steel mills, power stations, and nuclear reactors, while the poor farmer remained neglected."

Building fertilizer plants is not equivalent to the Bhoodan movement, which implies a comprehensive social revolution. Bhave and Narayan have not been proved wrong in advocating urbanized answers to India's vast problems.

As a footnote, anyone interested in India's food resources and/or farm ecology would be well rewarded to obtain a March *Natural History* magazine and read "The Myth of the Sacred Cow" by Marvin Harris. It is surprising to read arguments that India needs more cows.

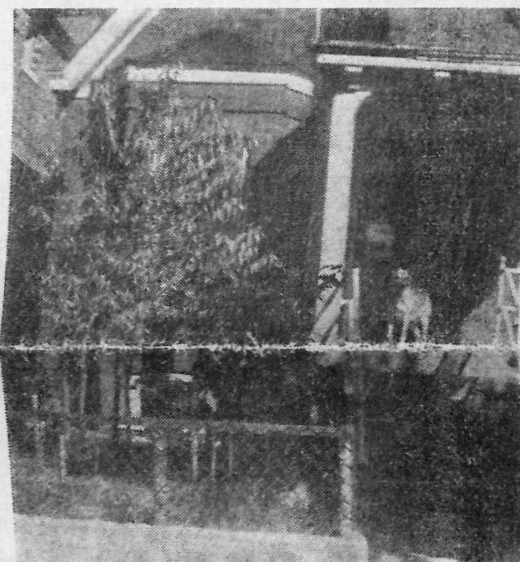
Chicagoans Produce Heavily On A Bit Of Land Around Their City House



TOP LEFT — Backyard garden at 833 N. St. Louis St., Chicago, Ill.



TOP RIGHT — In his 22' x 36' backyard plot, Bill Schuppenhauer tests a tomato and displays a zucchini squash.



RIGHT — Frontyard orchard and Pal.

If you were sauntering along north St. Louis St., about 30 blocks west of Chicago's Loop, you'd be in a neighborhood of average cottage homes, on very narrow lots (just on the edge of the 1966 riot area). You'd notice one lot frontage very different from the others — full of young trees and berry bushes. If you looked up to note the house number — 833 — you might see a sturdy German shepherd dog, "Pal," standing guard on the porch. And you'd see a name plate saying "The Schuppenhauers." Here live Bill and Norma Schuppenhauer, teenage son Billy, and Pal, on their pre-homestead homestead.

First you'd stop and examine this frontyard orchard. You'd guess the space to the left of the sidewalk to be about 10' x 16' and there you'd count 8 young trees: 2 English walnuts, 2 almonds, 3 filberts and 1 black walnut. The 12' x 6' space to the right of the walk you'd note is full of red raspberries and 2 butternut trees.

Next you would decide to follow the walk to the rear of the house, and there find a young 22' x 36' jungle, with perhaps the man of the homestead picking raspberries or bearing aloft a zucchini squash or two. This would be Bill Schuppenhauer. Sr., who would gladly give you a guided tour.

Bill would tell you that the portion of his backyard has 14 more fruit and nut trees: 2 dwarf apple, 1 peach, 1 avocado, 2 cherry, 1 black fig, 2 pears and 3 Manchurian apricots — as well as 4 blackberry bushes and 5 grape vines. These last are producing but the nut trees are not yet bearing. In a year or two they will be dug, balled and transplanted to the homestead they will establish northwest of Chi-

cago.

Vegetables Galore

Vegetables of all kinds are planted "in between everything," and you'd think they'd be sickly with over-crowding. Not so. The soil is good. "We bury all our garbage in the soil; don't have room to compost," says Bill. He uses 100 lbs. of dried cattle manure each year, as well as mulching in dry weather with grass clippings and leaves.

Bill manages to find space for (and bring to full production) 100 green pole bean plants, a dozen peppers, 1½ dozen tomatoes, 1 dozen eggplants, 1½ dozen cabbages, ½ dozen cauliflower, 2½ dozen celery plants, 1 dozen cucumber plants, several huge comfrey plants (they were loaded with someone else's bees), and 8 rhubarb, besides turnip greens, radishes, beets, lettuce, onions and parsley. "We don't record the production," says Bill, and "I couldn't guess at the amounts." He added, however, "it keeps us in good eating all summer and into the fall."

Preparation for Moving

At present, Bill Sr. and Bill Jr. are reconditioning and painting the exterior of the house, and in the winter will modernize the interior preparatory to selling and moving to a cherished piece of land where they can give better vent to their homesteading skills, and more space to their city-bred trees and bushes.

Well-Trained Pal

Pal is a friendly and well-behaved addition to the family. His territory is the rear-entry and he never puts foot beyond the threshold unless given an approving nod. At the word "paper" he dashes to the front porch and brings the daily paper in his mouth and drops it in the rear

room. He never steps off the front porch without permission, and will stand for hours with paws on the edge awaiting release. He has been taught not to bark, never to jump on people, and to keep all four feet on the ground. Bill says, "Training is easy if you follow instructions in a good dog book. Use as few words as possible, repeat, be consistent, insist and firm. Say 'No' to what he should not do; stick with it, and glare at him until he obeys. Approval and a pat for obedience helps. The reward is a well-behaved and faithful friend."

One wonders what the result would be if half (not to say all) the families on St. Louis St., Western Ave., Clark Division, Halstead, and all the other Chicago streets would use their front- and backyards the way the urban-homesteader Schuppenhauers do.

In Making Yogurt, Easy Does It

By Jane Preston
Butler, Pa.

So often when preparing natural foods in our own kitchens, the easiest and simplest method is by far the best. This applies to the making of yogurt. Most directions call for incubating at a constant temperature of 112 to 115° F. There are several contraptions on the market for maintaining the "proper" temperature for the required time.

But I learned from a knowledgeable European a year or so ago that the best yogurt is made by allowing the incubation temperature to fall, and to incubate for a longer time than directed in this country. Following this (continued on page 4)