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Cancel

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Flight From The City

By Ralph Borsodi (first published 1932)

CHAPTER 6 — Water, Hot Water and Waste Water

The great adventure, on which we had embarked when we left the city, did not contemplate any return to primitive ways of life.

We had no intentions of going in for manual labor just for the sweet discipline of hard work. We had no intention, therefore, of being satisfied with drawing water hand over hand from a well—a laborious form of drudgery still prevailing on many of the farms of the country. And certainly we had no romantic notions about carrying water from a flowing brook—good enough for a camping trip, but ridiculous as a permanent way of living. We were not after any such return to nature. What we wanted were all the comforts of the city in addition to the comforts which country life had to offer. There would be enough hard work, we knew, without making a virtue of doing things the hardest way.

The water supply on "Sevenacres" when we purchased it came from a well about twenty-five feet from the kitchen door, and from a cistern fed by rain water from the eave troughs of the house. Water was drawn from the well by two oak buckets on chains which were pulled up over a pulley. A suction pump in the kitchen was supposed to draw water from the cistern. This pump was out of order, but after being repaired, in the course of which we all received our first lesson in applied hydraulics, we discovered that this was a most uncertain source of water, since the cistern was too small to carry a supply between most spells of wet weather. So we installed an automatic electric pumping system—an outfit which at that time represented an investment of \$125 but which can now be purchased for around \$50. With the services of a plumber to connect it up, an expenditure of \$150 put running water into the house.

What did it cost for the water? Did it cost us more than in the city, where we had the benefits of mass pumping and mass distribution through water mains? On "Sevenacres" I had no occasion to work out this problem, but when we dug our well and installed our pumping system on the "Dogwoods," I decided to find out, and kept records, so that at the end of a number of years I would be in a position to answer the question with some degree of accuracy.

Some years after we were living in our new home I had quite an argument with my friend, Ralph W. Hench, who lives in Suffern, upon this point. The Hench family, of course, enjoyed the luxury of city water. Water cost them, he told me, \$20 per year. And he was quite certain that mine cost me much more than that. There was no man better equipped than Hench with whom to argue the point, since he was in charge of the accounting for one of the largest corporations of the country, and the question could only be correctly answered if approached from an accounting standpoint.

We made a detailed calculation of what it had cost us to supply ourselves with water on the "Dogwoods" during the seven years we had lived there. The capital investment in our system was as follows:

Cost of well	\$170
Complete pumping outfit	150
Labor	20
	\$340

The labor costs are, if anything, high, since I was my own contractor and only unskilled labor was used.

We then projected costs upon an annual basis as follows:

Interest on capital of \$340 (at 6%)	\$20.40
Depreciation on pumping system (at 5% of \$170)	8.50
Repairs per year (covering 7 years)	4.29
Electric current	12.00
Annual cost of water	\$45.19

The moment we had these figures my friend exclaimed: "There you are—it is costing you over twice as much as it costs me in Suffern."

I went to the telephone and called up a mutual acquaintance who we both agreed was the best judge of realty values in Suffern, and asked him this question: "Suppose there were two lots for sale in Suffern, both of them equally desirable in every respect except one. Suppose one of them was located on the Suffern water system, and suppose the other was located where no water could be supplied to the owner by the city. What would the difference in the price of the two lots be?"

After considering the matter a moment, he replied, "About \$500, perhaps a little more or a little less." Then I started out to figure what it cost my friend Hench for water in Suffern. And these were the figures at which we finally agreed:

Interest on capital investment of \$500 (at 6%)	\$30.00
Taxes on added land value (3-1/5% of the \$250 assessment)	8.00
Water tax	20.00
	\$58.00

This showed a clear saving of \$12.81 a year in favor of the individual pumping system. "But I am not through yet," I said. "This figure of \$58," I went on, "represents what it costs for water in Suffern on a single lot. But many homes in Suffern are built upon two or more lots, doubling the initial investment and correspondingly raising the hidden cost of securing water from the city mains. While if there were eighteen acres of land around a home, as there is around mine, the cost of water would be prohibitive for any but the wealthiest of families.

Here with regard to water we have another of the many illustrations available of the mistaken idea that mass production is of necessity economical. With water, as with other conveniences and with most products, what is saved by mass production tends to be lost in the costs of distribution. It undoubtedly costs the city of Suffern less to pump water than it costs me in the country. My small and relatively inefficient pumping system cannot hope to compete in cost per gallon of water raised with the large and relatively efficient pumping system of a city of many thousands of people. But when I pump my water on the "Dogwoods," all costs in connection with water end. When the city pumps its water, its real costs of supplying water only begin. It is the cost of distributing the water through an expensive system of water mains which absorbs the economies of the "mass" pumping, and replaces them with an actual higher cost than that of the individual homesteader. The city's investment and operating costs for its pumping system are negligible in comparison with its investment and maintenance costs for its water mains. The

pumping costs are taken care of by the water tax, but the distribution costs are hidden in higher land values, except right when the mains are laid when they are made visible in the form of assessments against the lots before which they have been laid.

What is true of water is true of many of the public services enjoyed by those living in cities today. Just as mains are laid to distribute water, sewers are laid to assemble waste water. The two functioned for us in the city without our being hardly conscious of the fact. If we were to be equally comfortable in the country, we would have to solve the waste water problem as we had that of running water.

(continued next month)

North of the Mississippi—

"When We Wake Up In the Morning, We're Already Behind In Our Work!"

By Ferdi Knoess
Harmony Homestead
Pennington, Minn.

For the past three weeks or so, we've been felling poplars which will go into a cabin to be built during the year. This tree is near the bottom for desirable timber for this purpose, since it is prone to rot rather rapidly. However, I have spoken to experienced individuals in our area who say that if the sticks are peeled and given a proper foundation this should prolong their life quite a bit. Anyway, we have no desire to make this thing last forever.

Our chief consideration is their availability. We have lots of poplars but not much else that is practical for this use. Peeling will be done in the spring when the flowing sap will aid in loosening the bark. Native stone will be used in the foundation. Four large oaks will serve as sill logs, a further precaution against premature decay of the shelter.

Finding and Sawing the Trees

All of the trees are cut down with a two-man saw. Usually a

ter breakfast, two or three of us will head to the adjacent woods with ax and saw on our shoulders. Then we try to find the straightest trees or those having long sections without pronounced bows. When someone finds a possible tree to cut, there usually begins a short appraisal by all of us on the merits or faults of the tree in question. We pace around it, giving it the eye from several points of view, and try to estimate the length of the usable portion of the tree. More fun than this is our attempt to determine the direction the tree is likely to fall. Occasionally there are as many opinions as the number of woodcutters present. Usually we reach a consensus and most of the time we have judged correctly.

It has been said many times that woodcutting is a task that warms one twice, the first time when you cut it and the second when it is burned. We have found this to be true. It is nothing unusual for us to be sawing at below zero. I remember it was 20 below one day when we were

(continued on page 4)

Letters, cont'd

houseboat travel and gardening my folks' place instead of waiting until I get my own homestead. — Musetta Giles, 1506 S. Main, Bellefontaine, Ohio 93311

New York Land

To the Editor:

We have approximately 200 acres of clear, excellent farm land, but are using only 20 for corn and a small vegetable garden. This land would be available for homesteaders, on flexible terms (some for selling, some for renting, or under other conditions thought practical). And we would consider the services of a couple for care-taking. There are several buildings available for dwellings; streams, with plenty of water; some forest; easy accessibility to main roads near the village of Liberty, N. Y.—Robert Blum, Ferndale, N. Y.

[This, and an offer from another owner came in reply to a "Land Wanted" notice in our ad column. Land seems to be available; people seem to want it. The School of Living is simply attempting to be a clearing house to bring persons together who want land and who have land. Any definite arrangements would be made between the contracting parties.—MJL]

To Talk At College

To the Editor:

I have been asked to be on a discussion panel on "Americanism in the 60s," at Bemidji State College, Bemidji, Minn. Economics and social structure will be the chief topics. I hope to air some of our "economics of peace" ideas. Send me a batch of papers on this subject for distribution. — Ferdi Knoess, Pennington, Minn.

Vegetarian Recipes

To the Editor:

A unique book, and very helpful when one wants to move into vegetarian practices, is *Live Foods*, by Doris and George Fathman (from Sun Haven Publishers, Rt. 9, Box 968-A, Tucson, Ariz. 85705). It has some meat-like vegetarian dishes, though I haven't found it necessary to use such complicated dishes. Nature is so bountiful with simple good things, and as Gandhi said, "there is always too much rather than too little." A friend here who has a Peace and Freedom library gave me *Green Revolution* and I

certainly enjoy its discussions. Can you send me some back copies? — Eliz. Baskette, 2707 N. Flanwill, Tucson, Ariz.

Hunza Club

To the Editor:

The Hunza Club meets here in February and I'd like to distribute copies of *The Green Revolution*. Tell Florida School of Living members to write me—they should give reports on their self-sufficient living along with mine. — Ruth Savage, 116 Hillsboro, Lakeland, Fla. 33803

Cancel

To the Editor:

Please remove my name from your mailing list. I do not want to be associated with your publication. — F. Shield, Highland Park, Ill.

Borsodi Influences Novel

To the Editor:

I'm writing a novel; the thinking I've done for it has been much influenced by Ralph Borsodi's writings, particularly his concepts of the corporate family. When it is published I should think it would bring people seeking further information on the good work you are doing.—Bob Rimmer, Quincy, Mass.

[Note: In his bibliography for the new novel, Mr. Rimmer says of Borsodi's *Education and Living* (1948), "Some publisher should re-issue this. It is quite germinal to many 'stirrings' in the land."]

West Coast and New Age

To the Editor:

More and more it seems to me that the world is in for some important change. Everywhere out here, there's talk of The New Age. The Six-Day School at Glen Ellen, Calif., is an influence. I'm taking two courses — one on Spiritual Healing, which is amazing, and one called Rough. In that we'll live one week at survival level in the wilderness during February. More and more I feel my place is here — I want to be part of the New Age that's coming.—GH, San Francisco, Calif.

Urbanist Turns Rural

To the Editor:

For many years I've been an urban revolutionary. Now I'm a rural revolutionary. I've read the

THE GREEN REVOLUTION — 3

March, 1968

ADVERTISING RATES

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

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

Deadline: 20th of preceding month (for example: April 20 for May issue).

Send ads to: School of Living, Brookville, Ohio 45399.

WANTED: single person or couple to assist with gardening; residence in comfortable trailer; prefer retired couple.—Grace Lefever, Sonnewald Homestead, Spring Grove, Pa.

WANT TO PURCHASE completed homestead for family of six, with access to organically grown food or a farm equipped to grow organic fruits and vegetables on east coast of southern Florida within commuting distance of Jewish Center and college or university.—Sidney Gottlieb, 67-47 Harrow St., Forest Hills 75, N. Y.

LET US FIND the out-of-print book you want. Any subject, no obligation. Send author and title to Jayar Books, 4401-L Broadway, Chicago, Ill. 60640.

WANTED: female partner (19 to 35 years), no children, for a going homestead and craft studio. Some art training desirable but not essential. Mild climate, organic fruits and vegetables. Vaki Studios, Fauquier, B. C., Canada.

THE EARLY AMERICAN, bi-monthly on homesteading, back-to-the-land and the simple life. 50¢ a year. Oxford, N. Y.

ANCIENT WISDOM AND DIETS UNVEILED—vital message for young and old, leading to better health, longevity and disease prevention. \$1. Dr. N. S. Hanoka, 507 E. 27th Terrace, Kansas City, Mo. 64108

MASS MEDIA — directory of 100 plus radical publications, all shades, 50¢. P. McAlpine, 1304 Geddes, Ann Arbor, Mich. m(1)2-68

ORGANIC GROWN, spray free, vegetable and flower plants. Donna Caton, 5630 S. Scarff Road, New Canaan, O. (ph. 845-8889). c(2)-68

BUILD YOUR OWN FREEDOM! Save many days' research on all aspects of organizing a homestead or retreat from the coercive rat race. The Retreat's Bibliography is the result of over 2000 hours of research and contains more than 300 detailed listings on sources of information and materials essential to you. Send \$9.50 for your bound copy to: Atlantis Enterprises Ltd., 5020 El Varano, Los Angeles, Calif. 90041. a(2)-68

INTERESTED IN SIMPLE LIVING Read our manuals. Wildcrafters World No. 61, \$1; STP No. 59, 25¢. Wildcrafters Publications, GR 3, Box 118, Rockville, Ind. 47872. w(3)4-68

LOOK AHEAD! Candidates should register for new intentional communities. Write for application and 35-page book, *Intentional Community Concepts*, \$1. Colonists of all ages, skills, interests sought. Emphasis on fellowship, voluntary association, survival, health, country life, self-help, realistic education U.S.A. and Latin America.—Questers Project, Box N-13, Los Banos, Calif. 93635. q(2)-68

TEN ACRE campsite reserved for flower people. \$500. Wm. Earwood, Rt. 1, Lew Lexington, O. 43764. (1)-68

A FEW remaining lots available in May Valley Cooperative Community—inter-racial, cooperative, single-family homes. So-called "profits" are returned to lot holders (\$200 to \$300 per lot, so far). 27 acres of park, playground and orchard for common use.—Write John Aftner, 10208 147th, S. E., Renton, Wash. 98055 (1)-68

FREE ARTICLE. Every year hundreds of thousands of Southern rural poor move to Northern city slums. Farm groups can help them to stay on their farms and become independent. For more information, send for THE GREAT MIGRATION, from National Sharecroppers Fund, Inc., 112 East 10th St., New York, N. Y. 10003. (1)-68

VIETNAM! VIETNAM! by Felix Greene, 175 pp., \$2.25. LET THERE BE A WORLD by Felix Greene, 64 pp., 75¢. CHILDREN OF VIETNAM by Wm. Pepper, 20¢. Marion Wilhelm, 97-28 130th St., Richmond Hill, N. Y. 11419. (1)-68

WALNUT ACRES puts its soul into its work—the supplying of whole, naturally-raised, carefully-processed, poison-free foods of all kinds. A highly significant, landbased, group venture. Please send for free mailorder price list. Walnut Acres, Penns Creek, Pa. 17862. wa(12-67)11-68

COLLECTOR'S ITEM — Summer 1967 issue of *A Way Out*. Don't miss it! 60 pages of vital, voluntary, anarchist, libertarian economics. This is the definitive issue on a free—really free—system. You'll not find another journal in this country—or in the world—with the point of view, the data, and the program in this combined (May-June, July-August) issue of *A Way Out*. Supply is limited. Get yours now. \$1 a copy from School of Living, Brookville, Ohio 45399. 12-67

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Poems for a Green Revolution—60 gems of insight and feeling by C. S. Dawson. Three groups: some depict the ugliness of our artificial world; some the beauty of the natural world; some decentralist life and living. Product of new School of Living Press. \$1 Order from Heathcote Center, Rt. 1, Box 129, Freeland, Md. (5)-67

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

Green Revolution off and on for several years, and perhaps some of your good stuff stuck in my head. Together with my friends and fellow workers we are attempting to create a "new society within the shell of the old." We have started some of our own industries and are engaged in many aspects of survival living. We salute you for your never tiring efforts in bringing sanity and health via the *Green Revolution* to the folks. — Alan Graham, Illustrated Paper, Box 541, Mendocino, Calif.

Separate Them?

To the Editor:

May I suggest that a distinction be made soon between School of Living Center at Heathcote and the budding community there. It would make things much simpler and less conflict-prone, I think, if it were seen by all that these two organizations — though sym-