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What Does Homesteading Mean for Us? (Part V) - Our Drainage Problem: First We Got Experience by Doing the Wrong Things

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Youth's Yearning For Life and Love: Two Plan Their Own Wedding Ceremony



John and Lynn and Art Jackson (Humanist)

John and Lynn Hill. Antioch College students with co-op jobs in a Dayton school and hospital (Antioch has an alternating work and study plan), typify a trend for significant living. They say: "We tried to put into our marriage ceremony some evidence of all our joys and values. We were married in Antioch's Glen Helen, so we had the outdoors, trees, us, friends, little children, our Humanist counselor. We wrote our own vows and ritual: Lynn made the shirt and dress; the cake and the food were home-made. Our friends held hands encircling us. The enter and exit music was from certain good rock groups we had taped. We even made our own rings. The leis in the picture are royal ones from Hawaii, which John's brother brought."

At one point in the ceremony

Lynn said, "So many times we've asked ourselves and each other: What does marriage mean? It is not willed by strange, mystical forces. It is not something that can be defined absolutely. John and I believe it is created by two people who take responsibility for each other. Marriage becomes a dynamic process for the two people who choose to develop from it an ever-renewing, ever-growing life."

And at one point John said, "We shall never stop changing, never stop growing and taking on new values, friends and ideals. We choose the strength and beauty we find in each other as the basis from which this change can occur."

They say: "For us it was very meaningful and relatively inexpensive."

Free Press, cont'd

men in the army are shown to be decent, scared kids—who haven't learned of available alternatives. Many say, "I'm as against the war as those who demonstrated in Washington; I'm uptight; but I guess I'll go when my orders come." Others say, "I know what I'll do when my orders come. If you hear from me, it'll be from jail, not Vietnam." In Chicago, in two years, 659 drafted men failed to report for induction.

LNS lists "recent" defense contracts issued by the Pentagon to American firms. Most readers will find some of this "big time murder" in their home towns.

Yippies

Plans for a Youth International Party (YIP) "Festival of Life" have recently been featured. It would be held in August, in Chicago, during the Democratic National Convention (called the Death Convention). It is predicted up to 200,000 young people will descend on Chicago for conferring, singing, dancing, "theater" dramatizing and protesting today's dilemma.

Results

Only bits from the 500 pages of releases can be reported here. (Send for a release from LNS, 3 Thomas Circle, N. W., Washington, D. C.).

What does the rebellion of youth and their free press add up to? Many an adult, less pressured by the war, says, "Youth should be more constructive. Rebellion is not enough. They should promote . . . (the speaker's particular idea)."

But rebellion is understandable. Young people say, "Either the war is right, in which case we should help fight it, or it is wrong, and then we must do all in our power to stop it." Many take this last position and get into all the anti-war activities they can. And they see the relative non-involvement of parents, teachers and adults generally. Their annoyance and frustration grows against all "business as

usual attitudes: their energies are turned against adult activities and social institutions. To their disgust and fear there is added a hopelessness of living a decent life in this society. It's a wonder they have enough hope and goodwill and enthusiasm left to plan and carry through such enterprises as the "Festival of Life" in Chicago.

The Green Revolution

Of course we would like to see thousands of today's rebels turn to and foster the green revolution. That could happen. And green revolutioners could become more responsive, more outreaching to today's rebels. LNS has reprinted "Wanted—Decentralism" from *Modern Utopian*. They have asked us for an evaluation of the proposed festival in Chicago.

We approve, provided they "squat on unused land" and otherwise live by their own (not other peoples') resources. We suggest they dramatize the whole, unethical system of absentee ownership of land.

Cheering word comes from 22-year-old Ray Mungo of LNS: "You may be pleased to know that Wayne Hansen, editor of *The Avatar* (Boston) will be urging his many YIP-style readers to go to the land this August, to retake the country rather than bother with LBJ. He and I sat for hours outlining the editorial call over cups of cold coffee in the Harvard Square Hayes-Bickford."

Wonderful! *Avatar* readers are just the ones to help add L-A-N-D to commonly used four-letter words! They can help start a nation-wide "squat-in," to dramatize the "land problem."

Still further, in today's mail comes two journals, *The Changes* (Glen Ellen, Calif.) and *Illustrated Paper* (Mendocino, Calif.), both slanted to rebel readers and both promoting country life and decentralism.

Let's have more and more of all this!

Theme, cont'd

been invited to also share his vision and efforts to revive culture, security and independence in his area.

Sunday afternoon, the whole group will plant a fruit tree by the famous White Method (which has brought such a bountiful production of peaches and apples on Sonnewald Homestead). The tree will be a gift to Heathcote Center, and its planting a dedication of all participants to the practices and philosophy of the viable way of life we call homesteading.

Future Heathcote Conferences

Human Relations Training—June 15, 16, 17.

Youth Workbee and Discussion—July 27-Aug. 2.

School of Living Week—Aug. 3-10.

IFI Plans, cont'd

American Friends Service Committee (see article next month, "Rural Credit in Jordan"). Credit will be granted to pilot plants, the use and re-payment of the loans will be supervised by trained persons, and credit is granted in the context of a larger, approved, community development plan. But IFI's plan is singularly different in that money loaned is based on and backed by actual goods. The standard of value for IFI money is a "commodity basket" of staple goods; the "money" actually consists of warehouse receipts; interest can be paid in goods; any investor who wishes can redeem his debentures (bonds) in goods. This constitutes a non-inflationary aspect.

Position Papers

Borsodi is also writing a series of papers explaining the philosophy and practice of this new credit-money system, for the International Independence Institute (the teaching and training arm of the loaning foundation). The address is 163 Water St., Exeter, N. H.

Plans, cont'd

might survive in the Southern Hemisphere, only to repeat the whole exciting and ghastly cycle, unless enough of the survivors were whole and rounded enough to treasure the knowledge gained during the last 30 years about our biological nature and tried to live reasonably within this framework.

The less we understand about our own instincts, the more we are their victims, especially when we live in societies above tribal size. We can see today how people who grew up believing that sexual instincts were wicked were relieved by the Freudian revelation of their absolutely basic importance. But many still feel guilty about aggressive feelings, possessive feelings, racial feelings and their desire to move up the social ladder.

Six Basic Instincts

The path of progress lies, I believe, in encouraging our better instincts and harmlessly diverting others, not pretending that they don't exist. In addition to food, love and sex, we should now recognize more clearly three other basic needs of human beings and other animals: security, identity and stimulation.

I hope that an intentional rural society in New Zealand (of 10 to 40 families) will provide security through each family owning a dwelling and a little land, the group as a whole owning land cooperatively, living in a rural area, and above all by the presence of convivial company.

This group should provide identity by giving a sense of purpose and belonging. Is there anything wrong with a "pecking order" if it is changeable and those near the top genuinely encourage the younger and less gifted ones to advance and even overtake? Finally, it should provide stimulation and prevent boredom by convivial company and by the spur to constantly re-examine and perhaps even defend their standards and priority of values.

What Does Homesteading Mean For Us? (Part V)—Our Drainage Problem: First We Got Experience By Doing the Wrong Things

By Carl Ogren
Rt. 3, Paw Paw, Mich.

[Editor's Note: The Ogren 100-acre farm had several waterlogged spots. Their land drainage problem is presented in three parts.]

June grew up right next door. Her father farmed all thru the thirties, until with the dislocations of the early war years he gave up his livestock. I grew up on farms or lived on the edge of small villages, both around here and up north. So we both can say with truth that we have country, or farm, "backgrounds." Yet we had so much to learn—and still do for that matter. Take the simple (?) matter of land drainage.

Any agricultural text will detail the "technical" explanations why good drainage of excess water is essential to crop growth. The old-time farmer understood instinctively (or in his "common sense" way) how absolutely essential it was not to have excess water laying around very long on your crop soils. The traditional and obvious answer? Drainage, of course. How? Tiles or open ditches.

They both work fine, but either system represents a very considerable investment of money or labor time (or both).

Big vs. Little Operators

The big fellow takes this right in stride. He has a large operating budget (or a substantial outside income to finance his farming), and he simply allocates the required annual amount to amortize the cost in a reasonable period. No sweat, no strain.

The little fellow can't do this. It doesn't take many major improvements to strain his capacity for meeting money payments. So he spreads his major improvements over a lifetime, because he has to pay one thing off before he can take another financial dive. Strange as it may seem, there is one terrific advantage in this way of going about it: he has time to think and experiment around a bit. This was the case with us: only it took about 14 years to wake up and realize what was happening.

Think Big!

And I might just as well state clearly right here was what was happening. All my life (without me really being aware of it, since I didn't think there was any other way) I had been taught to think BIG. Society teaches you this. If you're going to make any money at the business of farming, you've got to be BIG. Practically everybody knows this, even all the suburban Joe's who know nothing at all about farming; they still know you've got to be big to make any money at it.

And right along with this, all your farming problems have got a ready-made, industrial-type solution which everyone (including all the suburban Joe's) knows about and believes in. Industry will sell you the equipment you need to apply these industrial-type solutions (they are real obliging about this).

Of course it costs money, more than you can scrape up if you clean out every last pocket. But our progress-saturated society has got the answer to this one too. Financial institutions will provide the money for you; it's all very simple and painless. There is no need for you to do any thinking whatsoever at any point in this process. All that has been done for you by professionals.

But we didn't come off so bad on this one. Some of us otherwise normal people enjoy doing some of our own thinking, occasionally at least. And this is what we eventually got to do with our drainage problem, after making several false starts while I was letting the business farmers and the Ag. specialists do my thinking for me. A new subsoiler cost us just under a hundred dollars, that's true, and a used (and home-made) bulldozer cost us just under \$500—as we began to move on our own—but that's dirt cheap as these things go in the modern

world.

Manure and Humus

We had done a lot of talking about this drainage bit over the years. When the bulldozer approach didn't work for us, June took the bull by the horns. She had our son unload one trailer load of manure (1 1/4 tons) in a particular place. We had kicked the idea around from time to time, but her resolve brought some action into the picture. And thus we began our emancipation from think BIG.

We were thinking in family-style homesteading terms. Our solution to the drainage problem required no additions to our equipment, and hence no trip to the financiers. No wait either. We started right in with what we already had at hand.

And now that we've told the story behind the story, we can talk about our homesteading approach to the drainage problem, next time.

Letters, cont'd

the men. Only in the backward countries, where there is no real medical care in childbirth, do the fathers continue to outlive two or three wives, as they did in American pioneer days. Any old graveyard will yield evidence about the dangers of childbirth. Even if neither mother nor child dies, but is only disabled for life, how much anguish will be suffered.

Homesteaders who plan to have their babies at home should at least be able to get medical help quickly if it is needed. — Esther Landau, 532 Maryland Prospect, Pa.

Wants Organic Foods

To the Editor:

I subscribed to *The Green Revolution* mid-1967. Since then I've been trying to beg, borrow or buy as many back issues as I could lay my hands on. In the September 1964 issue there was a remarkably interesting article by June Burn on Southern Handcrafters. From it we got a good source of dried apples. We ask now if there are other green revolutioners in the country who would be willing to sell organic foods to our co-op. The smallness of the producer makes no difference; we would buy what they have. Most of our members are in serious need—with some degenerative disease. We supply their needs as close to cost as possible. All but one of our 10 employees is a volunteer.—A. N. Ivanich, Organic Foods Co-operative, 1728 University Ave., Berkeley 3, Calif.

[Editor's Note: This co-op carries an unusually complete line of foods.]

Large Order

To the Editor:

In the underground weekly, *Open City*, I see this ad: "I am looking for the answer to the Universe, God, Mankind and Myself. Send any information to . . ." I think our School of Living should interest him. — M. B., Bronx, N. Y.

Frobenius and McLuhan

To the Editor:

McLuhan says we're moving from a visually-oriented culture to an audio-tactile one. In *The Gutenberg Galaxy* he tries to make a distinction between the oral and written tradition, the importance of mime, a distinction made very forcefully by Frobenius. Of course Frobenius backs up any writer who knows that the world is ceasing to dance to the tune drummed up long ago. That is, he said we were moving from a mechanical to an intuitive culture, and studied Africa to gain insight into these matters. McLuhan is interested in primitives for the same reason. As he says, an audio-tactile culture would be tribal. . . . What with the air, water, food, my wife and I feel half-poisoned and do enjoy *The Green Revolution* and *A Wax Out*. — Ralph Reid, Berwyn, Pa.