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ATLANTA, GA. 30307

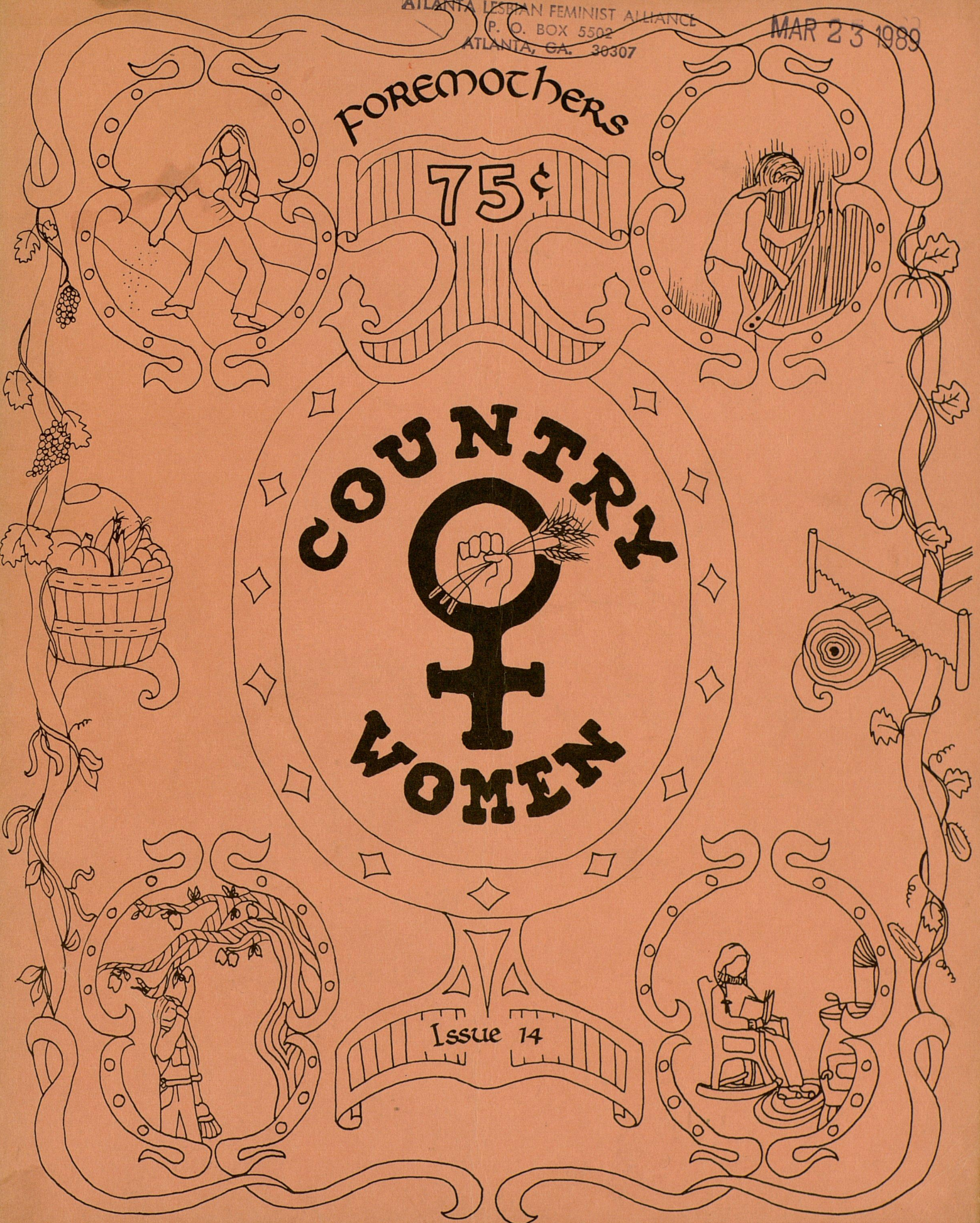
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Foremothers

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COUNTRY
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Issue 14



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Collective for this issue: Ruth Ann, Leila, Judith, Harriet, Nancy,
Judy, Slim, Carmen, Helen

Help from: Ellen, Anne, Virginia, Sharon, Marion, Leona, Vi

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THE VOW

FOR ANNE HUTCHINSON



sister,
your name is not a household word.
maybe you had a 2 line description
in 8th grade history.
more likely you were left out,
as i am when men converse in my presence.
Anne Hutchinson:

"a woman of haughty and fierce carriage."
my shoulders straighten.
you are dead, but not as dead as you
have been, we will avenge you.
you and all the nameless brave spirits
my mother, my grandmothers,
great grandmothers (Breen Northcott, butcher's wife
the others forgotten.) who bore me?
generations of denial and misuse
who bore those years of waste? sisters and mothers
it is too late for all of you. waste
and waste again, life after life,
shot to hell. it will take more
than a husband with a nation behind him
to stop me now.

A Feminist Pioneer

My great, great grandmother, Esther Warner, was among the first pioneer women in Nebraska and one of the principal fighters for equal suffrage there. This article is taken from her letters and from stories told to her granddaughter, Creta Warner Filley. Our story begins in 1864, when Esther and her older sister Orra Ann Boydston, both twice widowed and both in their 40's, headed for Nebraska from Iowa City in two ox-drawn covered wagons, accompanied by their eight children. Esther's oldest child, Haskel, was 12, Emma was 10, Ames was 2 1/2, their half sister Estella was 20 and was away at Pittsburg Female College. With these children, her sister, a younger brother and various cousins, who were still children, Esther homesteaded, survived an Indian scare, built a stone-log house that is still a home and sent her children (two girls!) to college, during a time when women were not allowed to vote, buy land, or speak in public.

Their first shelter was a temporary lean-to made of sod and the canvas tops from the wagons. Bed ticks were stuffed with straw and used for mattresses. That first summer of 1865, Esther began work on her two-story, eight room house. It was to have a full basement divided into two rooms by a stone wall and a fireplace in the west room. But in the midst of their building, in August, came rumours that the Sioux were on the warpath. (Many of Esther's homesteading "neighbors" left, one of whom sold his bordering 160 acres to Esther. The raid proved a false alarm and the Pawnees made their winter camps for several years in the woods near Esther's homestead; they were her closest neighbors for the next ten years.)

Winter was fast approaching and Esther decided to build a log cabin for the winter. She and her brother Henry marked trees suitable for use. In November, a bad storm drove them out of the unfinished stone house and neighbors from all around gathered and helped Esther raise her cabin. It was completed in one day, with windows, chinking and a latch on the door. The lower floor was one large room, partitioned by rag rugs. The upstairs was a sleeping loft for the children. The sisters' rocking chairs were on either side of a drop leaf stand with the lamp between them. By that first winter, Esther had also built a chicken coop and kept lots of hens and several milk cows. Butter was exchanged for supplies in Nebraska City.

In the spring of 1865 Esther went into the woods to get saplings and transplanted them in groves near the house. A garden was planted on either side of the brook, and strawberries and apple trees were planted. Work continued on the stone house. That summer, Esther and Orra Ann and the eight children moved into it. It was a sturdy house with walls 18" thick and a chimney at each end of the gently sloping

roof. Its mere simplicity gave it dignity. Even the lack of uniformity in the size of the blocks of yellow hued limestone in the walls added to its charm. The walls inside were smoothed over with white plaster. The house was furnished with Esther's furniture from her home in Iowa, which brother Henry packed in a wagon and drove out to Nebraska.

In 1866 Esther, Emma and Amos (now 6) went to Nebraska City, their first trip to the city since arriving at the homestead 2 1/2 years before. When Esther was making her shopping list Amos asked that she put down a doll for him. When the travellers returned home, she spoke privately to the older boys: "Amos has his first pants, his first boots, and a doll. I want it understood for all time that he is not to be teased."

On March 1, 1867, Nebraska became a state. "But there was no vote to represent my 320 acres," chaffed Esther. In the spring of 1869 a larger acreage of corn and wheat had been planted and the future of the homestead looked bright. In the fall of 1869, Esther decided that both Emma and Haskel should be sent to Tabor College in Iowa. Prior to college, the children's education had consisted of reading the various newspapers and magazines that Esther had subscribed to since the first winter on their homestead. She also read novels to them, extraordinary for the times, when novels were considered quite sinful. After two years of school, Haskel returned to the homestead to become farm partners with Esther, but Emma continued for another year at Northwestern University. When a railroad station was established near the homestead, Emma learned telegraphy and got the job as station agent. Emma was dismayed when she discovered that a revolver was part of her office equipment. But her ability as a marksman soon became well known because she often practiced shooting at a target. The station became a sort of social center because "townspeople" in Roca and the outlying homesteads would gather at the depot to see the 5 o'clock train come in and to hear the news.

In 1884, she married Dr. Clay Demaree and after losing two babies she went back to school and received her M.D. at the Woman's Medical College, Northwestern University. Emma and Dr. Clay practiced together in the village of Roca, only half a mile from the stone house.

Esther and her young folks were still battling the problems of a fenceless land in 1870. But the stone house no longer stood stark alone on the prairie sod. The saplings had rooted deep and there was an orchard, berry patches and fields of wheat, corn and oats. The land along Salt Creek, the east forty, and hillsides were virgin prairies. In 1870, Esther was awarded Homestead Certificate No. 100, for her 160 acres of land, for which she had filed six years previously.

That summer a new era was opened for Esther when she added to her list of magazines The Woman's Journal, a feminist and suffrage paper published by Lucy Stone. Soon she began writing for the Journal and speaking out for women's



rights throughout Nebraska.

In the autumn of 1882, Esther had attended a State Convention for Woman Suffrage organized by Susan B. Anthony. She became very active in the movement and spoke in various parts of Nebraska and organized local suffrage societies, against incredible popular opposition. In 1888, she was asked to speak at the International Council of Women in Washington, D.C. on the subject "Women as Farmers." People were there from England and France. . . Susan B. Anthony, Julia Ward Howe, Frances Willard, Reverend Ann Shaw, Carrie Chapman Catt, Clara Barton, and many others were present. The following excerpts from her speech portray her beliefs on farming and feminism:

"Suffice it to say, we succeeded in raising as many chickens to the acre as our neighbors, and when drought killed our trees, we planted more. Grasshoppers came and we were short on vegetables, but we never sent East for help, and we didn't eat grasshoppers ... After twenty years the experiment in farming still goes on...

"To understand something of the nature of different soils, to learn the proper depth to cut the turf in breaking prairie, what rotation of crops will produce the best results, and how to plant potatoes, must be supposed to come within the range of a woman's capacity ...

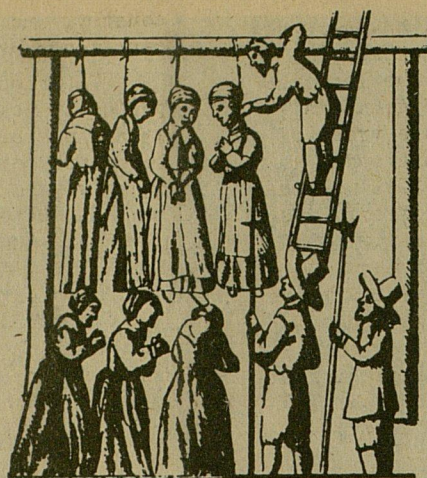
"I have been a resident of this state for more than a quarter of a century, and I am one of a multitude of tax paying women who keenly feel the ignominy of submission to tyranny. I am also one of a still larger multitude who wish to be regarded as part of the human family, and entitled to stand side by side with husbands, brothers, and sons in all the affairs of life: not 'told off' for some special purposes in a limited sphere.

"There seems to be an impression having strong hold on many minds that when women have political liberty they will desert their homes and rush around the streets trying to make up lost time by voting perpetually. Men and brethren, don't worry. Womanhood is not a product of legislation and cannot be abolished by law -- we shall take care of our babies though the heavens fall."

Esther was widely recognized as among the most notable of the pioneer women of Nebraska. As a farmer, she more than trebled the acreage of her homestead, raised all her own food and enough surplus to trade for supplies and to buy more land. As a feminist she fought for women's rights both on the state level and in her own life. Both of her daughters went to college -- one becoming the first female school teacher in the state and the other becoming one of the first female M.D. s in the country. Her youngest son publicly fought for women's rights and was a sociology professor at Nebraska University.

At 42, Esther Warner rose above personal tragedy to create a new life for herself and her family in the unbroken Mid-West. The booklet which Creta wrote gives little indication of the social prejudices and oppression that a woman, alone in the wilderness, had to face. Women were denied the right to education, to public speaking and suffrage, not to mention almost all legal rights. Married women did not even have a legal right to their own children, unless specified in their husband's will! All in all, to be a Country Woman in the nineteenth century, especially with four children, no husband and few neighbors, took a lot of strength and belief in one's womanhood. Her courage and integrity are strong support for our movement today. ♀

herstory



lives

It all began with the proverbial desire to give my nine year old daughter and the other children at the Whale School what I hadn't had. No, it wasn't tap dance lessons or a life on the stage, but rather some feeling for women's history. I wanted them to have a comfortable knowledge of the part women played in our history. This desire was about as abstract and flat as my last sentence, mostly because although at 31 I knew the "importance" of their learning this material, beyond a few scattered names and facts (Seneca Falls, 1848; Susan B. and Elizabeth C.), I myself did not possess this information. It was dead, inert. What began to bring it all to life for me was Eve Merriam's Growing Up Female In America: Ten Lives.

To quote from her introduction, "One scarcely need be a vocalizing feminist to observe that women -- along with Blacks, Indians, and, to a lesser extent, other minorities -- have not been given their due sufficiently in American history. More than these other groups, women have been not so much misrepresented as missing: their presence cavalierly, boldly omitted. Men wrote the history books; men assigned themselves not merely center stage and the central roles, but all the roles. The colonists who left the old world for the new in the early 1600's carried along with them a heavy cargo of prejudice and superstition. English law had discriminated severely against women; the colonies carried on the tradition."¹

Male historians have passed those shackles down to us, giving their history a propagandist, political function which is to simultaneously create and support a past and present reality. A reality that will maintain the unequal balance of power in favor of the status quo and patriarchal culture. A reality where women's power, past, present and future, is invisible.

Ann Forfreedom further develops this idea in her work, Women Out of History: A Herstory Anthology. According to her, "From Herodotus to Will Durant's Histories, the main characters, the main viewpoints have been male. Women have been considered minor additions or exceptions in history. That is why historical discussions of medieval Europe tell of the Crusades but not of the millions of women burned or tortured to death as witches in the christianized countries

of that era. Historians record one Joan of Arc, and forget all the women who fought to save their homes and children without fanfare or awards. American historians record a Pocahontas, but ignore the women who ruled the Five Nations tribes, considered by white colonists the most civilized and sophisticated federation of Indian tribes on the East Coast."

Moreover, she continues, "American myths tell us of Betsy Ross, not Abigail Adams; of the wives of Civil War combatants, not of the women who spied and fought in the front lines; of the women who married millionaires, not the women who originated labor unions and fought for their rights in the streets a hundred, or twenty, or two years ago. The same myths praise the system that produced pioneer women but ignore the system that has produced prostitution and welfare mothers. The most radical histories have yet to acknowledge this challenge."²

Eve Merriam omits the historian's interpretation and goes directly to the source, allowing us to hear the voices of these women. Through their journals, diaries and letters, we learn a little more about what it was to be a female, a little more about our past. I listened to their voices and the echoes are still ringing in the place I sometimes believe my heart chakre to be, for they describe with timeless accuracy many of our dearest struggles and joys. Merriam's desire was to present a chronological, geographic, economic and cultural diversity of lives, and this she does although the task was difficult because among our foremothers, the ability to read and write was severely limited.

Listen to Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, as a twelve year old in the Michigan wilderness: "At first we had our tree cutting done for us, but we soon became expert in this gentle art. I developed such skill that in later years, after father came, I used to stand with him and 'heart' a log." At fourteen her desire to become a minister began to be felt. "For some reason, I wanted to preach -- to talk to people, to tell them things. Just why, just what, I didn't know yet -- but I had begun to preach in the silent woods, to stand up on stumps and address the unresponsive trees, to feel the stir of aspiration within me."

After many years of teaching, however, she was still not able to afford the necessary education. Taking a radical step, she left the woods and moved to a sister's in Big Rapids. "There I had decided I would learn a trade of some kind, of any kind; it did not greatly matter what it was. The sole essential was that it should be a moneymaking trade, offering wages which would make it possible to add more rapidly to my savings. In those days, in a small pioneer town, the fields open to women were few and unfruitful. The needle at once presented itself, but at first I turned with loathing from it. I would have preferred the digging of ditches or the shoveling of coal; but the needle alone persistently pointed out my way and I was finally forced to take it."

Luck and circumstances relieved her of this hated work, and by 23 she preached her first sermon, causing many of her family and friends to disown her, since female ministers were an unorthodox rarity in 1870.

Meanwhile Anna Shaw's heterodox lifestyle attracted lots of attention, not all of it welcome. Her account of handling a wagon driver out to molest her gives vivid proof of this, and reminded me that I have never read any statistical or personal accounts of rape in any history book:

"Stopping his horses that he might turn and fling the words into my face, he replied with a series of oaths and shocking vulgarities. He ended by snarling that I must think him a fool to imagine he did not know the kind of woman I was. What was I doing in that rough

country, and why was I alone with him in those dark woods at night?"

"I tried to answer him calmly. 'You know perfectly well who I am, and you understand I am making this journey tonight because I am to preach tomorrow morning and there is no other way to keep my appointment.'

"He uttered a laugh which was a most unpleasant sound. 'Well,' he said, coolly, 'I'm damned if I'll take you. I've got you here and I'm going to keep you here.'

"I slipped my hand into the satchel in my lap, and it touched my revolver. No touch of human fingers ever brought such comfort. With a deep breath of thanksgiving, I drew it out and cocked it, and as I did so, he recognized the sudden click.

'Here! What have you got there?' he snapped.

'I have a revolver,' I replied as steadily as I could, 'and it is cocked and aimed straight at your back. Now drive on. If you stop again, or speak, I'll shoot you.'

Fortunately, that was not necessary and Anna continued to preach for many years while at the same time earning a degree in medicine. In Boston, she met Lucy Stone, who was then president of the Massachusetts Woman Suffrage Association, and Dr. Shaw eventually became a full-time lecturer and organizer for them.

But her boundless energy and dedication didn't stop there. Soon she followed Susan B. Anthony and Carrie Chapman Catt as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Then, after World War I, Dr. Shaw toured the country in behalf of the League of Nations before her death in 1919.

Anna lived one life, was one voice in the montage. Listen to another; that of Susie King Taylor (1848-1912), born a slave, as she describes the illegal school she attended in order to learn to read and write: "We went in, one at a time, through the gate, into the yard to the kitchen, which was the schoolroom. We went every day about nine o'clock, with our books wrapped in paper to prevent the police or any white persons from seeing them."

Later Susie served as a volunteer nurse in the Civil War. "I taught a great many of the comrades in Company E to read and write, when they were off-duty. Nearly all were anxious to learn. I was very happy to know my efforts were successful, and also felt grateful for the appreciation of my services. These I gave willingly for four years and three months without receiving a dollar. I was glad, however, to be allowed to go with the regiment, to care for the sick and afflicted comrades."

With prescience, Susie voices her concern that the historian will not take note of the bravery of those women who gave their lives for the Union's victory: "There are many people who do not know what some of the colored women did during the war. There were hundreds of them who assisted the Union soldiers by hiding them and helping them to escape. Many were punished for taking food to the prison stockades for the prisoners."

In 1886 this woman organized the Women's Relief Corps and her dedication and regard for



"MOTHER" MARY JONES

human equality and justice guided her work for the rest of her life.

Likewise did it guide the work of the woman who said, "No matter what you fight, don't be ladylike! God Almighty made women and the Rockefeller gang of thieves made the ladies. I have just fought through sixteen months of

bitter warfare in Colorado. I have been up against armed mercenaries, but this old woman, without a vote and with nothing but a hat pin, scared them."

Mother Mary Jones, living an incredible one hundred years (1830-1930) became a fulltime union organizer when she was fifty. "In her widow's weeds and black bonnet, with an umbrella for a sword, she traveled on foot from one workers' community to another, through the coal mines of West Virginia and Pennsylvania all the way to the copper mines of Colorado."

Her keen sense of history was one of her best weapons. "When asked by a judge if she had a permit to speak on the streets, she replied, 'Yes, your honor, I have.' 'Who issued it to you?' the judge demanded. 'Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams!' she answered."

Mother Jones was also a great tactician and her description of the dishpan brigade used in a coal mining strike should be required picket line reading:

"Then the company tried to bring in scabs. I told the men to stay home with the children for a change and let the women attend to the scabs. I organized an army of women housekeepers, and on a given day, they were to bring their mops and brooms and would charge the scabs up at the mines. I decided not to go up to the Drip Mouth Mine myself, for I knew they would arrest me and that might rout the army."

"Instead, I selected as leader an Irish woman who had a most picturesque appearance. She had slept late and her husband had told her

to hurry up. She had grabbed a red petticoat and slipped it over a thick cotton nightgown. She wore a black stocking and a white one. She had tied a little red fringed shawl over her wild red hair. Her face was red and her eyes were mad. Up the mountainside, yelling and hollering, she led the women, and when the mules came up with the scabs and the coal, she began beating on the dishpan and hollering and all the army joined in with her.

"The sheriff tapped her on the shoulder. 'My dear lady,' said he, 'Remember the mules. Don't frighten them.' She took the old tin pan and she hit him with it and hollered, 'To hell with you and the mules.' He fell over and dropped into the creek. Then the mules began to rebel against scabbing...."

Her story ends with the army of women, mops, brooms and pails in hand, chasing the erring scabs down the hill. If it was a success that day, others were futile in the face of the unbelievably cruel working conditions that faced these people. But her determination never faltered.

This is a serious, documented book review and I am not suppose to say that I thrilled to these women's words, that tears streamed down my cheeks late at night. I laid in bed reading, too cold to get a kleenex that I love Elizabeth Cady Stanton who lived 87 remarkable years. I go around quoting chapter and verse, and feel for the first time that I have a history that really connects to my life in a meaningful, potent way. These women spoke the words that I dream, and the excitement in this discovery has opened up a whole new vein of reading material. I don't want to give you capsulized paragraphs of these lives; I want to quote you the whole book, as you can see.

In case you haven't guessed, I wound up teaching that class that I had wanted to happen, and now entertain my friends by telling them fascinating and true stories about Sacajawea and other foremothers. In the process I discovered that our history does not have to be manufactured, only rediscovered and its meaning translated. Unless this is done, ignorance and historians will keep us believing that throughout our past, we have always been slaves.

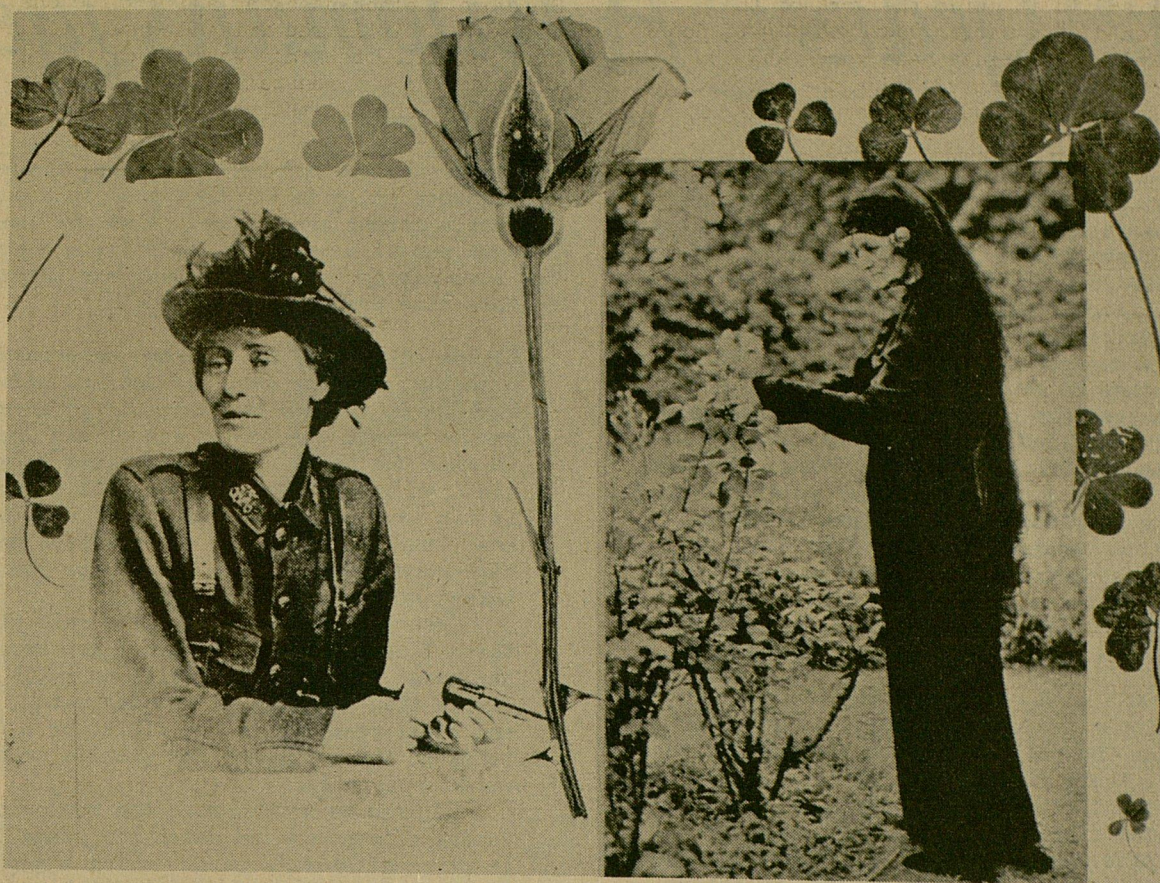
As Ann Forfreedom points out, "If we women have been oppressed for millenia, we have been free before; we have had our prideful rebels and our golden age. Our history is neither totally glorious nor totally shameful. It is human." Our past is not only ours; we are our past. We are the daughters and the inheritance is rich. ♀



Footnotes:

1Eve Merriam, Growing Up Female in America: Ten Lives, Dell Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1971.

2Ann Forfreedom, Women Out of History: A Herstory Anthology, published by Ann Forfreedom, Los Angeles,,1972.



To Nicola,

let our union be like the ivy
growing entangled along the brick wall.
let our bond be "sweet and strong,
like the fragrance of orchids."
let the marriage between our souls
join us to our sisters.
great grandmothers,
Amazons and daughters, in a fight
and a vision of Peace.

I discover you.
I believe in you.
gardens of blossoms are we.
Plant your feet in the earth
next to mine.

92 Years: A Woman's Life

I have always felt that my grandmother, Edna Langridge, was something special, perhaps because she is my only grandparent. I have always liked and respected her as well as feared offending her. She is outspoken, humorous and has a natural quality of authority. Once my brother Alan (approximately age 9) was asked to come inside by Grandmother who was babysitting. Alan reflected that he could run faster than Grandmother and that she couldn't catch him and make him come in. She just laughed. "What are you laughing about, Grandmother?" he asked. "Imagine you thinking I'm gonna chase after you," she said. "I'm not gonna chase after you; you're gonna walk right in through that door!" He did.

Here are parts of my grandmother's autobiography, which I excerpted when I visited her in Texas in 1972. I felt privileged to see it and copied out what, for me, were the high points.

"On a cold windy February night in 1883, in a little two-room log house, I was born to Nora Ann Cockrell Hocker and William Edward Hocker, their first child. My beautiful mother was but a little over 18 years. On the same night the high wind blew sparks from the log house onto a hay thatched roof where my father's horses were housed. Busy indoors, my father never saw the fire until too late to save the horses. Only one got out, and well I remember old Moses, a big bay with no hair on one side - just a big scar..."

A year and a half later Grandmother's mother Nora Hocker died of scarlet fever after giving birth to her second child. She was 20 years old. At the same time, my grandmother also contracted scarlet fever. The result was permanent deafness in one ear, and blindness in one eye.

After Nora's death, William, left a widower with two children under the age of two, married Nora's sister Joetta. She too had her first child, Clarence, at the age of 18. My grandmother writes:

"Some hazy memories - when Clarence had pneumonia and his mother, Joetta walking the floor with him and crying (no antibiotics, no cure) In that log house Joetta died of childbirth fever following the birth of her second son Carl - the infection brought to her by her doctor whose wife died of the same at the same time. Oh what a loss of precious lives because doctors did not know how to prevent and cure such infections!"

After the death of his second wife, and with four children to care for, William Hocker married a woman outside the Cockrell family, Leonora Redmond. Leonora was not a kind stepmother; something like the classic Cinderella story ensued. During this time, Edna found out that the eyesight in her left eye could not be

restored--the eye had become opaque; the most the optometrist could do was to tattoo in a pupil to restore a normal appearance. Also she treated her own ear with peroxide, stopping a discharge but also making deafness in that ear irreversible. Of this time Grandmother writes:

"I was ashamed of my clothes, embarrassed by a smelly, running ear, scolded and made to work hard, and had no chance to go anywhere but to school and Sunday school and Church. We went the three and a half miles in a little open buggy. We carried lunch to school in tin lard pails--biscuits with a slab of meat, maybe a fried egg and molasses and butter--sometimes we might have grape jam which turned green on soda biscuits.

"Weary, unhappy years. The only pleasant thing I can remember is when I got away from the house, outside to myself, to watch the little fish and bugs in running water, or pick and shell peas out in the field, or a few trips to the mountains for picnics or to pick wild raspberries.

"I used to look across the meadow on Sunday afternoons and watch the young folks in my grandfather's place having a good time. I was lonely and half in love with my stepmother's nephew who came out from Kentucky to work for my father. He was a boy about my age. After Leonora 'raved' about his taking me to Church in a borrowed buggy, I never went again while I lived at home.

"That was the year I stayed home from school to do the work (between the 10th and 11th grades) because she--my stepmother--was pregnant. She had the baby prematurely and it died soon after. I heard her raving to my Dad that I killed her baby. But I heard Dad tell her 'She did not; you did with your temper.'

"The last part of my 11th year in school I couldn't take her any longer. I had to walk to school while she'd pass me up in the buggy with her children. It got unbearable. Finally, I left home, going to my Grandfather's in town. I was nineteen then."

During her senior year in high school Grandmother boarded with a family named Mathis as a servant. One day she intervened in a husband-wife quarrel and was dismissed from service:

"That particular day, he started to throw his coffee at her [Mrs. Mathis]--I put my hand over it. Then he threw all the baked potatoes at her. By that time both she and I were up, and she stepped behind me as he raised a chair to smash her. I pushed him away (I was near twenty-one years then, a big strong girl) and I turned to his son and told him to take his

dad from the room, which he did. After that he wouldn't allow me to stay any longer. But she helped me select and buy material for several dresses including a lovely graduating dress she made on a machine (which she turned with her hand, being in too ill health to use her feet.) She finally sued for divorce, but before the case came to trial she had acute Bright's disease and died in Denver. I would have been her chief witness in the divorce trial. Oh! he was mean. Once he stuck her arm full of holes with a pen knife. He married soon after and I've always hoped he got a wife who could match him."

After boarding with the Mathises, my grandmother "batched it," living at a boarding house with other students. Among their numerous hijinks was a time when "we stole Eulah's father's horse and buggy to see who was skating with who at the lake." They also stole railroad sidecars at night, dressed in men's clothes and carrying pipe.

After graduating high school in 1904 at the age of 21, Grandmother attended Normal School for two years and then taught in a one-room schoolhouse. Some of her students were over 21 years old, although the school only went as high as the eighth grade; they were taller and older than she was. They were young men whose education had been interrupted by work on farms. Grandmother had no trouble with "discipline problems." She simply dismissed one young man until he was ready to do as he was told. He stayed away a week, returning the following Monday morning, volunteering to light the stove. Grandmother at 92 still corresponds with some of her pupils from that one year of teaching; one woman remembers the beauty of her long "strawberry red hair."



After teaching elementary school for one year, Grandmother married Mr. Webster who deserted her while she was pregnant. After giving birth, she took various types of work to support herself and her infant son, Kermit: a typesetter in Oklahoma, a field worker in Alabama. Then she went back to being a servant/housekeeper

in Colorado. One Thanksgiving, when she worked as a typesetter in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, it was for 25¢ an hour. Of Pawhuska, Grandmother recalls that the inhabitants were laying streets and trying to get the houses orderly, in straight lines, out of the middle of the streets. Only prostitutes wore lipstick and rouge. Powder was the only thing women wore and some women wore too much. It created a scandal if a woman went out without stockings; even playing tennis without stockings was bad. Women wore corsets, breast and waist-corset covers (bloomers), petticoats, stockings and long dresses. The bloomers opened to allow people to go to the bathroom. There was no underwear for sale in the stores; women made their own.

Babies were always dressed in white, including boys, who wore handmade long dresses until they went to school in short pants. Kermit crawled in his long dress which was also used to wrap him in.

Later Grandmother worked picking cotton and stripping sugar cane near Mobile, Alabama, for 50¢ an hour. Back-breaking work. Kermit was three.

In 1912, she married Harry E. Langridge. Four children--Margaret, John, Bob, and Edna--were born to the Langridges. One of the great legends about Grandmother is the story of her boarding house. Mr. Langridge was not making a great deal of money as a janitor and she wanted her children to go to college. So she rented rooms to college students.

A sample day from the diaries of those years (1938-42) reveals a staggering amount of physical labor; a day that might begin at 5:30 a.m. with Grandmother packing a lunch for her son Bob, cooking breakfast for the boarders, tending the garden, doing the laundry for a dozen people, changing the beds, lunch, dinner, ends with an entry in her diary at 9:00 p.m.: "My fingers itch to sew, but I am so tired," or a statement that she has a book she would like to read but is too exhausted. She records that her birthday went unnoticed until she was fifty.

When she was in her fifties, Grandmother was diagnosed as having a heart condition for which the physician prescribed complete bed rest, advice which Grandmother never followed:

"He--the doctor--didn't know I'd been eating German chocolate cake before the exam. That was all that was the matter--the cake--it always caused my heart to act up."

When I was a teenager in 1958, the book Love without Fear, by Eustace Chesser was the "in" forbidden reading in my crowd. I came across Grandmother, sitting on the sofa, laughing and reading my copy of it, which I had so carefully hidden. "Why Grandmother, what are you reading?" I asked. "I guess if you can read it, I can!" said the old matriarch.

Of her hard life, Grandmother says: "I got one thing I desired--five children--which compensates for everything bad during my life."

In her diary, Grandmother prayed for spiritual strength. She was and still is a spiritually strong woman. ‡



"I always knew
I wanted to be a
preacher..."

"Minnie," Mama said, 'Go out to the woodpile and bring in a big armload of sticks and I will give you something special when you return.' The woodpile was not very far away and the sticks were not very big. I filled my arms so full that I could scarcely see above the load and went back to the house. It really wasn't a house, just a tent of canvas, but it was our home on the Kansas prairie. The year was 1885. Mama was holding in her hand a white mug, with raised flowers around the handle. She said, 'Minnie, this is your birthday present. You are 4 years old today.' I hadn't ever had anything but a little tin cup to drink out of before and I thought it was very nice. I was still using it when I was ten or older.

"We had a cookstove with a protruding hearth where oftentimes I warmed my feet, but sometimes if they were wet, Mama let me put them into the edge of the oven instead. This was the place where I loved to sit and read. My education started with a little wooden box with the words 'Dr. Price's Royal Baking Powder' on it. What letters weren't on the box the cowboys (who often stopped at our place on their way through) would cut out and stick on. So I soon had the whole alphabet. As more settlers moved into the area my Aunt Sally got together what few children there were and taught us in her home. By the time I was eight I could read very well. As soon as there was a town to go to and I had a few cents to spend, I bought little fairy books for a dime apiece.

"When I was about seven years old I acquired a doll, a yellow-haired China doll. Mama bought the head and made the body. I named her Nellie. Before that I had a yellow ear of corn wrapped in a rag. My other favorite toy was a tin frog that jumped when I pressed a rubber ball."

My grandmother, Minnie Mae Stanley Hershey, loved to tell stories about her life - and we loved to listen, because she was so good at it. Her life as a child on the prairie was very exciting, but what she said she remembered most were the things that scared her.

"Once our family was on a trip, traveling in our buckboard. I can remember just like it was yesterday that I was sitting between Papa and Mama in the seat, only I turned around and was looking backward, when I saw a big gray dog.

I said, 'Mama, Papa, there's a big gray dog following us.' They talked quietly awhile and then stopped the ponies and Papa got out and just ran towards the dog. Mama said, 'It isn't a big dog, Minnie, it is a big wolf', and she held me tight in her arms. Papa had a big pocket-knife and as the wolf lunged at him he struck it in the throat and the blood just came spurting out. The wolf turned and ran over the hill. They said if he had kept following, a pack of wolves would have been on us before we camped. It was almost dark then.

"Another time, after we had our sod house partly built but no windows or doors yet - only holes for them - a big, long-horned Texas steer tried to get in. Mama and I were alone and she tried to drive it away. I tried to hide under the bed but that wasn't easy because our bed then was made by driving forked sticks into the dirt floor. We placed other poles across and laid the tick on top. Well, when Papa came home something happened to the steer. I wasn't supposed to know but we had beef to eat for a long time. The squatters and the cattlemen were always having trouble because the cattlemen didn't want any settlers coming in to spoil their ranges, but since it was unsettled land we had as much right to it as they did. By the time I was twelve I could shoot a gun as good as any man and I used it to keep the steer from ruining our land and garden.

"There were many desperados, many cattle and horse thieves and nothing but mob law on this Kansas prairie. Once, some of the men from our settlement, including Papa, and Mama's younger brother still in his teens, went chasing them. The thieves got the best of them and held them for three days in a cave without food or water. One of the boys got out and came for help and said the men who were held captive were beside themselves trying to shoot with sticks. By the time they got home everybody was terribly frightened and excited. Papa was one of the worst and they had to take him to a mental hospital for about a month. He was all right after that, but I think Mama was always afraid that it might happen again and so it did about 15 years later when he was under a terrific emotional strain of having lost everything financially. That did not last but a short time either. It greatly affected all of our lives.

"One of my biggest fears as a child was of storms. Once I saw my cousin struck and killed by lightening. We had been playing together in the front yard only minutes before. Many times such as this I was frightened by things I could not understand and Papa seemed to always scold me for being so afraid. But one day he said, 'Minnie, go in the house and read the 46th Psalm'. I did. It had such a quieting effect on me I will always remember. Later when I was nine years old that Psalm was to comfort me again.

"We were living in our new sod house at the time. The roof was not very sturdy as it had been made with dirt instead of shingles and had only 2 x 4 rafters for support. It was a lovely house with nice white gupsum plastered walls on the inside and served us well until the spring rains came. One evening after it had been raining for several days my mother said, 'You know, I don't like the way this roof is. I thought I heard rafters cracking.' Then the roof began to leak.

"My brother Johnny and I were just having a picnic trying to keep the drops of rain from getting on us. But Mama urged us to get some blankets quick and get out before the whole thing came down on top of us! My father was away at the time and my Aunt Betty and her two small children were staying with us. So we each grabbed something and headed for the doors. I went for one and they all headed for the other. When I saw they were across the room, I got scared and went to join them. Their door was jammed. Suddenly there was a loud cracking and crumbling noise and then darkness.

"Fortunately we were all piled down together. We couldn't see each other but we called out to make sure everyone was all right. By some fortune we were, though my legs were badly bruised and I had a bad scar for a long time after.



"We were all very frightened and I asked Mother to pray for us. She did and that gave all of us new strength. By searching in the dark Mama was able to find a window and assisted us all to safety. Then we somehow managed to walk a mile in the cold and rain to Grandfather's for shelter. On returning to our house the next day, we discovered that every place in the house except the spot where we had fallen, was covered with a ton of dirt. Ever since that time I have been terrified of rain and instead of being able to enjoy its patter on the roof. I can't help but remember that horrifying experience and think again that maybe the roof will cave in."

Despite the many frightening experiences she had as a child, Grandmother grew up a strong and determined woman. She always knew what she wanted to do - and she did it! Grandmother knew from the time she was very little that she was going to be a preacher when she grew up.

"My grandfather was a Quaker preacher, my grandmother always wanted to be, my father was a lay Methodist preacher, so then why shouldn't I be one too? I didn't know there was any reason why a woman shouldn't. I always liked to speak in front of people and my father had once told me that I was a born preacher."

As she grew older her conviction became even stronger. During her teens she decided for sure. "At 18 my fiancé and I joined the Salvation Army together in Chicago and trained to be officers. He dropped out before even finishing but I went on and was commissioned a captain. That was in 1901 - the same year Carrie Nation came to Chicago. I'll never forget that! People were afraid of her. We were leaving on the same train and she came into our coach - what a stir! She came straight up to me and another officer and asked us to go in the smoker and sing for her as she was going to give a talk. My friend refused but I was always ready for adventure and sang for her. She was a sweet little old woman and made a nice motherly talk. She wrote in my book, but I lost it someway as it wasn't very important then."

Disillusioned from her broken engagement and ill from the hard work and cold climate she returned home to work as a preacher and teacher, sometimes before crowds of a thousand or more people. She continued in this work for the next four years, taking time out to attend a college for deaconesses in Chicago. In 1905 at the age of 24 she married Noah Hershey, an evangelist and song leader whom she had met in the course of her work.

About her marriage, she said, "From the start our marriage was not a typical one, especially for those times. We worked together as a team, he leading the singing and both of us preaching. We took a five year ministerial course by correspondence. At its completion Noah was ordained a Methodist minister. Though I had taken the same course, because I was a woman I wasn't ordained. However, I could still preach and perform marriages.

cont.

"We were ministers to rural mission churches, first in Oklahoma and then later in the Pacific Northwest. We were like circuit riders of the 20th century who, instead of traveling on horseback, went by car. Our churches were small and we usually had charge of two or three at the same time. We moved around a lot and seldom stayed in one place for more than a year or two. Though, technically, I couldn't have a church of my own, I was a number of times appointed as temporary pastor to a rural church that otherwise wouldn't have one. Once I served a little church in the mountains where I had to travel by narrow gauge train to get there. At other times I would drive our Model T Ford to get to my destination. Noah and I enjoyed reading and studying together and when I wasn't preaching I would help him prepare his sermons."

But as their family grew in size, Grandmother found that preaching and caring for her children brought about problems she hadn't before anticipated. The first years of her married life were particularly difficult for her.



"It was very hard especially at the beginning. Neither one of us had considered how a family might affect us, so we weren't prepared for the problems we had. Not only was it hard financially (feeding 5 small children on a meager income) but I wasn't prepared for how hard it would be to preach and take care of babies at the same time. I wanted to do both. At one point it became almost too much for me. When Paul and Ruth (the 2 oldest children) were small I became quite ill from the heavy load. I was so depressed I didn't feel I had anything to live for. I decided to go and stay with my parents for awhile. During that visit I heard about a "physical culture"

course and by rigorously applying myself to its schedule (which included a bath in a tub of cold water every morning). I managed to bring myself out of my depression. After that everything was better. I continued to do my preaching and Noah and the children, as they got older, helped out at home.

"We always were stretching our money as far as it would go. I canned fruit and vegetables wherever we lived and sewed all our own clothes. Always liking to work with young people, I served as leader to the Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls when Ruth was older. I remember someone once said they couldn't understand how I could preach, take care of a family and keep well all at the same time and Noah replied, 'It's preaching that keeps her well.' And that was true.

"Another difficulty I had, particularly at first was the problem of people adjusting to the fact that I was a woman and a preacher. Most of them didn't even know a minister's wife could talk, let alone preach a sermon. Our first assignment at the San Pedro Mission was very disappointing because the person in charge felt I was too strong for a woman. We left after one year and returned to Oklahoma."

Throughout her life Grandmother remained actively involved in the church even when she wasn't preaching. During the depression, with her family nearly grown, they came to California. Unable to get work as ministers, Grandmother managed apartments while Grandfather went to work for Goodwill Industries and later as a custodian at a large downtown church. Grandmother later reflected that this was one of the most growing times in their lives because they had a much better understanding of people as a result.

But their mobile ministry did not end with the depression. After their retirement they continued to do supply preaching in southern California. Moving later to the California desert to be in a warmer climate they worked as trailerite missionaries, serving as ministers and counselors to people living in trailer parks. Grandmother continued to do her preaching. Her last assignment, truly an exceptional one, was when she was 75 years old and it lasted for a full year. Two things made this particularly remarkable. First, she was returning to a church she and Grandfather had served 37 years previously (Prairie City, Oregon) and secondly, she was totally blind at this time from cataracts in both eyes. Later, a successful eye operation restored her sight. She continued to remain active with her ministerial duties until her death in 1962 at the age of 81.

So ends the story of my Grandmother, as she was and as I remember her; her strength and her independence are a part of me. I loved her and I knew she always loved me and in some ways that fact is one of the most important things in my life. ♀

Footnote: In 1962, the year of her death, the Methodist Church began to officially ordain women as ministers.

an old woman

The old woman rocking in her new red chair is filled with memories and emotions she longs to pass on to a remnant of her flesh and blood -- the daughter of her son.

I, standing first on one foot, then anxiously shifting to the other, care little for all her treasured memories. With a life of my own to live, I don't see what she has to give me. I'm anxious to get upstairs away from her stories and eyes that glisten with all the joys and pains of a long, full life.

I squirm to see in my Grandmother such child-like needs, exposed and unashamed, for company, love, interest and time -- the need for more life and the need for death. I try to think of the fullness of her life. It's all there in those eyes and that laugh that pours out of her so easily, yet feels like it's just on the threshold of tears. If she let go, she'd cry and collapse; her life would be all over. And I wonder just how full it was, and what is its lasting value? Would it be all over? For one who claims to believe in a spirit, I find it so hard to see beyond the surface.

I look in her eyes and see life. I look away and fear returning my glance, because maybe that was the moment when life left. The presence of death is here: because she's old? Because she's sick? Or because it's here every minute, with every person?

But I do look again and I see her riding in the buggy into the farmyard of her childhood. I see her in her first car. I see her glowing at her wedding, love and laughter pouring out of her, back then, when her body was young and she could dance with it. And it's all here now in those eyes and shaky laugh. In the eyes of the old woman as she begs for just a last few joys -- for one more shower of love and then she'll go. But then, she wants more still.

And I'm getting restless and fear getting pulled in by the eyes and I fear the unending need for love in her. Does it mean this empty well in me will never be filled -- never? If the search for meaning and wisdom remains unanswered in the eyes of an old woman, does that mean there is no wisdom, no meaning?

I remember times when seeing Grandmother's unending awe of the mysteries of life gave me reassurance. But now her childlike openness to learning leaves my muscles tense and ties my heart in a knot that causes me to respond with fear and irritation. Suddenly I let go and flow into a few treasured moments of communion, where the child in me is once again enthralled by



her world, the changes she's seen and accepted. I can feel the fulfillment that was hers. I am touched deep by the open plea, from the child so alive in this old woman, for someone caring enough to know her.

And it all flowed willingly from me. For those cherished moments, I cared and saw and knew her. ♡

ANNA



HELER

Anna Heler was born in Volkevish, Russia in 1872 to a tight knit, upper class Jewish family. They kept themselves secluded from the rest of the Jewish community and stressed the "worldly" aspects of learning rather than the more traditional religious ones. During her childhood, Anna's family lost its fortune and was forced to move into town, leasing their old house. The the Provisional Statute of 1882 was passed: Jews were forbidden to lease houses and collect rent. Thus Anna began to awaken to the injustices in the world through her own direct experience. She began reading the wealth of Russian and Yiddish literature which offered some answers to her many questions about the world.

When she was about sixteen, Anna met a friend who felt that socialism held an answer to the suffering of the oppressed peoples of the world. Anna says of this: "It was as though a new light was being shone before my eyes."

She decided that she wanted to go to Vilne, take her examinations, and go on to study at a university. That summer, her father died, so she had to convince her mother and other relatives to let her leave home and go to school. "How can a Heler daughter want to go live with strangers?" they asked. "Anyway, why should a girl want to go away to study; she should stay and look for a husband." Finally she opened her heart to her sister-in-law, told of all her ideals and dreams, and the sister-in-law agreed to help talk to her mother. They at last decided that she could go because maybe somewhere along the way she would find a husband.

At school she decided to become a dentist. She also met others who shared her idealism and were willing to work towards a better world. Amongst them was Pavel Rosenthal, whom she later married. He spoke of the importance of there being books written in the Yiddish language for Jewish working people. [Yiddish, the language spoken by the majority of European Jews has throughout history been negated as being only a jargon of German. It is a language in its own right.] At that time there was no Yiddish literature speaking directly to the problems of the Jewish working class. As a minority group, their needs and struggles were being ignored.

Here, for the first time Anna had people to share her struggles for her ideals. She became an avid leader of a group called the jargoncommittee which was dedicated to these ideals.

In the summer of 1897, the Jewish Socialist Labor Bund was formed and began to publish a Yiddish socialist newspaper "The Worker's Voice" (*Arbiter Shtime*). Anna and Pavel moved to Bialistok where their home became a center for the operation and gatherings of the Bund. Anna became a middle person between the Bund and the workers.

In 1902 Anna and Pavel were arrested for fomenting revolution. After being in three prisons for 16 months, Anna was sentenced to six years in Siberia. Here she was an organizer of and a participator in the Romanovke uprising, which played a part in the Russian Revolution. Unfortunately the uprising did not free them. Pavel was sentenced to death, though later freed. But the court was trying to be lenient to Anna and the other women who participated, because they were women. Anna, as a spokeswoman for her sisters said "We have handled everything equally, together with the men we have stood in our righteous struggle, and if we had to be defeated, we were prepared. We accept the full moral responsibility for all that took place." Anna and her comrades were all sentenced to 12 years, but were freed during the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1905.

Free again, Anna and Pavel returned to their home. Inspired by the revolutionary zeal which surrounded them, they resumed their work with the Bund. Their joy was short lived, however, as this burst of revolutionary zeal was followed by reactionary years which were characterized by apathy of the intelligentsia and the workers. Not until 1912 was there a reawakening of revolutionary outbursts by the masses. Anna participated with the Bund in some protest strikes and was arrested once again; finally she was released at the start of the first World War. During the war she worked for the Red Cross while continuing her Bund activities.

In 1921 Anna and Pavel returned to Vilne, once again publishing a Bund newspaper.

At the same time she worked on the central educational committee in the Yiddish school system. She felt it was important to add political thought to the more traditional curriculum taught in the Jewish school.

In 1924, Pavel died, and Anna continued their work. She began to write more articles as: her memories of the Romanovke uprising, "About the Activities of the Workers' Movement in Vilne"; and "The Women in the Bund", which she read at the International Women's Congress. In her speech she declared:

"Women have always played a conspicuous role in the Bundist movement...the passive woman-mass has moved itself...and is taking responsibility in the decision making process...One curious fact: the movement attracted many more women when it was illegal than when it came up from underground..... Why is this? Are women attracted to illegality? Certainly not. There are deeper reasons. The underground movement required belief, working a printing press, spreading literature, coming to worker's gatherings, lighting the masses with enthusiasm, this was the element the Bundist women worked in.

"On the other hand, the legal movement required speakers, writers, political theo-

rizers and organizers...Life had not prepared a large majority of women for this work." She says of the women who were political workers: "Such women lived in every town, who remembers them? These are the unknown soldiers whose name history has never even registered."

It is interesting to note that while Anna herself was a leader and an organizer, as well as an excellent public speaker and writer, she would never admit her own worth.

Beginning in 1925, Anna became active in the Yiddish school system in Poland, which was struggling for survival because of heavy repression. She took on almost total responsibility for all Bund activities in Vilne. She also worked on the Bund's women's organization and began to set up day care centers for Jewish working women. A few years later, after the Stalin-Hitler pact, Vilne was occupied by the Bolsheviks, who were there to "clean up" the town. In the process they arrested every known socialist leader, and every worker for human rights. One night the NKVD entered Anna's home and took her off to prison. It was learned after the war that she died there.

"My sisters, my mothers, they lift up their arms against oppression and they sing loud and strong, into the sunshine." ♀

SOPHIE: SISTER TO MY DREAMS

Your presence is with me now, my body tossing round the bed, sleep not coming this full moon in Cancer night. I sense a difference in the room - a feeling that the space seems occupied by more than just my body. My skin tingles, my eyes unfocus. There seem to be soft shuffling movements in the room, accompanied by the murmurings of a Yiddish-accented voice. I yearn to communicate. To be more open and receptive to the vibrations around. Are these all my imaginings? Flashes of you run through my mind. I remember pieces of conversation we had in that last year you lived, which was the year I began to really know you.

As a child growing up thousands of miles away from you, I knew only of Sophie as 'the woman who lived with Grandfather'. Even when I was grown up and geographically closer, I still did not know you. Sophie was a strong, cold, aloof woman to me. How did it first happen, that flow of warmth and agreement of struggle together? It seems it began when you took me to the opera, a symbolic sharing of an event that made you high. You reminisced about being an eighteen year-old woman emigrating from Russia, coming to join a sister in Philadelphia.

Many parallels do I see between your life and Emma Goldman's. You did not get along well with your sister, so you left to be on your own. Sometime later you lived with a man, your lover of five years. During that time, before you

reached twenty-five, you terminated three pregnancies, each by the fourth month. No children for you. Yes, I remember you telling me how lucky women today are by comparison, fighting openly for legalized abortion and improved contraception. When your lover chose to go to medical school you left him, the reason being that you "did not want to be with a man who was higher".

What happened in those years afterward, before you met my Grandfather? During another of our infrequent meetings you told me about your coming west to Los Angeles in the 1940's. Once more a woman alone, this time going to a more sparsely populated city.

From here I know only of what I saw of your life with my Grandfather. Why did you decide to finally marry at age sixty or seventy? Your life, friends and activities centered around progressive politics. Politically active to the end, you were still giving talks and lectures when your health allowed. Physically active to your last year, I realize how frightened you became when your body started failing you and you had to depend on others for help.

I have been told we women are spiritually linked with our grandmothers. Sophie, we are not blood kin, but I am sure by the psychic energy we share that we are related. Your presence tonight helps me see more clearly my struggle as a woman.

Goodnight, dear one. ♀

A NIGHT ON THE PRAIRIE

A Night on The Prairie - from the True Diary of Jennifer Florence Higgins, written by her at eighty-one years of age, then rewritten by her daughter, Irmabelle.

Fresh from the city, we little knew what life on the prairie could hold for us. It was over sixty years ago, but my memory serves me as vividly as though it were yesterday.

For a home site we'd chosen a fine spot on the high prairie. Pike's Peak, landmark of majestic distinction, stood a constant reminder of where we were; but at that time I'm not sure we knew exactly who we were. The season was late, so we worked hard digging a basement in the side of the rise, hoping to build our house before winter set in. We'd set up a small tent with a bed across one end, a table at the north side, a two-lidded laundry stove on the south, and a small rocking chair and boxes to sit on. The feed for the animals and the supplies, such as potatoes, beans and onions, lay in sacks in a corner, while the table served as general storage area for staples, ammunition, dishes, and our meager hoard of patent medicines. We set the cook stove down into the excavation where the dirt walls protected it from the wind, making it possible for me to cook and bake the bread. We were lucky; down the draw about a hundred yards there was a well. With a rope and bucket we drew sweet, clean water. On the north, about a mile away, stood a one-room shanty. Again, there was a deep bucket well and a rickety little shedlike barn; but there would be no one there until the summer. Our nearest neighbor lived at least two miles away.

Dad had hauled some logs to a sawmill in town to be cut into boards for our house. Each night he'd cut and carry wood and fill the tub with water for me. He wanted to be ready for an early start on the morning of his choosing. A fine, warm October day dawned with a cloudless sky. Dad decided this was the day he'd been waiting for to fetch the lumber.

"You'd best take your overcoat," I warned as he kissed me goodbye.

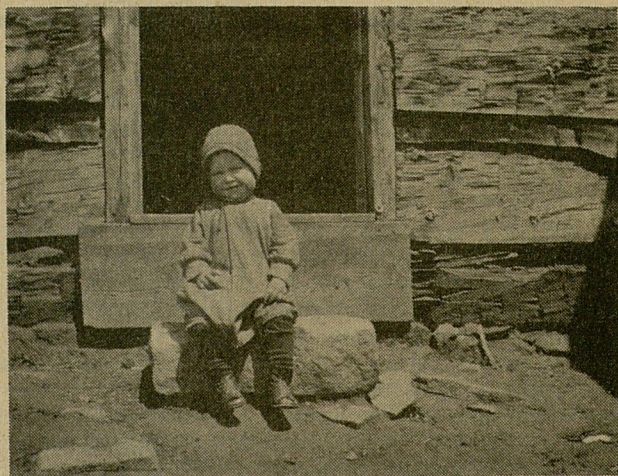
"No, I don't think I'll be needing it on a day like this; and I'll be home by sundown."

It never occurred to me to question his judgment. I watched as the wagon and team, turning with the winding dirt road across the prairie, became a part of the landscape. Luxuriating in the warmth and beauty of this rare day, the soft air warmed by the dazzling sun, I was tempted to stop to romp with the precious babies; but the days are short at that time of year. I knew I'd have to hurry with the washing so the clothes could dry. I put the boiler

on to heat the washwater and fed the children, three-year-old Ollie and his cuddly little sister of eighteen months. We'd left our oldest child in the city with her grandparents.

After I'd caught up with the small chores, I sat outside in the sun to keep an eye on the children as they tumbled and played, and I sewed several gunny sacks into a thick curtain. Then I sewed this curtain to one side and across the top of the tent opening. It would keep the draft out and we could push it aside to go in or out.

In midafternoon, knowing Dad should soon be home, I left the children playing on the dirt floor inside the tent while I fixed up the fire in the range so I could put supper on. I'd everything about ready -- the pan of water on to heat for dishwashing, the old iron

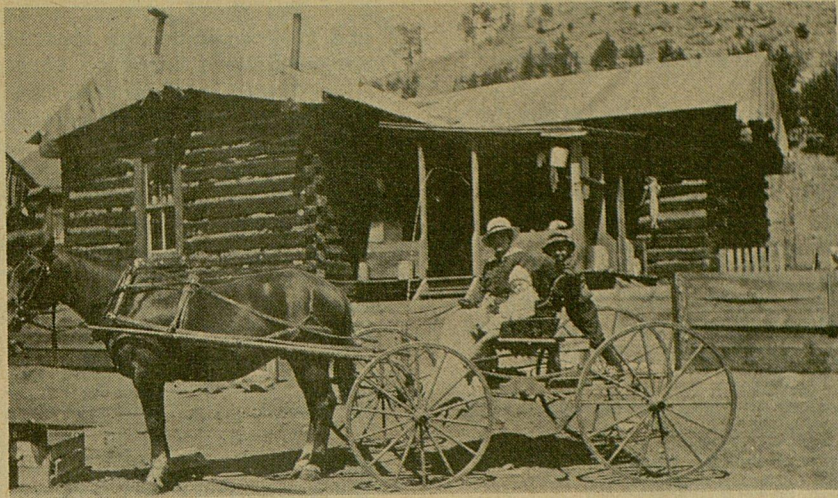


kettle filled with potatoes to boil, and I was making biscuits.

"There he comes now," I murmured. I'd a habit of talking half aloud to myself because so much of the time I was left alone except for the babies. "I'll have to hurry," I mused.

The quality of the noise I'd heard puzzled me. I looked around and Oh! good gracious! flames were rising above the tent. Ripping the blazing curtain from the tent, I tossed it where it could burn itself out. Little Ollie, grotesque with his scorched blond hair, jumped up and down crying over and over, "Oh, I'se sorry I did it, I'se sorry I did it."

But I'd no time to comfort or chastize him. To my horror tiny blazes licked at the edges of the canvas, some leaping into fingers of flame. I beat at them with my hands. I tried to tear them out. The canvas refused to rip. Disregarding my burned finger tips, I ran



for the potato pot, poured the water off into the dishwater and frantically sloshed the meager supply onto the blazing tent. It seemed useless. Suddenly I remembered the blue water I'd left in the wash tub. At last the fire was out. But so were we -- out on the prairie with nighttime closing in.

Gathering my baby into my arms, I sat down to catch my breath.

"How did the tent get on fire, Ollie?"

"I .. I poked a stick in the stove and when it got lighted, I took it out and touched it to the bottom of the gunny sacks. It started to burn and I stomped on it and putted it out. Then I did it again ... and .. and I tried to put it out but it wouldn't go out ... and then, I ran right through it and burned my hair. I'se sorry, Mommy. I'll never, never do it again."

"I'm sorry too, and thankful you aren't all burned up," I hugged him fiercely, for in his wide-eyed fright, too scared even to cry, he did look so very small and woebegone.

I was exhausted. Without realizing, I dozed off. The cow nosing at the grain sack brought me back with a start. I milked her while she ate her grain and extra feed. Then Ollie drove her away from the tent. A supper of warm milk with bread satisfied the children. I put them in the middle of the bed, tucking blankets and quilts tightly around them, for the wind seemed to be rising and suddenly it was very cold. I replenished the fuel in the cookstove and put the whole supper in the oven, hoping it would be cooked when Dad got home. But I was soon to learn that the fire was merely a prelude to an even more terrifying situation.

Suddenly the rising wind clawed viciously at the torn canvas where it was fastened to a collar around the stovepipe. It seemed demoniacally bent on wrecking our tent home in spite of the guy wires. As the canvas started splitting, I cut it loose, pulled the ends of it around the foot of the bed and fastened it under the mattress. Then I rolled the sacks of grain and spuds under the bed or

table, piling ammunition, gun and all heavy things on top of the table to hold it. The fiendish wind grabbing at a sizeable piece of the canvas seemed hell driven to finish its job of destruction.

"I'll have to hold it," I gasped to myself. How I yearned to hear the chuck, chuck of the wagon wheels announcing Dad's return. But the only sound was the eerie whine of the rising wind. I checked the children, snuggling them a little closer.

"Ollie, don't you dare get out of that bed and keep sister covered!" The tone of my voice warned that I meant business. Big eyed, he solemnly promised.

Pulling on my overshoes, a shawl wrapped close around my head and neck, Dad's overcoat over my own, chilled fingers into home-made mittens, I started the battle with the wind and the coming blizzard.

When at last I got good hand-holds on the lashing canvas, I drew it close around the end of the table and sat on a strong box to brace both the table and myself. It was well past six o'clock. The wind like a living thing tore and pulled at the canvas, abetted by an icy sleet that seemed all too eager to assist.

I can't hold on, I thought: I can't, I can't! and I started to cry. Then I looked over at the bed. I knew I would hold on. If I let go, the wind would scatter everything we had over the prairie, babies and all. How it whimpered, whined, sang, screamed, shrilled, Higher! higher! higher! until I was sure the tent would split.

Please God, don't let it go. I can't bear it. With a rising howl, the wind snatched my prayers away as though challenging my right to pray. I could see our tent climbing up, up, up! A pause as long as a thought; the wind came again, over and over, colder, colder and with increasing vigor. I lost all sense of time. I could feel my fingernails being torn out by the roots. I would have to let go! No! I'd never get another grip on the flapping canvas.

About midnight, my senses as numbed as

cont.

my body, I finally realized that what I'd thought I'd heard hour on end was actually a real live voice.

"What's going on? Where's the lantern? Why isn't there a fire?"

"The tent burned," I gasped. Oblivious to the strong language Dad always used that I hated so intensely, I watched numbly as he combed the icicles out of his eyelashes and mustache.

"If you've finished," I said wanly, "I'm awfully tired and so-o-o cold."

"Good heavens! so you are. Can you hang on a few minutes longer while I turn the horses loose. They're one coat of ice and I can't even give them a warm mash."

Suddenly it seemed nothing mattered. "I'll try," I whispered.

Frozen straps and buckles hampered him, but soon Dad was back with a couple of scantlings he'd worked out of the lumber pile. Too stunned at my plight to even swear, he painstakingly pried each of my fingers from the canvas. As he eased the canvas from my frozen fingers, he wrapped it around the boards and nailed them to the pole he'd spiked

to the ridgepole and wedged onto the tent peg.

The shock of realization of my torture and the consequences that might have been, worked like a tonic to both of us.

Clumsily I carried the lantern while he got boards and fixed a slanting roof and boarded up the end of the tent. By four in the morning, we built a fire. Dad brought in a kettle of snow to melt down for coffee. When he went to the oven for the food, he found frozen rocks. But we warmed milk and with bacon, hotcakes and coffee -- what a feast! How could anything ever in this world taste so good!

"You crawl in with the children," Dad said. "I'll tend fire. We'll all freeze unless it's kept going every minute."

We spelled each other, keeping the fire going until the end of the three-day blizzard. The temperature had dropped to seventeen degrees below zero the first night. Then it moderated and the big snow set in. About the fourth day the sun broke through.

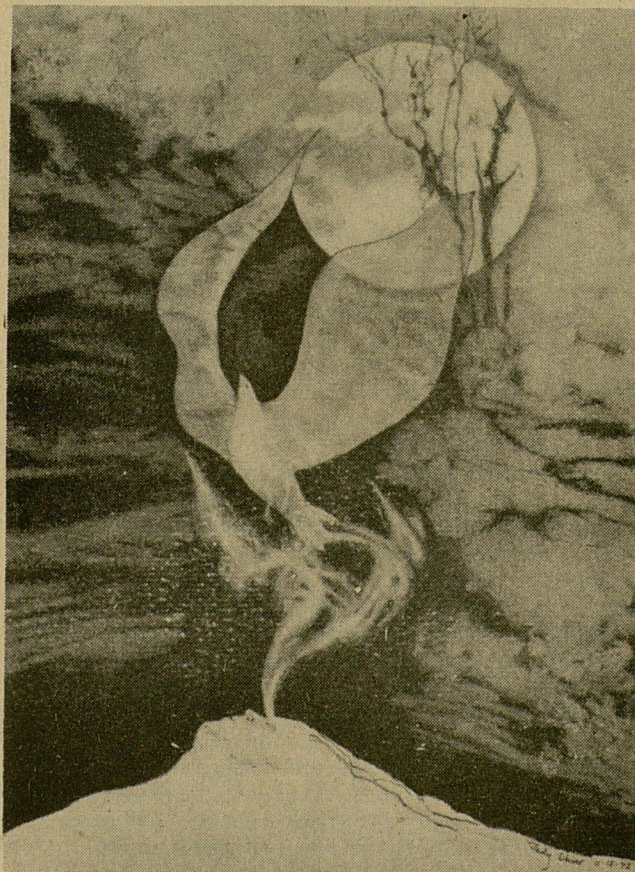
We moved into the one-room shanty down the draw and lived there until spring. It was that February that we welcomed our fourth child.

♀

wintertime

driving
poems instead of tractors

just one
sleeve
rolled
up.



A Seed Endures

That spring when we first met our land
it felt like many lonely storms had weathered
the blackened shake cabin that desertedly stood
between a stand of young half-century redwoods to the northwest
and a tall tan oak to the southeast,
whose dying top brittle branches
had long given up storm shield duty
and had become instead,
a windy night's danger threat to the thin roofed cabin.

Beer cans and whisky bottles
tossed mindlessly off the back porch,
were the rusty and broken souls
of past hunters and lumbermen.

Then we heard that yes, people had once lived here,
and we found three twisted apple trees up on a hill
standing witness to a homestead round the turn of the century.
The story was of a woman who was "crazy" about cactuses,
bringing them from Arizona, hoping they would "take"
in California soil.

And yes crazy women, let me tell you now
of the one that "took."
Sixty yards downhill from the apple trees
a cactus stands
with its fleshy silver-green leaf arms nearly eight feet long
ending in sharpest inch and a half grey-black thorns.
A century plant, fifteen paces around,
it not only "took," it thrived.

Well, the day we signed the papers to "buy" this mountain,
out of the center of that old century plant a bloom began.
That day a stalk, resembling a huge asparagus ten inches across
began growing

and it grew

and it grew

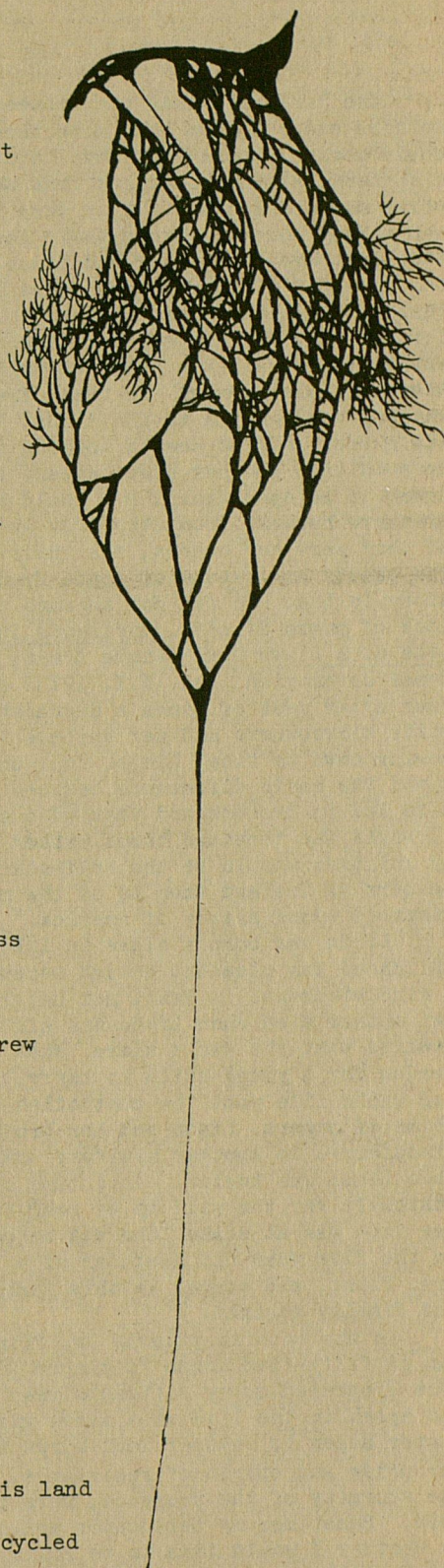
close to a foot a day it grew

until it had risen nearly twenty-five feet high.

And then it opened its yellow flowers.
and shown on us all that first summer.

Its death was slow.
First the flowers blew their seeds away
and then gradually the stalk and pulpy leaves
began browning,
began greying.
Someday i will roll its leaf fibers on naked thigh
and make strongest cord or rope.

The stalk still stands, into its fourth winter now,
waiting for the proper storm to blow it down.
Its sharp-edged, self-sufficient, enduring beauty,
the story of woman survival on rugged land.
Surrounding it are young ones, already strongly "taken" to this land
and in all weather we too are here.
The beer cans and whiskey bottles are nearly all buried or recycled
and we are again planting "Crazy" seeds.



DIARY OF A SLAVE GIRL

The hardships that our pioneer foremothers endured seem much more than I could possibly cope with now: natural disasters, sickness, attack from both white men and Indians. They were brave and strong women to bring their large families through so many bad times. But the strength of these women pales beside that of the black women in this country. For not only did slave women have to struggle with all the above hardships, they were also denied the human freedom which gives meaning to the fight. Nursing a sick baby to health knowing it may be sold into another state at any moment never to be seen again. How could she preserve herself from attack by white men if they were her owners, she their property? The beauty and lesson of Linda Brent's story is that she did not succumb to a loss of human dignity. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (Linda Brent; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. N.Y. 1973) describes year after year of Linda's degradation by white slaveowners and her success in not bowing down to them. Linda, too, understood the basic difference between a hard life led in freedom and that of a slave: "I would ten thousand times rather that my children should be the half-starved paupers of Ireland than to be the most pampered among slaves of America."

Linda was born a slave in 1818. Her childhood was pleasant enough because of a kind mistress. In fact, not until her own mother died when Linda was six did she realize that she was a slave. What a heavy burden for a young child to carry, knowing her whole life would be controlled by the whims of others. Linda and her brother were transferred to another mistress who died when Linda was twelve. This time she waited anxiously for the will to be read knowing her fate was at stake. She was bequeathed to the five year old daughter of a Dr. and Mrs. Flint, and stayed in this family until she finally escaped.

As she entered puberty Dr. Flint, a man of fifty-five began to plague Linda. "Now I entered on my fifteenth year - a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my ear." Her pride and spirit of resistance, given the enormity of the pressure, were incredible. "Sometimes my persecutor would ask me whether I would like to be sold. I told him I would be sold to any body (sic) than to lead such a life as I did. On such occasions he would assume the air of a very injured individual, and reproach me for my

ingratitude. 'Did I not take you into the house, and make you the companion of my own children?' he would say. 'Have I ever treated you like a negro? I have never allowed you to be punished, not even to please your mistress. And this is the recompense I get, you ungrateful girl.' I answered that he had reasons of his own for screening me from punishment, and that the course he pursued made my mistress hate me and persecute me. If I wept, he would say, 'Poor child! Don't cry! Don't cry! I will make peace for you with your mistress. Only let me arrange matters in my own way. Poor foolish girl! You don't know what is for your own good, I would cherish you. I would make a lady of you. Now go and think of all I have promised you.' I did think of it."

"Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth. Yet when victims make their escape from this wild beast of slavery, northerners consent to act the part of bloodhounds, and hunt the poor fugitive back into his den 'full of dead mens bones, and all uncleanness.' Nay, more, they are not only willing, but proud, to give their daughters in marriage to slaveholders. The poor girls have romantic notions of a sunny clime and of the flowering vines that all the year round shade a happy home. To what disappointments they are destined! The young wife soon learns that the husband in whose hands she has placed her happiness pays no regard to his marriage vows. Children of every shade of complexion play with her own fair babes, and too well she knows that they are born unto him of his own household. Jealousy and hatred enter the flowery home, and it is ravaged of it's loveliness."

As Dr. Flint began to lose patience with Linda's resistance she contrived a plan to put an end to his desire. She became pregnant by another white man, Mr. Sands. Although he was a good man and she cared for him she felt tremendous guilt for having compromised her morals. "I tried hard to preserve my self-respect; but I was struggling alone in the powerful grasp of the demon Slavery; and the monster proved too strong for me. I felt as if I was forsaken by God and man; as if all my efforts must be frustrated; and I became reckless in my despair." Her plan worked and Mrs. Flint forbade her to come back to her house. Linda lived with her free grandmother nearby and had another child. Dr. Flint refused to sell her either to Mr. Sands or to her Grandmother. Finally he transferred her to his son's plantation.

Separated from her children and forseeing more of the same from young Mr. Flint, Linda left the plantation. So simple as that. Walked away late one night when everyone was asleep. But she didn't walk into freedom. She walked into months and years of the most miserable hiding imaginable, first in a white friend's attic, then in a crawl space above a shed at her grandmother's, nine by seven by three feet

high, the only light and air coming from a hole one inch square. As I read her retelling of those years—about the sale of her children to Mr. Sands, about Dr. Flint's attempts to find her, all about the comings and goings in the house next to her—I began to lose track of time. Linda was always lying there... waiting.

"I hardly expect that the reader will credit me, when I affirm that I lived in that little dismal hole, almost deprived of light and air, and with no space to move my limbs, for nearly seven years. But it is a fact; and to me a sad one, even now; for my body still suffers from the effects of that long imprisonment, to say nothing of my soul. Members of my family, now living in New York and Boston, can testify to the truth of what I say."

Finally the time was right and she and a neighbor runaway slave woman took passage on a ship to the North. "(The captain) saw that I was suspicious, and he said he was sorry, now that he had brought us to the end of our voyage, to find I had so little confidence in him. Ah, if he had ever been a slave he would have known how difficult it was to trust a white man. He assured us that we might sleep through the night without fear; that he would take care we were not left unprotected. Be it said to the honor of this captain, Southerner as he was, that if Fanny and I had been white ladies, and our passage lawfully engaged, he could not have treated us more respectfully...The next morning I was on deck as soon as the day dawned. I called Fanny to see the sun rise, for the first time in our lives, on free soil; for such I then believed it to be...We had escaped from slavery, and we supposed ourselves to be safe from the hunters."

Her reservations about northern freedom were born from the years that follow. Northern families employed her and befriended her but a more subtle method than slavery still discriminated against her. "We went to Albany in the steamboat Knickerbocker. When the gong sounded for tea, Mrs. Bruce said, 'Linda, it is late, and you and baby had better come to the table with me.' I replied, 'I know it is time baby had her supper, but I had rather not go with you, if you please. I am afraid of being insulted.' 'O no, not if you are with me,' she said. I saw several white nurses go with their ladies, and I ventured to do the same. We were at the extreme end of the table. I was no sooner seated, than a gruff voice said, 'Get up! You know you are not allowed to sit here.' I looked up, and to my astonishment and indignation, saw that the speaker was a colored man. If his office required him to enforce the by-laws of the boat, he might, at least, have done it politely. I replied, 'I shall not get up, unless the captain comes and takes me up.' No cup of tea was offered me, but Mrs. Bruce handed me hers and called for another. I looked to see whether the other nurses were treated in a similar manner. They were all properly waited on.

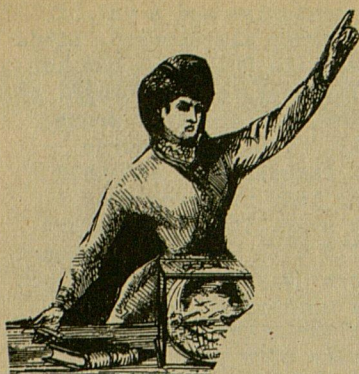
The fugitive slave law of 1850 also meant

that her freedom was tentative and a watchful eye must be kept for former slaveowners. Linda had some close brushes with Dr. Flint but her friends prevailed. "I immediately informed Mrs. Bruce of my danger, and she took prompt measures for my safety. My place as nurse could not be supplied immediately, and this generous, sympathizing lady proposed that I should carry her baby away. It was a comfort to me to have the child with me; for the heart is reluctant to be torn away from every object it loves. But how few mothers would have consented to have one of their own babies become a fugitive, for the sake of a poor, hunted nurse, on whom the legislators of the country had let loose the bloodhounds! When I spoke of the sacrifice she was making in depriving herself of her dear baby, she replied, 'It is better for you to have baby with you, Linda; for if they get on your track, they will be obliged to bring the child to me; and then, if there is a possibility of saving you, you shall be saved.' This lady had a very wealthy relative, a benevolent gentleman in many respects, but aristocratic and pro-slavery. He remonstrated with her for harboring a fugitive slave, told her she was violating the laws of her country, and asked her if she was aware of the penalty. She replied, 'I am very well aware of it. It is imprisonment and one thousand dollars fine. Shame on my country that it is so! I am ready to incur the penalty. I will go to the state's prison, rather than have any poor victim torn from my house, to be carried back to slavery.'"

After much negotiation Linda and her children were sold to her kind employer and were freed at last. "Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage. I and my children are now free! We are as free from the power of slaveholders as are the white people of the north; and though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in my condition. The dream of my life is not yet realized. I do not sit with my children in a home of my own. I still long for a hearthstone of my own, however humble."

Linda tells also some of the heart rending stories that happened to other slaves she knew: How on New Year's Day slaves were hired and on the second must go to their new masters. A mother of seven watched all her children sold to a slavetrader who wouldn't tell her where he was taking them. "Slaveholders have a method, peculiar to their institution, of getting rid of old slaves, whose lives have been worn out in their service. I knew an old woman, who for seventy years faithfully served her master. She had become almost helpless, from hard labor and disease. Her owners moved to Alabama, and the old black woman was left to be sold to any body (sic) who would give twenty dollars for her."

Linda Brent's story vividly portrays the day by day reality of slavery: not only the hard work, the physical abuse, the terrible hardships, but the essence of what it meant to be unfree. ♀



WHY FOREMOTHERS?

I am hungry. Hungry for knowledge, images, a sense of the parameters, sensibilities and solidarity of whole women. They are there in the past as well as the present. The irony is that we must have some notion of wholeness in ourselves, I think, before we can see it and understand it in others.

But I am not just hungry, I am ready. And I think we are ready for our foremothers, because we are the whole women of the future. We can now see, really see, our foremothers because we have adequately looked at ourselves -- at our own lives and the lives of women around us.

Among the major insightful analyses to emerge from the current women's movement is that the personal is political. Taken one step further, the personal is political is historical. People's lives are history. The lives of other women are also my history.

Learning from and about women's history, foremothers, is not very different from learning from and about women in any life situation other than one's own. The struggles and delights of a city woman are different from mine in the country in detail, not essence. And the same is true of our foremothers. How did they create space in their lives to do what was vital for their personal integrity/integratedness? How did they come to figure out what they wanted to do? What kinds of support systems did they have? What pitfalls did they confront? What were their compromises and how did they feel about them? How did they deal with their own failures and their own successes?

In the past, everyday women were ignored by historians as merely the backdrop for history. Exceptional women were hidden because they were and are a threat to the social order in this man's world. Women were considered the repositories of society's morality, and then excluded from making any decisions, or from being heard in any way that would affect society, the grand paradox. My grandmother could not even vote -- choose the decision-makers -- until she was 32.

To get at the realities of the past, we must look at the underside of history: minority history, women's history, black history, native American history. We must look at the quality of the lives of those not in power positions

to see how well or poorly power is being used.

The reason that history isn't as dirty a word as politics (except to radical historians) is because it has usually been presented to us as some exotic unreality -- dry, deadly and a million times removed from our lives. Another reason is because the history we have learned has been only a small part of the past, the upper class white male part. This reflects the fact that most historians have been upper class white men. Working class women and men who somehow stumbled into university history departments were rapidly resocialized into this "proper" historical perspective.¹ As a result, women's history has been hidden, like our mothers hid the dirty laundry and the clean laundry too!

But though our history is hidden, it is not lost -- just waiting for our energies to reveal it. In many ways, we may well be better off doing it ourselves, as with these articles in this issue of Country Women. Here we can bypass the necessity for unlearning a lot of the lies. We have begun to chronicle the omitted -- our sisters and ourselves. Further, just as the freedom of the press belongs to those who own the presses, the realities of our history belong to us who write them.

The situations, much less the degradations of the oppressed, have usually been left out of the accounts of 'mainline' history, or treated as of minor import. The more one learns of these situations, the more the historians' need of moral facades, omissions and justifications becomes apparent. The realities of minority history were/are both unrepresentable and unjustifiable as part of the story of "the world's greatest experiment with democracy." We as American women have never experienced democracy. What then have we experienced?

We may categorize our experience into three major related areas.² First, there are society's definitions of the proper nature and roles of women (the external expectations which were then internalized); second, there are the realities of women's lives and the actual roles they did fulfill (the everyday essences of being women); and third, there are the feminist responses to the intellectual, social, political/personal problems of women (generally revealed in the study of great or famous women).

As I have experienced deep conflicts in my own life, I see the lives of our foremothers as stories of conflicts and ambiguities. Women have negotiated between the ladylike expectations of society and the realities of hard, hard work for centuries. I want to learn more of such lives because I feel I will get a deeper sense of the continuity of the struggle to survive and maintain. For in successful maintenance of needed tools and spaces comes the freedom of our own creativity. [In the Country Women issue on Older Women, one woman talked about saving 85¢ because that meant 85¢ for a light switch. One such everyday victory.] Part of the power of womanness lies in such victories, because the motivation behind them is the long-term understanding and valuing of life itself. Everyday women's viewpoints are valuable because, "like all groups who have been on the bottom, we have learned to survive by being very observant."³

I also want to learn more about the lives of the "great women" -- the women who saw the oppression in our conflicts and were both courageous enough and articulate enough to speak out and act. I barely know their names after nineteen years of "education." And we are indebted to them in many ways. Betty Friedan writes, "Is it so hard to understand that emancipation, the right to full humanity, was important enough to a generation of women, still alive or only recently dead, that some fought with their fists and went to jail and even died for it?"⁴

I want to know more of such women because I want to develop my own courage as womancourage. I need models, heroines, path-breakers. I need my foremothers. These women dealt in their own styles with their success, which is for women usually only

another part of the struggle. Perhaps, in the long run, that will help us maintain our humanity -- and keep on struggling but with more ease, grace and understanding.

Oftentimes the issue topics of Country Women are a real touchstone for me, more often than not reflecting partially formulated notions and curiosities that have been popping into my consciousness, into the rhythms and directions of my life. Why foremothers now? Because we are ready. Our consciousnesses are rising and we're testing our powers. But we've only just begun and we're already moving into new frontiers trying to integrate the physical, the economic, the sexual, the spiritual, the personal and the political. Many, many women have stood looking at new frontiers. Knowing what they saw, what they said, what they did, and how they did it, is knowing some friends on the way to where we are going. ♀

Footnotes

¹Linda Gordon, "Towards A Radical Feminist History," p. 3, reprinted with permission of KNOW, Inc., P.O. Box 86031, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221.

²Jean E. Friedman and William G. Shade, Our American Sisters: Women in American Life and Thought, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1973), p. 7.

³Gordon, *op. cit.*

⁴Betty Friedan in The Feminine Mystique quoted in Martha Atkins, "The Hidden History of the Female: The Early Feminist Movement in the United States," p. 1, published by the New England Free Press, Boston, Mass., 02118.



AN ARKANSAS REMINISCENCE

My mother is an old woman, not in mind but in body, and she is dying; not rapidly and dramatically but slowly as each part of her body wears out into uselessness. At age 73, after eight children and 55 years of farm work and poverty, she now knows a deep physical and mental weariness, and one ailment follows closely upon another.

At age 35 and living on a farm again myself, I view her life in the light of my own, of all of us now returned to the land, and feel the need to examine decisions I make concerning my rural lifestyle in Arkansas.

As the youngest child, I have only a sketchy picture of the first forty years of my mother's life, but the little bits and pieces I've gathered over the years give me some sense of the whole. Married at eighteen, she left a fairly comfortable small town life to live with her husband and his parents on their farm in northern Georgia. There, she tells me, everything was new to her -- strange, often frightening and rough.

Perhaps what was most difficult for her at first was giving up the social life of town. With her husband's family, life consisted of work for six days; then, on Sunday, church and quiet reading in the afternoon. No visiting back and forth with neighbors, no lively conversations, no dancing.

Or perhaps more difficult was learning to cook in a whole new way. She who had been cooking for her mother's family all the years since an accident crippled her mother, now found her cooking all had to be changed. Here she had to learn how to churn and make butter, to pat biscuits out by hand, to grow vegetables and put them up for winter.

But no, I think it was the isolation she found most trying; the hours working alone in the house where she and my father lived, separate from the big family house of his parents. One of those pictures from the past she has given me is of her taking her first baby in her arms, running to the fields to be with my father because with a thunder storm threatening, she needed comfort against the fears she hated to confess. Other times, when a child was injured, she, alone, felt she couldn't cope but had to and did, terrified.

With more children and the passage of time, my mother learned to do it all, merging her ways with those of her mother-in-law, on a farm that was almost entirely self-sufficient for two families. But times were hard. There was plenty of food but little money. Fields were plowed with mules. Food was cooked on a woodstove. Clothes were washed in large black pots over fires in the yard, using a scrub board, and all clothes, bedding, and



quilts were made by hand. There was little money for extras.

A doctor, for instance, was considered an extra. It was difficult to get into town to his office and have the money to pay him, and equally difficult to get him out to the farm. Still, he came out eight times for the major event of childbirth, delivering each child in my mother's bed.

This question still lives in my mind, unanswered: what led to my mother's bad health in the late thirties? Was it due to having all those children? Hard work? Inadequate medical care? By the time the last two children, my brother and I, were born, she had a serious calcium deficiency and was gaunt with sunken eyes. I don't know what else. During that period we had a group picture made at a family reunion, and in each of the surviving copies of that picture, Mother has blackened out her eyes with a pen because, she says, "they look so terrible."

About that time, our family moved to a new farm, our parents on their own after twenty years of married life. It was part of my mother's dream, I think: a new life she was ready for, having had thorough training in country life under the tutelage of her in-laws. But our family had only just begun to build a life there, to clear land for pastures, for fields, when disaster struck. My father

was severely injured while scraping ice off the water wheel at my grandfather's corn mill, and he wasn't expected to live.

Leaving the eight children at home, my mother sat for weeks at his side in the hospital, waiting for him to die as predicted but praying that he would live. When he finally regained consciousness and the crisis had passed, she returned home to take her young children into the fields and raise a crop.

Mother raised a crop that year and the next and until my father was able to do farm work again. Not only did she keep the field work going, but she cooked and washed and sewed and kept us all alive and healthy and in school.


Each day was filled with work, before dawn to after dark. I can never remember my mother sitting down in the evening to read with the rest of us. Instead, she sewed, making dresses and shirts out of feed sacks or from material she sold butter and eggs to pay for. Pleasure, I suppose, was going to church on Sunday and having leisure for a long nap on Sunday afternoon.

That was her country lifestyle. Ours was a material poverty she could not overcome, no matter how hard she worked or dreamed. Her eyes always showed fear when one of us was injured, a special fear behind the calm as she poured kerosene over a bare foot that had just stepped on a rusty nail. It was a money fear, wondering how she could pay the doctor if infection set in or if threat of tetanus seemed imminent. Sometimes it came as a worried look when she made out a grocery list, trying to narrow it down to the essentials we could not raise on the farm: salt, pepper, sugar, baking powder, coffee.

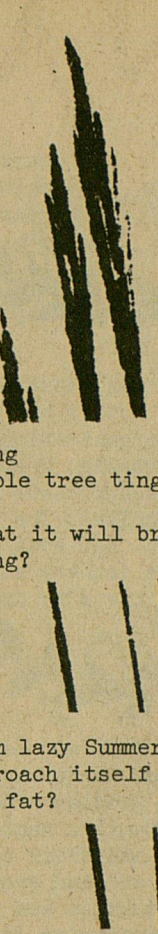
My mother doesn't have those worries any more. She and my father did what many of the elderly poor in the country do to make their lives easier. They sold half their small farm and used the money to build the new house my mother had always dreamed of, wished for, talked about, with longing. On my visits, the farm seems no longer my childhood home, with the old frame house torn down, a new red brick one in its place. A housing development is proposed for the other half of the land.

Mother entered the new house delighted but weary two years ago, and since that time has spent almost as much time in the hospital as in the house of her dreams.

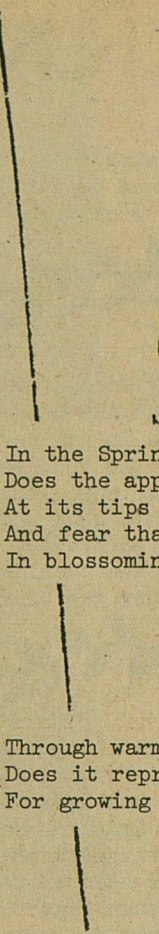
Hers was real poverty. Mine is volunteer, after years of college teaching. There is a difference. As I take on the ways of country life again, I examine much that I do in light of what my mother did, trying somehow to find a balance in between. I try to live simply and not exploit this world's resources. I try to live a full and creative and healthy life, but I do not try to live harshly, do not choose to use all of each day just for the means of survival, leaving no time or energy for creative moments or pleasure. It is the appreciation of my mother's life that strengthens my own. ♀



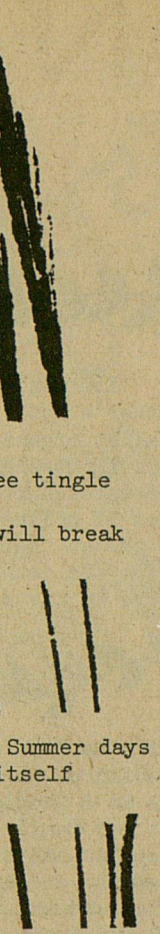
In the Spring
Does the apple tree tingle
At its tips
And fear that it will break
In blossoming?



Through warm lazy Summer days
Does it reproach itself
For growing fat?



Then does its apple spirit
Grow heavy
As its branches droop,
And mourn its bending?
Does it weep silently as yellow leaves
Fall, and shiver for its aging nakedness
And all the lost redness
On the ground?



Slumbering under virgin snow
Does it Winter-dream of
Long-gone sun caresses
Or nimbly wait in apathy,
All unknowing,
Of another Spring?

VOICES

In searching for our Jewish foremothers we discovered that they weren't to be found on the Kansas plains. Theirs was a different road, and the excerpts from these letters tell their story.

You ask about my foremothers: my father's mother helped the Bund (a socialist organization) in pre-revolutionary days in Russia. When the Bund members met, she watched outside so she could warn them of police. She hid guns under the floor to protect her sons and finally helped them leave the country so they wouldn't have to serve in the army under the Czar...

My mother was like the image of the American pioneer women. When I was a few months old, my father joined a group of Jewish families who were going to Utah to build a Jewish colony, which they called Clarion. When they arrived in Clarion they built houses to live in, worked the land, and built a school for the children. But the earth was nothing but clay, and the crops didn't grow, so Clarion did not succeed. My parents wanted us, their children, to get some Jewish Culture so we went back to New York...

Grandma Ruth was left a young widow with seven children in Warsaw, Poland. She turned to work as a peddler and ran a fruit stand to support her family. Aunt Emma remembers that their apples and their oranges were the largest and sweetest she had ever seen or tasted. Their financial situation was such that they ate the damaged and over-ripe fruit daily and had the choice fruit only on holidays. Ruth came to America with her son and his family, and the two daughters who were still alive. Four children had died...

In spite of all the work, Grandma was a very happy person. When she was in her kitchen, she would sing old world songs from her childhood. When we helped with chores, she was always very appreciative of anything we did. If I was cleaning, she would come in every half hour; "Mammala, sit down, have a soda, take it easy." Basically, she wanted very little from life. I once asked her why she didn't go to a movie or something. She answered: "You're part of me - when you go and enjoy, I enjoy too!"...

On the trip to America we traveled Steerage and were very seasick. America was unbelievable. Everyone lived in nice houses, wore beautiful clothes, and the store windows looked like magic. I guess I was comparing this to the frugal life of the town I came from.

Learning the English language was not easy. It took about six months before I could communicate with my classmates, and then it became easier to adjust to the other things...

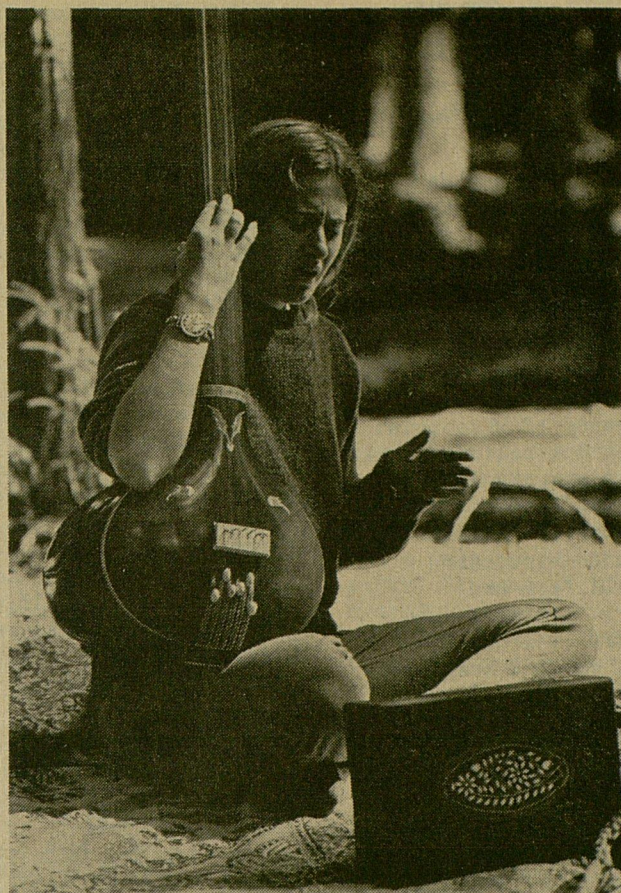
She was a product of her generation in feeling that women didn't need the same education as men. In fact, we, her daughters, were supposed to let a man always feel he was brighter than we were (though we knew he wasn't). Her greatest dream was to see us married. In retrospect I can't say she was wrong...

Needless to say, Grandma worked very hard, day and night. Years ago candy stores were open until two a.m.; she worked in the store fifteen hours a day or more. All her socializing was in the store. Friends came and sat in there conversing with neighbors and customers. Late into the night, people discussed everything; life, politics, etc...

Emma was a woman who could yell and would get angry or excited upon provocation -- but had a soft heart. She was always there when a neighbor had trouble -- with money or food or just a pair of hands to help. She was a woman who could lift a 50 lb. box of fish to put on the counter or a 100 lb. bag of onions. She could do cupping (shtel bancas) to ease the pain of lung congestion, and tend to the sick gently. She was a woman who felt useless when she could no longer work after her heart attack -- a woman who loved life... ♀

TRANSCRIBED
BY
J. J. J.

I
hear
music
and



there's
no
one
there

It is a great joy to be able to write music and share your visions of the universe with others. Women have been composing throughout history. The list of women composers is long, but unfortunately they survive only as one-liners in encyclopedias. Their music has been killed, manuscripts lost or preserved in museums in glass cases.

Elizabeth Jacquet de la Guerre is the unofficial grandma of women composers. Born in 1664, she was of the second generation of the French Baroque. She published "Pieces de Clavecin" in 1707. The music is subtle and delicate. Some of the pieces are forerunners; for instance, her "Sarabande in G Major", which sounds like Handel's later sarabandes.

Dame Ethel Mary Smith is the first known feminist composer. Born in 1848 in England, her works have been widely performed. Her "Mass in D Major" was heard in the Albert Hall in 1893. She also wrote many operas. Her interest in women's suffrage inspired several compositions, a number of which were performed at a concert of her works at Queen's Hall in 1911. Among these was a "March of the Women" which was heard in the streets of London as an accompaniment to the processions of the Women's Social and Political Union. Her feminist activities brought her the title "Dame of the British Empire" in 1922.

Germaine Talleferre was a French composer, the only female member of the popular "Les Six," a group of composers who had their influence from Eric Satie and the author, Jean Cocteau. She wrote compositions for orchestra, chamber music.

and a comic opera. In 1942 she emigrated to the United States.

Ruth Crawford-Seeger, step-mother of Pete Seeger, is a composer of considerable versatility. She has written chamber music, orchestral pieces, piano and choral works. She also edited the popular music book "American Folksongs and Ballads" by John and Alan Lomax.

But the unsung heroines, behind the scènes, must be remembered too. Bach, Beethoven and the Beatles had free creative time and energy because their basic needs were taken care of, probably by women. Much has been recorded about the wives and mothers of male composers. The mother of Franz Liszt, Anna, not only reared her own son but also her grandchildren while Franz was busy with his career. Mozart's wife, Constanze, would sit up all night while her husband composed and read him stories to entertain him on his breaks.

The story of Clara Schumann is widely known. Her husband, Robert, had permanently disabled his hand and Clara, an excellent pianist, was the foremost interpreter of his works. Her own compositions she had published under his name, as women had little hope of publishing their music: Fanny Mendelssohn, sister of Felix, published her music in the same way.

The foremothers of music may not get much recognition on a worldly level, but their spirits live in the music. So the next time you fill the air with your joyful song know that you carry the link of the ageless women who sang and composed their hearts out. ♀

FRONTIER WOMAN

"In the early years on our homestead I was busy trying to make my husband happy. After a while, it seemed that he was trying me out to see how far he could mold me to his liking ..."

That's Grace Wayne Fairchild speaking from hard experience. Her story, Frontier Woman: The Life of a Woman Homesteader on the Dakota Frontier, has been retold from her notes and letters by Walker D. Wyman of the University of Wisconsin. The editor of this remarkable book believes that the lives of common people can graphically portray the history of social movements. I think this is true, especially for the history of frontier women.

Grace Fairchild was born in Wisconsin in 1881. She grew up on a small farm and played on the Wisconsin River: "Living on the river made me love the outdoors .. I can't remember when I didn't tote a gun and keep the family in squirrel and rabbit .. When I was eleven I won a side-saddle in a Fourth of July race, but never used it much, even if riding astride and bareback shocked the neighbors.."

She reflects on her growth as a woman early in the book, saying "I suppose if I had known in 1898 what I know in 1950, I might never have left Wisconsin to take my first teaching job at Parker, South Dakota .. I wouldn't have got married when I was eighteen and I wouldn't have married a widower who was forty-five and had a son as old as I was .. I wouldn't have moved west of the Missouri with a husband who didn't have what it took to be a pioneer on the prairies."

This husband, Shiloh Fairchild, settled with Grace in Pierre, South Dakota. Life there on their claim was hard, and babies were plentiful:

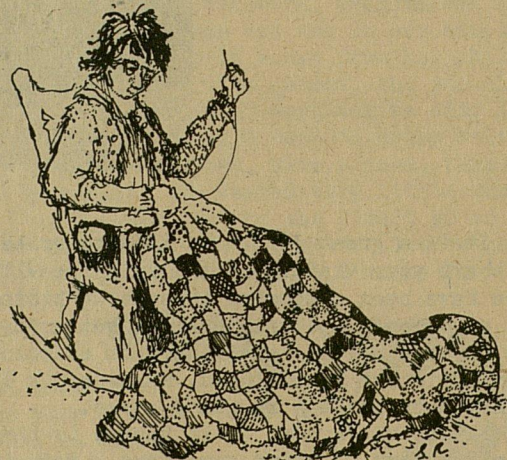
"When I got mad, I could always get some comfort out of thinking about the children. I had two babies when we went to our claim in 1902, and in the next few years I had seven more, all born at home."

"To have six children in less than eight years is something of a record. You would have thought I was in a race to see how fast we could get that new country settled. I decided it was time to call a halt, and in the next four years I didn't have a child. Once during those four years, though, I thought, "Oh my God, I'm pregnant again!" and took a heaping table-spoonful of quinine and went to bed. Pretty soon I began to feel queer. I staggered around the house and wondered if my last day had come. After walking around for a couple of hours, I decided that after this, I'd better quit bucking nature so I could be around to look after the family we already had."

During those years, when there was no doctor in the immediate area, Grace "gathered all the medical information that I could lay my hands on. I read doctors' books and articles

on how to care for children, and talked to anybody who could tell me what to do when a baby came. I didn't know anything about vitamins, but we did have plenty of vegetables in the summer and I stored plenty in the root cellar for the winter. Our own fresh eggs and meat, butter and buttermilk, and plenty of milk and clabber seemed to be all that was needed to keep kids in good health."

Learning midwifery the same way she learned human nutrition, Grace goes on to become a self-taught veterinarian. "When the brood sows had their first pigs, they were so far that they couldn't deliver them. Two died before I decided to play midwife myself. My hands were small enough to reach in and get hold of the baby pigs without hurting them. On the first try, I took a little rope in my hand and put it on the lower jaw of a little pig and pulled it out. This worked and so I kept on until I had delivered all the piglets. The two sows lived, too..The word got around that Grace Fairchild was a pretty good veterinarian. Often I was called on to help deliver calves and colts and pigs, as well as babies, and I never refused."



In addition, she did a lot of the farming and managed to keep going through hard times: "A lot of homesteaders left the country in 1911 when the drought dried up the pastures and killed most of the crops. Those of us who stayed used all the land that had been left behind. We cut hay on the low land and harvested anything else we could find. Then, in the 1930's, we had another depression. Not only were prices low, but our range dried up and grasshoppers ate up everything that was left."

Even during good times, life on the homestead was far from idyllic: "It was the children's job to take care of the livestock when they got old enough to do it. They had to wade around in the muck to feed them. Flies hung around both the shed and the house in swarms. Pet colts, pet pigs, and pet calves poked holes in the screen door and flies poured in. They were in the milk, on the butter and in the sugar ..."



In addition to her work running the farm and her activity helping deliver babies of all species, the busy Grace found time to work with a university professor from South Dakota State College. They worked developing and improving new strains of plants, bred specifically for the area of the country where she lived:

"We worked together on a new berry, a cross between a sand cherry and a choke cherry. I would find the nicest choke cherries, just as I had done as a little girl, and send him cuttings. He could send me many of his plants and I would try them out in our country ..."
New strains of wheat and grasses were improved by their partnership as well.

Grace Fairchild lived the last part of her life as a single woman, sometimes with her children, and for a while at Brookings,

South Dakota, taking college courses. She made out rather well.

"Over the years, the rift between Shiloh and me deepened, and in 1930 we separated. We had a sale that year and divided up the property. He went to live by himself .. I gave myself five years to straighten out the indebtedness on the land, but never made it in that time. The depression and the drought made me stretch it out to ten years. But by 1940, I had put together 1440 acres of land and had enough sheep and cattle to keep me out of the poor house, and then some."

This story of Grace Fairchild's life makes entertaining and sobering reading. Farm life today seems similar in many ways. May we farm women survive with as much zest and gumption and grace as this woman did! ♀

Downieville, 1851/

Inez García, San Jose, 1974

Regarding the racist heritage of California:

the hanging of a Mexican woman at Downieville, July 5, 1851.

"Two thousand sexually starved American miners, in an elaborately staged pageant of hate and envy, hanged a very beautiful and spirited Mexican woman, most likely pregnant, for killing an American miner. She had lived openly, and with every sign of sexual felicity, with a Mexican in the midst of a community where sexual tensions ran high. What revenge was possible when she killed an American miner! Even Hubert Howe Bancroft, grand perpetrator of the miner-with-a-heart-of-gold myth, confessed his bafflement at the hanging. 'Never have I met an instance,' Bancroft wrote, 'where so many men, or a tenth of them, were so thoroughly ravenous in their revenge.'"

Taken from Kevin Starr's Americans and the California Dream: 1850-1915, Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 163.

Ballad of an Indiana Dryad

sometimes I imagine I am a frontier woman
lost from my wagon train
wandering, starving,
sucking the sweet tips of wild chives
grubbing under the leaves
for beech nuts and acorns
for puff balls gone soft as flesh
stuffed with yellow powder

the snow melts on my tongue
I forget my drawing room
the china cupboard
my ten quilts pieced by hand

at the first thaw
foxes crawl out
leaving warm leaves
old fur
the smell of rotting wood

pulling my hair
I make a snare to catch meat
the wild geese returning
snarl in my net
I coat my skin with their fat
forget my fine complexion
my long white gloves
I am oiled leather now
I shine in the sun

my hair grows long on my head
and under my arms
I spend the night counting the stars
and remembering the husband and children
who, thinking I am dead
have put up a stone marker

by now
no doubt
I have been carved and dated

they bleed away like ghosts
manless
childless
for the first time
I am not afraid

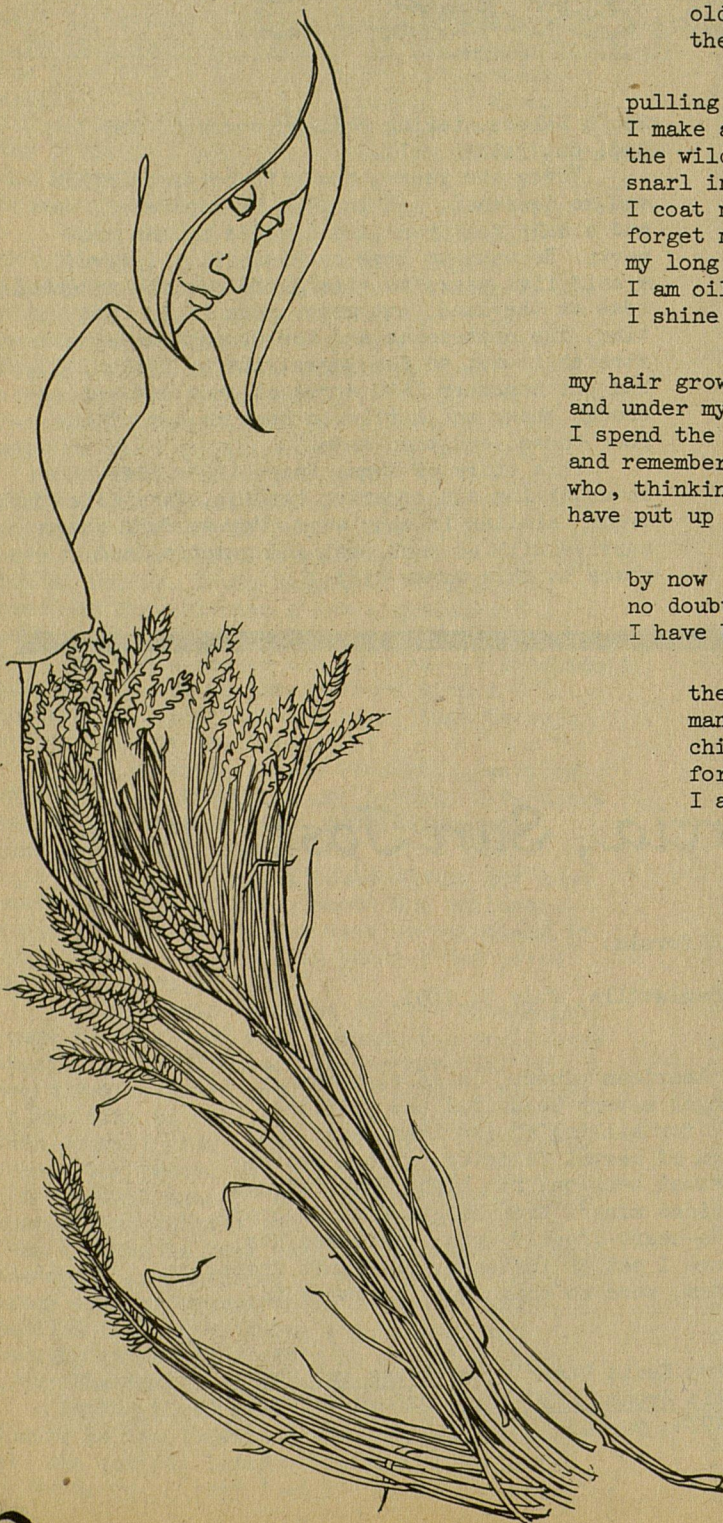
my feet grow hard as bloodstone
I learn to eat the grubs
that back the bark of oaks,
wild locusts, honey.

my petticoat falls off
I am naked and tattered
I chew a willow rod to a point
and speak my first trout
I twist my wedding ring into a hook
I survive

at night sometimes I think
I have become the woods
my arms are trees
my fingers twigs
my feet roots
my body disappears like a bad dream

the pools reflect a wild woman
her breath smells of comfrey

I forget the name he gave me
and invent my own.



Looking Forward

If, in spite of all indications to the contrary, it should come to pass that we as a species don't destroy ourselves, and there are future generations, then we are the foremothers of those generations. I think I like the idea: it gives me a sense of importance and continuity; it heightens my sense of responsibility.

But then I think: me a foremother? What am I doing that compares to the incredible struggle against hardships which our foremothers survived, in spite of which they even built and grew? Their physical world was hostile and insecure; their lives were on the line. By contrast, our physical lives are relatively secure -- we may contend with the elements, but it is no longer a life or death struggle.

Yet, I feel I struggle all the time. I am bombarded with greater psychological stress than any previous generation has experienced, and I fight to deal with it. I live in a society where most people are alienated from the production of their food, from the production of their tools and basic needs, and from their bodies. They are lacking in control over the society which feeds and clothes them, and are threatened by war and atomic annihilation. We live in increased comfort and ease, but wonder which of our acts are meaningful. In our foremothers' time, people were scarce and the work was great. Each person (even the women; especially the women!) were very essential in the battle to survive, and they knew it. Today we crowd each other and tend to value each other less. Also, today we face a growing awareness of our lack of freedom and of our oppression as women.

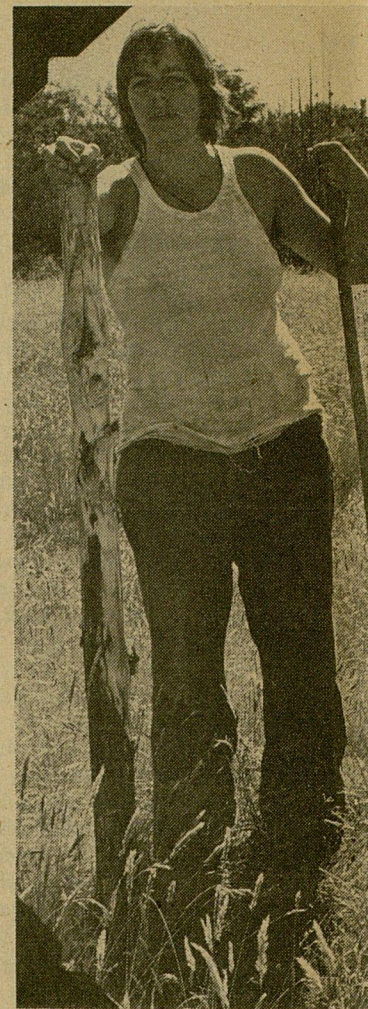
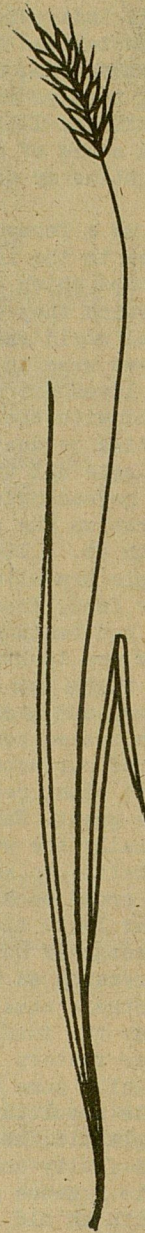
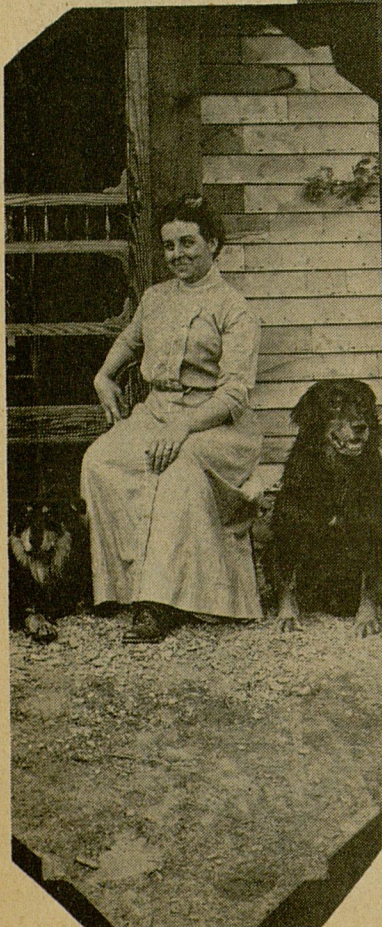
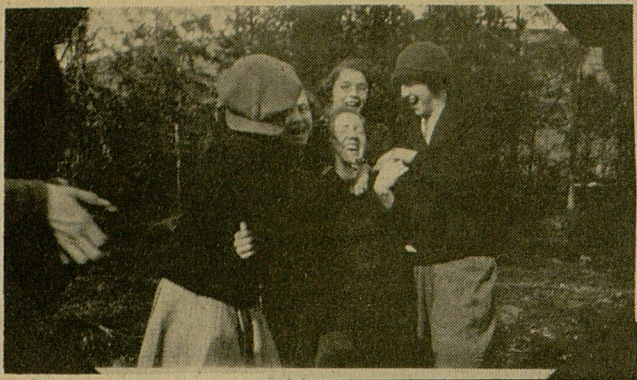
Our pioneer foremothers came to virgin territory and helped lay the foundation for today's world. But other factors influenced that foundation, and, while some of it was sound, some was not: the resulting superstructure -- the plastic, harried society around us -- is faulty and uncomfortable for me. I feel like someone who has moved onto new land, with an old structure on it which does not suit my personality or my needs. (Do I need it to shelter me? Can I tear it down?) Religion doesn't serve to pacify me; the roles of wife and mother do not suffice to give meaning to my life. I find our world, our values in flux and challenged. And we are the challengers. This is our battle, and our frontier.

I feel that I and the people around me -- particularly my sisters -- have begun a new kind of pioneering: we are beginning to search for more meaningful ways to relate to the people in our lives; we challenge the age-old roles of women in our society and explore new possibilities. We open new spiritual pathways for future generations; as country women we seek to maintain contact with the sources of our vital energy, with our nourishment and with the universal flow. Furthermore,

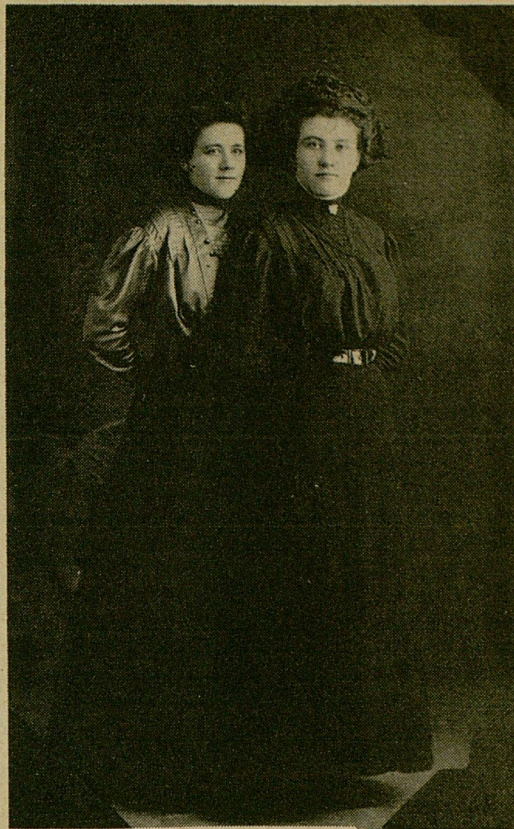
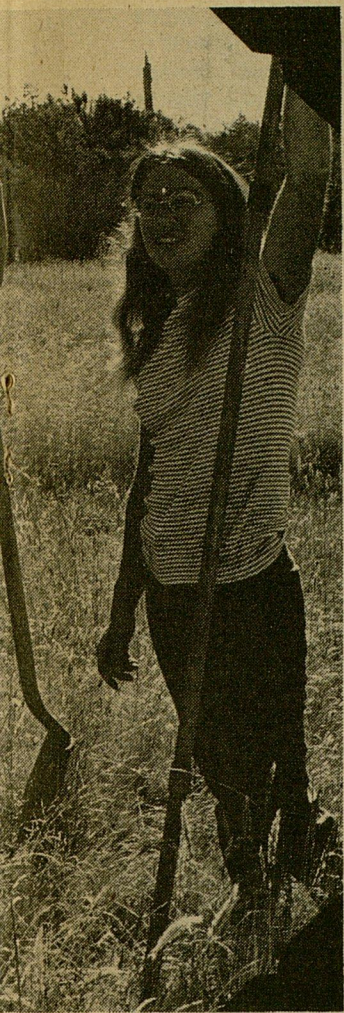
it seems to have fallen to us to deal with the incredible build-up of negativity accumulated by past generations and handed down to us by our parents. As a reaction, I try to validate and encourage my daughter, to see her as a person, to leave space and choices around her, that she may move and live as freely as possible, knowing her own desires and herself.

But this is just a beginning. When I focus on these processes of life then I know that nothing is proscribed; the answers are mostly as yet unwritten; there is a righteous path to follow, but I don't know it yet; and for my own sake and for that of future generations, it is for me to find that path, perhaps to clear and pave it. In this, I am a pioneer, and I, along with my sisters, face the world with courage and determination. ♀





I swear it to
 I swear on m
 The common
 as a common
 and wil



you
any common woman's head
a woman is as common
a loaf of bread ...

l rise.



to the library!

As a feminist sociologist, pushing the Women's Studies program at a small junior college branch campus, I find myself about to teach "Women in American History." This bibliography reflects my not being a historian, as well as my excitement about the course, which grows daily, almost paralleling this bibliography. I have annotated only those works I know or were highly recommended. It is weakest in terms of biographies and strongest in terms of social history. "La Crème" is precisely that, and can serve as an excitingly adequate background or as a beginning point for our knowledge of ourselves and each other.

Due to my extremely limited library resources, I have focused solely on books, excluding all the academic and movement journals which are unavailable to me here. I have noted those books which contain bibliographies which can serve as further resources. Wherever there was a choice, I have listed the paperback publisher and year of publication. Given my own limitations of knowledge and time, I have not even tried to include historic fiction by women, though it is an excellent means towards understanding women's history.

The following are relevant mail-order catalogues and small feminist publications' addresses:

KNOW, INC. P.O. Box 86031, Pittsburg, Pa., 15221. Excellent.
NEW ENGLAND FREE PRESS, 60 Union Sq., Somerville, Mass. 02143.
TIMES CHANGE PRESS, Penwell Road, Washington, New Jersey, 07882.
FIRST THINGS FIRST, 23 7th Street, S.E. Washington, D.C. 20003. Excellent.
THE FEMINIST PRESS, Box 334, Old Westbury, New York, 11568.
WOMEN'S HERITAGE SERIES, INC., 1167 HiPoint Street, Los Angeles, 90035.

LA CRÈME: THE TOP TEN OF SOCIAL HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY:

Ehrenreich, Barbara and English, Deidre. Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness. Witches, Midwives and Nurses: A History of Women Healers. 1973. The Feminist Press. Focus on the development and later, suppression, of women healers, and women as patients. These two are thus far the epitome of health/body history, and excellent on the medical profession. Lots of illustrations that really illustrate women's health care and the perceived threat of women as healers.

Flexner, Eleanor. Century of Struggle. 1970. Atheneum. This is a full-bodied, early feminist oriented history of American women. Recommended to me as among the very best. Large bibliography.

Friedman, Jean E. and William Shade. Our American Sisters. 1973. Allyn and Bacon, Inc. A marvelous collection of diverse articles, often from more obscure journals, by social historians covering colonial women, the Victorian image, abolitionists, suffrage, and twentieth century illusions of equality. Bibliography in article notes.

Kraditor, Aileen S. Ideas of the Women's Suffrage Movement: 1890-1920. 1971. Anchor. A major classic of early feminist suffragist ideology and ideological struggles, done by a highly reputed feminist historian. Excellent analysis and short biographies at end, and bibliography.

----- Up From the Pedestal: Selected Writings in the History of American Feminist. 1970.

Fine collection of original feminist materials from 1642 to 1966. Some classics and many more obscure but significant articles covering various spheres of women's lives. Good for a larger picture. Selected bibliography.

Lerner, Gerda. Women in American History. 1971. Addison-Wesley.

----- Black Women in White America: A Documentary History. 1972. Pantheon.

----- The Grimke Sisters from South Carolina: Rebels Against Slavery. 1971. Schocken. Lerner is a prolific feminist historian with a beautiful eye for detail and personal/political integration. Selections from the Grimke's writings integrated into the narrative.

Rossi, Alice S. The Feminist Papers. 1973. Bantam. A feminist sociologist did an exceptionally unifying piece of work here, lovely analytic biographic/sociological introductions. Precise information like, When in this woman's life was this piece of work done? Who was around while she was doing it? Includes a beautifully thorough selection of materials. Bibliography.

SOCIAL HISTORIES:

Altbach, Edith Hoshino. Women in America. 1974. Heath. Her offering towards a history of ordinary American women, includes domestic history, labor force participation, the early women's movement and contemporary feminism and day care issues. Huge time line on history of American women. Bibliography.

Beard, Mary. America Through Women's Eyes. 1933. MacMillan.

----- Women As A Force in History. 1946. MacMillan. Early feminist social historian's views on American history.

Bernard, Jessie. Women and the Public Interest: Policy and Protest. 1971. Aldine. Fine feminist sociologist on governmental policies regarding women.

Brown, Dee. The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old Wild West. 1974. Bantam. Not very consciousness-raised, but some interesting descriptive passages of women's life situations in the old west. Bibliography in notes.

Bullogh, Bonnie and Vern. The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes Toward Women. 1973.

Cade, Toni (ed.). The Black Woman. 1970. Signet. One of the very best.

Cooper, James L. and Sheila McIsaac Cooper. The Roots of American Feminist Thought. 1973. Allyn and Bacon. Socio-political historical and feminist introductions to seven major early feminist authors: Woolstonecraft, Grimke, Fuller, J.S. Mill, Gilman, Sanger and LaFollette. Great for those who want to get more deeply into a few rather than lightly into many.

Davis, Elizabeth Gould. The First Sex. 1972. Penguin. Extensive chapter notes as bibliography.

Davis, Rebecca Harding. Life in the Iron Mills. 1973. With an extensive introduction by Tillie Olsen. Biographical interpretation. Olsen is great and Davis' writings really give a fine flavor of a mill.

deBeauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. 1953. The early classic of the contemporary women's movement. Woman as the Other in history. I have trouble reading her, but others delight in her thorough, severe, quintessentially French style.

Dexter, Elizabeth A. Colonial Women of Affairs. 1924. Houghton-Mifflin.

Diner, Helen. Mothers and Amazons: The First Feminine History of Culture. 1930. Julian.

Dingwall, Eric John. The American Woman: An Historical Study. 1956. Rhinehard. I've never seen this one, but the author is also into psychic phenomena. Might be interesting.

Figes, Eva. Patriarchal Attitudes. 1971. Fawcett.

ForFreedom, Anne (ed.). Women Out of Herstory. (\$4 postage included from the author, P.O. Box 25514, Los Angeles, 90095).

Friedan, Betty. The Feminine Mystique. 1963. Norton. A contemporary classic that I continue to find relevant, especially for sharing with women newly interested in feminism. American women in the fifties.

Goulianos, Joan. By a Woman Writt. 1972. Bobbs.

Grant, Anne. Our North American Foremothers. 1975. Harper and Row.

Gruberg, Martin. Women in American Politics. 1970. Academic.

Herschberger, Ruth. Adam's Rib: A Defense of Modern Women. 1970. Harper.

Hopkins, Sarah Winnemucca. Life Among the Paiutes. 1883. Chalfant. Sarah Winnemucca was a Paiute, white and Indian educated, who was a translator, teacher, Paiute historian and lecturer. Most of all she was a patriot and champion of her people.

Huber, Joan (ed.) Changing Women in a Changing Society. 1973. University of Chicago. A special issue of the American Journal of Sociology on women. Often academically dry, but some articles unbeatable for hard data and excellent analyses. Some historical background in many areas of the sociology of women.

Janeway, Elizabeth. Man's World: Woman's Place: A Study in Social Mythology. 1971. Delta. Intellectual, interdisciplinary delving into the mythology of the title and about women in general; history and current situation of many attitudes and their causes. A fine inner logic and depth of consideration in a context that includes some notion of the wholeness of humanity. Notes as bibliography.

Kanowitz, Leo. Women and the Law: The Unfinished Revolution. 1969. The University of New Mexico.

Kelley, Edith Summers. Weeds. 1972. University of Southern Illinois.

Lifton, Robert Jay (ed.) The Woman in America. 1964. Beacon. A broad-ranging collection of articles presented at 1963 Daedalus academic conclave. From feminist historian Alice Rossi to Eric Erikson. Short notes as bibliography.

Martineau, Harriet. Society in America. 2 vols. 1837. Sanders and Otley. After seven years of studying sociology, I just found out about this first woman sociologist. Her book appeared about the same time as De Toqueville's commentaries on the new democracy, and still have considerable relevance in 1975. ("The prosperity of America is a circumstance unfavorable to its women. It will be long before they are put to the proof as to what they are capable of thinking and doing.") Comments on women as status objects of conspicuous consumption, the lure of femininity. It may have been among the first to draw the analogy between women and slaves.

Merriam, Eve (ed.) Growing Up Female in America: Ten Lives. 1973. Dell. My one peek I remember only as great. I've ordered it.

Millet, Kate. Sexual Politics. 1969. Avon. Classic with brief historical background to the sexual revolution of 1830-1930 and the counter-revolution from 1930 to 1960. Brilliant analyses. Extensive bibliography.

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----- Pentimento. 1973. Little. These are favorites of mine, preference for Pentimento. Major life-determining stories of herself and people she knew, lived with and loved. Made me look forward to that kind of grace and wisdom about my own life.

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The Ozark Organic Coldframe ☼

Lay out a c-shaped frame of old moldy hay bales facing to the South. Across the front stand a 2x6 board on edge & secure it with 2 pegs in the ground. Lay windows over the frame as is shown. You can plant in flats or directly in the ground. On cold nights cover with a tarp or old blanket.

FOR EARLY GREENS AND STARTING UP TENDER FLOWERS & VEGETABLES ETC.

By Summer when your seedlings are all transplanted to garden rows, the hay bales are rotted and can be used to mulch the plants they once protected. The windows are stored indoors.

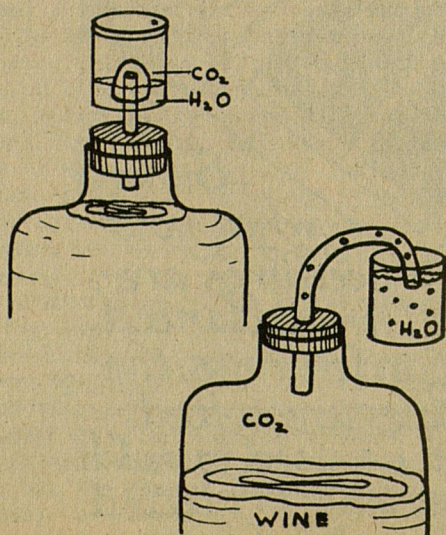
To make three gallons of finished wine you will need a five gallon plastic bucket, crock or other non-metal container, seven pounds of sugar or honey, a packet of wine yeast and a gallon of clean, ripe fruit, smashed. The yeast and other wine-making supplies can be bought from any wine-maker's supply house.

First take a sterile jar and lid, fill with luke-warm water (hot water will kill the yeast), 1/4 cup sugar and wine yeast, cover and set aside until needed. Put three gallons of water on to boil. Wash and smash a gallon of fruit and put it into a clean crock. When the water boils, pour it over the fruit and stir in the sugar. The heat will kill most of the wild bacteria, yeasts and molds in the fruit. If the fruit is already spoiling you can simmer it for a short time in the water. However, cooking it too long can destroy the fresh fruit flavor.

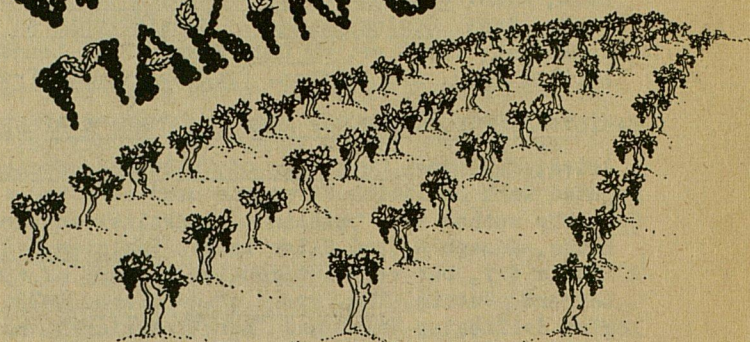
When I make wine I don't like to use synthetic chemicals. Although this is one way to sterilize the fruit to nourish the yeast, then later to kill the yeast and clarify the wine. I do add a 1/2 cup of lemon juice to bland fruits like peaches and pears because yeast grows better in an acid mixture and ascorbic acid is one of the chemicals that is sold as a yeast nutrient.

Now cover the crock and let it cool to 75° F. When the mixture is cooled add the yeast as prepared above. Cover the crock with a loose fitting lid that will keep dirt out but allow carbon dioxide to escape. Place the crock in a warm corner. Stir the mixture daily. It should start bubbling and fermenting on the second day. When fermentation has stopped and bubbles no longer rise to the top it is time to siphon off the wine from the fruit and yeasty sediment. This will take from five to ten days depending on the temperature.

To 'rack' off the wine you will need a siphon hose and a clean secondary fermentator with a fermentation lock. A fermentation lock is a device that allows carbon dioxide to escape but doesn't let any air touch the wine.



WINE MAKING



You can make one for any container you already have. Drill a hole in a cork or rubber stopper that tightly fits your container. Put one end of a plastic tube in the hole and the other end in a jar of water. Your other choice is to buy a plastic lock for under a dollar that screws onto a gallon bottle. I use these plastic ones. I also prefer clear plastic tubing for a siphon hose because I can see exactly what I'm doing.

Before siphoning the wine put the crock up on a table. Skim carefully from the top of the wine all the floating fruit without stirring up the yeast on the bottom. Put one end of the siphon hose into the wine about halfway to the bottom. You will be able to fill three and one-half gallon bottles. Be careful not to stir the yeast on the bottom of the crock more than necessary and don't suck the liquid from the very bottom of the crock. To avoid this, I tape a butter knife to the end of my siphon hose, overlapping two or three inches, so when the knife touches bottom the end of the hose is still three inches above it. It also helps to have a partner for this step. One person can watch the wine in the crock and the other can fill the bottles. When the bottles are full, attach the fermentation locks and let them set for three months.

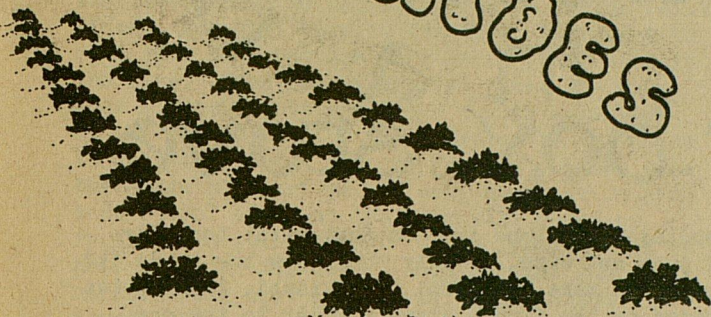
In three months you can repeat this process again, siphoning off the wine into clean gallon bottles, leaving a yeasty sediment on the bottom. I usually skip this step and bottle the wine at this point, then before drinking it I pour off the remaining sediment into a pitcher or decanter. But it will make a clearer and probably better-tasting wine if you rack it off twice before bottling.

To bottle the wine, siphon it into clean wine bottles, again being careful not to stir up yeasty sediment, and cork with clean new corks. Store the bottles on their side in a dark place for at least three more months. When I bottle wine I use recappable bottles and caps but I've read that wine needs to breathe and that corks are better for this purpose.

In closing, I would just like to say that to get a truly fine-flavored wine you must have all wine-making equipment scrupulously clean. This is especially important for the secondary fermentators and bottles.

Good luck and 'cheers' to your efforts! ♀

POTATOES



Potatoes are a delicious staple food which you can grow in many areas of this country. The Irish Treasure is a type which can easily produce enough to eliminate your need to ever buy potatoes. Most potato plants produce around seven or eight potatoes or less per plant. The Irish Treasure or survival potato, as I call it, produces from twenty to one hundred and twenty potatoes per plant. I've been told by other growers that it will produce up to four hundred potatoes per plant. They vary in size from four to one inches in diameter, but it's still a lot of potatoes. The plants grow up to four feet high and make a real bush which does not die back in mid-summer as do most potato plants, but continues growing until frost kills them.

Irish Treasures should be planted as early in Spring as possible after frost danger is past; the longer they have to grow, the more potatoes they will produce. This is provided they have sufficient nutrition and deeply spaded somewhat loose soil to push their roots out and down into. Several shovels of compost and some sand and leaf mold worked into each planting site will aid the plant in its heavy production work. The size of seed potato that seems to produce best is about four inches long and should be put into the ground whole. Plant them four to six inches deep. I am still uncertain as to the value of hilling up around these potatoes, or piling the dirt around and over them as they grow which is done with some types of potatoes. I think it does help as the potatoes do best in loose soil but you must be careful in doing it and use the soil from the paths between the rows rather than that right around the plant. This is because the unique way they grow is to send out runners under the soil which travel a ways and then head for the light sending up another leafy green chlorophyll gathering shoot. Then along the part of the runner which is underground will form more potatoes. If you hill up right around the plant you disturb these runners and even break them off. Because they expand outward this way they should be planted a good three feet apart in rows four feet apart. They should be watered every few days until they come up and then given a deep soaking about once a week. To tell if you've given plants a real soaking scratch down with your finger into the soil. It should be wet to a depth of six inches.

Any help you want to give these plants as

they grow in the form of manure or mulching will help them along. They are heavy feeders and will appreciate added nutrients although you should limit manure tea application to once a month to keep from burning the plants.

After frost when the plants die back is the time to harvest them. First grasp the bottom of the plant and pull up what you can. Then with your hands dig out all the easily available potatoes. Then with a manure fork which looks like a pitchfork with flattened prongs carefully dig around the perimeters of the plant starting out a foot or so. Dig out and down deep, and if your experience is anything like mine you will be amazed at the number and size of the potatoes on each plant. They will be all sizes, a number of large ones twice the size of your fist down to inch diameter little ones. Try and get them all out as potatoes should not be grown in the same spot twice and you will have to go around pulling them up next spring.

Our results this harvest were approximately sixteen hundred pounds of potatoes from around two hundred plants with a wide variation between each plant. Some plants produced up to twenty pounds and others produced very little but it averaged out to about eight pounds per plant. The first year we planted them we had only seven seed potatoes and therefore dug deep holes for them with much enrichment added to each hole and from fifteen plants we harvested close to three hundred pounds of potatoes. Which meant that each plant last year produced as well as our largest plants this year.

So your harvest depends on how much care you want to give them. Once the potatoes are out of the ground they need to be allowed to dry off for a day or so in a warm room or on newspaper outside if it's sunny and then boxed or bagged up and put to storage in a cool dry place. Don't let them sit long drying in the light or they will start to turn green indicating production of a poison which you have to peel off when preparing them for cooking. If you box and bag the potatoes shallowly you will be able to cull them easily during the year, taking out rotten ones and setting aside early sprouters for planting in the spring. For best production the sprouts shouldn't be more than a few inches long when the potatoes are planted, as very long sprouts sap the energy of the seed potato.

Last year when we first harvested the Treasures they were good boiled and mashed with butter or in a potato salad but tasted strange fried or baked. After about a month of storage their flavor changed and they were fine cooked in these ways. This year we have noticed no such strangeness in their taste at the beginning and are cooking them all ways. Perhaps the weather was the causal factor in this as it was much colder last fall while they were still in the ground slowly being harvested during November and December. I learn new things each year about these plants and am interested in other people's results.†

Blacksmithing in a box stove

The old man from whom I bought my blacksmith's vice told me that more and more people are buying old blacksmith's tools and not just painting them black and hanging them on the wall, but using them. But as he talked, I wondered how many of these people are women.

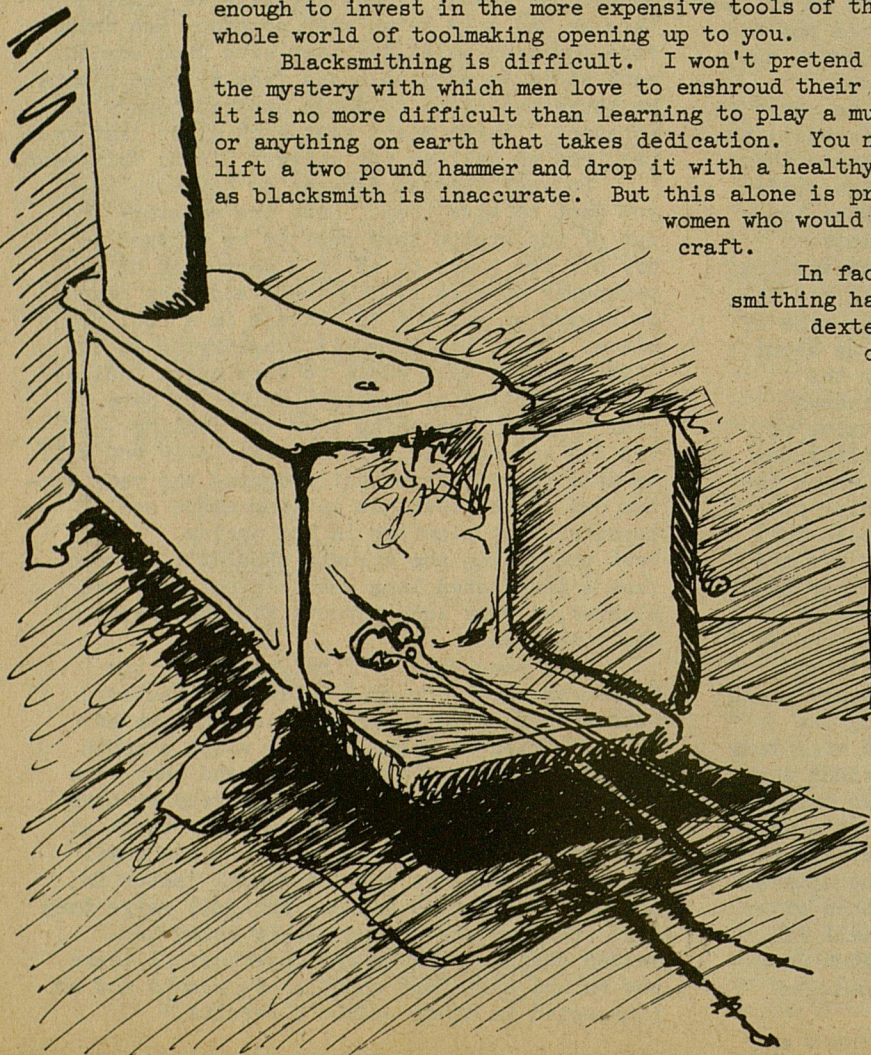
How many women living in the country have had a cheap tool fall apart in their hands, or found themselves spending ridiculous sums on that vital tool for some once-a-year job, a tool which could be made out of junk and wire, if only they knew how to do it? If you are one of those people, did you know that the means to make beautiful, functional, inexpensive tools may be sitting right in front of you? If you possess or can find a stove similar to the one shown below, than you have a small-scale, efficient blacksmithing forge which burns wood! The beauty of that one fact alone is readily apparent to anyone who has ever tried to burn wood in one of those old portable cast-iron forges, or who has tried to find, not to mention afford, a supply of high grade blacksmithing coal. Many blacksmiths used to use charcoal. When you are using a wood forging fire, you are simply making your charcoal on the spot.

During the past several years, I have accumulated an anvil, a portable forge, a blacksmith's vice, a hand-cranked grindstone, and a dozen assorted hammers, tongs and hearth tools. However, I have tried to write this article with the assumption that you have only a box stove, a good source of hardwood, various odds and ends of scrap iron, and only the tools that the average person would have on hand, or could buy without going hungry. From this foundation I have tried to build a set of blacksmithing tools that any person could duplicate who has plenty of time, determination, and a passion for fire and metal. The time element makes it a good indoor winter sport. If you find that you are interested enough to invest in the more expensive tools of the trade, you will then find the whole world of toolmaking opening up to you.

Blacksmithing is difficult. I won't pretend that it isn't. But if you remove the mystery with which men love to enshroud their valuable information, you will find it is no more difficult than learning to play a musical instrument or using an axe, or anything on earth that takes dedication. You need no more muscles than it takes to lift a two pound hammer and drop it with a healthy clank. The image of Charles Atlas as blacksmith is inaccurate. But this alone is probably enough to discourage many women who would otherwise be fascinated with the craft.

In fact, the difficult things about blacksmithing have more to do with intelligence and dexterity than strength. It is a game of skill whose object is to accomplish with a hammer what the fingers do with clay: to make each blow count, to hit with accuracy, because only too quickly the light goes out inside and the metal returns to its old, grey, stubborn self. It is difficult to learn how to hold the lifeless metal after it becomes alive. You must learn to touch it by remote control until the tongs and hammer become merely an extension of flesh and blood.

Perhaps the greatest difficulty is the fact that there are so few textbooks on the subject. Even the few I have leave so much to be desired that sometimes I am better off just doing it rather than reading about it. There is a lot to be said for that approach, but I could have saved hours and hours and a bucket of sweat and a load of wood had Mr. Alex Bealer in his scholarly book (see bibliography) imparted a few of the tricks that I am including in this article.



Basics

Your Stove

First, check your stove: does it have the foot rest shown in the illustration on the left? If not, you will have to fabricate something to rest your tong handles on when they are laid in the fire. Then see if you can close the front door of your stove and leave enough clearance at the bottom for the tong handles to fit under it and stick out. If not, perhaps you can take the hinge pins out of the door and make longer ones out of nails so the door will raise up further and still swing. It is important to be able to close the door. This creates such a narrow draft that it funnels concentrated oxygen right around the metal and the result is a small furnace-like pocket of heat.

Heating Metal

To know how your metal should look before you pull it out of the fire to work it, take one of those paper twisty things they close up bread sacks with, and burn the paper off to get the wire inside, then stick this wire (or any wire like it) into a candle flame. There, in just a few seconds, will be, in miniature, the color you are looking for: a bright yellow orange. You will probably be astounded the first time you pull a piece of metal this color out of your ordinary old parlor stove. But the smaller pieces of stock can be brought up to this heat, and in this state you can work it very easily. When it cools down to a dull cherry red color it is best to stick it back into the fire and bring it back up to a workable heat again. It is best to do your early experimentation in a somewhat dark room, because it is then easier to recognize the different shades of heat color.

Building Up Your Fire

A forging fire is no different from a good heating fire, provided you are using hardwoods. My very favorite is hickory, green or dry. If I can't get that I prefer the oaks, but well seasoned. If I can't get anything but poplar or pine, I would rather spend the day spittin' and whittlin'. It's just not worth the trouble to try to forge with softwoods, they make a bonfire and then just as quickly they are gone, leaving little or no coals behind. Coals are your prime consideration.

Let's say your fire is going and it's been going well for several hours. There is a bed of coals a couple inches thick under your wood. Open the door and study the fire. Is there a place where the coals seem to form a little pocket of special hotness, of a yellow-white color, with little blue flames coming out? If I had my metal ready it would go right in one of those spots. Often it occurs when two logs are just a couple of inches together and the oxygen is funneled between them. You will find it under logs sometimes, when there is a space between the bottom of the log and the bed of coals.

These are the kind of observations that you will have to be making constantly. These heat spots will move around as the logs burn down and shift, and you should learn to "build" these spots as well as observe them. Another important thing to remember is that unless your fire is actually burning, not just sitting there and smoking, the coals will do you little good; unless there are lots of yellow flames going up the chimney there is little suction to pull air in and through the coals.

Making an Anvil

Nowadays an anvil in decent shape costs fifty to seventy-five dollars, and even anvils in indecent shape are hard to come by. When I first got my anvil it looked like it had been used as a firecracker on the fourth of July once too often. I would love to bring my 200 pound anvil into the two-room shack where we live and where I do my forging --it would make a great extra seat-- but I've been overruled. So instead I've taken a section of log, gouged out a hole in one end the size of an iron brick I happened to have, and forced the brick in the hole. That serves as my anvil. To keep it from hopping about I drove several nails around the edges and wedged it in well enough to take care of anything but fits of fury when the neighbors' hogs get in the garden, and so forth. Most people don't have iron bricks lying about, so find anything metal with a little weight plus a flat face several inches square. Use your wits about how to get it stuck down. If it isn't fastened well, it will jump about under your blows and you will find your stock somewhere else than where you intended it to be when you aimed for it and this makes it hard to hit. Some of the force of your blow can be wasted in all this fussing about, which becomes important when you realize that the whole point is getting as much done as you can before the metal cools.

Anvil Tools

In Figure 1 is an illustration of my "anvil" with three anvil tools stuck in it. The one that looks like a railroad spike is a railroad spike. You can make spoons on this. The thin rod next to the block is a 3/8 inch bolt screwed into a hole right next to the anvil block. I use this to form the eyes of my gate hooks. The object in front is a cold chisel stuck in a hole just a touch larger than it is and wedged in with a sliver of wood for stability. There is a square hole in every anvil for the equivalent of this tool and it is called a hardie. There are hardies for cutting hot and cold metal: I use my chisel for both because it is tempered for cutting through granite, which is very hard indeed.

The idea is to think of what will work to shape, punch or cut your metal, drill a hole for it and fit it in as I did with the chisel, using a wedge for a better fit. If your hole is too small and you have to force it in, it may be hard to remove, so be careful about that. I have to put mine in and out sometimes every day.

To get a punch suitable for making holes up to 1/8 inch, take the metal part out of one of those cheapie awls that have a plastic handle around them. Put this in a vice and hammer the plastic until it falls off, or just leave it on and make a hole big enough for the handle. I have never run across my method of punching in any of the books I have read. The conventional method is to place your metal over a hole in the anvil and punch through it. However, it is hard to find the hole when you can't see it and even harder to do all this with just two hands, and I find my method the easiest for punching the lighter stock. I simply mount my punch (well-sharpened), take the wooden mallet shown in figure 1, lay the heated metal on the punch point and strike sharply with the mallet. If the punch comes all the way through the metal, so much the better. It just sinks into the wood and you don't have to worry about dulling your punch point.

Hammers, Vice Grips and Pliers

Primarily, I use two hammers--a two-pounder as shown in figure 1, and a ball peen weighing about a pound. These two hammers give me a combination of weight for the first rough forming, and lightness for quick, accurate blows. However, if you can't get two such hammers, an ordinary claw hammer will do; it just takes more effort than a heavy hammer and isn't as well balanced.

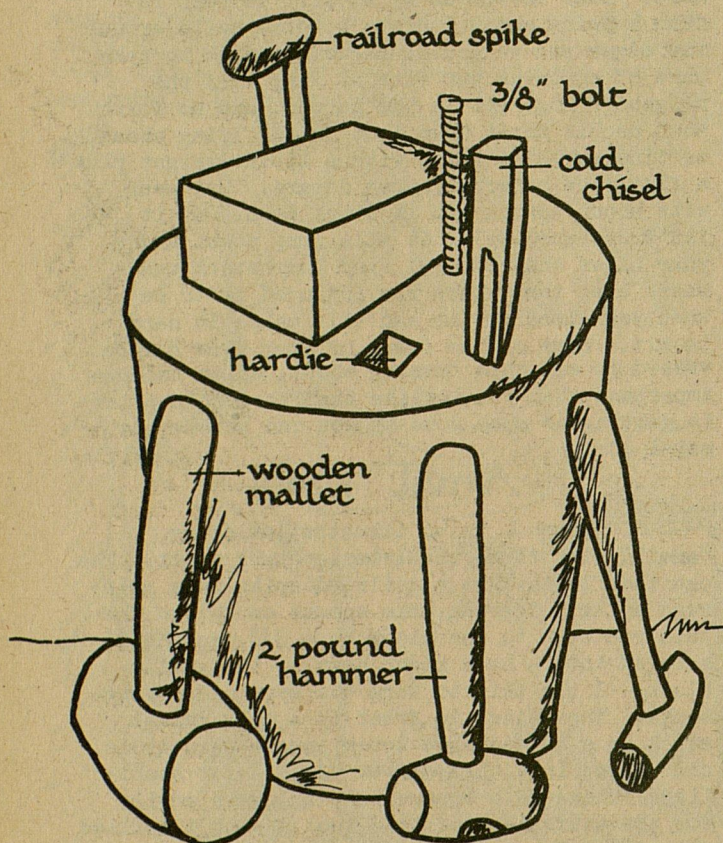
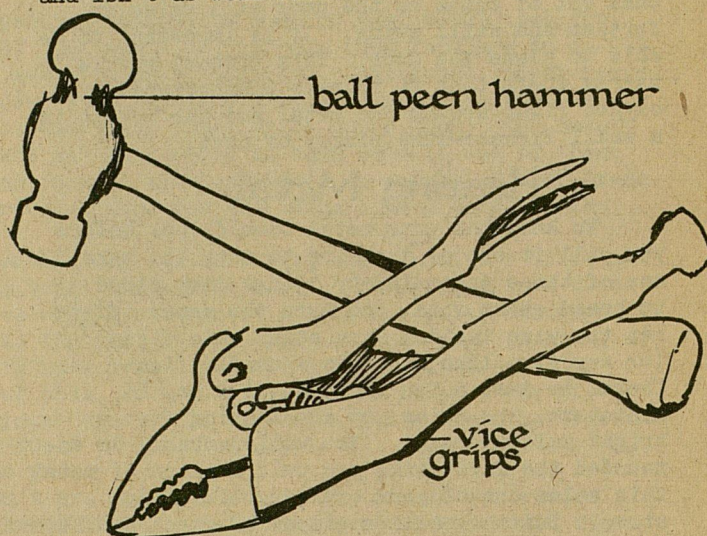


Figure 1.

You will need something over which to bend your stock to form right angles, if your anvil block does not have a corner on it suitable for this. For bending circles several inches across, a clean soup can mounted on your block will work as a form.

Most people who have worked with tools have come across vice grips. I am not referring to the larger size which is about ten inches long, but its little sister, which is much better for the kind of work you will be doing on this kind of forge. It is about 4 1/2 inches long, has all the features of the big one, and costs about \$3.00. Its use will be described further on. Another pair of pliers I use is the needle-nose plier, for doing delicate bends, etc...

A note on safety--I wear a pair of leather pants to protect my legs from the hot metal. I would strongly recommend some kind of leather protection, even if it is only a tanned skin flung around the legs. Leather doesn't burn like cloth. And don't leave your tongs in the fire too long--they will oxidize away.

Making a Decorated Poker

If you have a metal rack from a stove or refrigerator (which can often be found at a dump), see if the piece that runs around the outside edge is about 1/4 inch thick. If it is this diameter or even a little thicker, you can use it. Cut out the smaller wires that form the rack. This can be done with a cold chisel and hammer. Then with a hacksaw cut a three foot section from the 1/4 inch piece. It will be bent at right angles at some point (unless

you have a three foot long rack) so straighten it enough to stick in the stove, bring it to a good heat and finish straightening it while hot. Cool the hot section off in the bucket of water which you should have sitting somewhere near.

After you have established that the metal can be brought up to the color you saw in the candle flame, or close to it, you are ready to begin shaping the poker. There are no tools required other than the ones I have already listed. The techniques used in this project are: flattening, bending, squaring up, drawing out and twisting. The other end of this piece

of stock can be handled with the bare hand, but should it warm up a little too much, a glove and/or hot pad can be used in place of tongs. Each of the operations described from here on will take heat unless otherwise stated, so I will just assume that this is understood. Remember to return the piece to the fire each time it cools down to a cherry red. It does little good to try to work it cold in most cases.

First, I form the handles of my pokers. To do this I flatten out the first four inches or so all the way to the end, using my heavy hammer and delivering forceful blows. Don't be afraid to hit it hard --if you get it too thin in places just turn it on its side and compress it a little in the other direction. When it is flattened uniformly, it is ready to bend it around that soup can I mentioned earlier. You can bend it without one but it won't be as symmetrical. If it's hot enough, you can make this bend by just lightly tapping the stock around the can. When the end touches the shank of the poker, you have a handle, which you can leave this way, bend over until it is centered on the shank (using pliers), or compress into an oblong to fit a smaller hand. Quench this end in the water bucket until it stops sizzling. It should be cool enough to handle at this point, so turn it around and begin working the other end --the point.

First, flatten it out as you did the handle section, using about the same length of stock. Then turn it over and repeat the process until it is squared. Next, draw the metal out to a blunt point. To do this, take your light hammer, and starting about 1 1/2 inches from the end, deliver a series of slanting blows toward the end of the stock, using the edge of the hammer instead of hitting it straight on. Think of yourself pushing the metal along. It is best to use a hammer with rounded edges, as it is easier to smooth out these kind of dents than those made by a sharper edge. After you have worked the metal all along the section to be drawn out, turn it on the other side and repeat this process, then smooth out the dents. This should give you a blunt point which you can leave as is, or bend about 1 1/2 inches at right angles to form a hook.

Now the poker is finished, except for the finishing touch, the twist, which I consider the most interesting part of the whole process. Before heating your stock, adjust your vice grips so they will take a good firm grip about

an inch from the end of the poker. Detach them and bring the end to an extra good heat, then clamp the vice grips at the predetermined spot. Holding the handle steadily in your left hand, twist with your right, until the metal cools or you have all the twist you want, whichever comes first. Be careful to line up the hook on the same plane as the handle if you have made it hooked. If straightening is needed around this area, don't use the metal hammer as this will mar your twist. Instead, lay it on wood and straighten it with a wooden mallet. You now have a poker and enough skills to make a copy of a hand-wrought gatehook I found in an old house. The only other tool you will need is a pair of tongs.

Tongs

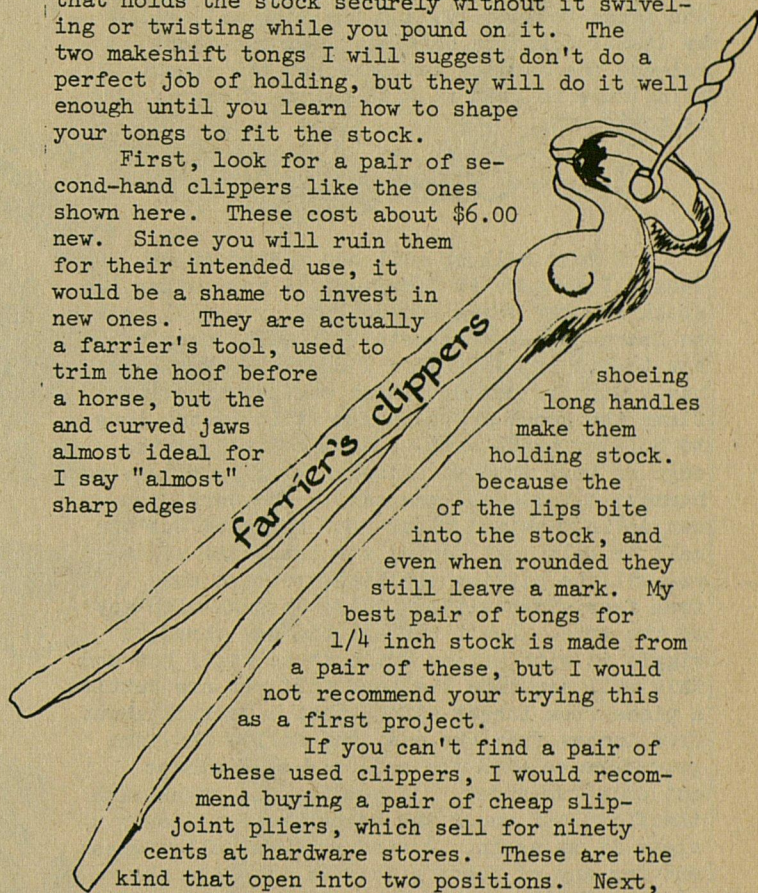
Let's assume you have no access to blacksmith's tongs, or that those you can find don't fit a piece of quarter-inch round stock. The fit is important, as you have to have something that holds the stock securely without it swiveling or twisting while you pound on it. The two makeshift tongs I will suggest don't do a perfect job of holding, but they will do it well enough until you learn how to shape your tongs to fit the stock.

First, look for a pair of second-hand clippers like the ones shown here. These cost about \$6.00 new. Since you will ruin them for their intended use, it would be a shame to invest in new ones. They are actually a farrier's tool, used to trim the hoof before a horse, but the and curved jaws almost ideal for I say "almost" sharp edges

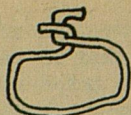
farrier's clippers

shoeing long handles make them holding stock. because the of the lips bite into the stock, and even when rounded they still leave a mark. My best pair of tongs for 1/4 inch stock is made from a pair of these, but I would not recommend your trying this as a first project.

If you can't find a pair of these used clippers, I would recommend buying a pair of cheap slip-joint pliers, which sell for ninety cents at hardware stores. These are the kind that open into two positions. Next, get two foot-long lengths of 3/4 inch iron plumbing pipe and jam these onto the pliers handles, as far down as you can. Put a dent in each pipe "handle" about 4 inches from the end. These are to hold the tongs rings. You may have to slightly flatten the ends of the pipes that go on the handles to keep them from going on so far down that they prevent the jaws from closing.



Tong Rings



These are rings of various sizes made from heavy gauge wire. Properly used they take a lot of the headache out of heating and handling your stock. To make a ring to hold your gatehook stock, clamp into the tongs a nail, bolt or piece of ice-box rack which is about six inches long and 1/4 inch thick. Measure the distance between the dents in your handles if you are using this method. or measure the widest distance between the clipper handles if not. Then form a ring slightly smaller than this distance, using pliers to make the loops which hold the ring together.

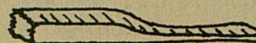
Next, take the stock out of the tongs, slip on the ring, replace the stock, and jam the ring up as far as you can on the clipper handles or into the dents of the plier handles. If the ring is the right size you should be able to let go of the tongs and the stock will remain stationary. To get the stock out quickly, compress the handles, holding the tongs vertically, and the ring will slide by itself down the handles. You can then release the handles and take out the stock, being sure to grip it with pliers first if it is hot.

Cutting

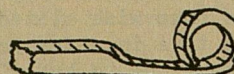
If your nail or bolt has a head on it (which I am sure it does), or if your other stock is over seven inches long, you will have to learn to cut your metal. I will describe how to cut it hot, since I doubt if everybody has a granite chisel, which can cut it cold. Clamp the stock in the tongs if it is too long to hold by hand, heat, and place it over the edge of your mounted chisel. With your heaviest hammer, hit it good and hard. The worst you can do is miss and blunt your chisel. Cut the nail or bolt just behind the head, and since you will be hitting the head, you can cut from four sides without going through with any of the cuts. Don't cut all the way through; wiggle it with pliers while it is still hot and this will separate the head. If you are cutting a piece from longer stock, heat a section about five inches from the end, and follow the same procedure as with the nail and bolt except cut only two sides. If you lay the stock with the first cut under the hammer you will only close it up again. A good rule to follow when cutting any of these pieces is to slide the piece a little to make sure it hasn't jumped out of the first cut. Otherwise you may end up making two or three cuts which are useless.

The only other tool you will need besides the ones used in making the poker is the 3/8 inch bolt mentioned earlier. Be sure to cut the head off first. I didn't, and when I formed my gatehook ring around it I couldn't get it off!

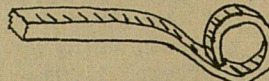
First, square up the portion of the stock that sticks out of the tongs. Next, flatten and draw out a section on the end about three inches long. When it somewhat resembles this shape you are ready to form the eye.



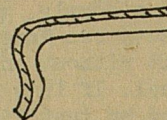
Place the thin end of the heated stock next to your bolt about 1 1/2 inches from the end, and with your light hammer tap it around to form a closed circle, the end touching the shank. You may need to bend it the last fraction with pliers, and it may not be a real good circle, but keep trying. You may leave it like this



But I always straighten it up a little by bending with the pliers at the point indicated until it looks like this.



Quench the stock and tongs, put the looped end in the tongs, and square up the second half of the stock. Then form a point and bend it, as below.



All that remains is to form the twist. Do that just as you did with the poker, but put it in the middle.

Scrounging

I mentioned already one good source for metal that comes in convenient shapes. Other sources are junk stores, antique stores (the prissier ones sell old rusty tools and files for a song) and junk yards and dumps. The scrap iron companies would be an excellent place to look for a good piece to use as an anvil. Just save any and all metal you come across. That old harrow blade you find in a field may make a nice vegetable cutter some day, files make good cutting tools, because of their high quality metal, etc. . Learn to see a piece of iron as raw material, instead of something fixed and unshapeable.

Good luck, and write me if you have questions or just want to talk: I'm Susan Thierman, Rte. 2, Box 265, Stanton, Kentucky 40380. ♀
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GOBBLE, GOBBLE

In one of the new homesteading books, the chapter on turkeys consists of a single word: "Don't!" Everything else I have ever heard or read about turkeys stresses their stupidity, inability to function on the simplest level, and susceptibility to diseases. My own experiences raising turkeys from tiny poults convinced me that turkeys, on the contrary, are fairly bright, personable and resourceful birds. Like other creatures, if they are given space, fresh water and good food, they thrive. If you are interested in low-cost, home-grown meat, a small flock of turkeys can provide you with delicious, high protein meals for very little investment.

Our turkeys were purchased on impulse, with neither plan nor place prepared beforehand. We went to buy feed one morning and there in the brooder usually reserved for baby chicks were about thirty miniature, ostrich-like birds. They were Bronze turkeys, a breed which resembles the wild native American turkey and adorns Thanksgiving cards more commonly than tables. The commercially raised turkeys usually found in grocery stores or on large turkey farms are usually the White Holland and Beltsville Whites - two breeds developed specifically for the market. The Bronze poults were all toms (male) and had been hatched with the holidays in mind. They would be slaughtering age (about six months) right around Thanksgiving.

Without really thinking about what we were getting ourselves in for, we bought six. The feedstore manager cautioned us not to handle them at all. Supposedly they are very delicate and easily upset, and can quite literally die of fright if you scare them. He also told us emphatically not to raise them anywhere near chickens, nor on ground where chickens had run. Young turkeys are susceptible to a disease called "blackhead" which is transmitted by chickens and can remain in the soil where chickens have been for long periods of time.

By the time we'd picked up the Purina turkey raising booklet and been convinced to buy medicated "turkey grower" (normally we never buy medicated feed, but the manager said flatly: "They'll die without it!"), we were thoroughly intimidated. We were sure the poults would all die before we even got them home.

All the way home, though, they hummed and chirped quite merrily. We worried over where to put them and where they could live when they were big enough to range. Every inch of our farm that wasn't brushland or forest had been trodden by the blackhead-laden feet of generations of chickens! We decided we would build a pen somewhere far from the main barn and chicken houses and hope for the best.

The immediate problem was where to put the

poults when we got them home: our house was full of baby chicks we were raising through the brooder/light stage, including a hundred Rhode Island Red pullets we'd started a week or so earlier. We decided to put the poults in a clean box in the back room and be extra-careful to always feed and water them before we tended the chicks.

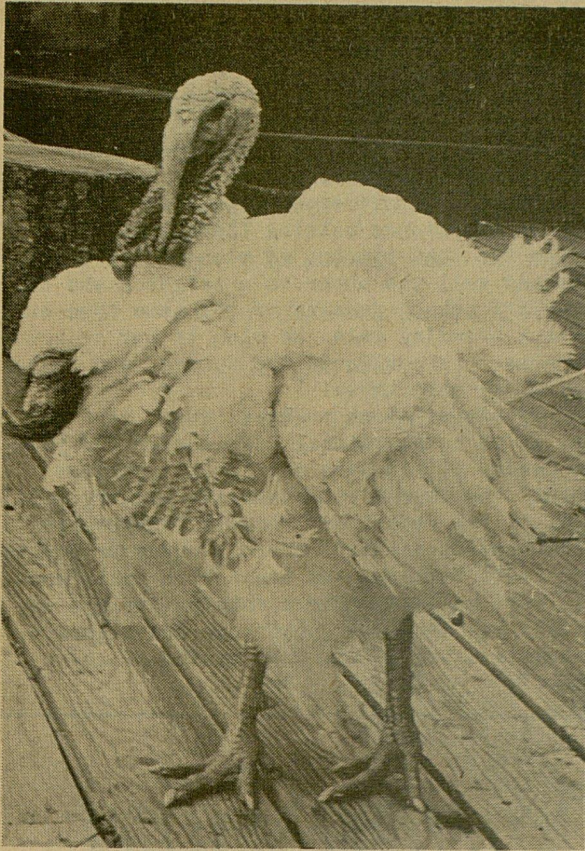
Meanwhile, the warning never to handle the poults was fading from our ears: far from being terrified of us, they were actually, obviously very interested in people ... Before we even reached home, there was a lap turkey being groomed!

Our turkeys spent a week or so in isolation, eating their medicated turkey grower and eagerly downing greens from the yard and garden. Turkeys are great grazers and young poults appreciate all kinds of greenery. We kept them under a brooder light for warmth, even though they were pretty well feathered. Like baby chicks, they seemed to thrive on special daily care: clean feed, clean litter, and fresh, clean water. We were careful to disinfect the waterer we used as it had previously been used with baby chicks. All boxes, feeders, and other equipment used with turkey poults should be brand new or at least disinfected before use. This simple precaution may be what keeps your poults healthy.

In a few weeks, we began cutting the poults' medicated feed with the unmedicated, soybean-base mash we raise our chicks on. Turkeys need a very high protein diet, so we began supplementing this mash with milk from our goats and with linseed meal. They grew noticeably every day and began to look a little crowded in their little box. At this point, we went through some serious discussions about introducing them to our baby chicks.

Obviously the poults hadn't been frightened to death by our handling; on the contrary, they loved being handled and would hop out of the cage onto our laps in a second. There they would pick and preen happily, chattering to themselves and us in their soft turkey voices. So, we reasoned, the feedstore manager had been wrong about this -- maybe he was also wrong about the potency and omnipresence of deadly blackhead. We borrowed an old poultry book from a friend and looked at its section on turkeys. There was the same stern warning: Never Raise Turkeys With Or Near Chickens! It even had elaborate setups for revolving poults from pen to pen every few weeks to keep them from becoming diseased.

We pondered more and decided to trust our own intuitions. Besides, if the turkeys were going to live on our farm, they would



sooner or later be bound to come face to face with a chicken or its droppings. We resolved to begin their exposure and see what happened.

On the big day, we moved the poults in with several young chicks. We had a good solid week of Deadly Blackhead Paranoia, but nothing happened. Chicks and poults thrived. They scratched, ate, preened and slept together in total disregard of all dire warnings.

By now, our turkeys were weaned from their special turkey grower (and its medication) and sharing with the chicks a diet of mash, finely ground grains, and plenty of greens and milk. When our poults were a little older, they moved outside to a pen with a small house for shelter. They seemed none the worse for their exposure to the chicks, and had begun what was to be a very communal existence with many chickens and other birds.

When the poults were large enough to intimidate our cats rather than become their prey, we began letting them loose every day. They loved to graze and nibble at grass and weeds and seemed perfectly secure wandering around the farmyard. At night, we would round them up and walk them back to their little pen and shelter. They would dive into their feed bowl, almost inhaling their mixture of mash and grains, then settle down cozily for the night. Turkeys are great snugglers! When they are young, they sleep huddled close to each other, probably for the warmth and comfort of the contact. As they get older, they still sleep snuggled together, not only at night, but in

the afternoon when they nap and daydream. If you lie down in the sun in the presence of our turkeys, they will stroll over and settle down with you -- preferably leaning up against your arm or leg. There they will sit, dozing contentedly, or picking at shoelaces or your buttons.

Turkeys are capable of great, gobbling excitement as they get older: a sudden noise of movement and their tails fan out and simultaneous gobbles pierce the air. Children and turkeys seem to have great fun conversing together -- one shrieks, the other gobbles in a raucous and uninhibited dialogue! Despite this excitable part of their natures, our turkeys have never swooned when a plane passes overhead, nor died of fright when a horse galloped by. They seem to be fairly relaxed most of the time, pursuing the sun or leisurely grazing. Anything that happens around the farmyard is usually subject to their attentions (inspections) -- a goat to be bred? they are present outside the pen ... A gate to be mended? they are parading just outside .. and so on. As you may guess from these stories, some of the turkeys are still with us.

After a month of so, we stopped locking the turkeys up at night. At this point they ceased being poults and came into their own as turkeys. They established their own sleeping spot -- first on an unused roll of fencing, later on the railing of the back porch. When the weather began to turn colder and rainy, we began a practice of herding them into the barn on particularly bad nights. If you live in a very cold or damp climate, you will have to treat your turkeys similarly; they will need shelter through the winter months or summer storms. But beside this simple consideration and a source of fresh water and some food, turkeys seem to need very little care.

Their feed requirements will depend largely on the type of grazing you have available, the number of birds you keep, and so on. Our turkeys have always foraged freely on land that stays green most of the year. They pick up scraps of grain from the chickens and from the goat mangers or horses -- but rarely demand more. When they were in their first few months of rapid growth, they had free-choice of mash and grain. One long-term feed estimate I read said that it takes three to four pounds of grain to produce one pound of turkey meat. This source said nothing about grazing, however. Even at the maximum four pounds of grain, the conversion rate is very good and makes the turkey a reasonably economic food source. I am sure that ours cost a great deal less to raise.

We lost two of our original six birds when they were still quite young. One was killed by an aggressive peacock, and the other died after exposure to an unusually early rainstorm. The other four stayed healthy and grew rapidly. We butchered two of them for food when they were about four months old. To be as humane as possible with these very humanized birds, we got up before dawn and

took them still drowsy and barely conscious from their roosts. They knew no fear and were killed instantly.

The traditional way to slaughter these birds is to hang them upside down and slit their throats, letting them bleed to death. We decided that this was much too slow and painful a death, so we used a sharp, heavy axe to strike the heads off, killing them at once. Then they were hung to bleed out. When the bodies were a little cool, we dry-plucked and drew the birds much as you would a chicken. One of these young turkeys dressed out at about fifteen pounds; the other at thirteen. They provided us with many delicious meals -- which we ate thankfully and in full realization of the lives they had lived.

It is never easy to slaughter an animal or bird you have raised yourself, but somehow it makes a very tangible, real connection between your needs and your surroundings and how you choose to integrate these. For many years, I was a vegetarian farmer, selling or trading or giving away the inevitable surpluses of lambs, kids, roosters that the farm produced. Being very much into raising and breed-

ing all sorts of livestock, I was never able to bring myself to kill and eat the unproductive extras and culls.

Now it seems that something has settled in my mind, allowing me to accept and take part in the cycles of life and death, feeding and growing, that surround me. This realization, or resignation, or reawakening, came in part from my experience raising these turkeys. Of the two that remain, we plan to use one for meat and sell the other to a neighbor who has a small flock of females of the same type and wants a breeding male. We plan to buy or trade for some more poults in the spring, and raise them as we have these.

My advice about turkeys, then, is: "Do!" Try, as we have, raising just enough for your own needs. If you have any health problems, consult the fairly comprehensive poultry section of the Merck Veterinary Manual. Chances are, if you are reasonably careful, buy your poults from healthy stock, and treat them well, you will have as few problems raising turkeys as we did. Besides being practical and economic, turkeys are beautiful, interesting -- and bright. ♀

letter from WomanSpirit

Dear Country Woman Sisters,

How marvelously our lives have been unfolding since we first heard of Country Women magazine three and a half years ago! Since then we have written for you in this magazine many times, and you have seen our songs, poems, articles and photographs.

We have shared a lot of love during our five visits with the Country Women collective in Albion over these years. So it was easy for us to stay six weeks in a little garden cabin on the edge of the forest to work on the Spirituality issue last spring. There under the redwoods the intuition came, after throwing the I Ching, that we should start a new quarterly feminist magazine.

Now we are part of a community of women in southern Oregon whose energy, abilities and conviction have resulted in the birth of WomanSpirit. Together we have produced two issues of this magazine with as much beauty and love as we can put into 64 pages. We think it is a good beginning for sharing personal experiences and consciousness raising on the spiritual side of our lives. Our definition of spiritual is very open: we mean the journey of discovering and discarding, as we move beyond institutional religions.

Our hope is to produce WomanSpirit as part of the process of creating our feminist culture, as an experience of sisterhood, as an affirmation of our woman strength. We work as a collective of eight to ten women, and we employ women printers.

Our financing began with a woman's gift to pay the cost of printing the first issue. Now we are working hard to develop our distribution so we can keep going. This letter -- a gift of Country Women magazine to its sister WomanSpirit -- is to ask support from Country Women readers. Your subscriptions, your manuscripts, your art work and photographs, your encouragement and promotion are NEEDED. We want to reach and include many women so we can all share the inner growth which we experience as we transform our lives on all levels.

We still find ourselves a bit surprised and delighted that, even though our "office" is a tiny space in a 10' x 10' cabin under Oregon fir trees, without electricity or telephone, we country women can again make our voices heard, reach out as sisters, and share the struggle and growth we are finding at the center of our lives.

May our circle keep increasing,

Jean and Ruth Mountaingrove

for WomanSpirit

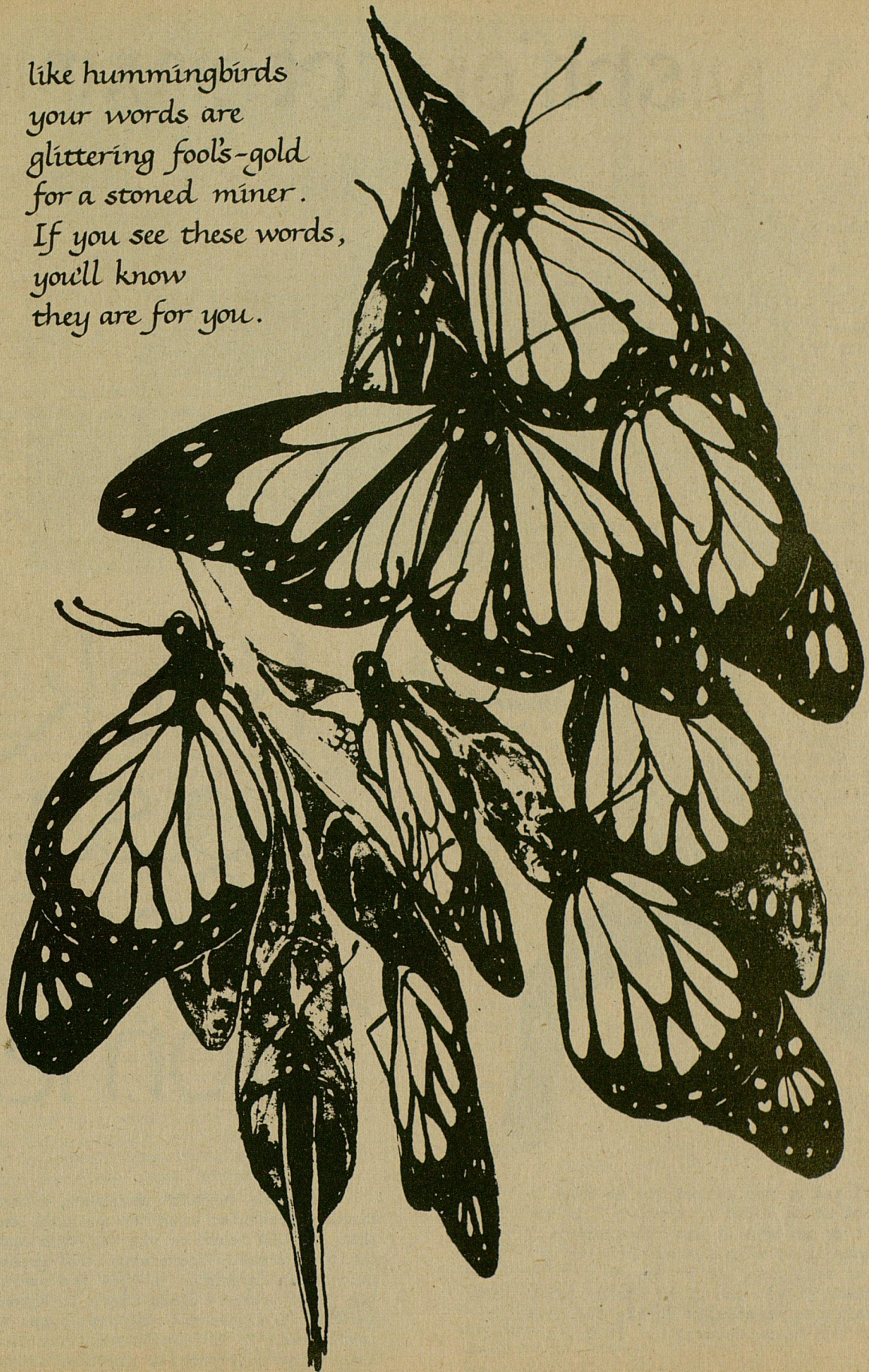
Box 263

Wolf Creek, Oregon

97497

Single copies of WomanSpirit are \$2.00
Subscriptions are \$6.00 for four issues (one year).
Consignment orders for five or more copies get 25% discount and postage prepaid. ♀

like hummingbirds
your words are
glittering fool's-gold
for a stoned miner.
If you see these words,
you'll know
they are for you.



self defense

My first contact with Katz was on radio KPFA when I heard her interviewing two women about their lives in the martial arts. I remembered two things about that interview: one, she said that when women were too afraid to fight that she would hit them until they were angry enough to fight back. That scared the shit out of me, but I've since decided that it makes a lot of sense. The other thing was a story she told about how she decided to train in the martial arts.

She was at a meeting and left with five other women. They walked down the street in twos and were approached by two men in a car asking if they wanted a ride. After refusing, they were followed by these men who verbally harassed them, refusing to take no for an answer.

Finally one woman, fed up with being

hassled, reached into the car and stuck her fingers in the eyes of the driver. This was a woman who had no training at all in self-defense.

The man stopped the car and jumped out, reaching behind his seat and pulling out a tire iron. He came after the woman, determined to smash her with the tire iron. It was then that the other woman who was with her, a green belt in karate, moved in and blocked the tool right out of his hands.

He jumped into the car and took off yelling, "Help, these dykes are attacking us!"

"I knew I had to be able to do that," Katz said. To be able to protect ourselves and each other, that's what it's all about.

Katz now teaches Street Fighting for Women at the Women's Skills Center at 51 Waller St., San Francisco



Kick ass for Women

I had my ass kicked for me from one end of my youth to another. If it wasn't my parents it was reactionary students in my high school who didn't like my politics. If it wasn't a boyfriend it was the pigs during demonstrations, especially during the civil rights and peace movements. It was a drag.

With the feminist movement, I was finally presented with the realization that I COULD learn to win and some opportunities arose. There were two green belt women in Boston in 1969 who started the first women's class there in Korean karate. I signed up, and that began my involvement in Tae Kwon Do and the fighting arts. The only problem was that after a



few months I got kicked out of the class for protesting when a welfare mother and her daughter were thrown out of the course for not paying. One of those instructors belongs to perhaps the richest family in the world: her last name starts with "R" and ends with "feller" and it was her feeling that folks don't really appreciate anything unless they work hard for it themselves, and earn the right to it. My feeling was that she didn't even know the meaning of the word "work," and that every woman has the right to know how to kick some ass.

Over the next couple of years I studied at several different traditional, male karate schools but I never stayed for very long. One time I got really beat up and thrown out of the dojo cause I wouldn't fuck the head instructor. Another place I was removed for refusing to wear a bra in class. Inside those schools, alone as a women, not to mention as a dyke, I really got beat around.

I was in a very tight women's collective in 1970 and the other women demanded I train them to fight since no one could afford to sign up at real dojos. So, piecing together the karate I had picked up in different studies, plus my experiences on the streets as a working class kid, I began teaching street fighting to them. I've been teaching ever since. Collectively we used a lot of common sense, devising life-like situations, and practicing and practicing, we became reasonably proficient

fighters.

Now, out here in California, I am in another dojo which I've stuck with for a year and a half and hope to stay in as long as I'm in the area. Since there are quite a number of other dykes and some straight women too at this place, it ain't all bad. The school is used to having women in it, used to seeing women attain high degree belts. And by sticking together, we keep the sexist incidents to a tolerable minimum.

I am still teaching street-fighting, but the course I offer has changed a lot. I still do not teach karate because I am not yet qualified. But even once I attain a high degree of expertise, I doubt that I'll ever teach straight karate. The martial arts are really far out and I love to train in that way, but it doesn't seem to me to be the most widely needed type of training for women. Karate just does not meet the needs of women who want some basic fighting skills useful in street situations.

Formal training in the martial arts requires going to class at least four or five times weekly. It demands big money to pay the dues at a karate club (\$15 to \$40 a month), not to mention the uniforms or gi (\$17 to \$30 a piece), and equipment like weights, knee supports, ankle braces etc. It requires a lot of devotion to the art, and love for it, which not everyone is about to feel. It requires spending your evenings in the company of lots of dudes down at the dojo. It can, and has for me, meant risking injuries (broken bones, water on the knees, sprained backs). Women who work full time, women with children,

women with marginal or unstable incomes all have a really hard time getting the time and money to train. Older women or those with bad health problems don't usually find much sympathy and private attention in a regular dojo. Women doing a lot of political work can't always find a dojo with a schedule of classes that doesn't interfere with their meetings. Then there are a lot of working class women who already feel they know how to fight fairly decently, but need to sharpen up their skills and pick up a few new techniques while getting back into shape.

It is for all these women that I teach street fighting. Street fighting, as I mean it, is simply learning how to fight as well as possible in as short a time as possible for as little money as possible. It is for women who don't necessarily want to devote years of their life to getting some fighting skills and don't really care exactly what art they learn just as long as it works.

What I do is teach some basic karate techniques, since those are the ones I know, combined with anything else that works. I teach basic blocks, punches and kicks, but allow for any other skills that people want to do; from pulling hair and biting, to dirty fighting like coming up behind somebody with a 2" x 4" or coming up smiling and then delivering a sucker punch. I once had a student who had played some semi-pro football and she used to tackle her opponents. I teach the Korean kicks, but if you do them more like a Japanese kick, I don't give a shit, as long as its strong and accurate and under control.

The emphasis in my classes is on sparring. We spar in one form or another at least once every class: we do it close in on each other with light contact and restraint; we do sparring with full power but pull our strikes; we do set-up sparring where just one person is on the offensive. In short, we do sparring in all different ways and combinations.

Basically you spar to learn but you fight to win. We maintain pretty strict rules during matches to keep injuries down. We emphasize respect for one's own and one's opponent's body. The only attitude of competition allowed is against one's self. Otherwise, anything goes.

A beginners class is usually three months long and students are expected to learn four blocks, a few punches and strikes, and two or three kicks. They must learn to control their breathing, their eyes and facial expressions, their experience and reaction to pain, and their fears. They should learn to move well in a fight, to improve their balance, and to learn to take pain when it is strategic or unavoidable without freaking.

Taking and giving pain are two things that seem very hard for women to get together. In my class they learn to take it by taking it: you get hit. As for giving it, you can only learn that by getting your politics together. By that I mean that once you understand who your enemy is and what he's trying to do to you ultimately, you'll feel nothing but victory

and exhilaration in his destruction. Throughout the course I make it clear that it is rich, white men who are most to be feared and hated, and that every strike against them is a step ahead for all of us.

[Statistically, the average rapist is 23, white, married, of average intelligence. Politically, in terms of power, I agree that rich white men are the ones to fear. In terms of self-defense, though, all men are to be feared. The man you will fight on the street can be any man. B.B.]

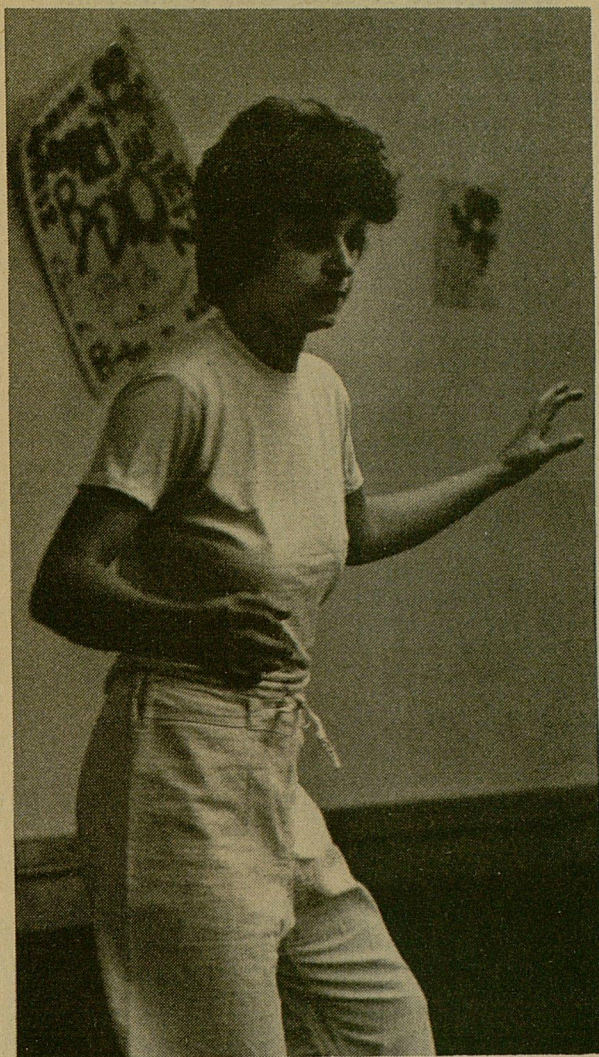
For three years, I never charged for my classes, up until I realized that some middle-class, ex-students of mine were making a mint teaching their own classes. At the urging of my working class friends, I started charging ten dollars to cover the rent on the place where I was teaching and to give me a tiny salary, since my teaching schedule seriously interferes with my ability to get a regular job. I generally do not charge third world and working class women who have less than me. My hope is that the middle class white students will eventually understand that they should see to it that I have enough money to live so that I can teach third world and working class women free, across the board.

I offer three classes a week to each group and require everyone to make at least two, all of which are scheduled after work or on the weekends. After the three months run out, my much-reduced student body can go on to another intermediate session where they learn more complicated kicks and strikes and more variety of maneuvers. The drop-out rate is very high, as is the case in any fighting art. After the intermediate course some students decide to go into the martial arts altogether.

Often women call me who are looking for a dojo in the first place. I try to help them get into one that will give them what they want. First I run down the high-ranking women who teach the traditional arts in pretty much the traditional ways. Many of these women are competent and fine, but a good number are not legitimized as official instructors and therefore cannot give out high-ranking belts. This is sometimes a result of the rigidity of the martial arts systems and, more often, of blatant sexism. Of course, there are a few fully accredited women's dojos, such as Sensei Keido Fekuda in judo (San Francisco), Betty Maillette in jujitsu (Oakland), Susie Desanto in gojukai karate (New York City), and a few others.

If a woman cannot locate a female instructor in her chosen art or if she would rather go to a mixed dojo (and there are a couple of good reasons for doing this, such as the experience of constantly fighting men), I give her these suggestions for finding a dojo she can survive in:

1. Does the head instructor also own the school or is it run by some businessman who knows nothing of the art and may even refuse to grant black belts to women?
2. Does the head instructor do any of his



Katz

own teaching or is he just a figurehead?

3. Does the school require contracts which specify how long you're going to stay and is mainly their way of making a lot of money?

4. How many promotional tests are required (one for each belt or three different degrees in each belt) and how much do they cost? This is another way to rake in the pennies.

5. Is the dojo heavily oriented towards tournament competition? Does it have a million trophies in the window? Does it demand everyone participate in tournaments (or, as is sometimes the case, does it exclude women from tournaments completely)? This often can mean that there is more emphasis on learning techniques that get points in competition than on learning street-efficient stuff. And it is also

sometimes indicative of whether the teacher is teaching out of devotion to the art or to amplify his own ego and reputation by having winning students. This can also mean that if you're not one of the big winners (and most women are not just because very little is offered to women competitors) then he won't pay much attention to you.

6. Are there other women in the dojo, particularly those of high rank, who are likely to help you train? Has the dojo ever awarded black belts to any women? Some dojos have been known to allow women to reach brown belt, then kick them out on some pretext just to avoid the whole question of black belts for women.

7. Are there any women instructors? Who actually does the bulk of the teaching and what are their attitudes?

8. How is sparring handled? Are women treated any differently than dudes or do they fight with everyone else? Do you have to wait until the advanced belts to spar? Is there light or heavy or no contact? Is it carefully supervised?

Whatever you do, visit as many dojos as possible to check them out and compare, even if you think you know already where you want to go. Try to get another woman to be your partner and go into training together.

[This can make the greatest difference in whether or not you make progress and keep your enthusiasm up during the difficult first few months. This is especially true for those of us who've never been physically active before. You can keep each other going and confirm each other's perspectives, offering support, encouragement and understanding all the way. I often wonder if I ever could have done it alone at all. B.B.]

Another thing to do is check out who it is that studies at that particular school. In my experience, schools dominated by white men are the hardest to deal with. Schools dominated by oppressed people (third world men, gays, women) generally deal with you on the basis of your commitment to your training, not on the size of your tits. In the same vein, generally Asian instructors are far more agreeable and less sexist than American white men, who have usually gotten their training in the army or at police academies.

Once you join the dojo, you've got to be politicking constantly. You have to spend some energy ingratiating yourself to potentially helpful and influential black belts. It's also a good idea not to let the men there know too much about your real life and politics. Don't mouth off too much: it can be very dangerous to your health, as I can testify.

Because of all of this, it's really a pain in the ass to transfer schools, so be sure to make a smart decision in the first place. The initial six months you are constantly being tested by all the men as to your seriousness and dedication to training. Just remember that you are in there to get something you want and need badly and you are basically risking your life every night to get it.

Best of luck to you! ♀

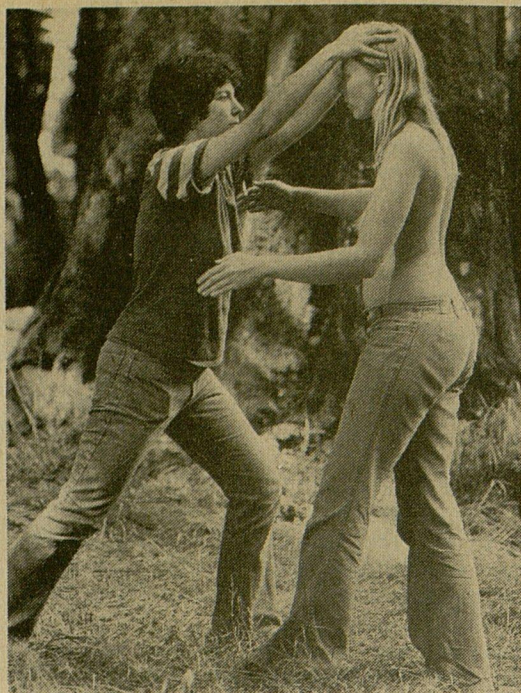


Photo #1

IF SOMEONE IS TRYING TO GRAB YOU, ONE OF YOUR OPTIONS IS TO GRAB HIM FIRST. HERE IS A HEAD GRAB WHICH I SUGGEST YOU DO BY TAKING HANDFULS OF HAIR AND PULLING HIM DOWN BY HIS HAIR.

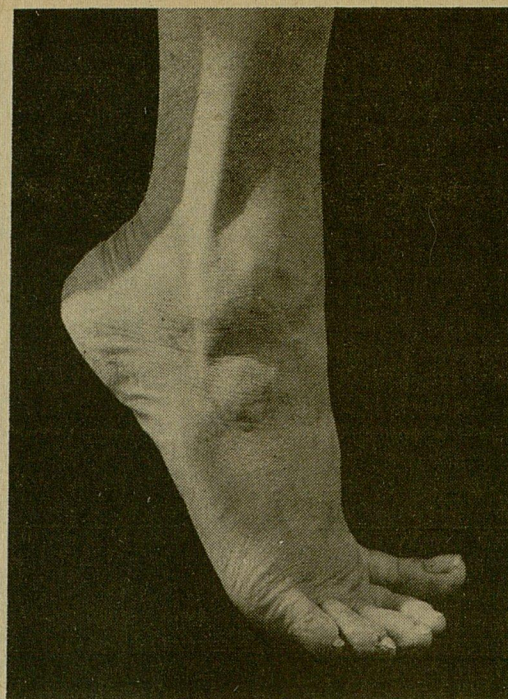


Photo #3

YOUR FOOT SHOULD LOOK LIKE THIS: TOES PULLED BACK SO YOU DON'T BREAK THEM. KICK WITH THE BALL OF YOUR FOOT.



photo #2

SMASH HIS HEAD ON YOUR KNEE. KIYAI!! WITH YOUR KNEE UP IN THIS POSITION, YOU ARE READY TO KICK.



Photo #4

EXTEND YOUR LEG BUT DON'T STRAIGHTEN THE KNEE COMPLETELY -- YOU'LL HURT IT. SNAP YOUR LEG RIGHT BACK TO THE POSITION IN PHOTO #2. IF YOU LEAVE IT THERE, HE CAN GRAB IT. PRACTICE KICKING BAREFOOT AT A PILLOW OR KICKING BAG TO SEE IF YOUR TOES ARE BACK.



Photo #5

IF SOMEONE IS GOING TO HIT YOU ON THE HEAD OR CHEST, YOU CAN BLOCK WITH AN UPPER BLOCK. MAKE A FIST AND SWEEP UP ACROSS THE FRONT OF YOUR BODY.



Photo #6

TURN YOUR ARM SO THAT YOUR WRIST IS TURNED AWAY FROM YOU AS YOU SWEEP HIS ARM OUT OF THE WAY. TAKE THE IMPACT OF THE BLOW ON THE MUSCLE OF YOUR FOREARM. KEEP YOUR WRIST STRAIGHT AND FIRM SO YOU DON'T INJURE IT BY BOUNCING IT. (NOW YOU COULD PUNCH, KICK, GRAB HIS HEAD -- WHATEVER YOU DO, KIIYAI!!)

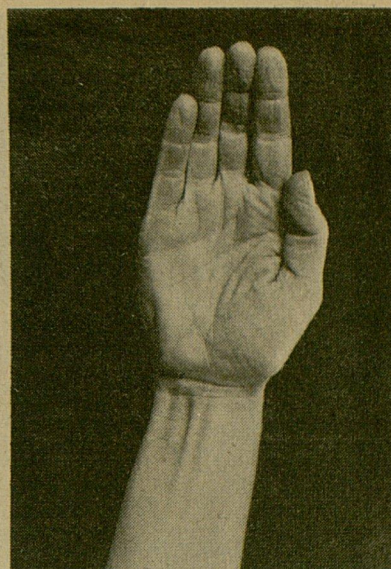


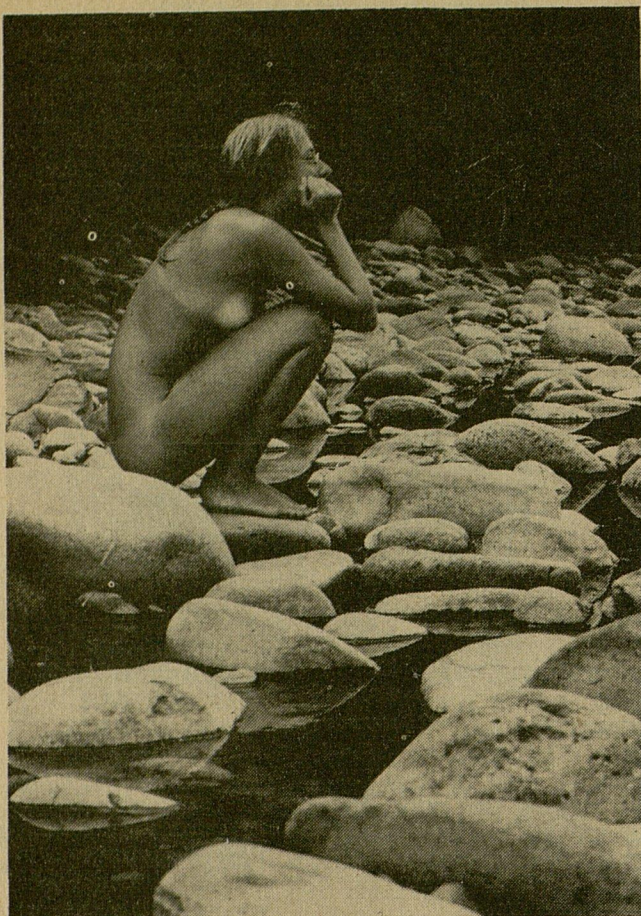
Photo #7

AN EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE IS TO CUP YOUR HAND IN THIS POSITION AND SLAP IT OVER YOUR ATTACKER'S EAR. WITH A SMALL AMOUNT OF FORCE, THIS WILL BREAK AN EARDRUM AND CAUSE INTENSE PAIN -- THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO GET AWAY. YOU CAN DO THIS AT ANY TIME, IN ANY POSITION, SO LONG AS YOU HAVE A FREE HAND. CAUTION: DO NOT PRACTICE THIS MOVE WITH HANDS CUPPED. USE EXTREME CAUTION, PLEASE.



Photo #8

HERE IS THE ABOVE MOVE, BLOCKED WITH A DOUBLE UPPER BLOCK. THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO PRACTICE ALL THESE TECHNIQUES. FROM THIS POSITION, PULL THE HEAD DOWN, SMASH IT ON YOUR KNEE AND KICK. KAYAI!



THE BEATING BIRTH CONTROL BLUES

Understanding my body has been instrumental in understanding myself. The confusion that blocked this must have always been there, but I will start a few years back.

When I first heard of "the pill" I took it unquestioningly. It was my wonder drug. No more long periods; no more cramps; less tension (after all, I was safe). Then I began hearing about cancer of the uterus. I let my prescription run out. Less than a year later I met a beautiful man and began living with him. Neither of us wanted a child (Ehrlich's Population Bomb had just come out), so it was time for birth control again. I had read about I.U.D.'s and discovered that a new one, the madjlin spring, was considered "reliable." My curiosity about it was insatiable. I asked women friends what they thought about using one. I asked the doctor to show it to me. I read all I could find, which wasn't much. The A.M.A. does its best to keep women uninformed about their bodies.

"O.K., I'll try it," I decided. I knew I'd experience pain, and waited for it. At just the right moment a Mexican-American aide put out her arm for me to clutch. She was mother to me, strong and gentle. I contorted and cried. I didn't stop crying until I was at home with an empty bottle of Chablis. For me, it wasn't too bad. I had bad cramps for only three days. I've heard of others who had them for two weeks. I was glad to have the I.U.D. in. I kept saying that it was hell getting it put in, but it was there for good and I was "safe."

But then, as I was going through a period of big emotional changes, I discovered I had gonorrhea. Or, rather, I had the symptoms. But every time the General Hospital interns took smears, they found nothing to verify that I had VD. They called it Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (P.I.D.), a nice catch-all. Nonetheless, I was treated with heavy penicillin doses and eventually the pain passed. I asked if my I.U.D. should be removed, if it was causing any of the trouble. I was told it was alright to leave it in. I wasn't warned of the yeast infections which often follow antibiotic treatments.

There were still times when intercourse was extremely painful, and I just assumed that this must be an after-effect of gonorrhea. I lived with this low level pain for a while, but when it increased I had it checked. My doctor determined that I had an enlarged ovary, the size of an egg. Surgery was not recommended, for the cyst would go down of its own accord. But meanwhile, I wondered what had caused it to develop ..

My doctor thought it might be the I.U.D., and advised me to have it removed. I agreed. How much pain was there going to be? He told me there would be very little, but that I would be given a local anesthetic if I wanted. I wondered how the hell a male doctor would know how much pain was going to be involved, but kept quiet.

When three male doctors started looking at my innards and sticking things inside me, I got nervous. They discovered that the spring had imbedded itself in my skin. As they began yanking at the I.U.D. that had attached itself to my body I remembered the day it was inserted. This time there was no woman to understand. I ached the rest of the day.

When the I.U.D. was removed the doctor asked what birth control method I wanted to use, explaining that the diaphragm and pills were available. I decided to try the diaphragm, though he pushed the pills. The diaphragm, as many of those who have tried it know, can be a lot of hassle - interrupted foreplay, numbness the day following, only one intercourse within a certain number of hours or a big mess. But for me just getting it in crooked was enough to irritate my ovary again. We tried using the diaphragm sometimes and a condom other times, with so much mind-bending that I finally told the intern (by this time a sensitive, young, understanding intern) that I wanted to try the pill again. Taking it daily while knowing what I did about its harmful side effects was too much for my psyche. I lasted only two weeks before tossing them out.

My neighbor was, at the time, trying to get pregnant. She told me about the ovulation method which her doctor was using with her. It is a birth control method which requires no artificial gadgets or pills. By watching her vaginal mucus she was able to tell if she was ovulating. I went to Doctor Herning in San Francisco to have this method explained to me. Within a month I was discussing this new method with every woman I knew (and lots of men too!). I felt so good, so relieved, so much in control of my own destiny.

Since I have been using the ovulation method (eighteen months now), I've begun to feel my body's rhythm. Not a month passes that I don't marvel at some new awareness of my body. At first I was surprised to find that I wasn't really having yeast infections all the time; but that, instead, a little more than two weeks before my period, my vagina would begin heavy mucus secretions. Along with these secretions, I was able to observe the signs of ovulating.

A few days before ovulation, a particular type of mucus is secreted by glands in the vagina. [To procure mucus for examination, insert a finger into your vagina, remove a little and pull it between your finger and thumb for examination.] This mucus production reaches a peak near the day of ovulation.

This mucus is a favorable environment for sperm cells. In it, they may live from three to five days. Each woman can learn to interpret the cycle of her body and avoid heterosexual intercourse or any genital contact with men during the fertile times (or else use some kind of contraception such as spermicidal cream or a diaphragm then). Or, of course, you can use this information to help conceive a child.

Begin recording the cycle at the start of a menstrual period, on a chart with numbered days. After menstruation is over, (days colored red on the chart) check outside the vagina for dryness or mucus. In a cycle of average length, there are usually several "dry days" (colored green). When mucus begins again, the feeling of dryness ends.

In a day or two, the mucus amount increases, usually becomes visible, and changes as the time of ovulation nears. The first mucus is yellow, white, or cloudy and tacky. Then it becomes more transparent, like raw egg white, elastic and stretchy to the touch. At the peak of fertility, it is also lubricative. Then it again becomes cloudy, tacky and then eventually ceases.

Ovulation occurs usually the day after the peak symptom of most elastic, lubricative, clear mucus. From lack of dryness to peak fertility symptom averages four to six days. Mark the peak day X and the following days 1, 2, and 3 (regardless of on which day post-peak-type mucus ends) before coloring the fourth day green. This day is considered safe for intercourse.

From then on until menstruation begins again, (usually two weeks from the peak), is considered safe. It is unwise to have inter-

course during menstruation, because mucus may have begun, in a short cycle, and you wouldn't know it. The early dry days, if any, are alright for intercourse; the mucus days are not. If there is one mucus day in between, wait a day and if dry days continue, it is okay. If there are three or more days of mucus, wait until the fourth day afterwards to resume intercourse.

With practice, you will learn to tell the difference between fertile mucus symptoms and "patches" of mucus of another type that may occur after ovulation. But before beginning to chart your mucus in this fashion, it is best to abstain from intercourse or genital contact for one menstrual cycle, or one month (whichever is shorter), and then chart the dry and mucus symptoms. This way seminal fluid does not confuse your observations. You can learn to distinguish between semen and mucus only after you can identify the mucus correctly.

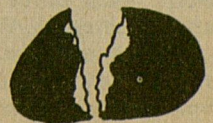
The above information is far from complete, and it would not be advisable to attempt using this method of birth control without first obtaining more information. A full explanation of the Ovulation Method may be found in a booklet called Natural Family Planning: The Ovulation Method, written by John J. Billings, MD. It costs \$1.50 and is available from the Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, or from the Prior's Office, St. Benedict's Abbey, Atchinson, Kansas. Don't be put off by the religious affiliation here. This is not the old rhythm method in disguise.

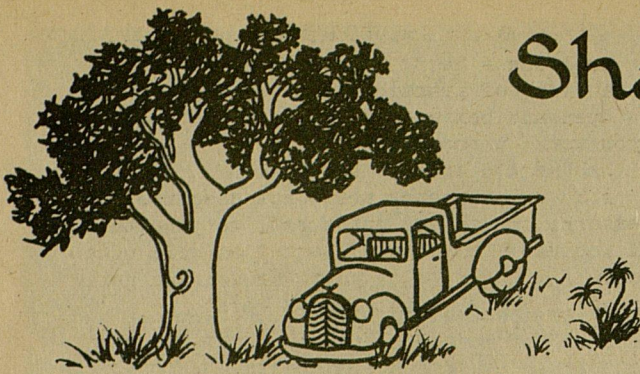
As the months pass, I've been faithfully charting each day's symptom. My initial irregularity due to the hormonal imbalance caused by the pill has been replaced by a constant: my own rhythm. I know now that I always had a pattern, but that I was not allowing my body to fulfill it. My normal bodily discharge means something now, something important.

This may have been understood and used by women long ago, before we became so detached from our bodily cycles. It's the kind of understanding I have been looking for in learning to live a natural life.

My head is totally into this trip, and I'm sure that I even control my fertility by this time. Once, when I thought I had made a mistake in making love on a fertile day, my period was late. I worried a lot, then we held an anti-fertility rite, culminating with the cracking of an egg. I began menstruation the next day.

But the best thing about this method of birth control, for me, is that I have the support of my mate and we do it together. Sometimes he checks my mucus, sometimes he charts the symptoms and we both know what kind of sexual trip we can do that day. It is our birth control method now, instead of mine. ♀





Shade Tree Mechanics

I began to learn about auto mechanics as a result of one thing; necessity. I found that if I wanted to be mobile in a vehicle, I would have to do one of three things: have a newer vehicle which would not break down, have enough money to pay the price charged by a garage whenever I happened to break down, or be dependent on a man or men to fix my vehicle for me. None of which was acceptable to me.

That was in 1971. Up to that point, I spent my life believing that automobiles were too complicated for me to understand. Machines that sophisticated were beyond my ken and the men who worked on them had spent many years in school or in their dad's garages under hoods of cars apprenticing the mysteries of motor vehicles.

I never heard the term "shade tree mechanic" until after I had become one. The first car I worked on was one that I owned which had spun a rod bearing. Under the guidance of a friend - ex Kenworth truck mechanic - we "rebuilt" the engine in a trashed out barn, installing used parts and using newspapers for bearing shims. This was later to be referred to as "fly by night auto rebuild". But the point is that the mystery and hands off attitudes were rapidly blown apart. With the help of my friend, a patient and objective male who let me do the actual work with the tools, I began to have a sense of motor vehicles and the kinds of talents or skills it takes to repair them.

Some of the qualities of a good mechanic are: patience, thoroughness, cleanliness, and attention to detail. Oddly enough, these are the qualities which are traditionally attributed to women rather than men, which says something about what kind of people can make good mechanics. Another myth says that mechanics are supposed to be very logical (and also says women do not have this quality) and it brings to mind pictures of the men I have seen swearing and throwing things at their vehicles; cursing them because they have done an insufficient job of fixing that vehicle.

All this is just to try to give you the confidence that YOU can become capable of maintaining and fixing your own car, that there is no mystery to it. An automobile is just a machine, put together in a certain order, made up of various systems that all fit and work together. When it does not work, a process of elimination will isolate the problem and then it can be fixed, rebuilt or replaced.

The first thing I ran into was the problem of how to use tools. This is a problem with most

women (who generally did not grow up playing with tools 25 years ago). Men who teach women mechanics don't have experience with this kind of stumbling block. It takes quite a bit of time to develop this kind of motor skill, so be kind to yourself in this department. There are no shortcuts. It just takes time, at least it did for me, to remember which way a ratchet undoes a bolt when you're lying face up underneath a truck - or to discover the most efficient way to use a hacksaw.

I would recommend using only open and box end wrenches at first, instead of a ratchet (use a breaker bar with socket where you need the power of a ratchet) for the simple reason that the ratchet, though faster, tends to be automatic and using a simple wrench forces you to develop your motor skills and co-ordination. It also helps you learn to recognize which nut size is a 7/16" and which is a 1/2" or 9/16". And when this becomes automatic knowledge, it will save a lot of time rummaging in the tool box or climbing out from underneath the hood to find the right wrench.

Another problem you will run into is that tools and vehicles were designed for men to use. I work mainly on trucks and so I especially have that problem. If you need more power, you can compensate with tools, leverage or two women instead of one. You can use a longer breaker bar (giving you more leverage, thus more power), you can use a bigger size tool, you can use heat (metal expands thus loosening a stuck part) where it is applicable. And it's really nice to successfully change a big truck tire with another woman. So spend some time learning about the most efficient way to apply force, the principles of leverage, etc. It's entirely possible for two women using just wood blocks and a couple of jacks, to remove the engine of a Volkswagen without undue strain. Also learn how to use your body and how to lift, push and pull properly so you don't strain or break something - especially your back!

If you are working especially on older vehicles patience is an indispensable quality to acquire or cultivate. Rusted-on bolts, parts that are missing, systems that have been thrown together, unscrambling someone's past mistakes or sloppiness, trying to figure out how the damn thing works - all these things demand patience and then some more patience.

Check it out to be sure, don't put something together half-fixed and hope it will hold indefinitely (all roadside repairs should be regarded as temporary). Don't overlook something because it will take more time or money. It's usually false economy. You will probably end up doing the job twice. Only experienced mechanics know what they can get away with successfully.

Faced with a greasy, gritty vehicle to repair, it would seem that the only cleanliness

to be concerned with is how to get yourself clean after finishing the job. But cleanliness is very important, always, when working on a car. The machined parts of a vehicle are designed to operate under high speeds, much heat and with very close tolerances (the space between the metal parts which rub on each other). An example would be the bearings that your front wheels turn on. These ride on smooth-as-glass surfaces called bearing races. Any specks of dirt or grit left on these surfaces or on the bearings will wear these parts out very quickly. Cleaning off parts thoroughly will also make them easier to put back on the vehicle and will assure a tight fit of any gaskets you use. An old bucket with stove oil, wire brush, tooth brush, old newspapers and assorted rags are a must for any mechanic. Again, make sure everything is spotlessly clean and greased, if it is necessary, with the proper type of grease.

If you need to, when you take something apart, draw a diagram, so that you can get it all back together properly. Sometimes a small part misplaced can destroy an otherwise good job and waste a lot of money in parts. Old muffin tins or egg cartons are great for putting nuts and bolts in sensible order - putting all the starter bolts in one section, etc.. When you have a part off, check it thoroughly for cracks or places where it may be worn. Do work on other parts that have been made easily accessible by some other part being taken off. For instance, when you have the wheels off to do a brake job, take time to clean and repack the wheel bearings, checking them for wear. You could also check out the front end to see if it's wobbly and will need attention in the near future. This kind of thinking will save a lot of time and you may be able to catch a repair that's small before the problem compounds itself.

Start out by working on a vehicle that you're familiar with. You know how to drive it; so now start listening to it. The sound when it starts, the noise of the engine and the way it shifts will all tell you something. If you know how it feels, then when something begins to sound wrong or start making new noises, you'll know it. You can then figure out what it is and grease it, fix it, or whatever. Never ignore a new noise and hope it will go away. If you wish to learn mechanics and keep your vehicle running you should begin a regular routine of maintenance and keep a record of it. This means brake adjustments, oil changes, tune-ups, lube jobs, and checking all places that need grease. This will give you an opportunity to become familiar with your vehicle, your tools, and the place where everything is located. It will also give you some confidence for the first time that you break down on the road.

Diagnosis is probably the hardest part and there are really no shortcuts. It is a matter of knowing all the systems of the automobile, how to test for what is wrong, knowing all the possibilities of what could go wrong, and mostly a lot of experience. Talk to old timers (especially if you have an old vehicle), get to know your friendly neighborhood junkyard, and ask questions since people love to tell you what they know a lot about.

Tools You Will Need:

Tool box - carry your tools with you; you get lots of practice that way.

Open and box end wrench set - get metrics if you work on foreign cars.

1/2" drive breaker bar

1/2" drive socket set - not absolutely necessary, but if you get a set, get one that will include a spark plug socket as well as a size to fit lug nuts on your wheels; and get metrics if you work on foreign cars.

1/2" drive ratchet - not a necessary tool at first, but consider it a tool you will want after you get coordinated.

Ball peen hammer - size will depend on what size vehicles you plan to work on,

Screwdrivers - again, size will depend on what size vehicles you work on, but generally one big, one long and one stubby common screwdriver and one medium and one stubby phillips screwdriver. The stubby ones are especially handy for tight places.

Crescent wrench - again, consider the size for your own use.

Vice grips - get the larger size. Better than pliers, they have many uses which you'll soon discover.

Wire brush - for cleaning, they cannot be beat.

Hydraulic jack - probably the biggest and most expensive item, but they are the safest way to lift any vehicle; are compact and easy to carry; and will last a long, long time if properly cared for. Try to find one used. It may just need seals and fluid. Or look for a sale on one. However acquired, buy as big a one as you can afford. Mine is a five



ton jack and has jacked up dump trucks, houses, and was one of the best tool investments I ever made. A three ton jack would be a good, flexible size.

Feeler gauges - essential for setting valves, points and spark plugs. It tells the thickness in thousandths of an inch, which is the way the specifications for your vehicle are written. Buy two; one type is for spark plugs and one is

cont.

for valves and points.

Sandpaper - a small square of fine sandpaper will come in very handy, but always use the kind that is not metal particle sandpaper. Used in the wrong place, metal particles could cause a generator or starter to short out.

Penetrating lubricant - WD-40, LPS-1, or whatever the brand name you choose; it loosens rusted-on bolts and generally helps wherever some metal part is sticking to some other metal part.

Electrical tape - that black stuff that tends to save the day.

Spare wire - the thickness of the wire that's in your vehicle. Just carry a couple of feet of it rolled up. It's indispensable when you need it.

Flashlight - the brighter, the better. I've been glad I've had one on some back country roads at night.

A rag - it makes you feel good to drive away with the gunk off your hands.

Pocket knife - for scraping, cutting wires, etc.

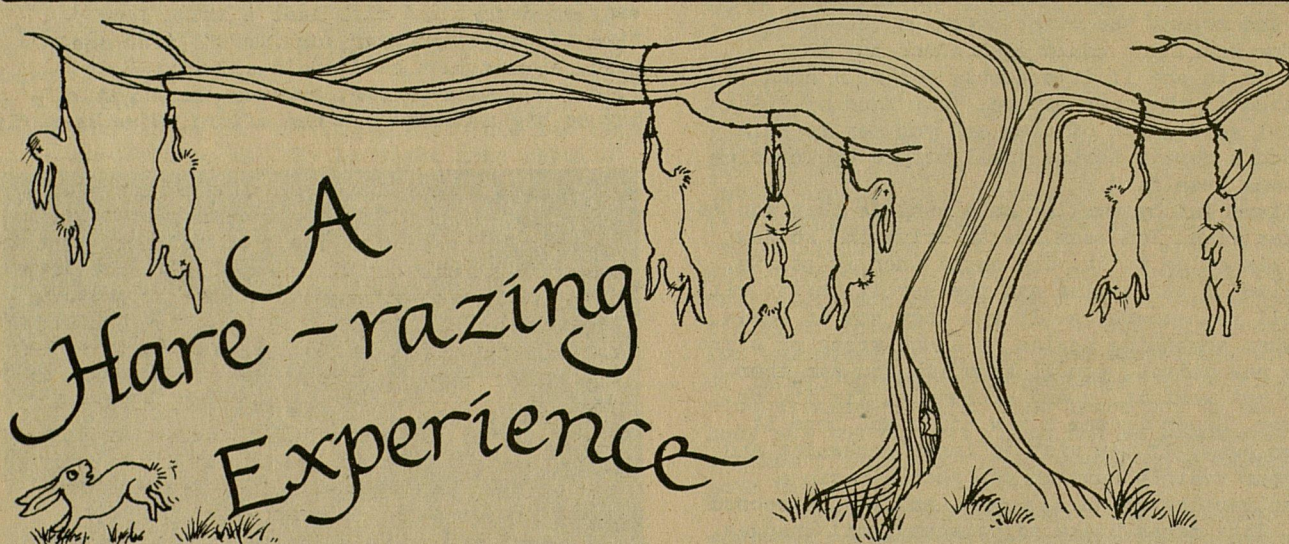
Ignition wrenches - a set of tiny wrenches for all those little nuts and bolts you'll run into, or, get one tiny crescent wrench.

Grease gun - indispensable if you intend to maintain your own vehicle. This is the kind of tool you can go in on with several people, since you only need it periodically.

Now, how do you afford all these tools and how do you know you're not getting ripped off when you buy them? Well, buy only guaranteed tools. (No cheapos are guaranteed.) Buy Snap-On, Craftsman (a Sears brand that can be mail-ordered), S & K and so forth. What this means is that if a wrench or screwdriver breaks, you can take it back and get a brand new one. Really.

One place to get used tools is in a hock shop. Look when you go to a city. You can sometimes buy a whole tool box full of tools for a fraction of the cost of individual new tools. Check at garage sales too. I got a whole set of tools, all guaranteed, for thirty dollars at a junkyard. And, believe it or not, there are a lot of older men who will help you out just because they respect women who stand up and do for themselves. I guess they remember the women of the Depression and World War Two times.

Also, if you run into a shop manual or a motor manual, buy it! They say on the cover specifically which vehicle they cover. These manuals are getting extremely hard to come by and you can always sell it for what you paid or trade it to someone who needs it. This is especially true of manuals for trucks or older Chevies, Fords or Dodges. And if anyone has a shop manual for a '37 Chevy truck, please let me know. I could really use one. ♀



The first rabbit I killed died a hard, unpleasant death. His screams and panic are part of me still. I would like to pass on what I have learned about slaughtering rabbits in order that you will be better prepared than I was and so that you can decide more clearly whether raising rabbits is worthwhile for you. A big part of deciding to raise rabbits is whether you can actually kill them.

If you can, rabbit raising is worth it. You can grow most of their feed, their shit is good garden compost, with reasonable care rabbits are quite hardy, and when you want, there is fresh meat free of chemicals and full of your own emotional energy.

I was completely unfamiliar with the taking of a life, but I knew that actually killing a rabbit would be much different from being an assistant or reading about how to do it in a pamphlet. Actually, I thought it would be a little like the first broccoli I ever pulled from my garden and sat in a jar of water for two weeks. It didn't help much that I'd known from the beginning it was to be eaten. That broccoli was a part of me, I had cared for it, been sensitive to its needs.

But we do many things that are hard as we learn to provide for ourselves, as we learn to deal with situations far from broccoli wrapped in plastic and anonymous fryers picked from under florescent lights. If you grow

rabbits for your table, you are going to find yourself one day staring an eight week old soft furry warm creature in the face, knowing you are going to take its life.

Laird had helped a friend kill his rabbits to learn how it was done, so it was easier to let him do the slaughtering while I assisted. For the first few times that felt right, but there came a day when my apprenticeship ended and I pushed myself to accept responsibility.

I have killed two rabbits now and the second experience was better than the first. I think the next time will feel even better, for I have learned more and gained some confidence. Here is a sketch of how I do it:

I pick a time when things aren't too hectic, prepare some coffee and sharpen my knives. I use two. One is a Buck, which I make as sharp as possible so that when I push the blade across my thumbnail, it catches. If it slides, the blade is too dull. The other knife is a Swiss army number which has a sharp but thinner blade with a rounded point.

When that's done, I locate a fourteen inch piece of lead pipe or a crowbar, comfortable to hold but heavy enough to stun the rabbit. Next I get the pelt stretcher which is a three foot long piece of flexible steel. Tools in hand, I go out back to set things up. There we have hung two pieces of baling wire from two long spikes, six inches apart. These I test to make sure the spikes are still in tight.

Mentally I go over all the steps that will be followed before I get the rabbit by the back of its neck and cradle it in the crook of my arm. I calm myself and the rabbit as much as possible. When I am ready, I grasp the back of its neck firmly and, taking hold of its two back legs, upend it. It kicks and struggles for freedom, but pretty quickly stops as the blood rushes to its head and it becomes rum dum.

I rub the lead pipe down its back, stroking toward its head until its ears flop forward, giving a clear view of the base of its skull. Taking a deep breath, I hit as hard and as accurately as I am able. This blow is not meant to kill, but to stun the rabbit, so it is now necessary to move quickly.

Now the animal is laid on its side and, starting at the back of the neck and working toward the throat, I cut its jugular vein with the point of my Buck knife. Both times I have not done this hard enough and the rabbit has screamed, one of the most haunting pleas for life there can be. It's panicked me, but once you've started, there is no turning back, so I've had to stun it again and cut deeper and harder. The second time, blood spurts and my hands shake and I feel pretty sick. But the hardest part is over. I hold it by the feet as it bleeds and feel its body as the life goes out of it and its heart stops.

When it's over, I secure it to the spikes by attaching the baling wire very tightly to the joint right behind each foot. This leaves my hands free to work and gives resistance when I pull off the hide. I proceed now as a surgeon. Using the Swiss knife as a scalpel,

I carefully ring the hide around each ankle, then slit down the inside of one leg and through the crotch and up the other leg, being careful to pull its hide away as I cut. The idea is to take off the skin like a sock, leaving the flesh behind. Next, the tail is cut off close to the body and the hide is ready to be slipped off.

Usually it slips down easily over the still-warm body with a minimum of pulling, and I tug gently down over the head, turning the hide inside out. Now the front feet are pulled out and the hide cut away from the head. I hang the pelt on the stretcher, which is bent in the shape of a U and pushed into the pelt. This stretching helps make a better pelt when later it is tanned.

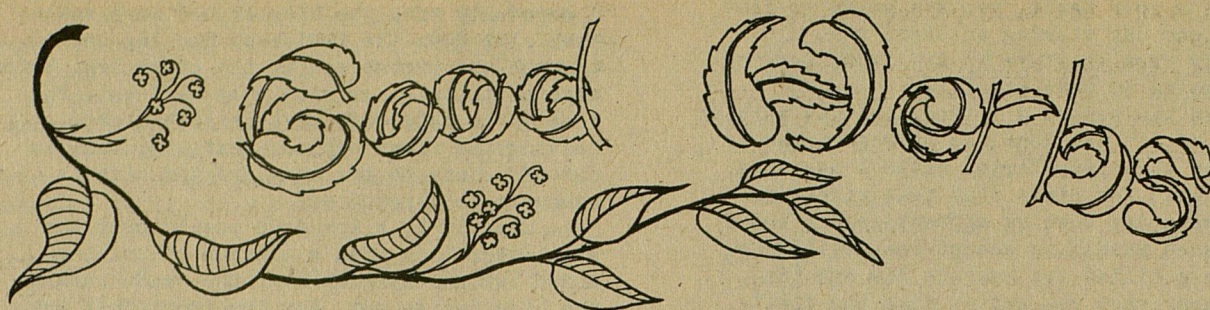
Finally, the head is removed from the body by cutting and twisting at the atlas joint; where the head is attached to the neck is easiest. I always take the head in my hand and look the rabbit square in the face before flinging it into the brush to be recycled.

Now the gutting begins. Very carefully, a slit is made down the belly with the blade of my Swiss knife. It's a good idea to slip two fingers into the abdominal cavity and run the knife along between your fingers down the stomach, with the knife blade pointed out, away from the internal organs. This way they are not damaged. As the abdomen is opened up, a lot of innards will spill forward and out, but some must be cut away carefully, particularly the urine sac. This will be rather yellowish in color and attached at the base of the intestines. These I pull out and throw over my shoulder.

One organ to save is the liver, a large, two-lobed affair that should be bright pink and shiny, free of spots. I have yet to see a bad rabbit liver, but its good to check just in case the animal was diseased. I give the liver to my cats, but other people save it and eat it fresh, lightly sautéed in a little butter. Certain fanatics regard fresh rabbit liver as the best reason to raise your own bunnies, in fact. Irrespective of who eats it, always be careful first to remove the longish, dark green bile sac that is attached to the liver. It is not edible and can taint the flavor of the rabbit if accidentally punctured.

Lastly the lungs and heart are removed and the feet cut off all four legs. Then I usually wash off the blood and any stray pieces of fur, cooling the rabbit meat in some water to which salt or vinegar has been added. This draws any remaining blood out of the meat.

When the meat is well cooled, refrigerate it for a future dinner. It needs a day or two to age. We like to marinate the meat in wine and herbs while it ages. Madiera is ideal for this purpose, but any wine will do. We often have friends in for our rabbit dinners and prepare it like chicken, boiled, baked or fried. The rabbit is always delicious and when we sit down together, there is a respect and appreciation for the whole process that made our dinner possible. ♀



Herbal medicine is a varied and multi-leveled subject which touches on many fields from botany to healing to chemistry to the psychic realms. It is impossible to reach deeply into the subject in only one essay of this scope - thus it is my intention to write several articles and to tie the information together. Each article will be as complete as possible and thus useful unto itself.

At this time, my herbal lore is most frequently dealing with problems of the

COMMON COLD

Cold-sufferers main requests are for teas to relieve stuffed sinuses and bronchial congestion/tension. My remedy for stuffed sinuses is a dramatic but simple brew, easily made from ingredients which can be purchased in markets and herbal outlets.

Tea for Stuffed Sinuses

To 1 quart water add:
1 tbsp. cayenne
1 tbsp. cinnamon
1 heaping tsp. ginger
a couple of large pinches of golden seal
a sprinkle of black pepper
Bring it quickly to a boil. Turn it off and cover. Steep 10 minutes.
Add honey.

The problem of bronchial congestion/tension is widespread and troublesome, particularly among children. Here is a basic brew with a number of variations, depending on the specific symptoms which need to be soothed during the healing process. The base of my tea is HOREHOUND, HYSSOP, AND COMFREY. One reason for this selection is the fact that I grow them all and have them readily available in quantity, both fresh and dried. However, there are many more, and better reasons why this particular combination is a good one.

Comfrey is one of the plants on which I would like to do an entire article. I can't begin to enumerate the reasons for basing a potion on this amazing plant. For the purposes of this particular condition it serves as a demulcent and it is one of the most ideal plants to use for this purpose. A demulcent coats irritated membranes and protects them during the healing process. Comfrey accomplishes this admirably without producing more mucous. It

also has very specific healing effects on infected or injured tissue. So, in this tea, it serves both an immediate and a more long-term function.

Diuretics promote the flow of urine and this virtue is ascribed to both horehound and hyssop. The actions which these two agents produce are those of secretion, expulsion, flow, a clearing-out of the body. The diuretic process is part of this clearing process. Horehound and hyssop are relatively gentle diuretics, so there need be no fears of extreme side effects. When there are irritated membranes, diuretics are usually accompanied by a demulcent.

Another quality belonging to both horehound and hyssop is that of a diaphoretic, an agent which induces perspiration. Some sources even list hyssop as a sudorific, indicating its powerful action in this area. The ingestion of fluids and the passing of them is an important part of the cleansing process. Horehound causes perspiration when the tea is drunk hot.

There is yet another quality which these herbs share; in this case horehound is the more active substance: that of expectorant. An expectorant loosens phlegm in the bronchial and nasal passages and aids in its expulsion from the body through the mouth and nose. Expectorants are usually used in conjunction with a demulcent. Here again, the inclusion of comfrey in the brew is indicated, because comfrey has expectorant qualities as well.

So we can see that the combination of these two related plants (both members of the Mint family, the Labiatae) creates a subtle balance of both effects and produces a comprehensive result. I will deal briefly with each and then indicate what other herbal agents can be added to this basic tea to obtain relief from other cold symptoms.

Horehound, Marrubium vulgare. Marrubium is derived from the Hebrew word marrob, meaning "bitter juice", and horehound is, indeed, bitter. I find, however, that sick children don't mind it, especially when lots of honey is added and this honey also has a distinctly beneficial effect on the pulmonary system. Horehound is expectorant, diaphoretic, diuretic, tonic, pectoral and slightly laxative when taken in large doses. Horehound has been used for asthma, coughs and sore throats in many cultures. It grows wild in hot, dry and often desolate places. I have gathered it in inland counties in California, but do not find it growing near the coast. However, it

flourishes year round in my garden only a few miles inland.

Hyssop, *Hyssopus officinalis*. Hyssop means "holy herb" and it is mentioned more than once in the Bible as a cleansing and purifying agent: (Psalms 51:7) "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean." This herb is expectorant, pectoral, sudorific, and loosens and dissolves phlegm, lessens fever (febreuge) and is comforting when stomach upset accompanies the cold symptoms. Other members of the Labiatae are also used for stomach troubles. Hyssop has been used for infections and the mold which produces penicillin grows on its leaves. I have not found it growing wild in California.

Here is the basic tea recipe. I usually make a quart of a tea for someone, tell them to drink what they want hot and then keep sipping it after it is cold.

Tea for Bronchial Congestion

To 1 quart water add:

2 tbsp. chopped comfrey root, dry or fresh. Bring to a boil and cook root 5 minutes. (If leaves are used instead of root, add them to the tea just before steeping and don't cook them.)

Add 1-3 tsp. horehound leaves depending on the effect you want and your patient's tolerance for bitterness.

Add 3 tsp. hyssop leaves.

Boil briefly, remove from heat, cover and steep 10 minutes. Add honey.

My measurements are approximate. If the truth be known, I almost never measure except by eye and inclination; the factors involved are so variable.

There are several other herbs which can be added to this to relieve specific symptoms. Yarrow is one I often add in the amount of a teaspoon for an adult, a big pinch for children. It is very useful in fever and headache and, if administered early in the course of a cold, can often break it up. It also heals and soothes mucous membranes. It grows wild everywhere. Valerian root, a teaspoon for an adult, is helpful for a sedative effect. I add it if a patient seems anxious or depressed about their illness or anything else. It relaxes a lot of general tension. Yerba buena (good herb) is tonic, soothes stomachs and adds a nice flavor. It is abundant on the California coast and I have found it around Redwoods elsewhere. Yerba santa, whose name also means "holy herb" is another good addition to a tea. It is expectorant and soothing and was widely used by the California Indians for bronchial afflictions. It is also used as an ingredient in a smoking mixture which relieves bronchial congestion.

I will include the formula for this smoking mixture. It can be used for something as heavy as asthma. One of the key ingredients, datura, can be smoked by itself to relieve extreme cases of spasmodic bronchial asthma, those in which a person can hardly breathe. Stramonium, an active principle of datura, specifically relaxes

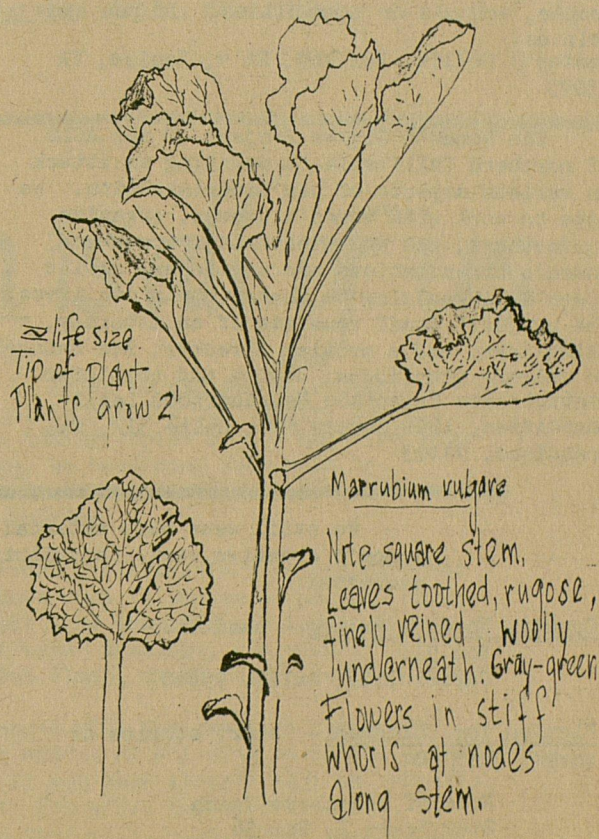
bronchial muscle. I have not observed datura leaves, smoked this way, to have any psychedelic or narcotic effects.

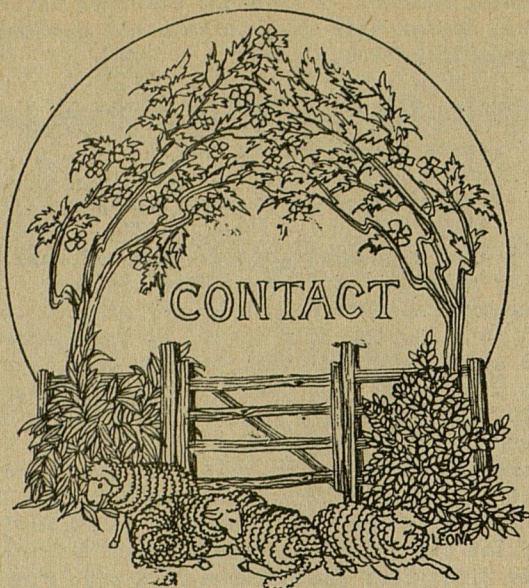
Smoking Mixture to Relieve Bronchial Congestion

- 1 part Datura leaves, dried
- 4 parts dried Coltsfoot leaves
- 2 parts dried Yerba santa leaves

I grow Datura stramonium, the official variety of datura, but "Jimson Weed" is very common throughout California in hot, dry places. I have found it along the Yolo River, in the Sierra Foothills and a beautiful variety with huge, scented bells of flowers in a peach orchard in Solano County, but not on the coast. Yerba santa does not grow on the coast either, though local belief is sometimes contrary to this. I have found people confusing it with Indian Hemp which has similar leaves and which can also be smoked; however, the two plants are really very different. I have discovered Yerba santa on a high ridge above the ocean near Shelter Cove, in a very dry and desolate environment. I have found it in abundance on dry hillsides near Clear Lake. I have gathered Coltsfoot in quantity in Connecticut and along the Albion River. It likes moist and shaded areas.

A final ingredient in the administration of herbal medicines is prayer, conscious and directed. I pray that this offering of mine helps you and your friends breathe easier the rest of this winter. ♀





We are six women and two children (three years old and nine years old) who are looking for other lesbian feminist separatists to live with us on five acres of land with apple trees and gardens in the Albion area. There are spaces available in two communal houses.
Contact: Aurora, Box 342, Albion, CA 95410

We are a group of women living in a large community in the country. We want to learn midwifery skills and we'd like to hear from anyone who could turn us on to any books, films, people, schools or communities. If you can help us.
Contact: Collie, Box 169, Rt 4, Louisa, VA 23093

The Women's Rights Project of the ACLU of northern California is mounting an attack on various aspects of sex discrimination. We hope to work with women's groups, organize conferences, act as a center for women and women's organizations and advise and assist women in organizing to change their own lives. The projects staff consists of an attorney, Ellen Lake, and a program director, Eve Reingold. We welcome your ideas, advice and criticism.
Contact: San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Foundation, 1095 Market St., Suite 312, San Francisco, 94103

The Feminist Eye, a conference of women in film, TV, and video, to be held in Los Angeles on March 29,30 is coordinating its efforts with the Conference of Feminist Film and Video Organizations, being held February 1st in New York City. Our goals are developing a more positive image of women in films and television; getting more women, especially third world and working class, in creative positions in the industry; expanding feminist alternatives to the industry and creating a national feminist media network. Information on both conferences will be available from the coordinators of either conference.

Contact: Frances Reid, 1334 McCollum St., L.A., CA, 90026 (213-413-2776) or Cathy Zheutlin, 237 Windward, Venice, CA, 90291 (213-392-5373)

If you are interested in being part of a small co-operative (mixed) community in northern Maine, we are trying to form one. Cold winters, black flies but fiddle heads, wild strawberries in abundance and wide, bright, night skies, make it worthwhile. We know of good land available reasonably priced.
Contact: Hilary and John Cole, Box 1350, Presque Isle, Maine, 04769

Common Life Education and Research COMMUNITY leasing land from Hidden Springs Community Land Trust will with more people or time fully define itself. We have feminist awarenesses. Fish farm research and political activism, including war resistance, will take place. An orphanage; freeschool; and eventually giving support to a writer, theatre troupe and other creative persons are being seriously talked about. There is a garage, sawmill, pond and some housing.
Contact: CLEAR, Hidden Springs, S. Ackworth, N.H., 03607

Farm for sale: 15 acres in Northern VA, 1/2 wooded, 1/2 cleared - small cottage, another large building, garage, 2 large barns, sauna and several storage buildings. \$26,600, possible to take over mortgage payments.
Contact: Source Collective, Box 21066, Washington, D.C. 20009

We still want more material for our special anthologies of country women's creative work. Contributions should be sent to the following addresses:

Country Women's Poetry - send to:
Box 511
Garberville, Calif. 95440

Fiction for Children - short stories or works. Send to:

None of the Above Ranch
Star Route 1, Box 38
Covelo, Calif. 95428

Photographs of Country Women - a book of portraits, women and their lives. Send to:
Box 90
Philo, Calif. 95466

Country Women's Fiction - short stories or other fictional prose. Send to:

Box 508
Little River, Calif. 95456

Future Issues

Sexuality: an exploration of sexual feelings, experiences, fantasies: childhood initiations, sexuality and age, making love with men, making love with women. We want to focus on graphic reality rather than theory.
Deadline: March 18

Women and Work: practical work experiences -- positive and negative aspects of creating meaningful and remunerative jobs in our sexist society. How do/did you choose your alternatives?
Scheduled for May - June publication.

**Box 51
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Country Women is all of us

We are still trying to increase our bookstore sales in order to pay sub-subsistence salaries to women who have been volunteering their services in putting out Country Women for the last two and a half years. Readers have helped by taking copies of the magazine into local stores and asking shopkeepers to stock Country Women. We need more such help in broadening our distribution network. Also, please let us know if the stores in your area usually sell out. Sometimes they do, and then neglect to reorder.

We now more than ever need people to contribute artwork. Unfortunately we cannot offer any money in return for your graphics, but individuals whose work is chosen to go into each issue receive a complimentary copy of that issue. By graphics we mean pen and ink drawings, wood or linoleum block prints, etchings, engravings, sumi brush drawings, ink washes, quality black and white photographs, even fingerpaints. But clear, crisp reproduceable material is what we need.

As always, articles reflecting your personal experiences with the practical side of country living are avidly sought. Currently we are in the middle of building an office space for Country Women and things are in a bit of a shambles. If you have already sent us articles, photographs or graphics, and requested they be returned to you after their publication, it may take a little while longer before they come. But come they will, eventually. Have faith.

COUNTRY WOMEN
BOX 51
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