

Ralph Borsodi

A Pioneer in Natural Foods and Organic Farming

"Separation of art and science is now almost universal. Take the staff of life. Bread ought to be both tasty and nutritious. One without the other is absurd.

"Yet chemists in universities study bread scientifically, producing facts about vitamins, fermentation and nutrition. Housewives bake bread primarily for taste and appearance.

"Because of the housewife's ignorance of science she may ruin her family's health. Because of the scientist's ignorance of art, his bread is not relished by cultivated palates.

"When both succumb to profit, the harm is incalculable."--Ralph Borsodi;
Education and Living.

In February 1975, Ralph Borsodi was swimming daily in a Florida pool, winning chess games with young people; lecturing to and discussing with audiences; completing a book on The Quest for A Good Society.

Nothing so remarkable about this, except that two months earlier Borsodi had turned into his ninetieth year!

When pool-side friends asked how he did it, he replied, "I'm no physical prize. My body shows evidence of childhood diseases and years of poor

food, and decades of constipation."

"You're doing all right now", one said. "When did you make a change?"

"My wife threw out white bread and white sugar in 1920", he said. "A drastic and complete change for us. My friend Hereward Carrington started us."

The Borsodis lived in New York City. Mrs. Borsodi was anemic and always tired. They had two little boys, but she had frequently miscarried. A doctor said she wouldn't live long.

At lunch with his friend, Borsodi noticed Hereward Carrington wasn't eating. "I feel a cold coming on, and I'm not eating today," Carrington had said.

Amazed, Borsodi heard Hereward tell why--that food in the body is like fuel in a stove--it provides heat and energy but stagnation and wrong functioning when overloaded. He explained digestion, metabolism, formation of poisons and toxins; need for elimination.

From him too in 1917-18, Borsodi learned the benefits of fasting, and practised it. Both of the Borsodis studied the book: circa 1910-1920, written by Dr. John Tilden, John Harvey Kellogg, Dr. Sylvester Graham and Dr. Alfred McCann.

A Revolution in Diet and Living

No more sugar, white flour and packaged foods for the Borsodis. In the grocery she read labels, asked questions, rejected foods with chemical ad-

"There is but one cause of disease, failure to protect the body from poisons from --Dr. John Tilden

"Selling of food to become one of the business enterprises of D. T. Quigley,

"Before 1945 the world produced crops of poisons. In 1945 poisons were used on 15 million people, deadly ones have been used since then."--Dr. John Tilden

Dogwoods Homestead, A Better Answer

"I know now," Mrs. Borsodi said one day, "that I made a mistake leaving our Kansas farm. The only good answer for us is to produce our food for ourselves!" In another year the Borsodis made their "flight from the city".

Hardly knowing a hammer from a hatchet, Borsodi remodeled Seven Acres and his wife planted a garden. They ate their food, canned and preserved it. In a few years they bought and developed 16 acres, and built the now famed Dogwoods Homestead. More gardens; chickens, a pig and goats. He commuted to the city for business; they ate well, enjoyed life, and improved their health.

The School of Living

Borsodi described their life in books; readers asked so many questions, they decided to build a School of Living in order to better teach. In 1936 the School of Living was a 3-storey Dutch Colonial stone building on a 4-acre homestead; in the center of Bayard Lane Community of 14 small homesteads, five miles from Dogwoods.

Organic gardens flourished. Well-made compost heaps combined vegetable and animal waste with earth; a library of good books on all aspects of living, was developed. People from all ranks came to visit; study and to build homesteads. All meals served at the School were from their own hands and gardens.

Among the people of note who came to see, to share and learn were Mnsgr. L. Ligutti from Des Moines, Iowa, editor of Rural America; Lady Eve Balfour, later head of the English Soil Association; J. I. Rodale and his 8-year old son, Robert,

who later established Organic Gardening and Farming magazine. In an early issue, circa 1943, they published Ralph Borsodi's study on How to Economize on Fertilizer, via composting.

The Family Farm vs. Agri-business

In the mid-thirties when agri-business was on its way in, Dr. M. L. Wilson and O. E. Baker of the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, wrote Agriculture in Modern Life, to state the case for the family farm. This he did, and joined a trilogy on the implications of commercial agriculture, mono-cropping, chemical sprays and fertilizers. This conversation is reproduced in a 1975 biography of Dr. Borsodi by Mildred Loomis. In 1938, he said, "In a generation or two America and the world will be facing a shortage of natural resources, as a result of mistaken agricultural and industrial practice.

Borsodi discussed his concept of organic, small-scale farming in Free America, School of Living publications and many other journals. All his efforts--in travel and education--have been based on his conviction that as humans remove themselves from direct contact with the Earth, they lose not only physical, but psychological and spiritual health. Norms of health call for a balance between urban and rural life. Present over-centralized society must be decentralized.

Dr. Borsodi's research in the Thirties proved by cost analysis that growing and preserving fruits and vegetables at home could be accomplished with savings as compared with buying them. When fifty quarts of canned tomato juice cost \$5.70, the School of Living produced it for \$3.53, a savings of nearly twofifths.

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