

On Pilgrimage - September 1954

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Summary: Chronicles the comings and goings of visitors and workers. Notes the crafts they practice and some of the trials that ensue. Ammon Hennacy begins another fast protesting atomic weapons. Keywords: retreat, fasting (DDLW #672).

A most crowded month.

July 30. Mary and Stephen Johnson, one of the editors of *Catholic Missions*, and Helen Crowe, came for a picnic with Tamar and her six children. The Johnsons so often took care of Tamar when she was a little girl that they think of her children somewhat as their grand children. A delightful hot day at Wolf Pond Park, ninety five degrees in the shade. The same Friday night Arthur Sheehan, formerly an editor of **The Catholic Worker** showed CARE pictures of relief work done. It is good to have pictures at some of our Friday night meetings.

July 31. Fr. Reinhold, famous liturgist, had lunch with us at Chrystie Street. A truly great man, to be loved gratefully by all the laity because of his work for their participation in the work of worship. Another visitor from Israel, a tool and dye maker from Tel Aviv, a conscientious objector to war who is trying to emigrate here with his family to peddle his inventions for agricultural machinery. He does not seem to realize we have conscription here too. Visitors also from North Dakota, friends of Dr. Robert Havda, who was a pacifist and served in a c.o. camp during World War II.

That evening Ammon Hennacy and I visited the scene of his coming picketing in front of the customs house where the tax payments from this district are to be made, and around the corner are the headquarters of the I.W.W. where Bob Willock, long time seaman gave us a history of the waterfront situation and the recent struggle between the A.F. of L. union and the old I.L.A. It made the position of Bridges understandable.

August 2. Betty Lou Geenty is leaving the work to return to the apostolate in the world but not of the world. We will all miss her and remember gratefully the years she gave to the work at Maryfarm, Chrystie Street, and the last year at Peter Maurin farm.

Never so many comings and goings as this summer, what with many children and many adults. Up on the hill in three tents we have thirteen children and Mary Anne McCoy and Helen Russell. They are colored and Puerto Rican, all ages from four to fourteen. We have made Fr. Duffy's big room in back of the chapel into a long dining room for them so that they will be safe from the flies which pestered them when they were eating under the cherry and pear trees. Fr. Duffy is growing in holiness every day. He sees his farm work, his hay stacks, his fences for the chickens and rabbits all in danger from the ubiquitous and

curious children. As we go to press we have had three camp periods of twelve and thirteen children each, and though the girls have been tireless in their care, the children get around. Green pears and apples endangered stomachs and the prospect of fruit for the winter dimmed. And then one day Fr. Duffy came in storming about the hay stack being burrowed into and fifty dollars worth of hay destroyed. Eleanor Corrigan, Ed Turner, Lee Perry, Al Grunnion and Stanley Vishnewsy had all helped to bring in that hay! Then he found that a genial drunk of our acquaintance had been making it his paradise, with evidence of his sleeping arrangements, and empty bottles secreted here and there. So Father apologized handsomely, but just the same the summer had been a hard one for him. On the one hand he says, the children have to learn about farming, about cows and pigs and rabbits and chickens, and what is a garden and the difference between pruning trees and breaking branches. On the other hand it takes more than a ten day vacation to teach them anything. What I hope for is this, that in the midst of the heat and furore of Harlem, or during the dingy cold winters, there will be a memory of days in the fields and woods, and on the beach, and the image of the goodness of God in their hearts and minds from their contact with nature, and they will think of Him as the Maker of heaven and earth and the sea and all that is in them.

August 6. Feast of the Transfiguration. Ammon began his fast yesterday afternoon at three. A French Protestant monk from Cluny, on his way to the World Council meeting at Evanston, a French Canadian seminarian, an Alabaman seminarian, another young man about to go to join the Little Brothers of Jesus, and Robert Steed from the Memphis Martin de Porres House of Hospitality, and several others launched him on his way, some of them helping to distribute literature.

In the afternoon at four fifteen there was another demonstration in front of the Japanese consulate which is in the Empire State Bldg., expressing our contrition for the past and present opposition to atomic weapons, and horror at the continuance of hydrogen bomb trials which are poisoning the food of the Japanese people.

In the evening to dinner with Karl Stern and his brother, and a walk through the East side. Later Helen Iswolsky talked on what the feast of the Transfiguration meant to the Russians. A beautiful evening.

August 8. Today Lucille Lynch and Jane Judge left Maryfarm, after their year's service there. Beth Rogers has returned from Atlanta where she had been caring for the last four months for her mother who broke her leg. She will be in charge of Maryfarm. Fr. Brown's retreat started today, and John Stanley is doing the cooking.

Four left Peter Maurin farm to go to the Maryfarm retreat. Ernest Lundgren of the St. Joseph's farm, Cape May, driving them.

Three Indo Chinese students at Peter Maurin farm for the week end, two of them Buddhists and one a free thinker.

Also this week end, four car loads of Puerto Ricans, a dozen to a car, one would think, from the appearance of them, so crowded that a policemena stopped them as they were going to the beach. On another occasion Helen and Maryanne were stopped with their load of children. "Who were they, Where did they come from," the police wanted to know. "Friends of the Catholic Worker," was the reply. It's like a new organization, "**Friends of the Catholic Worker.**" Some times such friends give us a good reputation, and sometimes a very bad one.

August 9. Jane and Lucille took the plane to Pittsburgh, and after a stop over to see Fr. Louis Farina, they went on to St. Paul. The fare on coach plane is only \$58 to St. Paul! Plane stations now begin to look like bus stations. Lucille was nervous since she had never flown, but Jane had, years ago. I hated to see them go, but am hoping to visit them in the fall.

August 8-13. Father Robert Brown of Louisville finished his retreat and the four from Peter Maurin farm came back in such a state of exhilaration, that they talked half the night. Peter Maurin used to say—"Be drunk on the Spirit, not spirits." The spiritual revolution makes all other kinds look pale and grim in comparison.

August 15. We do not have Mass on Peter Maurin farm on Sundays, since Father Duffy helps out Fr. McGrath and says the eight and nine thirty Masses. One of these days we will surprise Fr. McGrath into permission for a sung Mass. We love our little church, on its quiet street (no traffic problem there) with its church yard and benches and church hall and around the corner the cemetery. At a requiem mass one weekday during the month, Fr. Duffy said the Mass, and Fr. McGrath read the prayers for the dead, slowly, clearly, so that we heard every word of those beautiful intercessions. When my daughter had her last baby baptized by Fr. McGrath it was the same, both with the baptism, the churching and the offering of little Margaret to the Blessed Mother.

On Assumption afternoon we had vespers and a retreat conference from a book of recordings of Fr. Hugo. We were glad to see that our pastor at Old St. Patrick's is reprinting some of Fr. Hugo's conferences in his parish bulletin.

August 19. The loom is all set up. It took Tamar three hours, what with the children always getting cut feet and bruises and needing attention, and little Margaret crawling around on the floor underfoot. but someone sent in an extra crib, glory be to God, and now we can get her out of the way, and leave her to take a walk around the farm once in a while. She's at the crawling stage and has to be watched every minute.

Thanks to the crib, the loom was finally set up and now we are weaving yards of linen towelling. Lauren Ford sent another bag of wool so there is plenty of work ahead, for winter evenings, and we can make some of our own blankets and comforters this winter. Margaret Vincent, from the Edinboro, Pa., group came for a weekend visit and she tried to do a bit of weaving on the same loom that Mary Thornton had set up with both our own sheep's wool and goat's hair back at Easton.

Stanley has his printing press, a very small affair, going every day and had printed leaflets for Robert Steed, of the Martin de Porres House of Memphis, cards for Sue Coffield on the commandments, beatitudes and works of mercy, and countless letterheads for David Hennessy, and for me a card with a beautiful Memling of Our Lady to answer correspondence on. Now we can boast of a few crafts besides that of rolling cigarets. We have breadmaking, of course, and carpentry, and Father Duffy his farming. There a plenty of things to learn if people want to learn them, at this farm which could easily be an agronomic university if people talked less and read less and worked more. The best example we have of steady work, is Hisaye Yamamoto who yet finds time to read some every evening and for short periods during the day, and is ever willing to teach others, or lend a hand to others. This last week she was showing a few girls in a work camp how to make bread. They all got their hands in it and said it was something the had always wanted to do.

August 23. Another hectic week end. We had long watched the picnics at The Neighbor which is a tavern, not an inn, where every weekend there are working class picnics, from factories round about, and sponsored by Knights of Columbus, Holy Name men or various parishes. There are ball fields, parking lots, a dance pavilion and a good grove and the noise of the juke box, and occasionally of hand played instruments is wafted to us on the west wind. We put up with their noise and they put up with our occasional vicissitudes. Ours is an interracial neighborhood too, so there is no question ever about our international and interracial guests. We wondered why some of the ladies of the picnics never visited our chapel and in an effort to correct the situation, Ann Perry painted a very beautiful sign to hang under our Peter Maurin Farm sign and it was hung during the week.