



Frank Freed at his home somewhere near Pennsburg, Pa. The redwood tub on the porch holds live fish for eating later.

Family Lives on Philosophy and the Land

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PENNSBURG, Pa., May 10 — Not in this town, nor in the next, but on the rim of one of many valleys around here lives a young woman with an odd approach to life: quoting Nietzsche, she makes moonshine; reading Stendhal, she roasts dog; the message, says Dolly Freed, is people hardly need to work at all.

Dolly Freed is the name she has given herself for the jacket of a book, "Possum Living." She likes the sound of the name, as does her father, the newly christened Frank Freed, with whom she lives. They do not want to draw undue attention to themselves, largely because of their unorthodox, occasionally illegal, ways of making do. Thus the name change, and the roundabout manner of saying where they live.

Seven years ago, when Dolly was 12, Frank Freed, who was then 35, quit his job as an electronics technician in Philadelphia. He bought his house in the country for \$6,100, and he and his wife went into the candle business. Neither the business nor the marriage worked out, and the wife took the candles and a new husband and moved 10 miles down the road.

Front Porch Plus Back Yard

Dolly stayed with her father, discontinued formal education because "Daddy thinks compulsory education is a fraud," took up the front-porch study of history, literature and philosophy ("Nietzsche says, 'Philosophize with a hammer, testing idols to see if they ring true.'"), and the backyard study of edible vegetation. She also nurtured a slight strain of laziness into a fiercely strong strain of laziness that she regards as quite healthy.

Last year they spent \$268.89 for food. Between the two of them, they earned \$1,400. Frank did a little part-time construction work. Dolly cleaned an office one night a week for \$10 a night. They keep chickens and rabbits in the basement. In a redwood tub on the porch, a strange gift from a friend, they keep the fish that Frank catches. He goes fishing every day.

What They Grow — and Eat

He and his daughter grow basil, dill, parsley, fennel, chives, ginger, sage, anise, marjoram, rosemary, oregano, horseradish, garlic, tarragon, pepper-



Dolly Freed relaxing near her home, where she nurtures a 'healthy laziness'

mint, potatoes, tomatoes, broccoli, snow peas, squash, okra, corn, Jerusalem artichokes, green beans and wiser by the season.

They eat pigeons, turtles and dead dogs found on the road. "Dog tastes like mutton," Dolly says. They make whisky in the kitchen every afternoon and drink it with tea and mint.

"I grew up to the music of a merrily gurgling still," she says, as dandelion wine ferments in a corner. In one three-week period recently, they ate 75 sunfish, five bass, one crappie, one catfish and one sucker. Frank fishes without a license, always wearing running shoes.

From "Possum Living," published by Universe Books for \$3.95: "We aren't a couple of Thoreaus mooning about on Walden Pond here. (Incidentally, the reason Thoreau quit Walden Pond was because he was lonely — I don't care what he said. You need the support of a loved one.) No, if some wishing fairy were to come along and offer to play Alexander to my Diogenes, I'd pretty quickly strain that wishing fairy's financial preserves. We live

this way for a very simple reason: It's easier to learn to do without some of the things money can buy than to earn the money to buy them."

Frank, smoking a large-mouthed bass over a fire this cloudless afternoon just before going swimming in a favorite cold hole, said, "It's so easy to live without a job it's pathetic."

Dolly said that one of the hardest things about writing her book was the typing. She bargained for a broken-down typewriter, then taught herself to type. But the carriage wouldn't work. So she had to affix a large rubber band to the carriage, and then nailed the other end to the wall so the rubber band would pull the carriage along.

She looked off down the valley and said that it was a beautiful day. She said that she had a boyfriend and a radio for entertainment, a father for company and nature for life. She took a sip of 50 proof homemade whisky.

"The thing I can't make up my mind about," Dolly said, "is whether I'm going to try to save the world or become a go-go dancer."