

**HUGH MACRAE & CO.**  
(INCORPORATED)

**REAL ESTATE**  
RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES  
AGRICULTURAL LANDS  
COLONIZATION  
TIMBER RESOURCES  
COAL PROPERTIES  
RESORT PROPERTIES  
TOURIST HOTELS

WILMINGTON, N. C.

December 28, 1934.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,  
New York City.

Dear Miss Tarbell:-

We are still making use of your classic article\* as an inspiration towards broadening the program for rural life. This fact leads me to write you again when the broadening and creating an economically sound, socially satisfying rural life has become, I am sure you will agree, one of the most important problems of the nation.

The fight for replacing an impoverished rural life with one that that brings happiness is now at the zero hour.

As a background for this letter to you, I am attaching a copy of a letter from Dr. A. E. Morgan of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Also as a straw pointing in the direction of the wind, I am sending you a copy of a letter written to the President.

My belief is that we may safely consider Rural Life the primary motive power of our economic machinery. It has been forgotten and neglected, but like a rediscovered friendly germ, it is making a microscopic attempt to come back.

Knowing your influence and sympathetic understanding, I am taking the liberty to ask if you will throw your power into the momentous struggle at such strategic points as in your good judgment you think will be most effective.

The three most important points are the President, Mrs. Roosevelt and the Secretary of the Interior.

The general line of activity which I have in mind would be anything from a "to whom it may concern" letter giving briefly your impression of the possible usefulness of our rural life experience at this time or a more direct approach to the parties having the responsibility of shaping the national program.

\*"Will Your Home Be As Happy As Theirs?"

December 24, 1954

This plan, the ground work having in twelve months been prepared, has been surrounded with barbed wire entanglements which only your executive order can remove.

As far as any hope of eventually attaining success is concerned, this project has come to a standstill at a time when hundreds of thousands of families directly - and even millions indirectly - can be benefited by following principles already proven.

In my letter of November 30th, I referred to the statement made to you in the initial conference which you granted me on this subject - that you were the only man in the world with both the power and the sympathetic understanding in seeing this movement carried through to success.

It is the success of this program that I am interested in when I respectfully ask your renewed and continuing support of - not only this particular project, Penderlea, but an expansion of its benefits to the Southeastern states and to such other parts of the country as it may be applicable.

Respectfully,

(SIGNED) HUGH MacRAE

HMCR-AP  
Encls.

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

Washington, D. C.,  
December 13, 1934.

Mr. Hugh MacRae,  
Wilmington, N. C.

Dear Mr. MacRae:-

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for the chance you gave me to see the development at Castle Haynes and to see the progress on the Penderlea Homestead Project. I have just completed a trip of about three thousand miles through the rural regions of Tennessee, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. Excepting perhaps the immediate suburbs of Norfolk, I saw no agricultural developments on this trip which seemed so significant and promising as those at Castle Haynes. You and your associates have demonstrated there that small land holdings intelligently developed with diversified farming can become the basis of satisfactory and wholesome living. I was particularly impressed with the way in which the example of Castle Haynes was spreading along the roadsides. If there were fifty such projects scattered through the lowlands of the South this process of imitation would have a profound effect upon agricultural practice. I know from experience the long hard work and the many discouragements which must intervene between the initiation of such a project and its satisfactory development, and I congratulate you on the intelligent persistence which has been contributed to this undertaking.

I was also interested in the Penderlea Project. In a visit of only two or three hours one can not get a judgment of the effectiveness with which work is being done. On some of my own undertakings I have observed that the favorable judgment of visitors was based upon superficial appraisal, and that they did not see the weaknesses which I myself realized from more intimate acquaintance. However, in this brief visit I received a number of favorable impressions.

At several points it was evident that the work was in the hands of competent and experienced men and was moving along as a job does only when it is in the hands of qualified persons. For instance, I have had more or less to do with excavation of ditches by blasting. The quality of the results at Penderlea shows that the men in charge of this work are competent.

The technique developed in pulling stumps in land clearing seemed to me to be very good. The use of a large tractor for pulling stumps was a wise choice and the gang of men who were operating it in the stump pulling seemed to have an efficient technique. The work seemed to be moving along with decided efficiency. I judge that the use of this tractor has reduced the cost to a small fraction of what it would be by hand labor. While I watched the work, stumps were taken out at the rate of about three a minute by a gang of about a dozen or fifteen men.

Mr. Hugh MacRae - 2

December 15, 1954.

I was interested in the supply of poultry you have developed. I have seldom seen as fine a collection of hens, and if you can keep up this standard your residents will have a decided advantage over any community that would have to assemble its own stock.

I met a few of the families that you have chosen for settlers and my short-time impression is that your selection has been good and that these are the kind of people with whom you might expect to succeed. Such selection must have required a great deal of time and effort, but it is worth while.

I went to one of the houses and liked its layout very much. In comparison with much of the housing design with which I have become familiar, the plan was decidedly superior and practical. If such houses cost you not more than \$2,000, they are being economically built.

I repeat that one can not judge the over all efficiency of an undertaking by a brief visit, but such impression as I had was in general favorable. My personal inclination would be to leave more woods on these tracts. I think that for children growing up in a family, and for general appearance, a country with considerable woodland is more attractive. I believe that in general there is a tendency in the homestead projects to overdo the clearing operation, probably because it can be done so much more cheaply on a large scale. I am inclined to think that too few trees are being left around the houses.

I believe that it would be wise to build on every other ten-acre tract, leaving the alternate tracts to be absorbed as need requires. A family with several children may want twenty acres, whereas an adjoining family with no children may be satisfied with ten. I think that perhaps greater provision should be made for a variability in size of tracts to meet variable needs.

Thank you again for the opportunity of looking over the project.

Sincerely yours,

(SIGNED) Arthur E. Morgan  
Chairman of the Board.

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Miss Tarbell - 2

December 28, 1954.

Mrs. Macrae and I would feel greatly honored and would like very much to have you visit us again. We would like to show you now at Castle Haynes, Invershiel and Penderlea proof and some of the makings of an economically sound rural life carrying well-being and happiness.

Recently I hastily prepared the enclosed list of references "without permission". Might I include your name in a list of references made "with permission"?

With best wishes for the coming year,

Sincerely yours,

HMCR:AP  
Encls.

*Hugh Macrae*

Hon. Cordell Hull  
Hon. Daniel C. Roper

Hon. Robert Bingham  
Hon. Josephus Daniels

Hon. Joseph W. Bailey  
Hon. Kenneth McKellar

Hon. J. C. McEwinghaus  
Hon. Ibra C. Blackwood

Dr. Frank P. Graham  
Dr. George B. McCutcheon

Dr. E. W. Sikes  
Dr. Bradford Knapp  
Dr. E. C. Brooks

Dr. Bruce R. Payne

Dr. Charles J. ...

Mr. ...  
Mr. ...  
Dr. Alvin ...

Dr. George ...  
Dr. ...

Dr. Edward ...

Mr. ...  
Dr. W. W. Hall  
Mr. Robert Lathan  
Col. J. C. ...  
Mr. Clarke ...

Mr. David R. ...  
Mr. E. E. Lathrop  
Mr. F. P. Lathan

\*Deceased

C O P Y

Wilmington, N. C. December 24, 1934

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
President of the United States,  
The White House,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. President:

From the social column of THE MORNING STAR of Wilmington is clipped the attached item of great economic import.

By analysis it means that an economically sound, socially satisfying Rural Life exists at Castle Haynes.

Like Madame Curie's bit of radium - regardless of effort and the cost of effort - ~~there~~ it is.

Starting without capital or experience and living for six years in a \$500.00 house on a ten acre subdivision of a worn out tract of land, Mr. Ludeke has become one of the two outstanding farmers in the Southeastern states; I am tempted to say in the Nation.

It can be stated that his original ten acre tract is now the most profitable farm of its size in the South, and that the Ludekes' are living in the South's most successful rural community, which has been inspired and created by the Ludekes' and their associates.

My interest in this is that it opens the way for the entire Southeast on an equally sound and self-liquidating basis to immensely improve its economic status and social condition.

This, and the essential associated experimental and demonstration work, has required thirty years of time and a large part of my personal resources.

It is my wish to make use of the principles here developed in a way that will in this national emergency (which I believe is largely due to impoverished rural life, and from the lack of basic purchasing power primarily drawn from the soil) be of widest benefit. The time is propitious, and you are making the resources available.

One year ago, Mr. President, you generously agreed that a demonstration community might at once be built under my direction in the area near Castle Haynes - a process as simple and logical as lighting one fire from another.