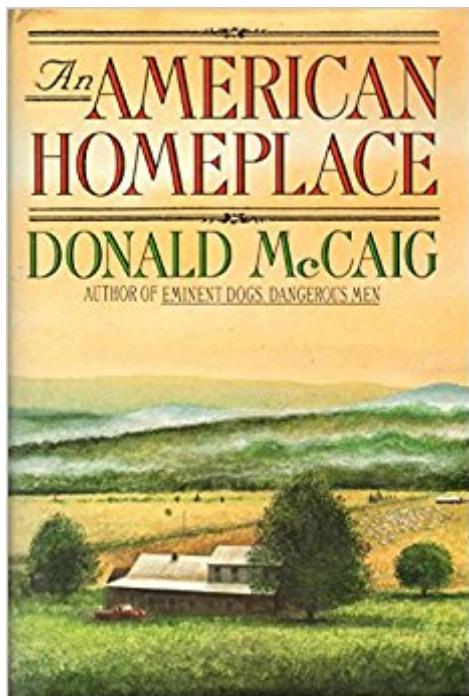


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# An American Homeplace



## **Synopsis**

A National Public Radio commentator on rural life in America comments on his own lifestyle and the nature of rural democracy as he describes the experiences he and his wife have had since they bought an unworked farm in western Virginia. 15,000 first printing.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In 1971 McCaig ( Nop's Trials ) and his wife left New York City for an abandoned farm in sparsely populated southwestern Virginia. Here he offers an engaging account of his tenure there in an atmosphere not far removed from that of a century ago, as he traces the land's history through its previous owners and mourns the passing of the family farm. Affectionately describing his working dogs, farm animals and wildlife, he gives the grim details of putting down more than 100 diseased sheep at one time. He tells about the local volunteer fire department, explains his duties as precinct captain on Election Day (68 voters) and takes us to the county fair, "the best four days in Highland County." Seeking encouragement in farming, McCaig turns to some notable writerly land stewards--Helen Nearing, Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson and Maury Telleen. Readers who enjoy Noel Perrin's works will applaud this book too. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This collection of writings by the author of Nop's Trials ( LJ 4/1/84) is based on McCaig's personal experiences on his Williamsville, Virginia mountain valley farm. McCaig first provides a brief history of the area, from the time it was explored and settled in the 1700s until he and his wife Anne

purchased their farm in 1971. The main portion of his book consists of an assortment of short essays or stories, some previously published, about farming, raising sheep, working with sheep dogs, dealing with neighbors, and day-to-day life in a rural community. McCaig concludes with brief sketches of a few contemporary "land stewards": Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson, Helen Nearing, and Maury Telleen, all of whom he has met and obviously admires. McCaig is a good storyteller. His concern for rural America and small family farms is present throughout this entertaining, thoughtful, and often philosophical volume. Heartily recommended for all public and academic libraries.-William H. Wiese, Kansas State Univ. Libs., ManhattanCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The word "essay" evokes thoughts of the dry historical documents that were required reading in school. That is not what Donald McCaig has written here. This book is an interesting collection of true short stories. The first chapter follows the history of the Virginia farm that McCaig and his wife purchased in 1971 and the beginning of their life there. The subsequent chapters describe the rural lifestyle of the McCaigs and their neighbors. There are stories of pleasure and of pain; stories of the hard labor and the simple rewards of farming. There are stories of humans and of animals. The chapter "The Best Four Days in Highland County", a narrative of a Virginia county fair, is the essence of the book, combining all of the elements that make the book, and the lifestyle, so appealing. Because each chapter can stand on its own, the reader can read or re-read each of them individually, and these are tales that deserve to be re-read and savored.

Excellent and interesting story of the joys and miseries of owning a small farm and the complex relationship between people and working dogs. If you're interested in homesteading or stock dogs, this is a great book to read.

wonderful story teller

A primer on the very best of America. Touching and trenchant, McCaig's tales of rural life offer a richer, deeper glimpse of the American spirit than the dross produced by Hollywood. City dwellers everywhere should read this book to refresh the soul.

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