

Free Land

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A life without landlords is a common American's dream real estate agencies love to sell. However, it takes a lot of work to own property without becoming a slave to financial institutions or the Government. A typical homeowner on a very small plot with a house in the suburbs usually has to make payments for up to 30 years! If the owner loses their job or is forced to move, the property can be foreclosed, and sold at a fraction of the price to vulture investors with the banks still asking for the difference.

Furthermore, because some Americans are worrisome creatures, there are many restrictions on what can and cannot be done to a piece of land. Zoning practices can keep you from setting up the front of a house as a storefront. In quite a few areas a home must be of a certain square footage to "keep up property values" (Read: more tax money for the slime balls in StateGov). Ritzy neighborhoods may have in place community covenants where your nosy neighbor could actually get you fined or force you to sell! Typical covenants range from required lawn mowing, not being able to change the oil in your car or even work on it in your own driveway, even down to what colors you are allowed to paint your house.

However, some of the benefits of owning versus renting are great. There will be no landlord to tell you that you cannot grow eggplants in the backyard. Even if you want to knock out a wall to renovate, no one will stop you. Not to mention, even the worst loan contracts for buying a house or land are much more favorable than a renter's lease if hard times fall.

So get some free land and tell the landlord to shove it!

Adverse Possession

Adverse possession AKA squatters rights is an ancient common law legal process now codified into law in most English speaking areas. It essentially consists of acquiring legal title to a piece of property belonging to another party after spending a specified amount of undisturbed time acting like you are the owner and sometimes also making certain improvements on the property. This law covers both rural and urban properties. If the family of a passed relative forgets about a property or you move in quickly and clean up an abandoned or foreclosed house as though you had purchased it there is no reason that anyone would suspect anything until several years later when you make your claim with the county or state for full legal title. It might even be possible to assure repayment for your improvements and place a lien on a property in case the owners ever return and demand the property before you can make your claim, in the face of the lien they may just leave you alone. Unfortunately one of the obligations of an owner is paying property taxes, but to make finding a property easier look on the county or state unpaid property tax rolls, this might help you narrow your search for abandoned property. So paying taxes is one good way to document that you are using the property, the good news is most counties will happily accept tax checks from both parties usually not telling the old owner what you are doing. A great way to establish a claim is to arrange for a friend with a squeaky clean look and record to 'trespass' on your squatted land as soon as possible after settling down, call it in to the cops, maybe they come by maybe not, this will leave a record in the police blotter that you are acting as the exclusive landowner.

It is important to be vague on how you entered a structure to occupy it, breaking and entering is hard to prove unless you admit it, in the US the 5th amendment means you can't be forced to testify against yourself, if the cops or anyone else ever asked just say you legally entered the premises, **your** home, and moved in, nothing more. If neighbors ask just say that you have a deal with the state and bank be vague, some neighbors will be jealous if they see you grab a free house that once belonged to their friend and might expend foolish amounts of time and money to keep you from getting your free lunch.

All you need is the balls to do this easy task and for one occupation you a street kid can be picking up homes for free, the equivalent of a six figure income, more if you adverse possess something in downtown Manhattan or Hollywood hills. If you decide to adverse possess additional properties and rent them out this is also a way to occupy the property in order to meet the statutory requirements, ordinary property owners rent out houses all the time and so can you in addition the contract is legal proof that you are acting as exclusive property owner. Now is the time for the rebellion to legally grab the free unused land, buildings, and means of production before the laws change or property values return to sanity.

What is important is that you meet the following conditions:

- You must actually occupy and use the property in the way a real owner would.
- Your occupation must be open and obvious, stealthy squats do not qualify.
- Your occupation must be exclusive, the current title holder must not concurrently enjoy any use of the property and you must be the only person openly acting as the landowner or landlord.
- Your possession must be hostile as in it must not be with the permission of the property owner, and hostile to his interest in retaining ownership of the property.
- You must be able to document that you have been acting as the landowner for the full period required by law without interruption.

- Claim to legal title must be either based on what is assumed to be legal title or squatters rights as established in state law.
- The statutory period or statute of limitations as established by law must have been met, it might be possible to count a previous squatters occupation and transfer to you as part of the legally required total occupation period.

A property owner may make the following defenses to block your claim to title in squatted lands or property by the following:

- Permissive use, you had permission to use or live on the land from the owner, pretty much never talk to or have any contact with the former owner without a lawyer skilled in property law and adverse possession present.
- Public lands may be exempt from adverse possession rights.
- The owner may make a defense that you did not make sufficient use of the property to establish your claim.
- The owner may claim that he or others also acted in the manner of a property owner during your period of adverse possession.
- It may be claimed that your possession did meet the full required statutory period or that there was an interruption of your occupation.

Because you will likely assume tax responsibility it might be better for some squatters to claim easement rights to dwell and use the property while leaving the landlord in actual possession with tax liability. If he is somehow able to drive you off for a specified period of time after you win adverse possession without you suing him for damages or filing a complaint he regains full rights to the land under the same legal theory.

Repo Your Own House From the Bank

Especially now with the foreclosure mess and housing bust you may be foreclosed out of your house, if you go along with that and move your stuff to storage there is no reason not to move back. The trick is that banks don't want to be responsible for a foreclosed property but if they don't kick people out there would be no societal stick to keep everyone paying mortgages. They will foreclose in court but not take title, this is an easy search in county records to find out, you still have your paperwork right? You can move back in and tell your neighbors you made a deal and now own the home outright, make the vague deal sound heartbreakingly expensive so they wont get jealous and poke around. Your old paperwork will probably work fine to reconnect the utilities and everything should be ducky until you can ride out the often shorter with-paperwork possession time period have the court give you your clear title and you will own the home you were cast out of by the bank without paying another penny to the banksters. As always it is good to invest some money to have the advice of a lawyer competent in this area of law advise you especially since you wont have a mortgage to worry about.

Buying Cheap Land

If you are wishing for the ultimate retreat or the future site of your own revolutionary compound, rural land can sometimes be picked up reasonably. By reasonable, we mean around 5,000 to 20,000 USD for a usable large parcel of land out in the sticks ranging from 5 acres to 10. Of course, the price jumps exponentially the nearer to a city you get or if any resources like timber, or farm structures are located on it. Note, that this does not include the possibility that you may have to pay the power company and

telephone company to run wires, a water company to lay pipe, or need to install a septic system. Nor does a land for this price usually include a house.

Craigslist and eBay can be good places for the frugal Revolutionary to look for cheap land, but do not shy away from a good realtor either. While the Realtor wants a commission, all state certified realtors have access to a database of all land being sold in the state they do business in - even many not listed in newspapers or on the web. That includes cheap land as well as luxury country club mansions. Most realtors will even offer free rides to the land to "show" it to you and will help you with the massive paperwork and financing. Be forewarned: Many of the really cheap properties listed are out in the desert, only accessible across miles of very rough road. Some may be located in flood plains than stay underwater every good rain or may be out in the swamps only accessible by boat. Most will have no utilities or cellphone coverage, or have no real farmable or arable land, and the nearest source of water may be miles away. If the main selling point is that the land is "affordable", it may be going cheap because no one wants to buy it. Also, get a property lawyer always to keep from getting screwed.

Speaking of rural land, you can still try using the antiquated free mining claim laws. Unfortunately, it appears that this frontier option is only left open for megacorps today with good legal departments. Even if a mining claim can be made legit, we are doubtful on the option of camping out on the land. The laws as we read them seem to imply actual documented mining activity and forbid all camping or residential structures on the claim without a prior waiver from the US Department of the Interior.

If being isolated out in the middle of nowhere just is not your style, there also deals to be found in many cities with a bit of research or the help of a realtor, if you tell the realtor exactly what you are looking for. Many cities have blighted housing which they cannot afford to tear down. Most of the time, you get a sliver of land with a dangerously messed up house for 2000 USD to 10000 USD. Problem is, most of the time, the city is going to give you a set time frame to demolish the house or make efforts to fix it or end up taking it back in short order. They may want to see that you have the funds in a bank to do this. Now, if you have useful trade skills like electrician, plumbing, and carpentry - you are golden. But, if you have no skills or the cash, it can sometimes take more cash to fix up than would be to go into debt slavery to buy a small place with few problems.

Free Kansas land

Kansas has a program to reverse certain county's negative population growth trend. Certain counties in Kansas offer plots of free land around the size of 10k-30k sq. feet, or about half an acre, or about a 1/3rd a size of a football field. They do this in exchange for the promise that someone will move to this land.

Usually the acquisition of this land requires that you demonstrate that you plan to build a house on this land soon after acquiring it. This means that you need to install a pre-manufactured home, have a contractor build on site, or build the house yourself. The land's still free and usually in an accessible area (and if there aren't roads, often the town will split the cost of developing a basic road with you), you just need to build a house. This program is only useful if you're looking for residential land.

Kansas Free Land (<http://kansasfreeland.com/>)

Developing Undeveloped Land / Keeping Cheap Land

If you buy a plot, and you want to use it as a place to live without having to worry about occasional run-ins with the police, you will need to do three things.

1. If there is no residential structure (house/trailer) there already, build one or move one in.
2. Pay property taxes once a year.
3. Build/keep any residential structures up to code.

Doing these things not only keeps you out of the cross-hairs of the state, but it makes you look like a model citizen in the eyes of the public, even if you have weird ideas, and make unusual decisions about what plot of land.

As already discussed, here are the three ways to get cheap land.

- buying/getting for free undeveloped land and building a house on it
- buying/adverse possession of a cheap home in a run-down, depopulated district of a city or town
- buying a cheap home in a rural area where property values are rock-bottom===

Let's examine how the above three obligations apply to each of these methods.

Undeveloped Land

If you're interested in "roughing it" out in nature (in which case, see the "Into the Wild" section below), you can get away (at least until you're found out) with building your own home that's entirely not to code, and not paying property taxes at all.

But in all other cases you'll need to pay property taxes or you'll get in trouble. It's not impossible to use property inspectors to your advantage if you feel the state is overcharging you, or simply find a state with very low property taxes. But taxes are the most basic way the government pushes people into wider participation in and support of the general corporate economy. In that way, they are very important to government, and tax evasion is one of most actively prosecuted behaviors. This is not a movie. You cannot take on the entirety of the government on your own. If you want to buy a piece of land just for you and a couple of people, you *are* generally going to have to pay property taxes. That's the game.

Likewise, if you build a home yourself in an area where it might receive electricity or water, then it's an area where it will be quickly found out that you're building a home. You're going to need a permit for that. Even if you're building an unorthodox residential structure, most local civil employees will actually be glad to work with you on licensing you to build it (cool, kooky eco-homes, or eco-communities could equal tourist money. Even with that out of mind though, municipal civil employees have slow workdays). It is a **mistake** to assume that just because you are doing some things which subvert a larger socioeconomic system, that the entirety of the legal system is angling to destroy you. It's not.

Should I commit to building a home?

Building a home yourself, and especially building a home to code, is hard work that requires dedication, lots of time, and lots of money. Building your own home is an expression of conspicuous leisure, won't overthrow the man, and is not the most efficient cost-effective way to get a home.

Are there good reasons for building your own home? That's for you to decide. But building a home is a commitment. You have to decide why you're doing this before you start.

Time

If you have never touched a power tool in your life, then expect to take at least a year, and very likely more than two years. This will be the case even if you can occasionally enlist a friend, or have a partner who is working with you on it. In fact, this will be the case even if you are well-versed in some of the tasks that come into play in construction or remodeling (drywall, finish carpentry, tiling, etc.) The only way you can expect to beat the one-year mark or bring the home reliably close to the one-year mark is if you have spent years working in remodeling or construction.

Cost

If you are experienced, building a 1-story, 1000 sq. ft. home (including buying tools on site) may set you back only 1015,000. If you are new at this, it will probably set you back 20-30,000. This is not including lodging and food for the time you spend building it. Unlike buying a house for \$15,000, a single person (who hasn't run their own one-man construction business for the past few years) can't get a loan which they can pay back over years. So buying a 15,000 home will hurt your wallet less than spending \$15,000 to make your own home

Questions to Ask Yourself

Although it would be really *cool* to build your own home and get you lots of *street cred*, it is wise to put aside those childish considerations when deciding whether to do it. Building a home is very isolating, will take up a large chunk of your life and will likely give you a back injury or two.

Before building a home, ask yourself these questions:

- Why am I doing this? What do I get out of it? Is the reason I am doing this a good enough reason to be worth all the hours and dangers I will face in building a home?
- Could I complete this home faster by simply working a job and then paying a few people or a company which is better and faster at building homes than I am to build it?
- Am I building this house to live in, or am I trying to build it to a level of quality where I could sell it and get some money back? If I am building it to live in, do I really want to chain myself to this area for several years afterward? Would building it "worth it" if I might want to move away a year or so down the line anyway? What if I lose my source of income and must move far away?
- (Let's be honest now) Am I building this to prove something to myself, impress my friends, or impress people I am attracted to (and then get laid more)? Do I really need to prove something to myself? And... do I really want to hang with folks that only like me if I have a house they can move into or crash and party at? Merely owning possessions that increases social acceptance does not solve issues like low self esteem or poor interaction skills.
- If I am in a corpgov approved marriage with an actual marriage license (or been living with the same person for years under common law), have I made arrangements on who will get the property after all this work if the relationship turns sour? Selling off during a divorce can often mean selling at a loss or losing the place outright to a vindictive spouse with a good lawyer. Property owned before a marriage can be taken, too if the spouse can claim they contributed towards the equity of it. But, this depends on state.

How to Build A Home

Buy a book. Lots of books. Go to public.resource.org for building codes. Start reading. The majority of your time needs to be spent on research beforehand. If you do all your learning "as needed"/"as you go," you will make many, many costly mistakes and end up spending much more time and money on fixing those mistakes than you would have if you didn't make them in the first place. This will also give you a sense for how very much work needs to be done.

Altogether, this wiki is not the place for a complete guide on construction.

Cheap home, urban setting

As usual, property tax depends on the state. If it's based off of property value like in California, then that helps you out a lot. Then again, you might not want to buy in California as Prop. 13 has created a housing market where even broken down house's have an artificially inflated property value and cost.

That said, the problem of keeping this new cheap property by remodeling and keeping the building up to code can be approached three obvious ways:

- Buy a home that may need substantial remodeling, and pay for the basics or do it yourself.

No need to make the place last another century, but this is an opportunity to take care of all those holes in the floor.

- Seek out a home in a run-down area that doesn't need too much remodeling.

There are plenty of homes in Detroit which are on sale for \$1 because they're in a largely-vacant neighborhood whose only residents are rabid dogs and career criminals. Many of the homes in neighborhoods are falling apart and need remodeling, but there are quite a few which don't and only have such a low property value because of the setting.

- Seek out a home in a run-down area in a metropolis that is so busy with its own problems, it won't pay any attention to yours.

In many poor neighborhoods, say far far south (past 80th st.) Chicago, falling-apart homes in poor neighborhoods is just the way life is there. You're likely to get in trouble if you're squatting, as its a common crime there so police watch out for it, but there are plenty of other people there who do it. And if you buy your own place in the neighborhood, if you do *anything* to keep the home up, that's still much better then the landlords around you, and you'll be left alone. Of course, if you're white, you're probably going to stand out in the neighborhood quite a bit for blocks in any direction and no matter what you'd like to think your skin color is a force for gentrification and your neighbors being pushed out of their homes. But if you're concerned about the hostility from that, you can always go for the poor white areas. Nothing wrong with living like everyone else in this country does - flat broke.

Building codes and how even anarchists can follow them

Whether you buy a home, are building your own, or are trying to acquire a home through adverse possession, you will have to do construction or remodeling of some kind to keep it up to code. Most radical types I know scoff at building codes as just some capitalist obstacle meant to hinder their free-thinking. It's not that simple.

Building licenses and Building Codes are there for a good reason

They're part of the process by which our society makes sure buildings which the majority of the populace ends up in are *safe* and *don't kill anyone*. Although in a different society, a different process could be used with more friendly human interaction, this is a process that has been built to work within the capitalist system to put a limit on reckless corporate behavior. You will find that because of its indiscriminating gaze, though, that it also greatly constrains your small-time personal behavior in building a home. In that sense, codes *do* make building a home inaccessible for the "little man" who does not have a pile of money or time.

As unfair as it may seem, there is a good reason for all this red tape. What may strike you as a nice but usually unnecessary feature (mandatory height distances from floors to outlets in basements, GFCI outlets in all bathrooms) will occur in the same way to many a thrifty contractor, and many home-building contractors or teams are just as small-time as you and your friends are. If everyone got to build what they personally thought was "safe enough," and made that decision around avoiding

personal inconvenience and expenditure, we'd have a lot of unnecessary deaths in this country. Although the existence of building codes could be posed as a sacrificing-freedom-for-security tradeoff, it is without doubt that if these codes were not mandatory (and thus home safety was determined by the capitalist market), no home that was affordable to the poor would adhere to them in the slightest, and thus choice of home design would be a "freedom" and a luxury that only the rich could afford. Instead of assuring freedom to the poor, most of the poor would still be confined in their choice of residence, only now to one which was manifestly unsafe to save development moguls a few dollars.

Getting city approval and cooperation doesn't have to be difficult

As a result, if you are building or significantly remodeling a home (rather than just, say, changing the flooring up) you're going to need to learn a lot about building codes, and interact with a lot of government employees (property inspectors, HUD clerks, courts, you name it). As mentioned above, it is a **mistake** to assume that just because you are doing some things which subvert a larger socioeconomic system, that the entirety of the legal system is angling to destroy you. It's not.

For example, municipal, small-time civil servants like these are often disconnected from the machine enough to appreciate (when presented to them properly) that the letter of the law is not the spirit of the law. If you are seeking to develop a unique home, do unordinary remodeling, or in any sense build your own home in their county most of them will be happy to work with you, guide you through the process, and give you leeway and flexibility when you're having trouble doing something. This is not always the case: some of them are hardasses, or will be antagonistic to you. The **best** way to get a municipal building inspector antagonistic to you is to assume a relationship of antagonism from the start.

How to make city approval and cooperation difficult

For example, if you are building a home, don't go in there having never built a house in your life with the clear belief that because you are an anarchist/communist/free thinker/environmentalist/whatever that you will be able to build in one or two years a specialty home that is safer, more efficient, and better designed than any home all of Western civilization has built in the last hundreds of years.

Drop the attitude. Don't be condescending or patronizing. Your worldview may be superior, they may be living an empty, boring life, and you might really be right about how much smarter you are than everyone, but be smart and keep your mouth shut about it while you're there. When someone feels that you don't respect them or are making fun of them, they're much less likely to help you out. You already know how radical you are, and they don't need to know, so there's no need to make this about how radical you are.

You are entering their domain and field of expertise and they are doing you a favor: show respect for their customs like you would if you were a visitor or intruder anywhere. Dress like them (business casual or blue-collar clothes when you go to their office, blue-collar clothes on-site), look like them (have someone go in there / meet them who doesn't have dreads or a rat tail, cover up tattoos at least to the elbow, remove piercings if convenient and possible), talk like them (keep slang to a minimum, especially "ironic" or mocking slang).

Conclusion

If you have unusual goals for building or remodeling projects, figure it out, do your homework, and go in there allbusiness about addressing that goal. Be assertive, but only about what you're there to do. You're just another person going in there to work on a building project. They are the place to go to for help, and they are there to help you. Don't bring your ideology into it. The average Jane or Joe is happily willing to help you with an unusual, interesting, or smalltime building or remodeling effort. But they are not interested in indulging your ego. Don't bring it up.

Into the wild

In the 60s there was a big move of hippies living rough in national parks, some communities still exist today:

- In Alaska you can stay in logging cabins undisturbed.
- In Humboldt county people camp out growing masses of weed, too much for police to find and destroy.
- In Berkley, yippies turned a barren parking lot into a community center with grass, swings, free-form sculpture and gardens. The University of California, with the aid of Ronald Reagan and the Berkeley storm troopers, fought with guns, clubs and tear gas to regain the land from the outlaw people. The pigs killed James Rector and won an empty victory. For now the park is fenced off, tarred over and converted into unused basketball courts and unused parking lots. Not one person has violated the oath never to set foot on the site. It stands, cold and empty, two blocks north of crowded Telegraph Avenue. If the revolution does not survive, all the land will perish under the steam roller of imperialism. People's Death Valley will happen in our lifetime. The Berkeley People's Park reopened in 1972 and is accepted by the University as a park. However, activists and police still clash over it sometimes, and the fascists from the '60s have no regrets for their actions, not even the murder. There is a very good article at the moment on the English Wikipedia (https://secure.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/wiki/People%27s_Park) .



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