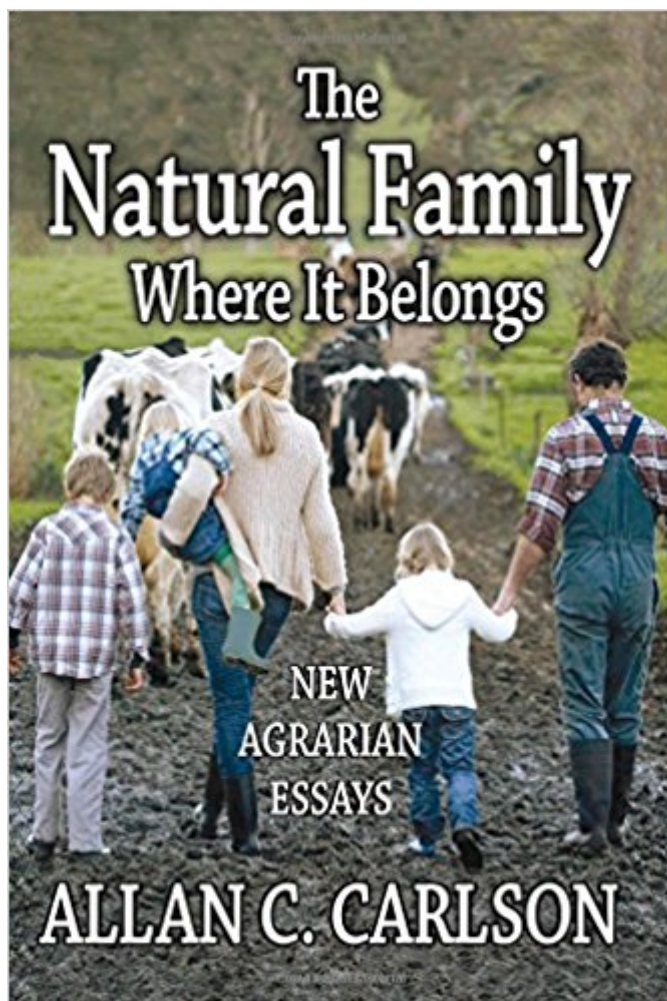


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The Natural Family Where It Belongs: New Agrarian Essays



Synopsis

The Natural Family Where It Belongs emphasizes the vital bond of the natural family to an agrarian-like household, where the "sexual" merges with the "economic" through marriage and child-rearing and where the family is defined by its material efforts. This agrarianism is alive and well in twenty-first century America and Europe. Allan C. Carlson argues that recreating a family-centered economy portends renewal of the true democracy dreamed of by Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. Critically well received, this paperback edition makes The Natural Family Where It Belongs available to teachers and students of twentieth century American social history and the American family system. It will also be welcomed by practitioners involved with the "new agrarian" revival of the last twenty-five years. As Carlson demonstrates, agrarian households represent the touchstones of a sustainable human future. Written by one of the most prestigious and respected scholars in the field, The Natural Family Where It Belongs will influence how today's family life is viewed in America and abroad. This volume is the latest in Transaction's Marriage and Family Studies series.

Book Information

Hardcover: 174 pages

Publisher: Routledge; 1 edition (March 30, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1412852846

ISBN-13: 978-1412852845

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.6 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #556,535 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #259 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Rural](#) #480 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Social Philosophy](#) #983 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Marriage & Family](#)

Customer Reviews

“Refreshing in its intellectual candor, to say nothing of its political audacity, Allan Carlson's Natural Family Where It Belongs has renewed the vitality of an important, but languishing conversation. . . . [Carlson] has shown that in the twenty-first century rethinking the meaning of progress has become not only necessary but also viable. His book may turn out to be

the first call for husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, grandparents and children to unite, reminding them that they have nothing to lose but their chains and that there may yet be a world to win.

• Mark G. Malvasi, *Modern Age* – “In four engaging parts comprising several essays apiece, Carlson (Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society) offers readers a brilliant history and analysis of the most important building blocks of civilization: marriage and the family. He begins his outstanding work by explaining the historic role of marriage and family as well as the community, state, and nation in the building and operating of civilization. In his second section, Carlson documents the 20th century’s destruction of each institution’s traditional role through industrial capitalism, gender ideology, and war. The third section highlights a variety of notable “agrarian” dissenters from these modern trends. Finally, Carlson concludes with essays marking the unanticipated return and vibrancy of traditional norms, made less surprising, perhaps, through their inherent good sense and alignment with nature. Throughout the work, Carlson demonstrates the outworn nature of standard political categorizations of “Left” and “Right” by perpetually skewering the sacred cows of both. Consequently, the book will generate vitriol from many corners, but that is merely one of many reasons his essays deserve the widest of audiences. In a time obsessed with the possibility of redefining both marriage and the family, Carlson’s work is simply indispensable. Summing Up: Essential.

• J. R. Edwards, *Choice* – “In this surprisingly hopeful book, Allan C. Carlson shows how agrarianism, far from being a relic of the past, is alive and well. With his characteristic incisiveness, Carlson argues that the natural family cannot simply be ignored or transcended. Human beings are not infinitely malleable, and they flourish under particular economic, political, and social structures that we deny at our collective peril. Carlson shows how a new agrarianism for the twenty-first century is a real, humane, and natural possibility. For those who are demoralized by the on-going attacks on the family, this book is a beacon pointing us to a better way.

• Mark T. Mitchell, *Patrick Henry College*; and editor-in-chief, *Front Porch Republic* – “What exactly is the family? What should its relation to the land and to place be? What privileges and responsibilities does nature require of men and women? These are some of the questions Allan Carlson has not only endeavored to ask but dared to answer – and to answer without fear of what the Re-Education Officers are going to think. . . . At a time when “family,” “husband,” and “wife” have come to mean almost anything, Allan Carlson has asked them to mean something very specific once again. More respect of this sort – for meanings, for the past, for tradition, for order – could go some distance in restoring health to that fundamental social organism, the family.

• Jason Peters, *Augustana College, Illinois*

“Allan Carlson understands agrarianism as a living, breathing force, not a museum piece, not a quaint (or disturbing) anachronism, but as real as poetry, farmers’ markets, and productive households. *The Natural Family Where it Belongs: New Agrarian Essays* is at once trenchant and hopeful, learned and loving. Carlson’s range is impressive: he writes of Distributists (Hilaire Belloc) and Northern Agrarians (the great writer-citizen of Michigan, Russell Kirk) and the devastating effect of World War II on rural America, and he even gives us a stirring reconsideration (or disinterment) of the unjustly forgotten Iowa insurance man-poet-short story writer Jay Sigmund, who knew that “Poetry is not a thing of far places.” Allan Carlson is a wise man and a patriot not of some far place but of his native American Midwest. Read him.

• Bill Kauffman, author, *Dispatches from the Muckdog Gazette* “Allan Carlson again confounds contemporary political categories in his well-researched and rousing defense of the natural family. He understands that a family must be formed by and embedded in nature to resist the dehumanizing rationalization and technologizing of modern life. More than simply a study of the threats to and possibilities for the natural family’s prospects, Carlson’s book ultimately offers inspiration and hope for those seeking to live a good life as part of a family, a community, and a common wealth.”

• Patrick J. Deneen, University of Notre Dame

Allan C. Carlson is president emeritus of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society in Rockford, Illinois and was distinguished visiting professor of history and politics at Hillsdale College.

A must read for anyone interested in the present or the future. beautifully written and full of authoritative facts we should all be aware of.

Interesting assessment of our current society.

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