

# Henry George Newsletter

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VOLUME 53, Number 8

October, 1989

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## AMERICAN HERITAGE — STORY OF THE LAND

*American Heritage — Story of the Land* is the title of a new videotape produced by the Henry George School for use in high school social studies classes. The tape consists of four segments, seventeen to twenty-two minutes in length, that each show how U.S. history has been affected and influenced by land and how it is controlled. The script was written by Stan Rubenstein, and narrated on camera by George Collins.

In order to capture historical accuracy, First Take productions, along with Mr. Collins and Mr. Rubenstein, visited numerous historic sites along the east coast from Virginia to Massachusetts. Guest professors and other experts are interviewed and pertinent historical concepts are explained in each section. The four themes treated are: *The English Are Coming — Early Colonization*; *Americans on the Move — From Wagons to Railroads*; *From Sea to Shining Sea — Westward Expansion*; and *Muckrakers and Reformers — The Age of Reform*.

*The English Are Coming — Early Colonization* depicts the founding of Jamestown, Virginia and the untold difficulties faced during its early years. Then, the story of the second successful settlement, Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts, is told by performers who play the roles of various Pilgrims who actually lived during the 1620s. Maps, interviews and relevant definitions are interspersed throughout the story. How to divide — or not divide — the land, was a decision both groups of colonists had to face from the start.

*Americans on the Move — Wagons to Railroads*, the second section of the tape, travels through time during early U.S. history. Starting with the Old Boston Post Road, we see the transportation scene advance to the early turnpikes and the heyday of canal building, culminating in that engineering marvel, the Erie Canal. We then see the canals eclipsed by another engineering triumph, the railroad. And it is the railroad that had the most lasting influence on the growth of the United States. Various land grants to railroads are explained in vivid detail to show how the increase in land value was distributed between government and railroads.

*From Sea to Shining Sea — Westward Expansion* traces the territorial growth of the United States from the Revolution to the Mexican War, culminating with Texas joining the Union in 1845. Included is the purchase from Napoleon of the Louisiana Territory, the acquisition of East and West Florida, the compromise with Great Britain on the northwest boundary with Canada, and the war with Mexico to gain most of what is now the southwestern portion of the United States.

*Muckrakers and Reformers — The Age of Reform* begins with the ascendancy of President Grant, his corrupt administration, and the impetus for reform. Touching upon some of the reforms during the 1880s, a short capsule history is included explaining the influence of Henry Demarest Lloyd, Edward Bellamy, and — of course — Henry George and the Single Tax movement.

Accompanying the tape is a twelve-page booklet highlighting each program, emphasizing important concepts, and detailing several activities that can be used by teachers to reinforce the concepts introduced on the tape. These activities include questions pertaining to the tape or analysis of a short text. One activity asks students to research and discuss popular slogans from U.S. history such as "Remember the Alamo", "Manifest destiny", "new deal", and others. At the same time, the students are advised in the words of James B. Conant: "Slogans are both exciting and comforting, but they are also powerful opiates for the conscience. . . Some of mankind's most terrible misdeeds have been committed under the spell of certain magic words or phrases."

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## **AMERICAN HERITAGE [continued from front page.]**

*American Heritage — Story of the Land* was unveiled at the recent International Henry George Conference in Philadelphia to an appreciative audience (see our September issue). Judging from the reception of high school teachers to the Henry George School's previous videotape, *Understanding Economics*, this one will also be well received and widely used. The School now has contact with more than 2500 high school social studies teachers in over 30 states. This new tape will be offered to them to use as part of their 11th grade American Studies program in conjunction with the School's printed material on *Land and Freedom in American History*.

## **LONG ISLAND ACTIVITIES**

Stan Rubenstein, Director of the Long Island extension, appeared on *Contact*, a half-hour program on WLIW, Channel 21, Long Island's educational station. The topic was the fact that a Nassau County judge had just declared Nassau County's method of assessing real property to be unconstitutional. According to Mr. Rubenstein: "What is most interesting is that the judge stated that the single most important factor in the appraisal of real estate is location. Unless this factor is dealt with, assessments will not only be illegal but unfair. About 40% of the value of residential homes is tied up in land value, yet the underassessed land portion does not reflect this increase."

*Progress and Poverty* classes are being held in three locations this fall in Long Island: Hicksville High School, beginning Wednesday, September 13th; Middle County, New Field High School, beginning Tuesday, October 3rd; and Smithtown East High School, beginning Tuesday, October 3rd. All classes begin at 7:30 PM and are offered free to the public. Teachers for this semester are Dave Norflus, Al Fink, and Charles Ellinger. Mr. Ellinger recently attended the International Conference in Philadelphia (see our September issue).

*Property Tax Relief — For Whom?* is the subject of a public panel discussion sponsored by the L.I. extension in response to the recent decision on the unconstitutionality of Nassau County's system of assessment. Speakers will be: Honorable Abe Seldin, Chairman, Nassau County Board of Assessors; Donald Leistman, attorney, representing clients in the tax assessment case; and Thomas Mulcahey, attorney and HGS board member. The discussion will take place on Wednesday, November 1st, 7:45-9:30 PM, at Syosset Public Library, 226 South Oyster Bay Road, Syosset. For further details, call the Long Island extension at (516) 734-7543.

## **NEWS FROM CHICAGO**

Fall classes began the week of September 11th with the following offerings: *Fundamental Economics and Social Philosophy*, Mondays (2:30) and Tuesdays (7:00); *Understanding Economics*, Mondays (7:00), Tuesdays (2:30), and Saturdays (11 AM); *Science of Political Economy*, Wednesdays (2:00); movies and discussions, Fridays (7:00).

Adam Monroe, Jr. has been commissioned to interview Chicago area Georgists for the School's oral history project. Adam's grandfather, John Lawrence Monroe, was director of the Chicago School from the mid-1930s to the mid-1960s.

Chicago HGS now has tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A letter of determination, issued by the IRS of June 20, 1989, declared the exemption effective as of January 30, 1970, the date of incorporation of the reorganized School in Chicago.

## **IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

For the past two years, Director Lucy de Silfa has been concentrating efforts to reach specific groups, as well as the general population. In conjunction with the Association of Lawyers, she began, in August, a twelve-week *Progress and Poverty* course with a group of lawyers. Meanwhile, Ms. Waleska Ruiz has been meeting with agronomists at the State University of Santo Domingo.

Of special interest is the Master's Degree Program, also at the State University. Forty students are studying Georgist philosophy once a week for six months. The course began this September as part of their Master's Degree Program.

In addition to *Progress and Poverty*, one course in *Protection or Free Trade* is being given this Fall at the Santo Domingo Public Library, and is being taught by Mr. Puella Marcellus.