



Fifty Golden Years

ABOVE is a picture we take great pleasure in sharing with our readers. It shows Mr. and Mrs. Otto K. Dorn in all their unposed joyousness, on their fiftieth wedding anniversary last summer pleasantly rocking on the lawn of their son's home in Utica, New York.

We love this little picture. We like to think of this romantic couple, Otto and Amanda, coming to the leisure years together, with a sense that life is good. We like to remember Mr. Dorn's regular Monday visits to the school when he would stride in, erect as a member of the king's guard, give a cherished and courtly greeting to all members of the staff, read his mail, sign a check or two, and sometimes, if we were especially lucky, bring us up to date on some of the big names in early Georgism.

Lately he has been reluctant to continue these commuting trips from his home in Westchester County, and has asked the board to find someone else to sign checks and be the school's vice-president (though he still continues as a trustee). For a long time the board members said no—we want Otto. Finally they did yield and made Ezra Cohen vice-president so Mr. Dorn could stop worrying. He was *that* conscientious that if he thought there was anything at the school, however slight, that needed his attention, he would come and take care of it, even in the most severe weather.

Some of the New York faculty members will surely remember hearing Mr. Dorn tell "how it all began." It is the kind of legendary story we like to mull over and retell.

"In 1896 my attention was called to a course in economics to be given on Monday evenings in one of Cleveland's prominent churches by Louis F. Post, editor of the *Cleveland Recorder*," Mr. Dorn once told us. "The tuition was free, the only requirements were a pencil and writing pad and a fifty cent copy (paper covered) of *Progress and Poverty*.

"I attended each of the ten sessions," he said firmly, "and stubbornly resisted accepting as final, the theories expounded by this excellent speaker."

Stubborn as he was, he was not aware of the influence Mr. Post's clear logic was having upon him until the end of the course. About that time the minister of the church "took upon himself the responsibility of demonstrating the injustice and harm that would result in making so radical a change as that advocated by Henry George." (Henry George was still living then, and his ideas were hot topics for discussion.)

"In the light of what we had been studying," and we quote the dignified and proper Mr. Dorn verbatim, "the pastor's remarks seemed to be absolutely silly and unfounded. So I jumped up upon my juvenile feet and

rushed to the defense of Henry George. This seems to have allied me with him ever since."

That incident was perhaps the greatest single factor in determining the future course of his life, as he has often affirmed to us. In public affairs as well as in private business he was determined to look for the underlying cause of every phenomenon as Henry George did. This enabled him frequently to find answers to problems which were not apparent to others.

Mr. Dorn has often emphasized to present day students the importance of Henry George in the field of logic. The clear sightedness of this logic gave him an advantage in business which enabled him to make progress in the development of a chain of shoe stores, as well as other activities in which he engaged. He was president of the Dorn Shoe Company in Cleveland from 1910 to 1920 and later manager of the Ground Gripper Stores, Inc., for nine years. (His first job was with a wholesale rubber house at \$6 a week).

Mr. Dorn never had any political ambitions but was active in the Tom Johnson campaigns in Ohio. In 1910 he took an active part in bringing about fundamental changes in the Ohio State Constitution, and in 1914 he served on the Board of Education in Cleveland.

In 1920 the headquarters of his chain of shoe stores was moved from Cleveland to New York, and that is how it happens that some of our sturdiest present day Georgists can remember Mr. Dorn as a teacher in the 1930's when the Henry George School was in its first home on 79th Street.

It was Mr. Dorn who kept this school going during that beginning period. He actually performed the duties of director but was too modest to assume the title. He served as business manager in 1935-36 and helped to get the school located in a large building on 29th Street. He it was who later searched out the present building on East 69th Street.

He is a director in the Robert Schalkenback Foundation and has been, since its inception, president of the American Journal of Economics and Sociology. Mr. Dorn has told us that he

had only a common school education (to the seventh grade). This seems hard to believe. His superb self discipline, kindness, fairness, good manners and generosity give the impression of a man educated far above the average.

His innate courage and faith will, we hope, speedily return him to a state of robust health. A recent operation and sinus ailment have temporarily gotten the better of him. Mrs. Dorn is a shining angel of hope and encouragement. A veritable multitude of friends have called to inquire and wish him well.

Ezra Cohen, who succeeds Mr. Dorn as vice-president, is an affable fellow indeed, and a native New Yorker at that. He also is a member of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation board and has been since 1939 a trustee of the Henry George School. He is an active member of the school board and board of trustees of the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York, and a trustee of the Milton Steinberg Educational Foundation.

Until 1950 he was in the fashion business (manufacturing of dresses), then he retired from "hard work" and went into the delightful business of helping Americans travel to glamorous, romantic, scenic, foreign ports. As you must have guessed, he's the man personally responsible for transporting Georgists to and from St. Andrews this summer.