

THE HENRY GEORGE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA: A HISTORY

INTRODUCTION

For over fifty years the Henry George Foundation of America has remained steadfast to the principles of Henry George. Since its inception in Pittsburgh it has grown over the years to become one of the largest and most effective organizations invoking the memory of George, with members and supporters in every state and in several foreign countries. The last ten years have been particularly profitable for the Foundation, as it has recorded several notable accomplishments in its efforts to provide a practical application of Georgist principles in American cities. The purpose of this study is to examine the history of the Henry George Foundation of America from its inception to the present, and to demonstrate how and why the Foundation has become perhaps the most successful of Georgist organizations.

THE BIRTH OF THE FOUNDATION

On January 3, 1924 Percy R. Williams of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania wrote to a friend that "...the time (is) ripe for definite organization of the local single tax movement." Williams was aware that there was no general agreement in the minds of single-taxers on the subject of organization, but he felt strongly that a fresh start needed to be made "...to enroll therein every believer in the philosophy of Henry

George..." in a national organization which would hopefully become "...the greatest movement in the world."¹

A few weeks later in a letter written to Joseph Dana Miller, editor of the Georgist journal Land and Freedom, Williams expounded on the purposes of the soon to be created Henry George Foundation of America. Williams wrote that "...it is our purpose to conduct a broad educational work and stress the economic significance of the single tax..." and cited that "...it will be a most difficult problem to undertake to reconcile the very diverse ideas among singletaxers...but we hope that the Foundation purpose and program will make a broad appeal to the majority of loyal singletaxers..."²

Efforts to charter the proposed Foundation ensued for over a year until August 4, 1926 when Pennsylvania Governor Gifford Pinchot signed the charter which created the Henry George Foundation of America as a non-profit corporation. The purpose of the Foundation as reported in its incorporation charter was to foster "...the support of an educational undertaking in the establishment of an institute for the stimulation of interest in the study of the science of political economy and, particularly for the promulgation and application of the principles of Political Economy, that is to say, the economic philosophy of Henry George as set forth in the books entitled Progress and Poverty, The Science of Political Economy, and his other works."³

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania was chosen to serve as the headquarters of the Foundation, as the majority of the twenty-

one original charter members were Pittsburgh residents.⁴ Pittsburgh was also chosen as the Foundation's headquarter site because it had been the first American city to adopt a modified version of the Georgist philosophy of municipal taxation. This modified version of Georgist principle became known as the Graded Tax; it held that land was to be taxed at a greater rate than buildings.

The Foundation was formally launched in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on September 2, 1926 at the annual meeting of the Henry George Congress being held in the Benjamin Franklin Hotel. Though the Foundation's charter membership indicated a predominant Pittsburgh base, it was the hope of the group to bring in prominent Georgist figures to its ranks for the purpose of establishing a strong organization of national scope. The Henry George Congress obviously provided a forum for which the new Foundation could reach other Georgists, and it was fitting that the Foundation would be officially christened at a meeting of its fellow Georgist comrades. Equally fitting for the formal launching of the Foundation to take place in Philadelphia was that it was the birthplace of Henry George. The Foundation's day of birth thus is also the birthday of Henry George, and the Congress regularly scheduled its meetings to coincide with the birthdate of George.⁵

The original Board of Trustees of the Foundation included: Johnstown-Democrat editor and former United States Representative Warren Worth Bailey (Dem.-Pa.), Paul de Moll, Charles R. Eckert, who later became a United States

Representative (Dem.-Pa.); future Pittsburgh City Council Member George E. Evans, Frederic C. Howe, Charles H. Ingersoll, J. C. Lincoln, George P. Loomis, John Mellor, Land and Freedom editor Joseph Dana Miller, Allegheny County (Pittsburgh) Solicitor and future long-time Pennsylvania State Senator Bernard B. McGinnis (Dem.-Pittsburgh), Hugo W. Noren, William E. Schoyer, Cornelius P. Scully, later elected Mayor of Pittsburgh; George J. Shaffer, Charles F. Schondrew, Carl D. Smith, Ralph E. Smith, Frank Stephens, George W. Wakefield, and the former secretary of the Pittsburgh Real Estate Board and Chief City Assessor Percy R. Williams.⁶ As is implied, the Foundation was able to attract numerous important civic and political leaders to its ranks, and this gave the newly formed Foundation a special legitimacy in Georgist circles.

THE FOUNDATION'S EARLY YEARS

Several immediate goals were quickly adopted by the Board of Trustees. The first goal was to purchase the house on Tenth Street in Philadelphia where Henry George was born September 2, 1819, with the intent of preserving George's birthplace for historical value.⁷ Funds were quickly raised and George's birthplace bought January 1, 1927; full settlement totaled \$7,000.00. Of this sum, \$3,500.00 represented the contribution of a Dr. Martin, the then owner of the property.⁸ While the Foundation was in the process of securing the George birthplace, it also embarked on a plan to establish a "Million

Dollar Endowment Fund to popularize the economic philosophy of Henry George." The Fund was acknowledged by Foundation President Evans and Executive Secretary Williams to be "a high ambition" but both seemed to believe that it could be attained.⁹ Such an Endowment Fund was to "guarantee a permanent income ample to carry on a broad, constructive educational work."¹⁰

In addition to the above stated goals; one of which was promptly achieved, the Foundation also dedicated itself to two other important long-range ventures. First would be an immediate demand for tax relief. The Foundation believed that a scientific system of raising public revenue was needed to replace the "...many oppressive taxes..." that retarded business and industry and was responsible for "...the high cost of living."¹¹ More importantly, the Foundation wished to popularize the idea of the single tax. Politically, the leaders of the Foundation were aware that the progress of the single tax movement depended "upon the development of favorable public sentiment...and that such sentiment would have to be created...by using all effective resources..." To this end the Foundation formulated a campaign of popular education by distributing literature and developing a lecture bureau.¹²

Emerging as one of the most tireless and vociferous lecturers of the Foundation was Executive Secretary P. R. Williams. During the first year of the Foundation's existence, Williams lectured before a variety of civic organizations in the Pennsylvania cities of Pittsburgh, Erie, Harrisburg,

Altoona, Lancaster, Corry, Wilkes-Barre, Lebanon and Oil City.¹³ The focus of these lectures seems not to have been concerned with the idea of the single tax proposal; instead Williams focused on the adoption of the Georgist styled Graded Tax plan modeled after that of Pittsburgh.¹⁴ The following year Williams took his message outside of Pennsylvania to the people of Wilmington, Delaware and Syracuse, New York.¹⁵ While in Delaware, Williams also spoke before the state legislature in Dover.¹⁶

In addition to Williams, other energetic and articulate Foundation supporters stumped for the graded tax plan. In just a period of two months, George H. Dunne filled forty-one speaking engagements in Alabama, Illinois, Louisiana, Minnesota, Texas and Wisconsin,¹⁷ and William N. McNair of Pittsburgh, who Land and Freedom described as "both a zealous worker and effective speaker," engaged himself on a lecture tour that was to "cover every corner of Pennsylvania."¹⁸

Through the work of individuals like Williams, Dunne and McNair, the idea of the graded tax program began to become popularized, particularly in Pennsylvania. In 1928 the Henry George group received its first major endorsement. After receiving several speakers at their annual meeting, the League of Cities of the Third Class in Pennsylvania unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the graded tax plan for Pennsylvania third class cities. The resolution cited the experiences of the second class cities of Pittsburgh and Scranton; that the plan had demonstrated its value in

encouraging the improvement of real estate and had fostered
the growth and development of those cities.¹⁹

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FINANCING THE FOUNDATION

Finance was a major concern during the early years of the Foundation, and it remained so until the late 1950's. The leaders of the Foundation must have realized that their original plans for a one million dollar endowment fund were unrealistic, as after a few short years there is no mention of the proposal. The Foundation reported in a 1927 pamphlet that it had raised the sum of \$12,102.25 since its founding; not a small sum considering the value of the dollar during that era. Of that amount, all but \$92.94 was spent during the first year. Being dedicated to the cause was certainly helpful for a Foundation employee as salaries paid during the first year of the Foundation totaled only \$2,250.00; most of that sum being paid to Executive Secretary Williams.²⁰

The Great Depression further complicated the financial plight of the Foundation as cash receipts dwindled steadily during these years. In the year 1929, \$5,789.89 was taken in by the Foundation;²¹ this figure dropped yearly, and by 1932 receipts totaled only \$2,660.58.²² It was not until 1951 that the Foundation again took in over \$5,000.00.²³ Despite the effects of the Depression and its obvious impact upon the Foundation, there is no evidence to suggest that the group deviated in its intensity to have its program enacted.

THE DEPRESSION YEARS

Much of the activity of the Henry George Foundation of America in the 1930's concerns the politics of Pittsburgh and the personality of William N. McNair. During the 1920's and the early 1930's McNair was an anomaly as a Democrat in the then solidly Republican city of Pittsburgh; he was the Democratic nominee for Mayor in 1921 and was its candidate for the United States Senate in 1928. McNair was a practicing attorney in Pittsburgh in addition to serving as a Democratic Party activist and candidate. In addition to his service to the Democratic Party, McNair was also a dedicated single taxer and a leader of the Henry George Club of Pittsburgh.

In 1933 McNair again sought and won the Democratic Party's nomination for Mayor of Pittsburgh; his margin of victory in the Democratic primary was so great that P. R. Williams wrote that McNair's victory was "so overwhelming as to surprise his most optimistic supporters."²⁴ The fall campaign was nonetheless expected to be an uphill battle against incumbent Republican Mayor John S. Herron. Although Herron was not at all adverse to the graded tax being practiced in Pittsburgh, nearly all Pittsburgh Georgists enthusiastically supported the candidacy of McNair. McNair certainly had deserved the support of Georgists for his credentials were of a solid Georgist stripe. For the fall campaign, McNair chose Foundation Trustee Cornelius D. Scully to serve as campaign chairman.

Both McNair and the entire Democratic Party were aided

by the general public feeling of animosity towards the Republican Party's handling of the Depression, but other factors were equally important. The personality of McNair himself and the aggressive campaign that he conducted were the primary reasons that led to his electoral victory. McNair was also the beneficiary of an united Democratic Party effort that was opposed by a faction torn Republican Party. The leadership of the Republican Party was held firmly in the hands of boss James J. Coyne, and Mayor Herron was clearly identified with Coyne. City newspapers bitterly opposed the Coyne machine and consequently they also opposed Herron's re-election bid. Despite any optimism that prevailed in the Democratic camp, Party leaders remained aware that they would need massive GOP defections to offset the huge Republican registration edge. Acknowledging this consideration, the Democratic Party slated the former popular Republican Mayor William A. Magee as one of their City Council nominees. Magee had already received the Republican nomination for a council seat. Magee had been Mayor when the graded tax was first adopted in Pittsburgh, and his selection by the Democratic Party was considered significant in an attempt to garner Republican support. In the end result McNair led a Democratic sweep in Pittsburgh municipal balloting. McNair easily defeated Herron by a margin of 102,867 to 75,674, and Magee led the five victorious Democratic council contenders by amassing an amazing 166,683 vote tally.²⁵

Pittsburgh supporters of the graded tax and of the single tax were overwhelmed by the large Democratic Party victories won in 1933. P. R. Williams was confident that "...prominent Single Taxers would be represented...in the cabinet of the new Mayor...",²⁶ and Williams was quite pleased that Walter R. Demmler had won one of the council seats up for election. Demmler was a member of the Henry George Club of Pittsburgh.²⁷

Even before Mayor-elect McNair's inauguration, he embarked on his reform program for Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania by pushing for a graded tax plan before the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The program would extend the option of the graded tax so that both counties and school districts would be able to apply the graded tax as a means of municipal taxation.²⁸ McNair was an idealist who saw the graded tax in Pittsburgh as only a fraction of a larger picture; to extend the Georgist principles of taxation throughout the land. McNair was a loyal Pittsburgh resident, but he saw his constituency as the entire United States. This would cause conflict throughout his tenure as Mayor.

That McNair saw the adoption of the single tax as his life's calling may be ascertained by a Pittsburgh Press editorial of April 9, 1934 that stated that Mayor McNair considered his primary job as "...preaching the blessings of the Single Tax,"²⁹ and that McNair felt that government with him at the helm could not possibly be separated from the principles of Henry George. This probably explains why

"Henry George Club members...(outdistanced) all political faiths when it (came) to landing on the city payroll."

Twenty-three of the one-hundred and fifty members of the Club received city appointments by the Mayor. Most important of these mayoral appointments were the selection of Club members as Chief City Assessor, City Assessor, and most members of the Board of Assessors. These selections were particularly important in relationship to the graded tax. McNair also appointed Cornelius D. Scully as City Solicitor. Scully had served as McNair's right hand man during the campaign. In addition to these key appointments by the administration and a host of lesser appointments McNair also had three fellow Henry George Club members on the City Council to work with, while the remaining members of Council were generally strong supporters of the graded tax plan.³⁰

One would have expected that the McNair administration would be characterized by an unusual spirit of cooperation; at least in terms relating to Georgists, but this was not the story of the McNair years. Much to the Mayor's chagrin, McNair quickly found out that his duties as Mayor limited his work on the adoption of the single tax. While most Pittsburgh Georgists were content to set their immediate sights upon maintaining or extending the graded tax program within Pittsburgh, McNair remained dedicated to the broader and more idealistic program of the single tax, believing that the adoption of the single tax would root out nearly all of society's problems.

Within a few months after his inauguration as Mayor, McNair seriously considered resigning his office so that he could go back to his single tax work. McNair believed that he could be more effective to the cause if he was not the Mayor of Pittsburgh.³⁰ McNair did eventually resign, but not at all too soon for many Pittsburghers. A long series of debacles and political miscalculations turned both the City's Democratic Party hierarchy and his fellow elected officials against him. Even many of his fellow Georgists in Pittsburgh turned against McNair and his antics. Under the threat of impeachment, and unable to work with the City Council, McNair resigned his office in October of 1936. He was succeeded by fellow Georgist Cornelius D. Scully. Although Scully had served as McNair's campaign manager and as McNair's choice as City Solicitor, he too fell out with the Mayor and was fired along with several other administrative appointees. The Pittsburgh Press gave Scully considerable credit for quickly restoring orderly city government;³² in 1937 Scully was elected Mayor for a full term, and he was re-elected in 1941. He declined a third full term bid in 1945.

Scully was an original charter member of the Foundation,³³ and he served as a member of the Foundation's Board of Trustees for several years.³⁴ He was also active in the Henry George Club of Pittsburgh. Significantly, although Mayor McNair became very unpopular in Pittsburgh politics, his unpopularity was not a reflection on the idea of the graded tax, and the graded tax never really became a political issue in the ensuing years.

With the election of William N. McNair, Pittsburgh began a long tradition of electing Mayors with decided Georgist tendencies, and although McNair lost much of his influence in Pittsburgh he remained and grew in stature in national Georgist circles.

THE WAR YEARS

In several respects the 1940's could be considered as the lean years for the Foundation. Activities of the Foundation became very limited in scope as financial contributions remained very small. There were however a few bright points for which Foundation members could cheer. The Georgist tradition remained intact in Pittsburgh politics when Foundation member David L. Lawrence was elected as the successor to Mayor Scully in 1945, and in 1946 former Mayor McNair returned to public life by winning a seat in the Pennsylvania legislature. Upon receiving official notification of his election, McNair promptly announced his determined opposition to the Pennsylvania Economy League's proposal for a wage tax in the City of Pittsburgh. McNair instead called upon Mayor Lawrence to immediately collect on its ground rent.³⁵

Annual meetings of the Foundation were suspended between the years 1942 through 1948, and some Foundation members wondered about what appeared to be the demise of the organization.

THE NEW APPROACH

In 1945, long-time Foundation President and former Pittsburgh Council member George E. Evans died. He was succeeded by former Democratic United States Representative Charles R. Eckert of Beaver County, Pennsylvania. Eckert plunged into the work of the Foundation with a new zest, but by August of 1947 he wrote that his "ambitious plan for the development of a program for the Henry George Foundation... (had gone) awry,"³⁶ and a few months later he wrote that "unless new interest can be created somehow and adherents to our cause moved to contribute, the Foundation might just as well fold up and cease to function."³⁷ Along with the President's despairing remarks he enclosed one of his numerous financial contributions to the Foundation in the ever-present hope that others would follow his lead.³⁸

Eckert may have voiced serious concern about the Foundation's future, but he had no intention of presiding over a moribund organization if he could help it. In 1949 he was re-elected for another term as Foundation President, and with the election of several new trustees he was able to sway the Foundation to follow his direction. A Policy Committee was formed and the organization determined that the time had arrived to emphasize the need for a practical demonstration of the value of the graded tax. It was further decided that the Foundation would concentrate their efforts in third-class cities of Pennsylvania, as the second-class

cities, Pittsburgh and Scranton, had already enacted land value taxation.³⁹ From this date on there is little mention of the principle of the single tax. The Foundation was now ready and eager to embark on the much more practical and attainable program of the land tax; it should be added though that the adoption of the land tax program was to be no minor task.

The first step in launching the Foundation's program was to raise the funds needed to carry on such a campaign. Secondly, the Foundation began to publish Foundation News in 1950. Plans were also made for the establishment of a Graded Tax League in Pennsylvania, and legislation was drafted for introduction in the Pennsylvania legislature that would provide for a local option in real estate taxation in Pennsylvania's third-class cities. Without such legislation the third-class cities were prohibited from enacting any form of the graded or land tax. In 1951 Pennsylvania State Senator Bernard B. McGinnis, a Pittsburgh Democrat and veteran Foundation Trustee, introduced Senate Bill No. 121; it provided for the separate assessment of land and buildings and permitted city councils to fix differential rates at any time.⁴⁰

The Foundation labeled this new campaign as the "Pennsylvania Campaign," noting that Pennsylvania had long stood as the pioneer in the practical application of Georgist principles in municipal taxation. The Foundation argued that "probably 90% of the home owners (would) benefit directly through substantially lower annual rates under a graded tax,

and much more, of course, by the complete untaxing of improvements...."⁴¹

The "Pennsylvania Campaign" got an important boost when the August 1951 issue of Foundation News reported that it was now possible for Pennsylvania third-class cities to concentrate municipal taxation upon land values. This was such because on June 28, 1951 Governor John S. Fine affixed his signature to what became known as the Third Class City Code. It was passed in both houses of the state legislature by overwhelming margins.⁴² The Foundation was now able to directly appeal to city councils to enact such legislation. Instrumental in guiding the bill through the legislature was its author, Senator B. B. McGinnis, and Walter E. Greenwood of Coatesville, President of the League of Cities of the Third Class.⁴³

Foundation supporters were overwhelmed by the signing into law of the Third Class City Code. Economist John Lawrence Monroe wrote that "...June 28 is another July 4,"⁴⁴ Clayton Ewing added that it was indeed progress,⁴⁵ and Gilbert M. Tucker reported that a great and very important step had been achieved.⁴⁶ Encouraged by their recent legislative victory, the Foundation became optimistic about further progress; contributions to the Foundation also began to increase. Feelings ran so high that the Foundation dubbed their 1951 convention theme as a "Victory Conference."⁴⁷

Despite the optimism of the Foundation, Pennsylvania's third-class cities did not jump at the opportunity to enact

such programs. One such example is the campaign put forth in the city of Easton, Pennsylvania. P. R. Williams, Professor George Sause of Lafayette College in Easton, and William E. Stowe appeared before the Easton City Council in a public hearing on the graded tax in November of 1954. They were encouraged by remarks made by the Easton Mayor during the hearing, but the Easton Express and downtown real estate owners advised Council to give much further study and deliberation to the issue.⁴⁸ As is often the case, these powerful groups were able to pressure the Council against adoption of the graded tax, despite the fact that the majority of Easton property owners would have paid lower taxes.

Perhaps the same such story can be said for the city of Clairton, Pennsylvania. In 1951 Mayor John J. Mullen pledged that the City Council would soon support graded tax legislation.⁴⁹ No such measure was ever adopted by the Council, lending to speculation that the United States Steel Corporation may have opposed the proposal; the steel giant is the largest property owner and employer in the City and it well known for having a tremendous influence in political decision-making in the City.

Although financial contributions did increase during the 1950's, the Foundation's treasury remained strained. As a means to generate revenue it was decided to sell the George birthplace in Philadelphia to the Henry George School in 1957 for the sum of \$6,878.57.⁵⁰ It's sale to the School guaranteed that the birthplace would remain as a Georgist

landmark and it provided the Foundation with much needed funds. Two years later, Henry J. Eckert, brother of President Charles R. Eckert, died and left the Foundation a generous bequest of \$15,000.00;⁵¹ also in 1959 President Eckert died at the age of 91, and he too left a generous gift to the Foundation. These bequests were invested in stocks and bonds and began the Foundation's Endowment Fund. This Endowment Fund today provides the major source of the Foundation's funds.⁵²

Political figures associated with the Foundation remained successful during the 1950's. David L. Lawrence was elected Governor of Pennsylvania, and Bernard B. McGinnis, easily re-elected from his Pittsburgh constituency, gathered increased stature as a State Senator. Under McGinnis's nurturing, the Pennsylvania State Senate amended the Third Class City Code to allow cities greater freedom in the use of land value taxation, and the Code allowed for a possible total shift to land value taxation for municipal governments. McGinnis encouraged the State's mayors to take the initiative in investigating the merits of the legislation.⁵³

In November 1958 the Foundation held its annual meeting conference in Pittsburgh and named the meeting a "Conference on Land Value Taxation and Free Enterprise." The Conference was held in Pittsburgh to celebrate Pittsburgh's Bicentennial and also to celebrate the forty-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the graded tax plan in Pittsburgh. It was the first time that the convention had been held in Pittsburgh since 1929. The Conference program included presentations by

a number of prominent Georgist luminaries, including: President Eckert; Vice President Ewing; Joseph Stockman, Director of the Henry George School in Philadelphia; Pennsylvania Governor-elect David L. Lawrence; Lafayette College professor George Sause; long-time Foundation Secretary P. R. Williams; Gilbert M. Tucker, the President of the Economic Education League; Pennsylvania State Senator B. B. McGinnis; Otto Cullman, President of Cullman Wheel Company; Judge John R. Fuchs of Texas; and Professor Harry Gunnison Brown of Franklin and Marshall College.⁵⁴

THE GRADED TAX LEAGUE OF PENNSYLVANIA

One of the groups organized and affiliated with the Foundation was the Graded Tax League of Pennsylvania; found in 1961, it was led by veteran Foundation activist William E. Schoyer of Pittsburgh. The Tax League was created with the goal of influencing at least one third-class city in Pennsylvania to adopt the graded tax formula. This city would then become a model city in efforts to encourage other third-class cities to adopt the tax program. With the victories amassed in the Pennsylvania legislature, the League was free to carry its message throughout the state. The League acquired a business office and enlisted P. R. Williams as part-time Executive Director. Williams was to coordinate publicity and political efforts, and through Williams, fund-raising efforts were sponsored by the Foundation to

finance the League's activities. Pennsylvania was chosen as the center of the League's efforts because it was one of the very few states that had given cities the constitutional authority to enact land value taxation proposals, and also because Pennsylvania cities seemed most accessible for the enactment of such legislation; largely due to the lobbying efforts of the Foundation which had at least made most Pennsylvania city officials familiar with the basics of the graded tax.⁵⁵

The estates of the Eckert brothers, and additional financial support contributed by Sidney G. Evans of San Diego, financed the early activities of the League. Gilbert M. Tucker of the Economic Education League volunteered his group's support, and Presbyterian minister W. Wylie Young enlisted as the League's Field Director. The League chose Erie, Pennsylvania to be the first city in which their lobbying efforts would be made. Erie was chosen upon the advice of P. R. Williams, who noted that the Erie Junior Chamber of Commerce had endorsed the graded tax plan. The League's early efforts in Erie failed to produce the adoption of land value taxation by the Erie City Council, but the League continued its work and would later make another effort.⁵⁶

In 1966 Professor Steven B. Cord of Indiana University of Pennsylvania drafted a series of ten letters for the League on the merits of the land tax. These letters were mailed out to city officials and urban renewal directors throughout Pennsylvania at two week intervals. The letters

stressed the various aspects of the land value tax as an aid to foster urban development and renewal, and as a special stimulus for improving existing residential neighborhoods. It was thought that the campaign was worthwhile in that it received much favorable comment and public discussion, and provided the League with contacts in several cities. None of the cities enacted the land value taxation program at the time, but Cord noted that it gave him his first practical experience in how to present the program before city councils; a very valuable experience.⁵⁷

THE DECADE OF TURMOIL

Nearly all contemporary historians agree that the decade of the 1960's was one of the most tumultuous and critical decades in United States history. For members of the Foundation, the 1960's were also critical years; but in many other aspects they were also years of continuity. Continuity was most evident in the continued leadership of P. R. Williams and other elder disciples of the land tax. Among these others was Professor Harry Gunnison Brown. Brown was a retired economics professor from the University of Missouri; following his retirement at Missouri, Brown moved to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where he became a part-time professor. Throughout his seventies and eighties, Brown remained one of the Foundation's leading spokesmen and exponent of the blessings of the land tax. He spoke before

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before civic clubs and municipal bodies across Pennsylvania. Brown also went as far as to take up temporary residence in Meadville, Pennsylvania in the hope of influencing that city to adopt land value taxation. Until his death, Brown maintained his firm belief that most people would actually vote for the land tax if they understood it, and he added that he felt that a higher land tax was a more realistic solution to slums than was President Lyndon B. Johnson's proposed anti-poverty program.⁵⁸

The Graded Tax League continued its work during the mid-1960's, and Erie, Pennsylvania remained a hotbed of League activities. Jack Motley, Wylie Young, and P. R. Williams worked with individuals in Erie, and through their efforts, the Erie Land Tax Association was formed. The League hoped that they would be able to convince a candidate for the Erie City Council to campaign on the land tax issue, and to this end Motley found several allies within a faction of the Erie Republican Party.⁵⁹

On January 9, 1962 the Erie Land Tax Association met to discuss their plans for the future and to decide how to promote the theme of land value taxation. It was decided to approach people through newspaper articles and advertisements, direct mail, and through personal contact. The group also began to conduct land value taxation classes on the campus of Gannon College, and major lobbying efforts were made to enlist the support of the Erie Home Builders Association and the local Bar Association.⁶⁰ This grassroots effort in Erie is most significant in that the Association was most effective in

utilizing community resources and member talents, and by laying a solid foundation for continued effort. The group also is to be commended for not waivering in its support of the program after early efforts to enact a land tax failed to acquire tangible results. This endless optimism had already been the trademark of the Foundation.

The highlight of the 1960's Erie campaign was the Republican Party's nomination of Al Woodell as a candidate for City Council in 1963. Woodell had endorsed the land tax program advocated by the Association, and in doing so, he became the first serious contender for public office in Erie to endorse the land tax. In turn, the Association endorsed his candidacy and campaigned energetically for his election.⁶¹ Despite his having waged an aggressive campaign, Woodell was defeated in this overwhelmingly Democratic city. There is no indication that his stance on land value taxation contributed to his defeat. His defeat was a serious setback to the Association and the Foundation, but to this day there remains a nucleus of hardcore land tax supporters in Erie who remain dedicated to the cause.

Following the series of setbacks in Erie, attention turned back to Pittsburgh. Upon Pittsburgh, did the Foundation lay its claim and hope, and Pittsburgh remained the model city of land taxers everywhere.

In July of 1962, a joint conference of the Henry George School of Social Science and the Henry George Foundation of America was held at Pittsburgh's Chatham College. The

assembled groups were welcomed by Pittsburgh Mayor Joseph M. Barr, heir to the powerful Lawrence Democratic organization. Barr told the groups that the graded tax plan of Pittsburgh had "done a great deal to encourage the improvement of real estate in general and especially the building of homes and apartments, and it has definitely reduced the tax burden on the home owners." As a former State Senator from Pittsburgh, Barr reminded the groups that he had been a legislative supporter of the graded tax.⁶² Not surprisingly, the Foundation had welcomed his election as Mayor, and favorably viewed his landslide re-election bid in 1965.

Suddenly and without prior notice, Mayor Barr announced in 1968 that he was going to ask the state legislature in Harrisburg to give the city the right to choose between a graded tax and a flat millage formula. Barr felt that whatever economic benefits had laid in the graded tax concept with its stress on land values no longer applied in a city with virtually little or no vacant land available for development.⁶³ The Foundation and its subsidiary organization, the Incentive Tax League, immediately attacked Barr's plan to consolidate the taxation of land and buildings, arguing that it would have been most harmful to the poorest residents of Pittsburgh, and that it would lessen the incentive to rehabilitate and renovate property.⁶⁴

The bill was sponsored in the legislature by two city assemblymen, Democrat Charles N. Caputo and Republican Joseph P. Rigby. Following the vehement opposition to the bill by

the Foundation, Rigby dropped his signature as a sponsor, and the bill died without having ever been debated on the floor of the House. As a result, the graded tax sustained its first real threat in Pittsburgh, and in the years to come there would not be any concentrated efforts raised to amend the fundamentals of the graded tax. In fact the tax would later be expanded with the unanimous support of the City Council.

THE SUCCESSFUL DECADE

Surely the 1970's must be considered the most successful decade ever in the history of the Henry George Foundation of America. The decade was marked by a very successful fund-raising and investment program, a changing of the guard in the leadership of the Foundation, and a new flurry of lobbying efforts carried across Pennsylvania. These lobbying efforts would result in several monumental victories for the Foundation.

William E. Schoyer had served as President of the Foundation between 1966 and 1976. He resigned his office in 1976 due to his advancing age and declining health. Schoyer was succeeded by Steven B. Cord, professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Cord had been active in the Foundation for a number of years and had served as a Trustee and as Vice President. It was Cord, who, along with P. R. Williams and John C. Weaver, kept the organization intact

during the late 1960's and early 1970's, with Williams and Weaver staffing the Pittsburgh office. Williams and Weaver, two veteran Georgists, held regular monthly meetings in Pittsburgh, answered requests for information, and maintained the general office. Both were holdovers from the era of William N. McNair, with Williams being a classical liberal Democrat in the tradition of Woodrow Wilson, while Weaver was a Republican progressive in the mold of Theodore Roosevelt. Though well into their eighties, both were quite active, and Williams remained an employee of the City of Pittsburgh as a property tax consultant. While these two elder statesmen assumed responsibility for the Pittsburgh office, Cord embarked on lobbying efforts throughout Pennsylvania on behalf of the graded tax. Cord, with the advice of Williams, changed the Foundation's traditional campaign pitch in that they no longer would propose that cities adopt the standard 2:1 land:building property tax rates, but instead simply advocated that land rates be higher than those of buildings.⁶⁵

In 1969 the Foundation began to publish a quarterly journal entitled Equal Rights; devoted to discussing the various undertakings of the Foundation, as well as providing information on Georgist and particularly graded tax principles. Williams served as the first editor of the journal, with Cord and James L. Busey serving as associate editors. Funds for publication of the journal were provided by a series of fortunate investments in the Boeing Corporation which netted a significant profit.⁶⁶ In addition to the dividends

received from the Boeing Corporation, the Foundation also benefited from several large financial contributions. Walter H. Sheffield, a prominent California Georgist donated \$10,000.00;⁶⁷ William Schoyer donated \$5,000.00;⁶⁸ and a bequest that eventually totaled \$32,000.00 came from the estate of Steven Cronan, a relatively unknown Chicago Georgist. Cronan, a bachelor, had made sporadic correspondence with Williams, but the two never met. Foundation records recorded that Cronan had previously made a \$100.00 donation, but his large bequest in 1977 came as a total surprise.⁶⁹

Sparked by additional revenue, and with the addition of new activists within the Foundation, the issue of the Foundation's leadership and control emerged in 1974. As is often the case when individuals remain in positions of leadership for many years, the Foundation had become somewhat stagnant. Younger Trustees desired to chart a new direction for the Foundation's future, while the old guard was skeptical and resistant to change. P. R. Williams was at the center of the emerging debate, as he was the leader whose leadership was being challenged. Williams had served as Secretary of the Foundation since its founding in 1926, and as Secretary he was the most powerful and influential officer as it was he who controlled the checkbook. The Secretary of the group far outdistanced the other officers in power, including that of the President. In addition to this, Williams was able to devote nearly all of his energies to the Foundation, as he was partially retired. Most all of the other officers were

engaged in full-time employment, thus when the telephone rang in the Foundation office or when mail was received, it was P. R. Williams that the public had made contact with, as he and John Weaver staffed the office. Williams simply had more time to consolidate his power within the organization, and for years no one dared to challenge his authority.

Jack Tetley first voiced concern over William's leadership. In order to undercut Williams control over the organization, he urged that the Foundation hold a special meeting to change the Foundation's Constitution and By-Laws, to discuss the financial status of the organization, and to chart a new course of action for the future.⁷⁰ Williams replied to Tetley's request with an unusual display of indignation, believing that Tetley was entirely out of order and that he was proceeding without authority in an attempt to take over the entire operation of the Foundation. Williams then bluntly charged that Tetley had never offered anything significant in the past to solve the organization's problems.⁷¹ Despite William's blast at Tetley, (which does seem unjustified) Tetley was joined by Cord, Wylie Young, and three other trustees in calling for a special meeting to be held in Philadelphia on January 11, 1974. This group added in their call for a meeting that they sincerely hoped that Williams would attend, as they wanted the benefit of his experience and advice.⁷² Justifiably, Tetley responded to William's charges leveled at him. He stated that it was his desire "to promote the best interest (of) the organization (and sought) nothing personal"

for himself in requesting the meeting.⁷³ Although President Cord held high personal regard for Williams and respect for his long tenure as Secretary, he too shared some of Tetley's concerns. Cord specifically believed that the organization was spending too much money for administrative costs, and too little on taking the message of the graded tax to political figures in Pennsylvania and elsewhere. For whatever reason, little action was taken at the special meeting, and unfortunately some hard feelings developed between Williams and his allies and those who had called for the special meeting. Cord was able to quickly mend the broken fences that had developed as a result of the special meeting, and soon all returned to normal between the group. It is fortunate that no subsequent split developed following the incident, and to this day the Foundation remains a cohesive organization.⁷⁴

The only subsequent development incurring as a result of the 1974 special meeting was that it was decided to increase the number of the Foundation's officers. In the years ahead three vice-presidents would be elected as well as an assistant secretary and an assistant treasurer.⁷⁵

THE NEW TOWN MOVEMENT

During the 1960's and 1970's, a new housing movement began in the United States known as the New Town Movement. This movement was important to the Foundation in that it potentially could have provided several model demonstration

cities that were truly governed by Georgist taxation principles. These communities were built by private land developers in several locations throughout the United States.

For Georgists to capture the initiative of this movement, Floyd Morrow, a San Diego, California City Councilman and Chairman of Basic Economic Education, a non-profit corporation, embarked on what he hoped would be a new national membership organization. He named the organization Land Equality and Freedom, known as LEAF. LEAF was to provide a fund of \$2,000,000.00 in bequests to finance its activities. In 1974, at the annual convention of the Henry George Foundation of America, being held at Pittsburgh's Chatham College, LEAF announced that it would donate money to Cord to finance a new publication. The publication was to be entitled Tax Free New Towns, and it was to be sent to residents living in such towns. Unfortunately, however, for both Morrow and Cord, most of these new towns fell into bankruptcy within a few years. This however did not deter Cord, and in 1975 a new publication began to be published. It was entitled Incentive Taxation. This successor publication to Tax Free New Towns was initially funded by Basic Economic Education, but as time went on, subscriptions and contributions became more important to Incentive Taxation. Along with the money being raised through subscriptions and contributions, the Foundation has been able to finance the needed balance to publish the journal; Basic Economic Education continues to finance a part of the necessary costs as well. Incentive Taxation is greatly aided by the Fairhope Single Tax

Corporation in Alabama; the Corporation has bought 1,700 subscriptions for its members and prospects.⁷⁶ In addition to Incentive Taxation, the Foundation continues to publish Equal Rights under the auspices of the Center for the Study of Economics in Indiana, Pennsylvania. The birth of the Center was a result of an Internal Revenue Service ruling that provided that such a center could be ruled as a 501-(c)3 status group. Prior to this ruling such a group was unable to declare itself as tax-exempt. This ruling made contributions to the Center tax deductible and allowed for the Center to be given a non-profit postal status. The tax-exempt status was permitted because the Center was declared as an educational venture; the Foundation itself remained liable to taxation in that it was primarily a lobbying organization. Accountant Jack Himmelstein is credited for ably handling the application for the Center's 501-(c)3 status.⁷⁷

NEW LEADERSHIP

The winter of 1977-78 was hard for the Foundation in that it lost two of its most dedicated and tireless warhorses. On December 28, 1977 long-time Foundation Secretary P. R. Williams died at the age of 91,⁷⁸ and on February 8, 1978 former Foundation President William E. Schoyer died at the age of 99. In addition to serving as the Foundation's President, Schoyer had served as an organizer of the now defunct Keystone Party of Pennsylvania, as President of the Pennsylvania

Graded Tax League, and along with Cornelius D. Scully and B. B. McGinnis, he organized the Pittsburgh Civil Liberties Union.⁷⁹ Both Williams and Schoyer had remained active in the Foundation right up until their deaths. Their memory lingers on in the work of the Foundation.

Veteran activist John C. Weaver was scheduled to succeed Williams as Executive Secretary, but Weaver, too, was advancing in age, and he soon fell ill. This required that the Foundation hold a special meeting to name new officers. At that meeting President Steven B. Cord was elected to serve as Executive Secretary, and Marian Hahn was elected Treasurer. Cord retained the office of President.⁸⁰

With his dual appointment as President and Executive Secretary, Cord became the most powerful and influential officer in the Foundation. He had first come into contact with the philosophy of Henry George in 1951. He attended the Henry George School of Social Science in Manhattan, New York City; enrolling in a course under the tutelage of Dr. Henry Gross, a podiatrist and volunteer teacher at the School. Cord argued all the way on Gross's proposals, but after taking two more courses at the School, he became a dedicated Georgist.⁸¹

THE VICTORY YEARS

In 1974, Harrisburg became the first Pennsylvania third-class city to adopt the graded tax. Ironically, the tax bill was adopted without the direct knowledge or assistance of the

of the Foundation. The Foundation was not even made aware of the Harrisburg decision until a few months later when Cord, on an errand in Harrisburg, decided to drop in at City Hall to lobby city officials on the merits of the land tax. Much to Cord's surprise, he learned that the city fathers (and mothers) had adopted the proposal the previous year at the urging of mayoral aide Walter Geisey. Geisey had previously served as an aide to Pennsylvania Governor David L. Lawrence. Evidently, Geisey had become familiar with the tax program in that capacity. The measure was significant in that it was adopted by a bi-partisan coalition on the City Council before being signed into law by Democratic Mayor Harold Swenson. The graded tax was later expanded by Swenson's successor, Republican Paul E. Doutrich, Jr.; again with bi-partisan support in Council.⁸² By 1980, Incentive Taxation reported that Harrisburg had become one of the Foundation's brightest spots. In 1979 it again raised its land tax; urged on and advised by the Foundation.⁸³

Although Harrisburg may have become one of the Foundation's brightest spots, Pittsburgh soon superceded it. In December 1978 Pittsburgh elected to raise its land tax by a total of 48 mills, setting the millage rate at 97.5 mills. The tax rate on buildings remained at 24.75 mills. The decision reached in Pittsburgh did not come without heated debate and opposition. Democratic Mayor Richard S. Caliguiri had vigorously proposed a wage tax increase, an increase in business privilege taxes, and a water rate increase to raise revenue. Councilmen William J. Coyne and Robert Rade Stone, also Democrats, opposed

Caliguiri's measures, and instead called for the increase in the land tax. The full Council eventually went along with Coyne's and Stone's proposal, but their action was vetoed by the Mayor. Undaunted, Council overrode Caliguiri's veto on December 31, 1978. Opponents of the Caliguiri measure appeared on television and in print, and they lobbied extensively in City Hall, stressing that all taxes on labor and capital investments would penalize and either lower income or raise prices. Among those who best articulated this position was Carnegie-Mellon University economics professor and Nobel Laureate Dr. Herbert Simon. Simon argued that "assuming that a tax is necessary, it is clearly preferable to impose the additional cost on land by increasing the land tax."⁸⁴ Simon also supported and aided the further extension of the land tax in 1979 and again in 1980.

Councilman Coyne was especially instrumental in the support of legislation to raise the land tax, and Foundation associates took heart that it was through their efforts that Coyne had become a land tax advocate. For a number of years John Weaver had been holding periodic meetings in Pittsburgh with economics and business professors from Pittsburgh's institutions of higher learning. These meetings dealt with the virtue and application of the land tax. Local political dignitaries were also invited to attend the meetings, but few ever appeared. Between 1975 and 1978 Councilman Coyne regularly appeared at the meetings, and eventually he was won over as a land tax advocate. As long as Coyne remained on Council the Foundation

had an ally in City Hall.⁸⁵ Riding on the crest of widespread public popularity, Coyne was elected to the United States Congress in 1980; land tax advocates were indeed sorry to see him vacate his Council seat.

Pittsburgh and Harrisburg were not the only bright spots for the Foundation during the 1970's, as another successful campaign was won in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. In 1975 McKeesport voted out of office their incumbent Mayor, a Democrat, and replaced him with Republican Thomas J. Fullard. The Foundation was unsure of the future possibility of a land tax being enacted under Fullard; he had not declared his position on the subject during the campaign. Fullard's upset victory seemed to spell the defeat of the land tax; his Democratic opponent had just recently endorsed the idea. Much to the satisfaction of the Foundation, Fullard forged an alliance with Council President Joseph J. Bendel, Jr. and his followers on Council. With the aid of Cord, Bendel, who was already a proponent of the measure, approached Fullard on the land tax's merits, and in 1976 Fullard formally endorsed the proposal. Council went along, and in 1976 the tax measure was adopted in McKeesport.⁸⁶ In 1979 Council voted to increase the land tax to 90 mills, while decreasing the building tax to 20 mills;⁸⁷ a significant achievement. Prior to the adoption of the land tax, McKeesport's tax rate had been 24 1/2 mills on both land and buildings.

The Winter 1980 issue of Incentive Taxation revealed further success for the land tax movement. In 1979 Scranton,