

Opinion

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In celebration of Henry George

Single Taxers from all over the world are in Philadelphia to mark the 150th birthday of economic theorist Henry George.

The climax of the observance will be Saturday in Arden, north of Wilmington.

In France, in the century before George, the Physiocratic Party believed land was the source of all wealth and thus should be the source of all revenue.

A supporter of that theory was Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours of Paris, who late in life came here to live with his son, E. I. du Pont, who founded the Du Pont powder works.

George was born Sept. 2, 1839, in Philadelphia. He died Oct. 29, 1897, stricken while campaigning for mayor of New York. He had run for mayor in 1886 and was defeated by the Democratic Tammany Hall machine but got more votes than a young politician named Theodore Roosevelt.

As a journalist, George saw a lot of poverty. He became a student of economics and in 1879 completed his most famous work, "Progress and Poverty." He believed everyone was entitled to share in the value of land. If land were taxed at full value, it would be used to its fullest and no one could speculate in it.

On Saturday the Single Tax conferees will tour Longwood Gardens, developed by Pierre Samuel du Pont II, late namesake of the noted Physiocrat.

At 2 o'clock Saturday, the group will come to Arden. After a walking tour, a program in the outdoor theater will be dedicated to the founder of the village, Frank Stephens, famous for his support of civil rights and many unpopular movements.

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Speakers will tell about how single tax is being used in the Ardens; Fairhope, Ala.; Canberra, Australia, and in the Dominican Republic. There will be music and poetry. The program will be followed by a fried chicken dinner in the Gild Hall and the showing of "An Experimental Village."

Supporting the celebration is Republican Gov. Michael N. Castle, who certainly is no Single Taxer and who would never support a George political campaign.

Proclaiming August Henry



George: single-taxer

George Month in Delaware, the governor calls him a "a great thinker, who spoke out passionately for individual liberty," whose book "continues to influence public policy."

Castle notes that George's ideas inspired the "founding of Delaware's three colorful villages, Arden, Ardentown and Ardencroft." The sad, sad fact is that many of today's 1,000 or more residents of the villages know or care very little about George and the tax.

They do know they own their houses but lease their land for 99 years, and that much of the villages is held in common. The land is administered by three trustees in Arden and Ardentown and by three directors in Ardencroft.

If you are interested, you can attend this week's programs at the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania or come to Arden Saturday.

In Philadelphia, the Postal Service is also putting a special cancellation on stamps, reading, "Henry George, Economist, Philosopher, Reformer, 150th Anniversary 1839-1989."

George's birthplace, at 413 S. 10th St., already on the National Register of Historic Places, has been rededicated. Guest of honor for the observance was scheduled to be famed dancer Agnes George DeMille, who helped restore her grandfather's old home. Another Henry George grandchild, Dr. Henry George III, was twice an unsuccessful Democratic candidate for mayor of Wilmington. He died 20 years ago.

Leading scholars on George include Frank Nelson of Newark and Michael Curtis of Arden. They can tell you about classes in Single Tax theory.

In the greeting of Arden pioneers: "Ye are welcome hither."