

# The Century, Almost, of H. M. McEvoy

A SKILLED protagonist of the single tax, pioneer for women's rights, and newspaper reporter, made news for the last time when her death was reported last month in the Chicago newspapers. She was Helena M. McEvoy, aged ninety-five.

Robert Clancy, in an interview with her published in the March-April issue of *Land and Freedom* in 1941, wrote: "Among the interesting women in the Georgist movement is Alaska Jane. . . . She is an elderly 'hard boiled' woman; that is, she insists on calling herself 'hard boiled,' but just the same, there is a kindly gleam in her eye."

At the time of her interview with Mr. Clancy in New York nearly a quarter of a century ago, she had just completed compilation of the exhaustive concordance of *Progress and Poverty*, by which she will be remembered. She said it represented "twenty-two months of unremitting toil and contained about 88,000 key words. The purpose is to be able to find the page and exact line of any important word or phrase in Henry George's great classic."\*

Her reason for undertaking this gigantic work was that she once used the word *metayer*, and was asked where she got it. From *Progress and Poverty*, she replied. But the person replied, "Nonsense, I've been reading that book for thirty years and I never came across it." She hunted all night and couldn't find the phrase "metayer system" which she had used. That convinced her that a concordance was

**\* This immensely valuable limited edition of the Concordance to *Progress and Poverty* by Helena Mitchell McEvoy is being offered now at the very special price of \$3.50. Order from George Tideman, 307 North Arlington Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois.**

needed. Mrs. McEvoy has consistently believed that "Georgists ought to do more constructive work and less quarreling over doctrinal issues. The real work before us," she said, "is to understand and propagate the philosophy of Henry George. Why can't we all pull together for that great work?"

Helena Mitchell was born in Kansas. Her father had a small hotel equipped with, as she recalled, "the only hair mattresses west of the Missouri River." Among distinguished visitors at the inn were John W. Davis and "Sockless" Jerry Simpson, both avowed Georgists. Someone gave her father a copy of *Progress and Poverty*, and because of his failing eyesight Helena was asked to read the book to him. As she read he often stopped her to explain difficult passages which he understood clearly. Both father and daughter remained "confirmed Georgists" throughout their lives.

The intrepid Kansan later met Henry George a few times, and also his most noted followers, such as, in Chicago, Louis F. Post and John Z. White, who applauded a speech she made there at a large convention where the Philippine action was being discussed. According to reports, "Alaska Jane was the only woman at the convention who opposed this imperialistic action."

She wrote several books and helped to edit a regional magazine in the Southwest. In the early 1890's she was a reporter on the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. She was one of the first women to be appointed a national speaker by the Democratic national committee. The list of exciting "firsts" seems endless.

As a young suffragette she was called "our orphan," by Susan B. Anthony. She was instrumental in having the first hotel for women estab-

lished in New York at a time when it was hard for single women to find accommodations in hotels. She was one of the founders of the Women's Single Tax Club in Washington, D.C. in 1898 and was its president four times in succession.

At the turn of the century she went to Alaska in connection with mining interests. She sent back articles to the New York Times which were always accepted, for her influence was enormous. Her aggressive activities earned variously the titles of Calamity Jane, then Humorous Jane, and finally one

that stuck, Alaska Jane. She taught in the government school at the Indian village at Douglas, and won a citation from President Woodrow Wilson for her nursing work among the Indians during the influenza epidemic of 1917.

A memorial service was held for Helena Mitchell McEvoy, "idealist and crusader" at the Peoples Church in Chicago on January 23rd. Honorary pallbearers were long time friends and well known Georgists, who gathered for this tribute to the familiar and appropriate music of "Home on the Range."

## The Most for the Least

**W**ILLIAM Feather is growing into one of those legendary figures in which Cleveland seems to abound. In an article "The Pleasant Way to Get Rich," in the Plain Dealer's Sunday Magazine, we are given a half-century portrait of this man who calls himself "a disappointed single-taxer," but who "points with pride to the fact that he served two terms on the Lincoln Foundation, the single tax organization."

Early in his career he was offered desk room in the office of The Ground Hog, a single tax weekly. He began to write, and suddenly and quite unexpectedly, cleared \$150 on a 16-page promotional booklet. Then and there he made it a rule to make as much money as possible with as little work, or as little unpleasant work, as possible. "If people liked to work," he said, "we'd still be plowing the ground with sticks and transporting goods on our backs."

Mr. Feather soon found himself in the printing business, where he started the magazine which bears his name, filled with homely epigrams and essays.

In 1959 he wrote, "the 52 per cent tax on corporate profits, plus the high

taxes on individual incomes, is a fearful brake on American enterprise.

"As the years roll on it becomes clear that an ideal investment for surplus funds would be in idle land, near a growing city. The vacant land would produce no taxable income, the property tax would be low (and deductible), and, year by year, the land would increase in value. In a dozen years it might triple in price, at which time it could be sold, subject only to a 25 per cent capital gains tax.

"As the tax is now set up, the temptation for owners of small enterprises to sell out to larger companies is almost irresistible. Unless they sell out, they are locked in.

"Once out, the usual procedure is to put their funds into the stock market where they can get in and out quickly. Just how long this merry marathon will last is anybody's guess, but a day of reckoning is bound to come."

Mr. Feather still writes and edits his magazine and lunches with business companions at the Union Club where he "argues the single tax." He is a perfect example of a man satisfying his desires with the least amount of effort.