

Praise for Fairhope.

(From the Birmingham (Ala.) *Advocate*.)

Comparatively few persons know that there exists a community in this country where the single tax ideas of the late Henry George are put to a practical test.

Nevertheless, Fairhope, in Baldwin county, Ala., a flourishing town of 200 inhabitants, is now in its sixth year, and still boasts of being the only single tax town on earth, says the Philadelphia *North American*.

Founded in 1895 by a group of adventurous adherents of Henry George's philosophy, numbering half a dozen families, the town to-day is a thriving agricultural and manufacturing community, where poverty is unknown and prosperity and material comfort are within reach of all.

There was a single tax club in Des Moines, Ia., half a dozen years ago, whose members were willing to back their faith with work. Ernest B. Gaston, editor and publisher of a single tax journal called the *Fairhope Courier*, was at the head of the movement. Associated with him were J. Bollanger, Alfred Wooster and others. They mapped out a scheme of colonization, sold shares at \$200 each, and after making inquiries departed for Alabama, where they had bought 200 acres of land and secured options upon 1,200 acres more.

They chose the abandoned site of Alabama City, in Baldwin county, on Mobile Bay, about fourteen miles distant by water from the city of Mobile. Under the laws of the State of Alabama persons securing a tract of land may administer the finances of the inhabitants thereon, under agreement with them, permitting them, in other words, to administer the land.

Taking advantage of this liberal law the Fairhope Industrial Association proceeded to erect a small State within a State. Having no power to tax its inhabitants, it agreed with them to pay to the State all taxes assessed upon all property, real and personal, save alone money and credits, and to pay the same out of certain adjusted rentals for the land occupied by the inhabitants.

No man was allowed to own a foot of the land within the jurisdiction of the settlement. But he could lease for twenty years, with privilege of renewal, as much town or agricultural land as he chose, paying for it such an annual rental as the members of the association might fix.

He might then proceed to erect upon the land a dwelling, store, factory or mill, as he chose. If his mill, store or factory became profitable, he must pay proportionate increase in rental.

In exchange the association bound itself to make roads and maintain them, furnish water and guarantee him from all taxation.

The town thrived. To-day two hundred people live there. There is a good schoolhouse, employing two teachers, and attended by twenty-five pupils; there are three stores—a drug store, dry goods store and millinery establishment. There is a rice mill and a sawmill and a shipyard, employing those who labor. Peace and happiness reign in this little colony of practical single taxers.

Speaking of Tom Johnson's plan, Julian Hawthorne says: "The possibility of the spread of the doctrine of equal justice, so that it shall include in its grasp men of the Tom L. Johnson order, is one of the most appalling signs of the times for the moneyed minority of this country. Equal justice is death to all their hopes and devices. Revolutions used to begin from below. If now they are to begin from above, what is to be done about it? The holders of the plutocrat fort feel the same kind of dismay that would visit the garrison of a military stronghold were a flying machine loaded with dynamite to appear in midair over their heads. Their bastions do not protect them in that direction, and their guns were not constructed to fire upward."