
Preface

A LARGE PART OF THE HISTORY OF MANKIND is the story of increase in population compelling the migration of people to acquire land on which to live and maintain themselves, and of wars to govern and exact tribute of others.

Mass migration of Europeans to America was caused, not by widespread desire for religious freedom as often declared but, as here shown, by craving for land, and to escape the poverty in Europe emanating from feudalism.

This, it has been justly said, affords a study which is one of the most interesting in American history.

Without some knowledge of the claims of ownership of land, the location of settlements on the North American Continent by five European nations and the many naval and military fights between them during a long period of time to uphold such claims, the study of the history of the United States would be superficial, for a large part of that history must be written in terms of land.

The facts are historic. New and timely interpretations of many neglected facts are here presented.

Here are related the unscrupulous aims, objects and methods of European potentates and their favored grantees to possess all the land on a continent they had never seen.

After the English conquest of other nationals, all the land in the English colonies in America was, by royal edict, claimed as the personal property of successive British monarchs, to do with as they pleased.

The mere scratch of a goose-quill in the hand of a European monarch, giving to his court favorites, their heirs and assigns, title to land and, supported by armed force, the right to exact tribute of all who settled or were afterwards born in America, was without justification of any kind.

Here for the first time in integral parts, disassociated from extraneous matter, are shown the methods of favor, fraud and force by greedy and unscrupulous men of great political power and influence in the United States government during the first century of its existence. Here also is told how they grabbed the vast expanses of fertile prairies and valleys, forests, mineral wealth and potential water-powers of the public domain, and proceeded to exploit and despoil succeeding generations of their rightful share of the common heritage.

The reader may be astonished to find amongst these despoilers the names of some of the most illustrious political leaders of the past.

Tangible facts can be more easily comprehended than can communicated impressions. For that reason I have simply presented facts, letting them show for themselves, rather than pressing upon the reader my own conclusions, other than to give the facts what I consider to be their real significance.

Some of the best work when presented, has seemed to be in opposition to some existing policy, but when it has had time to prove its wisdom has been accepted and acclaimed as an enlightened contribution.

With but relatively few individual exceptions in each generation, people seem to hold to beliefs with which they have grown up, until it is demonstrated that such beliefs are not justified by facts—and any attempt at such demonstration is usually resented.

It long has been a popular belief that the existing universal land policy is sacrosanct and must not be questioned, but now many outstanding thinkers, men and women, in different parts of the world are expressing their misgivings respecting the wisdom of it.

What effect the land policy, whether in America or elsewhere, has upon the cause of economic conflicts and international wars, and upon social welfare—upon unemployment and its many con-

comitants, and upon agriculture, industry, and public buying-power—is here indicated.

American civilization is still in the embryonic state, with inestimable possibilities of growth. The success or failure may well be determined by what the future land policy may be. The first step to arrive towards understanding is a critical examination of the subject and of ourselves. To that understanding this book is devoted.

The chapters have been entered chronologically as nearly as may be, and each chapter is likewise so treated.

The first seven chapters are preliminary but essential to a full understanding of the subject.

A chapter on any specific colony, state or region does not necessarily present all that the volume contains relating to that area. There were some conditions and actions which were alike in different parts of the country. To avoid repetition, such are generally noted in but one chapter, although there is occasional reference to kindred chapters.

To elucidate what may appear confusing: several different governmental agencies in London named in the text as dealing with land and government in the colonies were committees of the Privy Council, but in some instances have been inexactly designated.

Numerals in brackets in the text refer to the authors whose names are given in the bibliography.

ALFRED N. CHANDLER

Maplewood, New Jersey