

# John Lawrence Monroe

By ROBERT CLANCY

One of the outstanding personalities of the Georgist movement has departed. John Lawrence Monroe died in San Francisco on January 23, 1988.

Born August 31, 1908, John was the son of Frederick H. Monroe, who founded the Henry George Lecture Association - thus he was born into the movement. Upon the death of his father in 1929, John continued the Association, quartered in Chicago and doing much travelling.

John visited the newly formed Henry George School and its founder Oscar H. Geiger in 1933 (at which time I met him). A couple of years later he was engaged by Otto K. Dorn, then the School's Director, as Field Director, a job he continued under the next Director, Frank Chodorov.

In 1939, John returned to Chicago as Director of the Henry George School there, which had been founded in 1934 by his wife Marian's father, Henry L. T. Tideman. During the war years and after, an impressive operation was built up, with numerous classes around Chicago, as well as an active headquarters at 236 North Clark St. The Chicago School was also host to the first three postwar conferences.

In 1949, John initiated the Commerce and Industry Division of the School. The purpose was to introduce classes in commercial offices and industrial plants, with sponsorship by the businesses concerned. He and his colleagues developed an extensive set of materials which were to teach the basic principles of Progress and Poverty, but without the book as text. This was to become his primary activity, and in 1962 he changed the name to the Institute for Economic Inquiry. This left the possibility of reviving an adult education Henry George School, which was done, first under George Menninger and then Mina Olson.

John relied on contributions from Georgists and from business. Not a stringent manager of money, he got into debt, and by 1968 it became too much, and he moved with the Institute for Economic Inquiry to San Francisco. Efforts to continue the program there were made but did not get very far. John took part in the Progress and Poverty Centennial Conference in San Francisco in 1979, and was presented with an award for his long and distinguished Georgist service. Later that year, he suffered a stroke and was hospitalized. Thus he remained until his death, visited daily by his devoted second wife, Martha. Others visited him, including Nan Braman of New York, who assured him that his work would live.

Memorial services were held in Chicago and San Francisco, both well attended. In San Francisco a service was organized by his wife at the Church for All People. In Chicago a meeting was held at the Henry George School, and John's four children were there: Jane Alspinger, Phoebe Schroder, Adam Jon and Jeremy Martin.

In the many years I knew John Monroe, I was impressed by his unflagging and devoted work for the Georgist philosophy. Though he did things his own way (not unusual for Georgists), he was a "strict constructionist" on P&P. Though he sought "conservative" support, he insisted on the goal of making land common property. I have perused his teaching materials with admiration and have adopted some of his contributions.

The Henry George School-Chicago was reorganized in 1970. Its current Director is Sam Venturella and the address is 4536 N. Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640. Contributions to the School on behalf of the John Lawrence Monroe Memorial Fund are invited.

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(In GJ No. 58 it was stated that Chicago headquarters includes an upper story. Mr. Venturella advises that this is not the case, and the School occupies only the ground floor of a store-front. - Ed.)