

must understand before they can demand. If we are ever to get the Single Tax* on the statute books so that it will stay there, we must first get it into the minds of the people. We must get the people to want it and to get them to want it we must first get them to know it.

“It is proper for us to try to get whatever measure of justice we can by such legal enactments as with the present state of the public mind we are able to obtain, but we must not delude ourselves into believing that merely direct effort toward legislation will secure fundamental justice, or if by chance it does, that it could be maintained. The people themselves would soon undo or sanction the undoing, passively if not actively, of any law, however just or right it may be, which they did not understand.” (A warning that has had its share of exemplifications!)

In the course of this talk, Geiger made a plea for a more effective and persistent method of education than the hit-or-miss affairs that were then current. He proposed *reading circles* that would undertake a thorough study of George's teachings and that would develop leaders for conducting more reading circles, thus reaching out in ever-widening circles.

Unfortunately, nothing more than a flurry of temporary interest came from Geiger's idea at the time. Some study groups were in operation—the work of Louis F. Post in this respect deserves special mention—but there seemed to be so many more important things to do. Geiger himself was drawn into the political activities of the movement, and he was also busy earning a living as a furrier, but he nurtured his idea and the opportunity to realize it eventually came, at a somewhat grim time.

When the 1929 crash deepened into a long depression, Geiger gave up his business and resolved to devote the rest of his life and his savings to his idea. He felt strongly that the right time had arrived. And so, in January, 1932, Geiger set about founding the Henry George School of Social Science in New York. The reading circle idea was to mature into an institution.

Only two years remained to Oscar Geiger from the founding of the School to his death. But in that time he established it firmly, secured a provisional charter† from the University of the State of New York, developed a method of teaching classes based on Henry George's works, acquired a headquarters, gained the interest of the Georgeist movement, and formed a nucleus of ardent students who were ready to take up the work when he passed away.

*The term “Single Tax” is seldom used nowadays at the Henry George School because of the misconceptions and prejudices associated with it. No short and simple term has yet been accepted as a satisfactory title for George's major reform.

† Within five years the School was granted an Absolute Charter.