

The County

In a booklet, "County Government Lives Up to American Principle," written by Dorothy Worrell for the County of Barnstable, Massachusetts, she states:

"The county is the oldest form of government, having come down from the ancient times of antiquity. . . . It has survived for 1500 years and has been found to be a very efficient governmental unit. The county acts as a buffer, being a unit intermediate between the town and the state. There are functions that are above the town level that should still be handled directly by the people, and through the county this can be done. There are other functions properly belonging to the state.

"County government well exemplifies an American principle, of which we must never lose sight, enunciated by Abraham Lincoln; namely that our government, is one of the people, by the people, and for the people."

One of our Long Island readers who takes his county government seriously is Dr. Samuel Scheck. He visited the Nassau County Tax Assessor's office for the purpose of getting general information as to how the property tax and assessing system works, with the thought of making up land value maps as Joseph Zashin has done in Tucson. The County Assessor was pleasantly surprised and informed

Dr. Scheck that he was the first person to come to his office for such information — most visits being from property owners who complain that their assessments are too high or their neighbors' too low.

Dr. Irene Hickman, a leader in the Sacramento Henry George School and a director of the Statewide Homeowners Association, has filed two taxpayers' suits charging illegal assessments in Sacramento County. She, too, is interested in tax reform and has found innumerable cases of unequal taxation of lots adjoining practically identical parcels.

The first suit is an action to obtain an injunction to prevent illegal assessments in the future, and the second is an action to recover for the county taxes she says should have been imposed and collected for this year for parcels she has found to be assessed at too low a figure.

One two-acre plot was sold for \$100,000 but assessed for \$100—one-tenth of one per cent of assessed ratio. The taxes on this parcel were \$7.42, said Dr. Hickman, "most of us would be delighted to pay \$7.42 for every \$100,000 of property we own."

Georgists might do well to take another look at their county unit and exercise some of their rights as citizens—especially as these are often welcomed by the county officials.