

The City Built On Hope

THE STORY OF A SINGLE TAX COLONY, by Paul E. and Blanche R. Alyea, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1956, \$4.50

HIS book dealing with the story of Fairhope, Alabama is still news, though it has been out nearly a year, and many readers have commented upon it with interest. It is the account of a "model community" planned some sixty years ago by men and women of meager means from different parts of the country. Though they settled on submarginal land, they brought with them an understanding of Henry George's theories of management which resulted in establishment of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation.

This body still guides the fiscal destinies of a successful and growing city. Its policy of collecting the economic rent of land and applying that portion remaining after payment of lessees' taxes to public improvement, has provided a fund from which Fairhope has been supplied with a larger than average share of public improvements.

"From its inception," wrote Paul M. Gaston in *The Fairhope Courier*, "the Colony was beset by discord. The fact that it has survived—and prospered—is indicative of the advantages which the simulated single tax then offered and of the strong and dedicated leadership which the Colony enjoyed."

Sixty years ago the main purpose was to educate the public to demand local option in taxation. This goal has not been achieved, a fact which the authors, both of whom are trained economists, readily admit. Among a number of suggestions which they make for strengthening the single tax experiment is a program concentrating "on specific local matters of policy rather than on abstractions of Georgean philosophy, a subject difficult for many to grasp."

Every serious student and instructor in the Henry George School has extolled Fairhope's example and wishes it continued success. May its citizens awaken to an awareness of their blessings.