

OIL AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN By JOSEPH JESPERSEN (HGI Board Member)

In an article entitled "High Flying Tulsa in the National Geographic magazine for September 1983, Robert Paul Jordan tells this story:

Glenpool, a sleepy collection of modest dwellings, is a bedroom for Tulsa, Oklahoma. Three-quarters of a century ago it was an incredible place: a forest of derricks, a commotion beyond imagination. With five hundred wells, this was perhaps the richest small pool in the world.

It happened that this land was part of the Creek Nation. The government had allotted parcels to Creeks, one of whom was a boy named Thomas Gilcrease. His mother was one-quarter Creek, his father French, Scotch, Irish. Young Gilcrease became a millionaire with the discovery of the fabulous Glenn Pool, and then a multimillionaire. He set out to realize a dream, a museum devoted to the American Indian.

Now the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art belongs to Tulsa and everybody featured in its vast collection, ninety percent of which cannot be displayed for lack of space, is the finest single assemblage of works by Frederick Remington and Charles Russell.

Gilcrease voluntarily used some of his millions for the good of the community. We commend his generosity, but recognize that he had no right to those millions; he did nothing to create the value of the oil found on the land. Here is an instance of some unearned income being plowed back. But how many millions of income from natural resources are not plowed back?

Our system permits and encourages the private collection of rent - income not earned by the landowners. That is why poverty persists, among whites as well as among Indians. The present system fails to recognize that each generation of man has equal rights to the land and its resources.

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"PEOPLE'S RENT" from Betsy J. Harris (GJ No. 42) sound good. I for one will start using it in connection with the fact that it is produced by the conscious and unconscious cooperation of the people. - Robert Sage (Sun City, Arizona)