



HENRY GEORGE, JAMES MCCLATCHY, AND THE LONG HISTORY OF LAND REFORM

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IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA

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(The following presentation was made at the Council of Geologist Organizations conference July 10, 2014 in Newport Beach, CA. Alex W. Lough received her Ph.D. in American History from Brandeis University. Her dissertation was "The Last Tax: Henry George and the Social Politics of Land Reform in the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.")

Over this past year, I've had the opportunity to work on an exciting new project with the Henry George School of Social Science, so I thought I'd spend just a few minutes telling you about the newly formed Henry George Birthplace, Archive and Historical Research Center, or the BAHRC for short.

Last fall, I signed a contract with the Henry George School of Social Science to lead the effort to transform the Henry George Birthplace in Philadelphia, into a central repository of archival material on Henry George, the HGSS, and the Single Tax movement.

In addition to important historical material at the Birthplace, the Henry George School of Social Science in New York housed a couple dozen boxes of uncatalogued archival material dating back to the school's founding in 1932. I was hired to help organize, digitize, and preserve this material at the Birthplace. Also helping with this project is Marcial Cordon, Director of Operations of the HGSS; Ed Dodson, the Senior Researcher; and Ibrahima Drame, the Digital Archives Coordinator for this project.

For those of you unfamiliar with the Henry George Birthplace, this is the residence on South 10th Street in Philadelphia where Henry George was born September 2, 1839. The Henry George School of Social Science purchased the building in 1957 from the Henry George Foundation, which had acquired it in 1926. It is the only surviving residence of Henry George.

The dwelling had changed quite a bit from the time of George's birth. In 1839 it was a modest one-story frame house, with one front room, two back rooms, a second floor attic, kitchen, and cellar. By 1957, the house included two additional stories, and top floor attic.

When the HGSS purchased the birthplace in 1957, it was in bad shape. With the help of Henry George's granddaughter, Agnes de Mille, a renovation fund was established and minor rehabilitation work was completed. This included the restoration of the bedroom on the second floor to resemble

a room from the 19th century. Agnes donated many items to this bedroom including the bed in which Henry George was reportedly born.

In 1976 the Birthplace was first nominated for the National Registry of Historic Places, but the HGSS was told the building needed more restorative work before the nomination would be accepted.

Inspired by the approach of the 100th anniversary of Progress & Poverty in 1979, the HGSS established the Henry George Birthplace Building and Restoration Fund. Philadelphia Architects Charles Peterson and Jim Collins were hired to prepare drawings for the Historical American Buildings Survey. In 1983, the Henry George Birthplace was officially entered in the National Register of Historic Places and a new historical marker was approved by the City of Philadelphia.

Once again inspired by an impending anniversary—the Sesquicentennial of George's birth (150)—in 1987, school officials re-hired Charles Peterson and James Collins to restore the Birthplace to its original 1839 appearance. The restoration was completed in 1989.

To prepare the Birthplace to receive and house archival material, I've consulted with an architect who specializes in libraries and museums. He has prepared recommendations for maximizing storage space without compromising the structural or historical integrity of this fabulous building.

On the other end of the things, the HGSS staff in New York has cataloged over 10,000 documents and is in the process of digitizing as many as possible. I've created a website—hgarchives.org—and have been publishing the digitized documents as I organize them into collections and prepare finding aids.

So far, I've organized and published three collections: 1) The Henry George and Anna George DeMille Family Collection; 2) The Henry George Birthplace Rehabilitation and Restoration Projects; and, 3) The Henry George Birthplace Portrait, Textile, and Artifact collection

I am in the process of organizing two other collections including, The Henry George School of Social Science Collection, which includes founding documents and other material related to the early history of the Henry George School of Social Science and its satellite campuses. Additionally, I'm working on a (continued on page 10)

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collection that will include material on "Prominent Georgists." Between Philadelphia and New York City, we have a lot of archival material produced and collected by George's followers and prominent single taxers, including Louis Freeland Post, Tom L. Johnson, George Geiger, and etc.

I should note that the NYPL houses the most complete collection of Henry George's papers, including his diaries and correspondence. While the collection has been microfilmed it is not digital. I am in conversation with the assistant archivist at the NYPL manuscripts division about the possibility of a working with us to apply for a grant to create a digital copy of the entire collection from the originals.

Another collection that is nearly complete is the Henry George Birthplace Portrait, Textile, and Artifact Collection. This collection includes a complete list of the portraits, textiles, and artifacts currently housed at the Birthplace. Much of this material was donated by George's relatives including Agnes George DeMille and Richard George III and includes: the desk upon which George wrote *Progress and Poverty*, his wallet, sea chest, campaign paraphernalia, a very large oil portrait of Henry George, doll clothes made by George's wife Annie as well as one of her dresses.

For decades this dress hung in the closet of the second story bedroom. It is currently under the care of a textile preservationist in Philadelphia who is cleaning it and creating a mannequin for display.

All of the completed collections are available to for viewing and download at the BAHRC website. On the website you'll also find a "spotlight" forum where I am writing periodic updates on the progress of this project and the collections.

As we continue to collect, catalog, organize, and digitize archival material, we want to re-open the Birthplace for classes, lectures, conferences, and tours. Once the BAHRC becomes more established, I'll be reaching out to other institutions and organizations which may have archival documents or historical material they wish to donate to our collections.

You'll notice a slight title change on the Program to reflect the current direction of this project. "Henry George, James McClatchy, and the Long History of Land Reform in Nineteenth Century America."

I've long been interested in the relationship between Henry George and the fiery newspaper editor and founder of *The Sacramento Bee*, James McClatchy. Having grown up just outside of Sacramento, McClatchy is a familiar name, seen on street signs, public schools, and parks. Additionally, my father worked as an investigative reporter for *The Sacramento Bee* for a number of years before moving to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Thus, it piqued my interest when I saw mentioned in

several biographies of George that he and McClatchy enjoyed a long and close friendship, and that as an Irish immigrant, McClatchy encouraged George to write *The Irish Land Question*, which he published in the Christmas edition of the *Sacramento Bee* in 1882.

When I set out to explore this relationship in more depth, I came across an article printed in *The Sacramento Bee* a few years after McClatchy's death in 1883 and at the height of George's popularity in the United States. The article, titled, "Henry George's Master" relayed an anecdote suggesting that McClatchy was the inspiration for *Progress and Poverty*. It also claimed that McClatchy served as George's closest advisor who reviewed and edited each chapter of George's manuscript as it was completed.

According to the article:

"Henry George is really a protégé and a disciple of James McClatchy, the late veteran editor of the *Bee*. At the feet of the latter George drank in those ideas which are so graphically explained in "Progress and Poverty." In fact, it was James McClatchy who prevailed upon George to write that wonderful work."

Thus, one of my early goals for this project was to assess McClatchy's influence on the formation of George's ideas about land and land policy. I started by consulting both the Henry George Papers at the NYPL as well as the James and Eleanor McClatchy Collection at the Center for Sacramento to History. The latter contained no letters to or from George.

In George's collection, I found several letters George had written to McClatchy, or "Mac" as he addressed his friend. But the subject and tone of these letters served only to confirm that a close friendship and professional relationship existed between the two men and continued after George left California in 1880. They do little, however, to suggest which specific ideas or viewpoints of McClatchy's George may have adopted as his own.

My next step was to look into the life and work of McClatchy. In this research I learned that McClatchy came to California during the Gold Rush by way of New York City, where he had worked for Horace Greeley and the New York Tribune during the 1840s. Like Greeley, McClatchy had been an active participant in the National Reform Association, the most successful land reform group of the antebellum era.

As I began to dig deeper into the origins and activity of the National Reform Association, it became clear to me that the question I should be asking was not the extent of McClatchy's influence on George, but the ways in which their relationship demonstrated the continuity of a land reform tradition spanning the entire nineteenth century, that held access to land was a natural right (continued on page 11)

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and that the denial of this right most contributed to social and economic inequality throughout society. Although he advocated a different remedy to acute inequality, in studying the works of men like Thomas Skidmore, George Henry Evans, Horace Greeley, and James McClatchy, there can be no denying that Henry George was cut from the same cloth as these land reformers many years his senior.

Thus, in studying McClatchy's early career and participation in the NRA, I realized I would better be able to place George and his ideas in a longer history of land reform that permeates nineteenth century America.

I should note that my research on this subject is still in progress. While I've uncovered a great deal of information on antebellum land reformers, I am still searching for more evidence of the participation of McClatchy or other individuals who were later associated with George. And so, you'll have to forgive me for some of the obvious gaps of information you'll notice in my presentation. It is the very definition of a work in progress.

James McClatchy was born in Atnrim County Ireland on June 30, 1824. Orphaned and at an early age, he immigrated to New York in 1840, where he began work as a baker's apprentice.

Sometime during the early 1840s, McClatchy met Horace Greeley, the prominent newspaper editor, anti-slavery advocate, and founder of the Liberal Republican Party.

Seeing intellectual promise in McClatchy, Greeley suggested that journalism might offer a more promising career path for a young immigrant. Greeley hired McClatchy to the editorial staff of his *New York Tribune*. A few years later, both McClatchy and Greeley began attending meetings of the nascent land reform movement growing from within the ranks of organized labor.

Throughout the 19th century, the interests of land and labor reformers were closely intertwined. Some of the earliest efforts to improve working conditions included proposals to broaden workers' access to land.

One of the first labor groups to engage in land reform was the Workingmen's Party of New York, which formed in 1829 in response to a rumor that employers intended to lengthen the workday for mechanics from 10 to 12 hours.

A mechanist originally from Connecticut named Thomas Skidmore assumed a position of leadership and used the party to promote his plan to equalize property throughout the state.

Earlier in 1829, Skidmore had published a political tract called *The Rights of Man To Property!* in which he denounced the unequal distribution of property in society, claimed every individual enjoyed a natural right to possess property, and outlined an extensive legislative program to redistribute land and property.

Skidmore believed that social justice required an equal distribution of property throughout society. In his tract, he called for New York State to adopt—by popular vote—a new constitution, under which all private property reverted to state control. Skidmore then called for the state to “order an equal division of all this property” among adult citizens and to prohibit the transfer or sale of this property once distributed.

He proposed a term of imprisonment for up to 14 years for any citizen found in violation of this principle. In the case of the death of a spouse, Skidmore believed that half of the property should revert back to the state and the other half to remain with the surviving spouse or family member.

Skidmore used the analogy of the dinner table to illustrate the justice of his plan:

“Those who have gone before us, have been first to sit down to the table, and to enjoy themselves, without interruption, from those who came afterwards; and not content with this enjoyment, they have disposed of the whole dinner, in such a manner, that nine-tenths of the beings that now people this globe, have not wherewith to dine, but upon terms such as these first monopolisers, or those to whom they pretend they have conferred their own power as successors, shall choose to dictate.”

The popular press attacked Skidmore's plan and the Workingmen's Party for promoting “agrarianism.” At that time, the term “agrarian,” carried a negative connotation generally associated with forced redistribution of land and restrictions on landholding. Skidmore's opponents used agrarianism as an epithet, claiming his plan was not only radically unjust but impractical.

Skidmore left the Workingmen's Party but continued to promote his redistribution plan until his death from cholera in 1832. The New York Workingmen's Party collapsed shortly thereafter. In 1835, many of the men active in the Workingmen's Party participated in the Locofoco movement, which emerged to block the election of specific Democratic officials deemed unfriendly to labor.

The term Locofoco originated in the aftermath of the 1835 Democratic convention when a group of labor radicals tried to block the nomination of five Tammany Hall officers. The opposition grew so loud Party officials “resorted to a standard machine practice, turning off the gas and leaving the gathering to dissolve in darkness.” The effort failed as the radicals had brought candles and hundreds of “Lucifer” or “Locofoco” matches to keep the meeting well-lit.

Later the Locofocos reorganized into the Equal Rights Party but disbanded after a poor showing in the 1836 election. Labor activity fell in the (continued on page 12)

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aftermath of the Economic Panic of 1837; for nearly seven years, wages, prices, and profits stagnated while unemployment continued to rise.

In March 1844 the land/labor movement picked up again in New York when three printers led by George Henry Evans began meeting to discuss the formation of a new and independent political party to address unemployment and poverty among workers in the city. They called a public meeting at the site of the old Locofoco rallies and launched the National Reform Association.

As its first task, the Association set out to study the causes of and solutions to unemployment and low wages. The findings were printed on July 6, 1844 in *The Working Man's Advocate*.

The report emphasized the potential of the nation's vast reservoir of land to provide relief to labor through a more just and judicious system of its distribution.

"Nature is not unjust," the report reads, "The Power who called forth those mechanical forces did not call them forth for our destruction. Our refuge is upon the soil, in all its freshness and fertility—our heritage is on the Public Domain, in all its boundless wealthy and infinite variety."

"The first great object" of the Association included establishing the right of the people to the public domain, which its members proclaimed must be treated as "capital stock" belonging to the people and their posterity.

To protect the public domain and make it more accessible to workers, the NRA proposed what became known as the "Township Plan," a proposal it adapted from Thomas Jefferson's Rural Plan for Republican Townships.

Jefferson's plan had called for the State of Virginia to subdivide its counties into separate wards of six-square miles each. He called then for each ward to establish and operate its own schools, militia, police, courts, roads, town hall, and system of poor relief.

To Jefferson, small, independent towns helped foster virtuous and self-reliant citizens, which he and other founders considered paramount to the long-term strength and viability of entire nation.

Building on Jefferson's vision, the NRA proposed the creation of six-mile townships composed of 40 lots of five acres, and 140 farms of 160 acres each. The NRA called for the federal government to carve these townships and farms from the public domain and to give them for free to individual adults without land of their own.

The NRA report not only utilized the language of natural rights, as Skidmore had done, and also introduced the notion that America's special place in the world—or what modern commentators might call America's "exceptionalism"—

depended in large measure on the existence and treatment of its vast public domain. George frequently made this same argument throughout his career.

"If we were circumstanced like the inhabitants of Europe, there would seem to be little hope of getting the laboring population out of the difficulties, and distress in which they are at present involved," the report explained.

Without a large supply of uninhabited land, the report continued, In [Europe], "the laboring classes have no recourse, except to sell the labor of their bodies for whatever price it will bring—live upon that pittance, as long as it will sustain them alive; and when it fails, sink into the grave which is yawning to receive them."

In contrast, the United States, the report pointed out, possessed a seemingly endless supply of rich soil capable of providing for the livelihood of all its citizens and serving as "an outlet" where "our superabundant labor" can find relief.

Although the NRA restricted its redistribution efforts to the public domain, the report echoed Skidmore's concern for the welfare of future generations and demand that the government stop treating the public domain as a commodity.

The appeal of the NRA's message led to the formation of similar land reform groups throughout New York and other states on the eastern seaboard. In October 1845, the NRA joined forces with the New England Workingmen's Association and began holding annual meetings under the name the Industrial Congress. The American followers of utopian socialists Robert Owen and Charles Fourier led by Albert Brisbane also attended these meetings and in the spring of 1846, voted the NRA ticket.

The NRA followed the method utilized by the Locofocos and mainly relied on petitions and pledges to affect political change. In signing the NRA Constitution, for example, all members agreed "that we will not vote for any man, for any legislative office, who will not pledge himself, in writing, to use all the influence of his station, if elected, to prevent further traffic in the Public Lands of the States and of the United States, and to cause them to be laid out in Farms and Lots for the free and exclusive use of actual settlers."

To encourage other voters to adopt the same pledge, the NRA issued handbills and conducted petition-drives prior to elections. In one of its more famous election pamphlets, the NRA encouraged citizens to "Vote Yourself a Farm."

Issued in January 1846, and reprinted in several local papers including *The New York Tribune*, the pamphlet outlined the various ways that the NRA's land reform program promised to benefit all types of Americans. The pamphlet opened with the following questions:

"Are you an American citizen? Then you are a joint-owner of the public lands. Why not take enough of
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your property to provide yourself a home? Why not vote yourself a farm? ... Are you tired of slavery—of drudging for others—of poverty and its attendant miseries? Then, Vote yourself a farm.”

By limiting the quantity of land any one person could hold or inherit, and making the public domain free to actual settlers, individuals' natural right to land would be restored without infringing upon their equally sacred right to enjoy the fruits of their labor. In fact, as the pamphlet explained, these two proposals promised to transform social relations and improve economic opportunity so that no class could live off the labor of others.

As a result of these measures, the pamphlet concluded, “Wealth would become a changed social element; it would then consist of the accumulated products of human labor, instead of a hoggish monopoly of the products of God's labor; and the antagonism of capital and labor would forever cease.”

Three months after the publication of “Vote Yourself a Farm,” Representative Richard P. Herrick, a Whig from New York, introduced a homestead bill backed by the NRA but the House voted 56-50 not to print it. Another homestead bill did not appear in Congress until 1848 when New York voters elected Greeley to fill a vacancy in the House of Representatives. On December 13, 1848 Greeley announced his intention to introduce homestead legislation based on the principles of the NRA report. The House, however, postponed discussion of the bill until after the New Year.

The Mexican-American War and the debate over the extension of slavery into the new western territories further delayed discussion on the Homestead Bill until 1860, when it finally passed Congress, but was vetoed by President Buchanan.

Two years later, as war raged between the North and South, President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law, granting 160 acres of public land to individuals in exchange for a small filing fee, five years residence, and proof of improvement. Alternatively, homesteaders could purchase the land outright for \$1.25 an acre after six months of residency.

At the time of its passage, supporters in Congress viewed the Homestead Act as the final realization of Thomas Jefferson's dream of America to be a nation of small farmers. But as George and many others would later point out in *Our Land and Land Policy*, in reality, the Homestead Act was doomed from the start. By 1860, there were too many other ways for wealthy individuals and corporations to gain access to the public domain. Additionally, no mechanisms were put in place to prevent the fraud that undermined the act's main principles.

Despite its failure, and it was truly a failure, the Act embodied the core principles for which land and labor activists fought for the previous 20 years in its attempt to limit the amount of land any one individual could purchase and restricted purchase of the public domain to actual settlers.

These principles continued to motivate the political efforts of labor activists throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, including James McClatchy, and through him, Henry George.

In 1848, after four years of participation in the National Reform Association, McClatchy decided to head West to become a miner. Before he left, however, he secured a contract with Greeley at the *Tribune* by which he would receive 5 dollars for every article he sent back east.

Shortly after McClatchy settled in Sacramento in 1849, he began sending reports on the increasing tension between land squatters and speculative owners in the area. By the end of his first year in Sacramento, he found himself in the thick of one of the most violent squatter riots of the century.

By the closing months of 1849 hordes of migrants who had come to California in search of gold the previous year settled in Sacramento where they found ample space to build homestead. While these settlers had no legal title to the land selected, like thousands of settlers before them and throughout the west, they figured their claims would be protected under the Pre-emption Act of 1841, which allowed individuals to claim federal land as property so long as they could demonstrate that they had improved the land and lived upon it for at least 14 months.

Of course, the land many of these settlers “improved” was not public land at all; it belonged to John Sutter who possessed nearly 50,000 acres of prime real estate around the American River which had been granted to him by the Mexican government, shortly before the outbreak of the Mexican-American War.

Since the discovery of gold at one of his mill's, Sutter had been parceling out sections of his land to the highest bidder—most often, speculators who had no immediate plans to reside upon or improve said land, but merely wait for its value to increase.

Throughout the fall and early winter of 1849, speculators hired henchmen to remove—often violently—squatters from the lands they had purchased from Sutter. In one particularly controversial case, a settler Z.M. Chapman had constructed a log cabin near Sutter's Fort on land claimed by a commercial institution, Priest, Lee & Company. The Company convinced the Sacramento City Council to approve of the destruction of Chapman's cabin.

In response to cases like these, squatters began holding public meetings and James McClatchy assumed a leadership role in the Sacramento Settlers Association formed in December 1849 to prevent landowners from removing settlers from their homes. (continued on page 14)

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A terrible flood in January of 1850 provided a short reprieve from the tension as settlers and landowners alike dealt with the destruction to their homes and city.

The peace did not last long. In May of 1850, tensions brewed once again after an elected Sacramento judge ordered the removal of a squatter on a disputed section of territory formerly belonging to John Sutter.

The Settlers Association organized a massive meeting in which they decided to stage a large protest. They distributed handbills around town charging speculators with using "brute force" to "extort the timid from their rightful lands and bullying the legislature to do their pleasure."

At that meeting, McClatchy suggested that it was time to meet force with force:

"If the land owners want a fight, let them fight," he declared. And the devil take the hindmost. Let us put up all the fences pulled down, and let us put up all the men who pulled them down."

The city's law enforcement agents did take too kindly to McClatchy's call.

On August 13, McClatchy and another member of the Settlers' Association named Michael Moran were arrested for inciting violence and unlawful occupation. Two days later, an armed contingent of settlers swarmed the streets of Sacramento demanding the release of McClatchy and Moran. The Mayor and Sheriff, both armed and on horseback ordered the protesters to disband. When they refused, shots were fired and seven men were killed including three squatters, two civilians, and the city assessor. The mayor was seriously injured and transported to San Francisco for recovery.

A lengthy trial ensued throughout the fall of 1850. The squatters arrested in association with the riot including McClatchy were found not guilty. Following his release, McClatchy formed the *Settlers and Miners Tribune* in November 1850 to advocate for greater protection for squatters claims.

The paper folded after only a few weeks and McClatchy began working for the *Sacramento Transcript*. In 1857, he co-founded the *Sacramento Bee*, which he edited and used to advocate for greater protection for settlers throughout the state.

True to his NRA roots, McClatchy also used the Bee to promote policies designed to limit the amount of land any one individual could own. As George would also come to see, McClatchy viewed land monopoly as the single greatest evil plaguing the State of California.

In 1878, McClatchy ran as a delegate to the California Constitutional Convention on the promise to fight for an amendment that would prohibit individuals or companies from purchasing more than either 640, 1,000, or 2,000 (the exact number

could be haggled out during the convention) acres of land and if by inheritance or gift an individual came into possession of more than the maximum quantity of land, they would have five years to sell the excess land before the State would be empowered to confiscate it.

McClatchy would not interfere with existing property rights.

George first met McClatchy in 1866, when McClatchy took a brief sabbatical from the Bee to edit the *San Francisco Times*, where George was working as a compositor. The two struck up a friendship, and according to George's biographers, McClatchy encouraged George to try his hand at editorial writing.

After only three weeks as editor of the *Times*, McClatchy and the paper's owners had a disagreement and he returned to the Bee. That same year, George wrote and submitted three editorials that McClatchy published in the Bee.

Throughout the remainder of the decade, George continued to develop an economic philosophy grounded in his direct observations and likely, his friendship and admiration of McClatchy. In 1870, George began working on his first book, a short but poignant critique of state and federal land called *Our Land and Land Policy*.

In the pamphlet, *Our Land and Land Policy*, George contemplated the reasons for and the effects of the nearly complete privatization of the nation's public land supply. George blamed the rapid privatization of the public domain on ill-devised and poorly executed land policy, which he claimed encouraged land speculation and monopolization.

At the national level, George singled out the failure of such policies as the Homestead and Pacific Railway Acts—these are the acts that financed the first transcontinental lines—to prevent land speculators and fraudulent buyers from snapping up the choicest sections of the public domain before actual settlers could apply for a farm. And at the state level, he described the abuses and fraud throughout the state land offices in their handling of college land scrip and Swamp Land.

The solution George outlined in *Our Land and Land Policy*, as many of you probably know, most differentiates this book from his later works. But it also best demonstrates the continuity of ideas between George and the antebellum land reformers.

By 1871, George had discovered the problem plaguing modern society (vast inequality of wealth) and its cause, (the monopolization of land) but he hadn't quite arrived at the solution, or what would later become known as the "single tax." While George advocated for a similar land value tax in *Our Land and Land Policy*, (continued on page 15)

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he failed to see this measure as a step toward the much larger goal of abolishing private property in land.

Like McClatchy and the NRA, George proposed the amendment of federal and state land policies to prevent the transfer of the public domain to anyone except "actual settlers" and only in limited quantities.

"WHEN we reflect what land is; when we consider the relations between it and labour; when we remember that to own the land upon which a man must gain his subsistence is to all intents and purposes to own the man himself, we cannot remain in doubt as to what should be our policy in disposing of our public lands.

"We have no right to dispose of them except to actual settlers—to the men who really want to use them; no right to sell them to speculators, to give them to railroad companies or to grant them for agricultural colleges; no more right to do so than we have to sell or to grant the labour of the people who must some day live upon them.

"And to actual settlers we should give them. Give, not sell. For we have no right to step between the man who wants to use land and land which is as yet unused, and to demand of him a price for our permission to avail himself of his Creator's bounty."

From this short passage, the similarity not only in the ideas, but also the phrasing and reliance on the rhetoric of natural rights by George and the antebellum land reformers becomes clear. When George runs for mayor of NYC in 1886, his appeal to workingmen in the city likely stemmed from his use of this same rhetoric and the idea that without land monopoly, workers lives, even in the largest and most industrialized urban center of the country, would improve.

But despite these similarities, an important difference remains between George, McClatchy and the antebellum land and labor reformers.

Unlike Skidmore, Greeley, and Evans, who viewed the "labor question" in largely agrarian terms—that is, they interpreted it to mean that the best way to improve the condition of the working class was to broaden access to land and other national resources—George re-envisioned this notion and described it in industrial capitalist terms.

As we know from his later works, most famously *Progress and Poverty*, George believed that workers suffered from a combination of rent and oppressive taxation. He believed that the reason wages hovered around subsistence level was because with every increase in productivity, rent also increased forcing those without land to pay a higher price for the privilege to access this natural and necessary resource.

This difference accounts for George's surging popularity among the working classes in the 1880s, who, unlike workers in the 1840s, had little intention of leaving the city for the life of an independent farmer. In other words, George helped modernize and broaden the land reform movement by stripping it of its association with "agrarianism" and bringing it more in line with the concerns facing industrial workers.

(Dr. Alexandra W. Lough may be emailed at awLough7@gmail.com. Her website is www.awlough.com. She also spoke at the 2013 CGO conference, and that presentation, "The Federal Income Tax and the Georgist Movement", was published in the Sept.-Oct. 2013 issue of *GroundSwell*.) <<
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Pictured below is Henry George's granddaughter Agnes de Mille (in wheelchair) along with the Georgists who attended the 1989 Henry George Sesquicentennial International Conference held in 1989 in Philadelphia.

