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**A PRIVATE LAND OWNERSHIP STORY IN THREE PARTS.** By WILLIAM C. MINER.

Part First.

It came to pass in the first decade of the 19th Century, in the old New England town of Guilford, Connecticut, there lived and thrived one of those strongly Puritanic families, whose paternal head was Mr. David Perkins. In those primitive days of easy access to land and none divorced from his native soil, Mr. Perkins had in early manhood taken a wife to himself and set up his domicile on land that the fact of citizenship had made his own. While not the most fruitful and inviting of all the spots on the round earth, yet it was there with his young wife as queen of the modest cottage that he walked the hard soil of his rough acres a free man.

Time was—so Guilford's older story ran— When every rood of ground maintained its man, Gave Perkins freely from her bounteous store, Gave what he needed, though it gave no more.

In those early days of rural life in New England race suicide occupied but a small place in current discussion. Calvinistic theology supplanted that idea in every sermon, and Jonathan Edwards had been too deeply absorbed in his effort to reconcile the freedom of the will and eternal decrees to mention it at all. Large families were the order of the day, and the Perkins family was no exception. Boys and girls, a dozen or more, a good healthy stock, in a few years came to claim a place at the family table or to gather around the hearth-stone before a blazing open fireplace of a winter's night, or to sit reverently impatient while "pater familias" dispensed a chapter of Scripture and invoked the Divine blessing. Furthermore, it came to pass, as the boys arrived to age and strength of manhood, it became necessary to leave the old home and strike out for them- selves, that one of the boys, Nehemiah, by name, endowed with a native force and energy so characteristic of the men of the times, bade goodbye to his Guilford home associations and finally found a stopping place in Savannah, Ga.

It needed but a short time to elapse before Nehemiah found an opportunity to engage in business for himself, and forming a partnership with a gentleman by the name of Frost the two men plunged enthusiastically into business activity, and becoming strongly identified with the life of a growing city, they greatly prospered, so that at the commencement of the Civil War they were counted among the millionaires. The coming on of the terrible war wrought great changes everywhere, both North and South, and Perkins and Frost found themselves in trouble like many others.

While Frost was of Southern birth and Southern sympathy and sanguine of Southern success, in the coming war Perkins was of Northern sympathy and hopeful for the Union cause. The result was a dissolution of the partnership with Frost remaining in Savannah, while Perkins came north to the old home town of Guilford. In the division of the company's property there fell to the part of Perkins a certain large lot of yellow pine land that at that time was supposed to have little or no value, but the title vested in Perkins, who, of course, had to leave it behind on coming north, and the land, being valueless, was soon practically forgotten.

Twenty years after the return of peace, Perkins was surprised by a request from a would-be purchaser to put a price on that tract of some 20,000 acres of yellow pine land. Correspondence followed which finally resulted in a bona fide sale of the whole plot for an amount that increased the credit of Perkins at the Bank by \$750,000. Here then was the money value of three-fourths of a million dollars that was dropped into the lap of Perkins for which he had paid in labor and capital not a single penny. Indeed, so far as this lot of land was concerned for the time elapsed of 25 years, Perkins had been practically dead, yet the law of private ownership had taken a value created by the thousands of returning and new populations, and gave the whole amount to Perkins. The sequel to this story is a strange one. By some strange ordering of affairs Perkins was not possessed of the all powerful greediness of Rockefeller, Rogers, Morgan & Co., but was disposed to give the people of Georgia and the South the benefit of his easily acquired thousands, rather than to take chances on risky investments, or to give by will to a lot of prospective hungry legatees. His final decision was to place the whole sum in the hands of a

board of trustees, the income from it to be used for the education of the black people of the Southern States. To Single Taxers this story is additional confirmation of the truth of the fundamental principle of the Single Tax philosophy, for while the income from Perkins' generous bequest did not follow exactly the Single Tax method, it did not go to swell a millionaire's already huge pile, but went where for all time it will help in the mental development of the negro population of the Southern States.

#### Part Second.

It came to pass about the year 1860 that the aforesaid Nehemiah Perkins advanced to his nephew, John Philander, a large sum of money, and it also came to pass soon after that the said John Philander invested the whole sum in white pine lands in the northern part of the State of Michigan. The passage of the Morrill Tariff Law in 1862 established a bonanza for John Philander. As was anticipated, the price of white pine lumber immediately advanced, but the added price for the lumber on sale in Chicago and Cleveland was not to the benefit of the lumber merchant, or the sawmill owner, or the workmen who cut the pine logs and hauled them to the mill and sawed them into lumber, but to the benefit of John Philander, who stood ready, and took the whole amount of the increased price when he sold his big pine trees as they stood on the stump.

Before the close of the Civil War John Philander was rich, and an undoubted millionaire who had gained his pile in the very profitable business of selling pine trees as they stood in their native forest. For the next forty years John Philander led a life of dignified idleness, spending much of his time at the old home in his native village where he was exalted to the place of a demigod, worshipped, admired and flattered at every turn. While the men, who in his boyhood days were his old schoolmates in the village academy were at work on their farms and in the Scriptural way literally "earning their bread by the sweat of their face," John Philander was swinging in a hammock under a shady tree, or playing croquet with the ladies by the shady side of a house to avoid being overcome with ennui, all of which is abundantly sufficient in John Philander's mind to prove the righteousness and justice of a high protective tariff to build up and establish the infant

industry of selling white pine trees as they stand on the stump at an abnormally high price.

Consider the sequel to these two parts of my story: that of part first shows an old man refusing to take a great sum an unjust law had put into his hands, but in a noble spirit of benevolence, so disposing of the whole \$750,000 as to inure to the benefit and elevation of an ostracised race. The sequel to part two shows a man younger in years, but ready to use his unrighteous gain for his own selfish purposes without the inspiration of any noble thought for benefitting his fellow men. Like the proud Pharisee, with an air of assumed superiority, he wrapped himself in the cloak of supercilious dignity and social exclusiveness, using his influence in antagonizing in every way every principle of free government, a menace of privilege which might be used as an additional item for the new book of Henry George, Jr.

#### Part Third.

This is separated from the parts preceding by long time and geographical space. However, it came to pass in the year 1900 that the good people of New London, Connecticut, were much pleased by the advent of a great enterprise, which was nothing less than the construction of two monster steel steam ships at a newly established shipbuilding plant across the Thames River, in the adjoining town of Groton. The putting out of about six millions of dollars in actual business was a godsend to both the city and Groton village.

As soon as the reported enterprise had gone beyond gossip, and become an established fact, there was a big boom in land values, especially in Groton, and no land within a half mile of the great shipyard was on sale for less than four or five times the former price. Owners of village plots for dwelling house and small garden went to bed at night, and dreamed they were rich. They awoke in the morning to find it a fact, at least, prospectively. The two big ships were built and sailed for their destination en route across the Pacific Ocean from Seattle to Japan, and none doubted the permanency of the ship building business at the Groton yard, with its great half-million-dollar plant.

Unfortunately, the Great Eastern Ship Building Company, the corporate name, was joined to the greater ship building trust, and the Eastern Ship Building Company was lost in the wreck of the disintegrated trust! The great plant is there to-day, rotting and rusting and going to decay, with a sheriff's ticket offering the whole business for sale. Of course, all the bright dreams of prospective fortunes cherished by the original owners and the speculators have disappeared like "the base- less fabric of a dream," and Groton village can show as fine an exhibition of shorn lambs as can be found anywhere outside the regular contingent of Wall Street. While they were all gladly willing to take a value that other men had created, they have learned that in human affairs are many very curious muta- tions, and that those who dream of reaping where other men have sown, some- times find at last a harvest of tares.