

FILE N. 3 - Cities & Towns

1937-38 Series

HISTORIC

SCOTCH PLAINS
No. _____

Bulletin No. 11

561

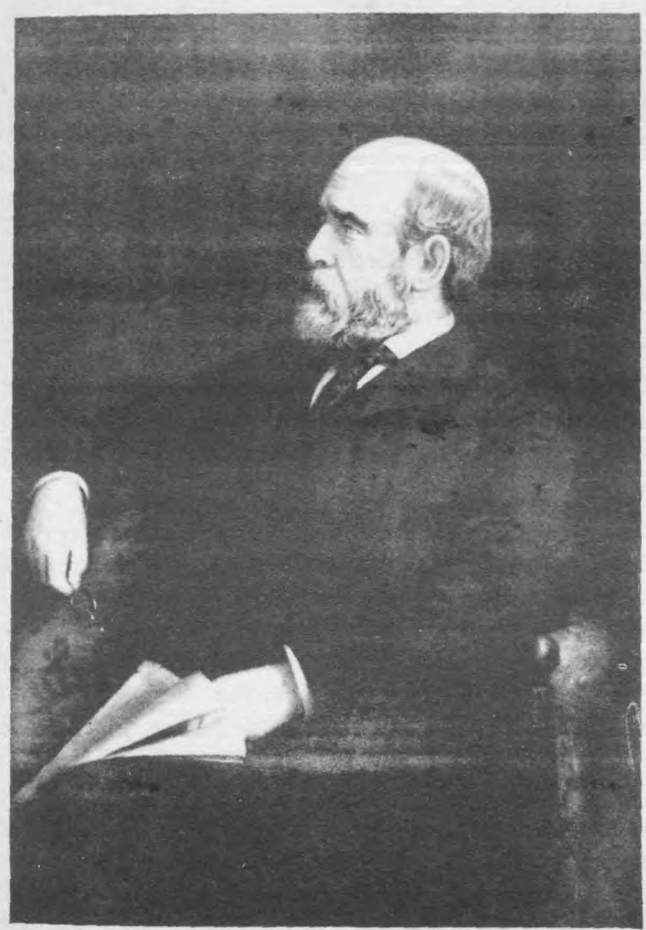
STORIES of New Jersey

PREPARED FOR USE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY THE
FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT of the WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION

1060 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey

FREE ACRES, A SINGLE TAX COMMUNITY

Free Acres, a section of New Providence Township in Union County, is one of several experimental colonies founded about the turn of the 20th century to demonstrate the single tax theory. This was the fourth of such colonies in this country. The first, Fairhope, was established in 1895 on Mobile Bay in Alabama. Five years later followed Arden, in Delaware. One man alone, Fiske Warren, a wealthy paper manufacturer, was so anxious to spread the single tax doctrine that he founded 13 colonies with a total land area of 971 square miles and a population of more than 9,000 persons. Of these, Tahanto, in Massachusetts, and Halidon, in Maine, are among the best known.



The single tax movement is credited to Henry George, whose book, Progress and Poverty, caused a sensation when it appeared in 1880. According to Henry George Jr. "It out-sold most of the popular novels of the day. In America and England it ran serially in the columns of the newspapers and by 1905 more than 2,000,000 copies had been printed." Single tax was debated in clubs and forums and discussed in editorial columns. To many it seemed that it was a scientific solution of the numerous difficulties of a complex economic and social structure. Others looked on it as just another scheme that had no possibility of success.

Henry George based his plan on the theory of the impot unique (the single tax), which was presented by the social philosophers of debt-ridden, tax-bedevelled France as a solution of the shocking conditions which finally led to the French Revolution.

The advocates of single tax contend that the fundamental cause of our difficulties is the taxation of industry, of profit, of income. Land,

© R.S.F. HENRY GEORGE *From the Oil Portrait by Harry Thurston See.*

(Courtesy Robert Schalkenbach Foundation)