



## Henry George Cigars Reintroduced

Bret Barker, who is affiliated with the Henry George School of Los Angeles, has reintroduced the Henry George cigar. GroundSwell's editor was alerted, that Barker is now producing a new Henry George cigar, by Richard Biddle, a teacher at Henry George Institute and the Henry George School in Philadelphia.

Barker responded to GroundSwell's query for more information: "As a Georgist, I just wanted to put the cigar back on the market. It was popular years ago. We do private labeling at K&B Cigars, so I got hold of an original label and made copies. Customers like the cigar. It's made in the Dominican Republic. I don't know if we can get many people interested in George through a cigar, but you never know."

K&B Cigars, Huntington, Calif., sell the Henry George cigar for \$4.95 each, Toro size, reports Biddle, who bought some for a gift to his brother-in-

law, a cigar smoker of the new wave.

Biddle reports: "Henry George was a fairly popular brand of cigars with a lovely full color picture of George on the inside lid. Over time George lost his meaning as an economist to the general public, and the brand became Henry George without the original emotional attachment. Things went so far that an advertising campaign for Henry George in the 1930s actually had two bellhops named Henry and George on a song sheet promulgating Henry George cigars. They were first made by Hirschhorn, Mack & Co., and later made by United Cigar Co. The pre-tobacco trust boxes are prettier and more in keeping with George's importance and message. American Tobacco (the Tobacco Trust) 'cleaned up' designs keeping them from any sort of controversy. Originally created about the turn of the century, they were still around, possibly into the 1950s, maybe

into '40s, and into the '30s for sure. They were distributed nationwide and mostly made in New Jersey."

Barker and Biddle each have early Henry George Cigar (5 cent) boxes from Hirschhorn and Mack Company (by various transfers to United Cigar Manufacturers) after March 2, 1901, which is the date of the U.S. Revenue Stamp. Inside there is a handsome picture of the great man and around him there is a rooster with red and blue ribbons to the left and a book, titled Progress and Poverty, to the right.

Biddle recently bought a rare Henry George cigar box and one Henry George cigar band from a California cigar box dealer, who wrote: "In my forty plus years of collecting, I've only run across a couple of boxes in the 100 drop front configuration." The dealer even photographed this box for his cigar box typology files before sending it to Biddle.

There is a more recent Henry George Cigar box at the Henry George School, Philadelphia, without the rooster and picture of Progress and Poverty.

What does the reintroduction portend? Comments Biddle: "The decline of Georgist influence late into the 1930s and beyond is clearly chronicled in The Corruption of Politics and other books. At some point in recent history, probably the 1950s or '60s or '70s, Georgism hit bottom and has been on a slow but sure rise ever since. That Henry George Cigars are available again may be but one more indication."

(Editor's note: See Jan.-Feb. 1995 GroundSwell for related story by Earl Hanson.)

### How Henry George Made History

by Ronald Yanosky, Asst. Professor, Department of History, Harvard University

(The following paper was presented to the Council of Georgist Organizations, Sixteenth International Conference, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, on October 12, 1996, and is reprinted with the author's permission.)

It's a pleasure for a historian to see that a panel posing the question "Whither the [Georgist] Movement"

includes a look at where Georgism has been. That leads me, however, to the daunting task of saying something of value in fifteen minutes or so. Historians aren't too good at supplying short answers to any kind of question, and if my reading in Georgist sources over the years is any guide, neither are Georgists. The situation reminds me of an episode that took place in New York

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