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FAIRHOPE: A GILDED AGE UTOPIAN EXPERIMENT

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The Fairhope Single Tax Colony, a unique experiment in communitarian reform, was established on the eastern shore of Mobile Bay, in Baldwin County, Alabama, in 1894. Of all the experimental communities founded in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, in the era when Fairhope was dreamed of and established, none lasted as long as it did.¹

There were dozens of communitarian efforts in those years. Largely neglected by historians of the era, they were a vital part of the history of that troubled, exciting, and creative time. Most of them had an ethnic or religious base, but we have the records of about twenty-five secular colonies roughly similar in design and purpose to Fairhope--all of them communities that the early Fairhoppers looked on as their sister colonies. Only six of them lasted for as long as ten years or more. Their median life span was five years.²

These facts tell us something important, I believe--about how resistant the world is to reform, surely, but also about how hard communitarian reformers found it to work out the right kind of community pattern to demonstrate their theories. Most important of all is what they tell us about Fairhope's unique success in creating an enduring social experiment.

A constitution for the Fairhope colony (which was called the Fairhope Industrial Association until 1904 and the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation after that) was adopted in Des Moines, Iowa, in February 1894. Soon a

pamphlet was released to recruit members. "The present social and economic order is doomed," it began. "It bears within itself the seeds of its own destruction. . . . It must go!"³ Denouncing the evils of their society, these young Iowa rebels harnessed their anger and frustration to go beyond protest. Complaining was not enough. They designed their own alternative society, one they believed rested on principles of justice and fairness.

In this way the Fairhope architects were utopians, taking their place (however small history may ultimately judge it to be) in an ancient tradition that goes back at least to the time when Plato's anxieties over the social disintegration following the Peloponnesian War led him to write a book about his ideal republic. In another period of disorder and violence in the sixteenth century, Sir Thomas More created his imaginary commonwealth which he called utopia, giving us the word that has been with us ever since. Thomas Jefferson, even as he participated in the creation of a new nation that itself would be regarded by many as utopia writ large, nonetheless warned in his Notes on the State of Virginia against the dangers of manufacturing and materialism and wrote lyrically of an ideal state of yeoman farmers.

In nineteenth century America both utopian literature and utopian experiments flourished. More than anything else, the utopian propensity of that age tells us about the ways in which Americans believed their republic had failed to live up to its utopian charter, had failed to make a reality of the "self-evident truth" that all men were "created equal" and endowed with an "inalienable right" to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Scores of philosophers, philanthropists, religious leaders, novelists, dreamers, and

community builders found the elbow room within their flawed nation to proclaim their versions of the good life and to demonstrate them in communitarian experiments.

Between the founding of the Republic and the outbreak of the Civil War, one hundred and thirty-seven known utopian communities were founded in the United States.⁴ They included famous ones such as New Harmony, where Robert Owen's theories of economic cooperation and education were practiced; Brook Farm, based on Charles Fourier's doctrine of associationism, and John Humphrey Noyes's unique blend of Christian communism and free love at Oneida. Scanty records tell us also of little-known and long-forgotten communitarian dreams with such intriguing names as Society of One-Mentians, or Promisewell Community, Integral Phalanx, Congregation of Saints, the Rising Star Association, and Ole Bull's Colony.

I find it fascinating that a unifying thread of concern ran through these ideas and experiments. Arthur Bestor, the pioneer historian of the subject, tells us that "though the founders of communities might differ from one another in their plans, they thought of themselves as participants in a well-understood and unified tradition." Noyes believed that all the American experiments were "organically connected."⁵

Albert Brisbane, a leading communitarian reformer and America's chief disciple of Fourier, wrote in 1843 that these organically connected experiments hoped to change society "quietly and through substitution." Everything that was "false and defective" would be discarded, he wrote. A better social organization, tested on a small scale in self-contained

communities, would "spread when practice has shown its superiority over the present system," he promised.⁶ This was "reform by nucleation," as the historian John Thomas puts it, "the multiplication of renovated communities until the entire nation has been redeemed."⁷

Fairhope was created a half-century after Brisbane wrote so hopefully about the transforming power of communitarian reform. The country by then had indeed been transformed, but not by communitarian reformers. Instead, the industrial and technological revolutions had unleashed unprecedented inventive genius, created staggering amounts of wealth, and produced a dazzling storehouse of material objects. But they had also created shocking new forms of poverty and given rise to industrial violence, class conflict, and political turmoil that threatened to unravel the nation's fabric.

Among the thousands of distressed and thoughtful men and women whose creative anguish was aroused by these paradoxical developments, none was more eloquent or influential than Henry George. "What has destroyed every previous civilization," he wrote, "has been the tendency to the unequal distribution of wealth and power." That was precisely America's problem, George believed, and it was the reason he wrote his book, Progress and Poverty. He believed that every material advance, instead of helping those at the bottom of the economic ladder, tended instead to make their condition worse. "This association of poverty with progress," he wrote in his most famous passage, "is the great enigma of our times." Not to solve it was to perish.⁸

Fairhope's founders agreed. When E. B. Gaston, the chief architect of the colony, met with the first group to draft their plans he spoke of the "enormous waste of human energy and natural resources" and of the "hideous

injustice and cruelty" that increased because poverty everywhere accompanied progress. Opportunities for honest middle-class men were also vanishing, he said, "as one industry after another goes into the hands of trusts and the broad acres of our common heritage pass under the control of speculators."⁹

What could be done? Could anything be done? Was it possible for a few individuals--young and without money, influence or following--to make a difference?

The group of twelve men who met with Gaston early in 1894 to answer that question were all members of the rebellious Populist Party, but they had about given up on its chances, especially in Iowa where election results were disastrous for them. Instead of politics, they looked to the nation's well-established tradition of communitarian reform. That tradition had not died out since the Civil War and the industrial revolution that followed it. Quite the contrary. Every month the newspapers told of plans for new colonies in the making. Why not establish one of their own, these young Iowa reformers asked themselves, one tailored to fit the ideas they agreed on?

There were many models to choose from. Gaston had studied some of them closely when he attempted unsuccessfully to found a colony inspired partly by the ideas of Edward Bellamy four years earlier. All of these colony proposals had in common the dream of a more cooperative, harmonious life, one in which there was collective responsibility for individual welfare and opportunity. Most aimed to socialize economic enterprise to one degree or another. Some would socialize domestic work as well, freeing women from household drudgery. Many required that property be owned collectively and that collective action

determine what kind of work should be done, who should do it, and with what compensation. Fairhope's founders sympathized with this emphasis on collectivism. They agreed that unbridled individualism was a curse. They shared with their socialist allies a vivid sense of exploitation. They regarded themselves as partners in a common mission to humanize the world.¹⁰

But there were problems with the socialist models. The Fairhoppers believed that most of those colonies collapsed after a short lifespan because the scales were tipped too much toward the group, away from the individual. The problem that needed to be solved--it was a problem as old as organized society--was how to balance the needs of society and the individual. To solve this problem, E. B. Gaston developed a concept with the apparently paradoxical title of "cooperative individualism." Combining his own thought with that of Henry George, he found what he believed was the way to avoid the stumbling blocks that had tripped other colonies. At the same time, he claimed to have found an antidote to the poison of excessive individualism that all agreed had to be treated.

George believed that poverty, exploitation, and inequality were caused by the monopoly of scarce resources, the private ownership of land. To banish these evils and to assure equal access to the earth it was necessary to make land common property. This much should be socialized, put down on the cooperative side of the ledger. Government did not necessarily have to nationalize the land to accomplish the reform. Instead, it could nationalize the income from land by levying a tax on land values--what economists call the economic rent of land--and then abolish all other taxes. For this reason,

George's proposal came to be known as the single-tax program and his followers known as single taxers. Rounding out the collective, or cooperative, side of their evolving plan, the Fairhoppers provided that public services and public utilities be owned and operated by the community to prevent the exploitation of private monopoly.

This scheme thus left much more on the individualism side of the ledger than the standard communitarian model. Alf Wooster, one of the founding members (it was he who thought of the name "Fairhope" for the colony), wrote that it was going to take "considerable missionary work to get people to understand the difference between our plan and the 'regulation' cooperative move."¹¹ What Wooster and his colleagues had to emphasize was that, in the Fairhope plan, ownership of all the means of production except land would remain in private hands. The association might undertake some collective productive and commercial activities but, for the most part, private enterprise, the actions of free individuals in a free market, would determine production, distribution, and wages.

Capping this delicately balanced economic scheme was a democratic political structure that was a model of reform thought. Elections were to be frequent and terms of office short. The initiative, referendum, and recall were provided to assure the ultimate authority of the membership. Women, everywhere denied the right to vote and hold office, were to be the political equals and partners of men in the Fairhope model community.

Convinced that their plan, unlike those of their more coercive sister colonies, was based on a realistic understanding of human nature--that its ultimate success would not depend on the denial of personal ambition--they

looked forward to a mutually supportive, progressive, wholesome community life in which cooperative ventures and a cooperative spirit would exist in perfect harmony with individual enterprise. Gaston's essay on cooperative individualism, widely circulated to draw attention to the proposed colony, concluded with the promise of "a community . . . where intelligent men and women, drawn together by a common purpose, will strive to make practical application of the best thoughts of the best minds of all ages to a solution of the problems which threaten to-day the existence of every nation of the globe. In such an effort we invite the co-operation of all of kindred aims."¹²

Included among the statements in the essay calling on those of "kindred aims" to join the Fairhoppers was the claim that "they that shall make good theories work and prove the value of proposed social solutions by practical demonstration, will do far more to move the world than the wisest and most brilliant theorists."¹³ Whether doers actually contribute more to the world than thinkers is not an easy argument to settle, but I expect everyone would agree that it was a lot easier to write about the model community than it was actually to create it.

In the first few years there was good reason to doubt that the job could be done at all. There were many obstacles. The site, table land on a high bluff overlooking Mobile Bay, was seductively beautiful but economically sub marginal. Despite the published attractions of the chosen land, only twenty-eight persons, nine of them children, made the trip there in November 1894. None of the settlers, then or later, brought substantial capital; all

were men and women of modest means, or no means at all. Nor did they have much help at the start from sympathetic northern reformers. George himself never endorsed Fairhope because of his long-standing opposition to communitarian reform as a means of advancing the single tax. He always favored working through the political process. Single taxers generally worried about the cooperative features of the colony and Fairhope's socialist friends were troubled by the stress on individualism. The colony fell between two stools of reform. On top of these problems, a small group of newcomers started a power struggle in 1895 that nearly destroyed the settlement.

That crisis passed, obstacles were gradually overcome, and a small number of sympathetic single taxers, Joseph Fels most prominent among them, eventually provided critical funds to purchase the needed land. Operating as a land-owning association, the colony made land available to members without initial charge. Each member paid into the treasury an annual rent, or use fee, based on the value of the leased land, thus simulating the single tax. Under this plan the colony flourished, attracted curious visitors from afar, and achieved fame as a unique experiment. The first land, 135 acres with a half-mile frontage on the Bay, was acquired in January 1895. Holdings increased to about 4,000 acres by 1907.

The colony reserved the most beautiful bluff and beach property for parks, demonstrating the belief that no individual should own scarce community resources. All would share in the riches nature provided. The Bay brought Fairhoppers together for recreation, fishing, and commerce. The Progressive League, where great and small issues were debated, met on the bluff or in the

community hall. Since boat travel to Mobile was the only access to the outside world, the colonists built a wharf and later constructed their own steamer. Meeting the daily boats was a major Fairhope social and business occasion until a causeway built in 1927 made possible automobile travel to Mobile.

Other cooperative ventures included the laying out of tree-lined streets which early plats show as widening toward the Bay, giving all lessees a bay view; bath houses and pavilions; a public water supply; a telephone system; a library that housed the remarkable book collection of the bibliophile Edward Howland; a meeting hall; a school; and several small commercial enterprises. The population grew by what must have seemed leaps and bounds. The twenty-eight original settlers saw their numbers swelled to a hundred by the turn of the century. Thirty years later, with a population of 1,549, Fairhope was the largest town in the county. Its rapid growth was due to several related factors but the most important of them was the colony's free-land policies--nowhere else could a person of modest means find a free site for a home, a business, or a farm.

Materially successful, the colony in its early years developed a unique intellectual and cultural environment based on its reform mission. One resident wrote in 1904 about a special "spirit of Fairhope" that infused the community and attracted reformers to it. "No matter how great the number of subjects upon which Fairhoppers may disagree," she wrote, hinting that arguments in the colony could be lively and frequent, "they are united on one subject: namely, that there is something wrong with the present economic

system. There may be a wide difference of opinion as to just what is the matter, and as to the best remedy; but the very fact of their presence in Fairhope proves that they think the principle it is applying is one way out, and presumably the best they know. The unity of thought and purpose on this subject," she continued, "and the willingness of a large majority to make almost any personal sacrifice in order to further the community interests creates an atmosphere of sympathy and comradeship that is the strongest and pleasentest impression any one will carry away from Fairhope. . . . No one can understand, unless he has experienced the comradeship of a common interest, what a dead thing existence is without this vital element."¹⁴

Fairhope's success and the vibrant sense of mission and accomplishment it nourished did not eliminate controversy and disappointment. Two early decisions need special mention. At the time they were made, both seemed necessary to survival and growth, but both would profoundly change the experiment.

The first decision had to do with membership. Like other communitarian reformers, the colonists had intended that their community include only those who believed in its principles and paid the \$100 membership fee. Some members were deeply concerned about opening the lands to anyone who was not wholly committed to single-tax principles. But too few persons were either willing or able to make this commitment. The hard choice for colony leaders, then, was either to end the experiment or open it to non-members. To continue their demonstration they had to have settlers to develop the land.

After experimenting with several arrangements, the colony made lands available to non-members on the same terms as to members. The hope was that these lessees would see the virtues of the single-tax plan, join the association, and then participate in its governance. Instead, non-member lessees found they could have all the material benefits of the colony without paying the \$100 membership fee, a considerable sum of money in the early days. The result was the growth of a large class of non-member lessees. Some turned out to be friends and admirers of the colony and some were indifferent to it. But some became opponents who led protests against the colony.

The second fateful decision was the incorporation of the municipality of Fairhope in 1908. The new one-square-mile town included within its boundaries privately-owned as well as colony land, thus giving rise to two land-tenure systems in a single municipality. This diluted the demonstration. Over the years the colony gave to the town government the public improvements that stood as visible proof of its success. The water system, the wharf, the park lands, and the public library became municipal property, no longer identified with the colony.

For many years, however, the effects of these two decisions did not undermine the demonstration significantly. Colony land was more in demand and more intensively developed than deeded land, and the colonists played prominent roles in town government. However much it may have lost its purity, Fairhope was unmistakably "the single-tax colony," unique among communitarian experiments and almost totally different from all other small southern towns.

That distinctiveness became greater and the Fairhope experiment took on a greater significance when Marietta Johnson founded her School of Organic Education in 1907. Up to this time only the single-tax experiment set the colony apart; after this time, at least for the next thirty years or so, the town's fame and character were shaped by the two institutions.

Before Johnson joined them, Fairhoppers were traditional in their ideas about rearing and educating their youth. They believed that creation of the cooperative model community they desired required nothing more than the economic and political reforms they advocated. Johnson disagreed. Her most important contribution to Fairhope was her insight that the just society required a reformed educational foundation as well as a new economic basis. Sometimes she made this point bluntly, writing in the Courier once that "No great economic reform can be effected by people who have been trained during the growing years to believe that success is in 'passing' at school and in 'making money' in . . . life."¹⁵

Johnson believed that schools should be small communities where cooperative, egalitarian ideas became part of the everyday lives of children. Children should not be motivated by putting them in competition with one another and they should be freed from examinations, marks, promotions, failures, honors, and prizes. Education, she said, should be the growth of the whole person, hence the term "organic." Her curriculum mixed dancing, arts, crafts, music, drama, and games with nature study and all the conventional academic subjects, placing all on a par. Natural, unselfconscious development was her goal.¹⁶

John Dewey, America's preeminent philosopher of progressive education, visited the school in 1913 and called it a demonstration of "how the ideal of equality of opportunity for all is to be transmuted into reality."¹⁷ This endorsement helped to make Johnson a prominent figure in the national progressive education movement and turned Fairhope into something of a national educational laboratory. At the same time, the school became, like the bayfront, a focal point of the Fairhope community with the charismatic Marietta Johnson presiding over its activities. On its ten-acre colony plot near the town center, the school hosted meetings where the links between organic education and the single tax were discussed.

By the 1920s Fairhope was a mature social experiment. I believe it reached the height of its fame and came nearest to becoming a model community in that decade. A binding sense of comradeship was noted by visitors, many of them famous, who came in large numbers--to put their children in the school, to enjoy the beauty, and to exchange views with the single taxers, free thinkers, artists, and mavericks. Visitors and thoughtful locals alike also commented favorably on the congeniality, industry, and sense of well being of the community's working men and women--its majority and its backbone who prospered because of the availability of free land. With no rich and few who were poor, with little hierarchy, pretension, or ostentatious homes, Fairhope seemed to many observers to demonstrate the virtues of Henry George's economic theories and John Dewey's educational philosophy.

In some ways it would be pleasant to stop here, to end this account of Fairhope's history with the confident, fulfilling years of the 1920s. But an

upbeat ending without paradox and irony would unfairly obscure important aspects of the story of Fairhope as utopia that must be noted, if only briefly.

Despite their success as community builders, the Fairhoppers had not found a way to propagate their ideas. One of the trustees later remarked that the colony was doing well materially but educationally it was getting nowhere. He was right. Not even in Baldwin County, where the Fairhope success was there to see, had significant sympathy for land-value taxation developed.

Within the town some conditions made the demonstration less than a perfect model. Blacks were excluded from the beginning because Fairhoppers believed that southern racial attitudes would not allow compromise of the segregation principle. E. B. Gaston said that no single taxer could justify barring anyone from the land, but he condoned it because he wanted the colony to survive. Racial prejudice would go away, he believed, once economic justice had been established. Marietta Johnson believed that true organic education must include all people, but she wanted to fight only one battle at a time, so she, too, went along with the local mandate for segregation.

Divisions in the municipality between Fairhoppers and non-Fairhoppers further lessened the appeal of the model. Many town residents were neither members nor admirers of the single-tax corporation, many opposed or ridiculed organic education, and many held values, assumptions, and attitudes that were precisely those the demonstration had been designed to change. All of which is to say that perfection was never achieved.

There were also serious disagreements within the membership. For example, when the Florida land boom spread to the area it set off a speculative fever. Nothing could threaten the experiment's integrity more

than unchecked land speculation. To keep intact the basic single-tax principle, the colony began rejecting lease transfers when speculation was apparent. The policy was hotly debated then and would be challenged a half-century later by non-member lessees caught up in the fever of another land boom.

With the coming of the Great Depression of the 1930s, Fairhope's prospects dimmed. Funds for both the school and the colony dried up, outside interest and support dissolved, and the old leadership passed away. E. B. Gaston, who had edited the paper and directed the colony from the beginning, died in 1937, Marietta Johnson in 1938.

Fairhope survived the Depression crisis, found fresh leadership, grew rapidly in the war years, and has prospered in the four decades since then. But, as the years passed, thousands of newcomers arrived. Few of them knew or cared about the principles on which Fairhope had been founded. The whole eastern shore grew rapidly and the single-tax colony lost much of the cohesive influence it once had. Organic education, after having achieved almost co-equal status with the colony in defining the Fairhope experiment, receded and vanished as a significant community force. The old reform spirit seemed to dissipate as the Fairhope residents turned inward to cultivate the garden of riches bequeathed them by the early Fairhoppers. When the struggle for racial equality became the central reform issue of the 1950s and 1960s, Fairhope's revolutionary heritage of free land and equal educational opportunity inspired only modest opposition to the Wallace white supremacy juggernaut. And somewhere along the line the newspaper stopped claiming to be

"a progressive paper for progressive people," boasting instead of being "Baldwin's prestige newspaper," surely an ironic fate for a journal founded to shake the pillars of established authority.

But even as these ironic twists of history wove themselves into the patterns of a vibrant new Fairhope that sets its own agenda, the deeply-rooted ideas and institutions of the utopian experiment retained force and relevance in the present. The bayfront and parklands stood as an almost unique and nearly incredible example of common sharing of community riches. Despite assaults by dissident lessees and human failures of its own leadership, the single-tax corporation kept alive, in however modest a way, the ideal and some of the reality of land as our commons, to be legitimately held only for use and never for investment.

Crisis and controversy have also brought out blunt, plain-spoken language, once a proud Fairhope trademark. A colony member wrote a recent letter to the editor proclaiming that "whenever land values go up, this rich plum with its some 4,000 acres creates a feeding frenzy among our hungry land sharks, lawyers, and opportunists." The same author's soaring faith that his single-tax colony offers "a cure for most of the social ills and all of the economic ills of mankind" tells us that the utopian pulse still beats in Fairhope. But is what we hear only the echo from a bygone era? Is what we see only a dying idea's nervous twitch?

Only today's Fairhope residents and tomorrow's historians can answer that question.

In the history of communitarian reform Fairhope as a unique position. The hopeful communities that were established at the time Fairhope was begun--places like Topolobampo, Kaweah, Ruskin, and Equality--came crashing down after short but eventful lives. They were dissolved and they disappeared from the face of the earth. They left no traces, no echoes, no beating pulses in the lands they once occupied.

It was otherwise in Fairhope.

But a new Fairhope has emerged in the last generation or so. It is a Fairhope shaped by new people, new economic and social conditions, and new values and aspirations, but it has been built on the old Fairhope. It has made its way by modifying, absorbing, even denying, the legacy bequeathed it by the old Fairhoppers. But never by rooting it out, obliterating it, packing it off to outer space.

In the long run, what happens in Fairhope--how it subverts, ignores, modifies, or affirms its utopian legacy--or does all of these things simultaneously--is less important than what others can learn from the study of its long history.

Many years ago Lewis Mumford wrote a book about the history of utopias because he said it gave him the opportunity "to discuss . . . the ultimate goods, the basic aims, the whole conception of the 'good life' by which, in modern times, we have been guided."¹⁸

Fairhope has been a self-conscious ongoing search for a good life in a better world, and study of its history, a history spotlighted on a small stage, may help us to see more clearly timeless humanistic concerns, enduring

paradoxes and dilemmas of a democratic society torn between selfish and aggressive impulses and peaceful, cooperative instincts. It calls us back sharply to an awareness of the unsolved dilemma of poverty amidst plenty, in the United States and throughout the world, and reminds us of the principled commitments men and women are capable of making.

Notes

¹On the history of Fairhope see Paul E. and Blanche R. Alyea, Fairhope, 1894-1954: The Story of a Single Tax Colony (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1956); Paul M. Gaston, Women of Fair Hope (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984); and Arthur Power Dudden, Joseph Fels and the Single-Tax Movement (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971).

²Robert S. Fogarty, Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1980).

³E. B. Gaston, "True Co-Operative Individualism: An Argument on the Plan of the Fairhope Industrial Association," Liberty Bell, April 28, 1894.

⁴Fogarty, Dictionary of American Communal and Utopian History.

⁵Arthur Bestor, Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian Origins and the Owenite Phase of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663-1829, 2nd edition (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), pp. 47, 53.

⁶Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷John L. Thomas, Alternative America: Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Henry Demarest Lloyd and the Adversary Tradition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 274.

⁸Henry George, Progress and Poverty: An Inquiry into the Cause of Industrial Depressions and the Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth--The Remedy (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1960; 1879), pp. 8-10, 528.

⁹Gaston, "True Co-Operative Individualism."

¹⁰Robert V. Hine, California's Utopian Colonies (San Marino, Ca: The Huntington Library, 1953); Ray Reynolds, Cat's Paw Utopia [Topolobampo] (El Cajon, Ca.: Privately Printed, 1972); Charles Pierce LeWarne, Utopias on Puget Sound, 1885-1915 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975); and John Egerton, Visions of Utopia: Nashoba, Rugby, Ruskin, and the 'New Communities' in Tennessee's Past (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977).

¹¹Alf Wooster to E. B. Gaston, June 3, 1894 (Fairhope Single Tax Colony Archives, Fairhope, Alabama).

¹²Gaston, "True Co-Operative Individualism."

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Alice Herring, "The Spirit of Fairhope," Fairhope Courier, April 1, 1904.

¹⁵Fairhope Courier, March 29, 1912

¹⁶Johnson expounded her theories in two books: Thirty Years with an Idea (University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1974) and Youth in a World of Men: The Child, The Parent and the Teacher (New York: John Day, 1929); her life is the subject of Paul M. Gaston, Women of Fair Hope, chap. 3.

¹⁷John and Evelyn Dewey, Schools of Tomorrow (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1915), pp. 315-16.

¹⁸Lewis Mumford, The Story of Utopias (New York: Boni and Liverright, 1922), pp. 11-12.