Land Problems and Policies

A. Property Institutions Affecting Production and Distribution:

I. Quo Vadis, The Point of View

1. Land Tenure Policy
2. The Property System
3. The Political Economy of Freedom
4. Equality of Opportunity
5. Economic Development and Property Rights
6. The Effect of Distribution Upon the Size and Kind of the Social Product

Suggested Reading:


II. Origin of Property and Contract

1. Primitive Origin of Property
2. Feudalism
3. Development of Contract
4. The Emerging Market Economy: Changes in Property Concepts

Suggested Reading:


III. Property and Contract: The American Experience

1. Introduction: Man to Nature and Man to Man Relationships
2. Use Value and Exchange Value: A Hypothesis
3. Evolution of Property Concepts in the United States
4. Land Speculation
5. Corporate Growth
6. Bankruptcy and Debtor Relief
7. Tax Exemption
8. Development of Economic Power
9. The Due Process Clause as a Barrier to Economic Reform, 1890-1930
10. New Property Concepts in the Depression Environment

References:
Cushman and Cushman, Cases in Constitutional Law
Mason and Beany, American Constitutional Law

IV. Property As a Factor in Economic Growth

1. Hypothesis: A necessary condition of economic growth is that society must throw its collective weight behind certain actions and actors at strategic times.
   a. The Use of Shifting Property Rights
   b. Direct Intervention in the Allocation of Resources:
      Allocation of land and capital to development of transportation and commercial agriculture, development of credit, and encouragement of industry.
2. A Case Study in Water Development

Suggested Reading:
Hurst, James Willard, Law and the Conditions of Freedom in the Nineteenth Century United States, Chapter 1.

V. Policy and the Concept of Efficiency

Suggested Reading:
Commons, John R., Legal Foundations of Capitalism, Chapter IX, "Public Purpose"
B. Some Major Institutional Changes in the History of American Agriculture

I. Colonial Period—Shucking the vestiges of feudalism

Suggested Reading:

Edwards, Everett E., "American Agriculture--The First 300 Years," Yearbook of Agriculture, 1940, pp. 171-276. (This is a good overview and should be read first to get a broad perspective.)


Suggested Reading:


Peffer, E. Louise, The Closing of the Public Domain, 1900-1950. (Skim as interested)

Shannon, Fred, The Farmer's Last Frontier, Chapter III, "Disposing of the Public Domain."


Garland, Hamlin, Main-Travelled Roads, "Under the Lion's Paw."


III. Public Assistance in Economic Development: The Case of Transportation

Suggested Reading:

Goodrich, Carter, Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads, Chapter 1 and conclusions.

Fogel, Robert W., The Union Pacific Railroad: A Case in Premature Enterprise, Chapters I and IV, pp. 86-110.

IV. Agrarian Protest, 1870-1930: Market Power and Technological Change

Suggested Reading:

Shannon, Fred, American Farmers Movements (paperback), pp. 74-96.

Shannon, Fred, Farmers Last Frontier, Chapter XIII, pp. 291-328.


Nye, Russel, Midwestern Progressive Politics, skim.
V. New Institutions in the Depression Environment

Suggested Reading:

Agee, James, Let Us Now Praise Famous Men: Three Tenant Families (photographs).

Commons, John R., "Legislative and Administrative Reasoning in Economics," _Journal of Farm Economics_, May 1942. (Analysis of Triple A)


Lilienthal, David E., _TVA, Democracy on the March._

McConnell, Grant, _The Decline of Agrarian Democracy_, Chapters 8, 9, 10 on the Farm Security Administration and Land Use Planning.

C. Contemporary Problems and Policies: Application and Integration of Relevant Theoretical Concepts and Critical Review of the Literature

I. An Overview of the Field of Land Economics

Suggested Reading:


_Land Tenure Research Workshop_, 1956.


II. Relations Between Major Land Users: Land Utilization and Shifting Land Use; Conservation

Suggested Reading:

Clawson, Marion, "Land Use and Demand for Land in the United States," in _Modern Land Policy, 1960_, pp. 3-16 (other articles in this volume may be of interest to individual students).

III. Distribution and Transfer of Property Rights; Land Exchange--Relation Between Owners

Suggested Reading:

1. Land ownership

Ackerman, Joseph and Marshall Harris, Family Farm Policy, 1947.

Kanel, Don, Opportunities for Beginning Farmers, Why Are They Limited? North Central Regional Publication 102 or Bul. 452, University of Nebraska.


2. Land values

Optional

3. Land transactions


IV. Land Tenure--Division of Rights

Suggested Reading:

1. Relations between owner and occupier


2. Relations between owner or occupier and financier (or other input supplier)


V. Private and Public Relationships--Techniques for Public Direction of Economic Activity

Public spending, public ownership, taxation, and land use controls
V. Continued

Suggested Reading:

(Investment in land vs. human capital)

Hardin, Charles M., *The Politics of Agriculture*, Soil Conservation and the
Struggle for Power in Rural America, 1952. Chapter IV, The Soil Con-
servation Service; Chapter V, Soil Conservation Districts; Chapter VI,
pp. 100-103; Chapter VII, The Union of Conservation and Parity, Chapter
XIV, Farm Family Living.

VI. World Land Tenure

Suggested Reading:

Barlowe, Raleigh, "Land, Taxes and Rural Economic Development in Colombia,"


FAO, *The State of Food and Agriculture*, 1961. Chapter III, "Land Reform and
Institutional Change," Progress in Different Regions.

VII. Food, Resources, and Population

Suggested Reading:

Political and Economic Planning, *World Population and Resources*, London,

Wibberley, G. P., *Agriculture and Urban Growth*, a study of the competition
Chapter 6, "Food Replacement--at Home or Abroad?," Chapter 11, "A
Comparison with the USA."
Historical Note: When I joined the Department of Agricultural Economics at Michigan State University in 1959, I inherited two graduate courses from Prof. Raleigh Barlowe who moved to another department. One was AEC 810, Advanced Land Economics, and the second was AEC 811, Land Problems and Policies (later the numbers were switched). Barlowe had organized the 811 course around a review of current policies concerning different resources such as land, water, forests, etc. I decided to give it a more conceptual basis and it evolved first into Public Choice Economics and later to Institutional and Behavioral Economics. I decided that some of the interdependencies surrounding land such as high exclusion cost and given order by collective action also applied to other situations. Over the years, the field of “land economics” evolved into resource economics and environmental economics. I still used many natural resource cases to illustrate the applicability of institutional economics, but did not limit the subject matter applications to land.

The Advanced Land Economics course evolved into a course in Benefit-Cost Analysis, a technique originally applied to water resources (navigation, irrigation, power, and flood control) by the U.S. government. I tried to put some of this experience into practice when I worked for a year (1968-9) with the Systems Analysis Group attached to the Assistant Secretary of the Army who oversaw the civil functions of the Army Corps of Engineers.