



For immediate release

The Community Land Trust Reader explores the roots of low-foreclosure home ownership on community-owned land

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (May 17, 2010) – A new collection of essays, assembled for the first time, trace the roots, evolution, and prospects of the community land trust -- an innovative model of affordable housing shaped by the likes of Henry George and Ebenezer Howard, and flourishing today in hundreds of U.S. communities.

The Community Land Trust Reader [http://www.lincolninst.edu/pubs/1766_The-Community-Land-Trust-Reader] (2010 / 616 pages / Cloth / \$35.00 ISBN: 978-1-55844-205-4), edited by John Emmeus Davis, brings together the seminal texts that inspired and defined the community land trust, where buyers can purchase homes exclusive of the cost of land. The model maintains stability through limits on resale profits and support for households and their financing that has resulted in negligible foreclosures over the last two years, according to a recent survey [<http://atlincolnhouse.typepad.com/pressroom/2010/04/community-land-trusts-have-fewer-disclosures-for-2nd-year-survey-finds.html>].

The essays – many of which have never before appeared in print, and others written expressly for this volume -- trace the intellectual origins of an eclectic model of tenure that was shaped by the social theories of Henry George, Ebenezer Howard, Ralph Borsodi, and Arthur Morgan, and by social experiments like the Garden Cities of England and the Gramdan villages of India.

The community land trust arrived quietly on the American scene in the late 1960s, an outgrowth of the civil rights movement in the Deep South to help African-American farmers gain access to agricultural land. It soon found many other uses, including affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization, as it spread to urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout the country. By 2005, there were more than 200 CLTs, with a dozen new ones being organized every year. Today, CLTs are operating in 45 states and the District of Columbia, and they are being introduced in other countries including Canada, England, Scotland, Australia, and Kenya.

Rapid growth has brought many newcomers to the CLT movement, as residents, staff, governing board members, and public officials in communities engage in this innovative combination of common ownership of land and individual ownership of buildings. Understanding the origins of the community land trust will help remind them of the model's values and core principles, such as inclusive membership and popular election of the governing board – while at the same time identifying obsolete features and fostering the experimentation that gave rise to CLTs in the first place.

The *Reader* does not look only to the past. Many of its 46 essays and excerpts examine contemporary applications of CLTs in promoting home ownership, spurring community development, protecting public investment, mandating stewardship, preserving farmland, and capturing land gains for the common good. They describe a

modern-day model of private, nonmarket ownership that is fighting for acceptance on a national stage long dominated by better-known tenures historically favored by the market and state.

“Community land trusts are at a critical turning point, and many opportunities lie ahead,” said Gregory K. Ingram, president of the Lincoln Institute, which maintains a partnership with the National CLT Network [<http://www.cltnetwork.org/>] to support training and research on community land trusts. “This book aptly frames an approach that can counter today’s tumult in housing markets and provide sustainable affordable housing.”

The Community Land Trust Reader had its origins in the National Community Land Trust Academy, which the Lincoln Institute helped found in 2006. Many of the essays and excerpts contained in this collection have been regularly assigned as required readings in Academy courses. By bringing them together in a single volume, these materials are now more accessible for classroom use, as well as for practitioners, public officials, community activists, and others who want to learn more about the heritage and potential of this vital movement.

John Davis will be at Lincoln House in Cambridge June 15 for remarks [imbed link: <https://www.lincolninst.edu/education/education-coursedetail.asp?id=709>] followed by a reception and book-signing.

Advance praise for *The Community Land Trust Reader*:

We’ve recently seen an immensely damaging housing bubble that was built on speculation suddenly burst, with disastrous results not just for our national economy, but for individual homeowners and renters. Homes that are needed by working families are too often priced beyond their reach – or pried from their grasp – by dramatic rises and falls in real estate prices. *The Community Land Trust Reader* show us there is a more equitable way of keeping land-based resources available, affordable, and secure for people who need them the most.

—Bernie Sanders
United States Senator

Forty years ago, the Civil Rights movement in the South gave birth to the community land trust. The nation’s first CLT, New Communities Inc., was created to help African American farmers and their families gain economic independence in a turbulent time. CLTs of today are still engaged in making land available for rural homesteads, but many more CLTs are now working in cities and suburbs, serving families in need of affordable housing and neighborhoods in need of revitalization. Having been a part of New Communities at the beginning, I always hoped for the day when CLTs might be implemented nationally. From what I see in *The Community Land Trust Reader*, it would seem that day has finally arrived.

—Mtamanika Youngblood, President/CEO
Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies, Inc.
Atlanta, Georgia

The community land trust is a practical, innovative model for affordable housing and community engagement with a potential applicability, as this book suggests, that is *worldwide*. An exemplary CLT in the United States, the Champlain Housing Trust, was selected as a 2008 winner of the World Habitat Award, receiving the Award at the United Nations global celebration of World Habitat Day. Global interest in the model has begun to grow.

—Diane Diacon
Director
Building and Social Housing Foundation
Leicestershire, United Kingdom

About the Editor

John Emmeus Davis is partner and cofounder of Burlington Associates in Community Development in Vermont, a consulting cooperative specializing in projects that promote permanently affordable housing. Contact:

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The Lincoln Institute of Land Policy is a leading resource for key issues about the use, regulation and taxation of land. Providing high-quality education and research, the institute strives to improve public dialogue and decisions about land policy.

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