

THE LANDLORD'S GAME (LLG): Precursor to Monopoly / By Richard Biddle

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The TV game show *Jeopardy* on September 5, 2019 posed this fact for its contestants' response: THE ORIGINS OF THIS POPULAR HASBRO BOARD GAME GO BACK TO THE 1904 THE LANDLORD'S GAME. Of course, the correct answer was: "What is Monopoly?" But what was the original basis for THE LANDLORD'S GAME? The answer to this question is much less known.

Over the past 15 years, I have lectured numerous times on the little known history of the origin of Monopoly, on the basis of my personal experiences. The history of the LANDLORD'S GAME is part of the material I incorporate.

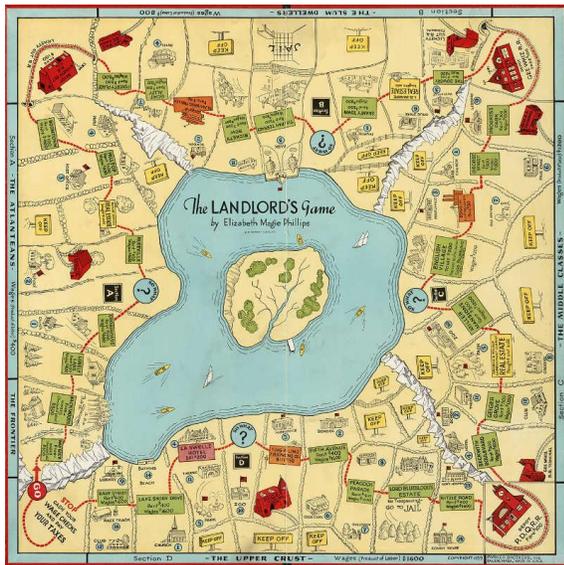


My involvement and fascination with the game started at age 5 when my 8 year-old brother first got me to play our 1936 edition of Monopoly. As I recall, my brother read the Monopoly "rules" in his favor, taking advantage of the fact that I was a pre-reader. It was a rare day if I won, and then it was usually the result of my cheating and lying about how I won, because the "rules" of the game were rigged against me. I quickly learned that there were a host of possible strategies to utilize in winning. I believe I witnessed some cheating in an adult Monopoly competition about 10 years ago.

THE LANDLORD'S GAME is the precursor to and basis for the Monopoly game. Elizabeth Magie (in 1902-1903) invented the games as a means to educate people about Henry George's political economics. She was a Georgist, as was her father.



THE LANDLORD'S GAME was patented in 1904. Parker Bros. purchased its patent in 1935 from the inventor for \$500. It was the first patent number assigned to Parker Bros. MONOPOLY, and it also was used by Parker Bros. as the patent on the 1939 LANDLORD'S GAME.



The first wooden board for the game was made in Arden, DE, a Henry George Single Tax enclave, and an arts and crafts community. The 1906 printed edition is very rare. Thomas Forsyth found one in his parents' house in the 1990s. It was in very good condition and mostly complete. Fortunately, Thomas held on to the game and studied it and its history; he now makes available the important replica edition.

The rules for the 1906 THE LANDLORD'S GAME have an alternative single tax choice. Two players can vote to enact them. Among other things, revenue that would go into private pockets, thus would go into the public treasury. I recently bought two copies of

