

Henry George Memorial Green

Bob DeNegrís
Trustee of Ardentown

Recently a sign commemorating the Henry George Memorial Green in Ardentown, Delaware, was installed by Rodney Jester and Bob DeNegrís, members of the Georgist Guild.

The sign, commissioned by the Village of Ardentown, was designed and made by Walter Broadbent and has been placed in an open area of the Green. The sign reads:

**HENRY GEORGE
MEMORIAL GREEN
1839-1897**

At its September 2000 meeting, the Village of Ardentown voted unanimously to name the Green as a memorial to Henry George, whose ideas on land value taxation form the basis of the Deeds of Trust on which the villages of the Ardens were founded.

Also installed on the Green and dedicated last September is a stone bench commissioned by the Guild and put in place by Rodney Jester. Rodney also recently installed a metal plaque with a quote from Henry George on a rock placed next to the bench. The plaque reads:

On the land we are born, from it we live, to it we return again — children of the soil as truly as is the blade of grass or the flower of



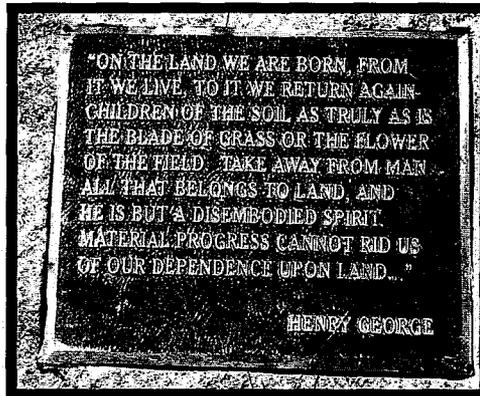
Rodney Jester prepares the site

the field. Take away from man all that belongs to the land, and he is but a disembodied spirit. Material progress cannot rid us of our dependence upon land.

Stefanie Lombardo and Page Dwyer have volunteered to provide landscaping to the area.

We invite all who come to Ardentown to stop by the Green on their walks through the town and join us in remembering the man who helped to make our way of life unique. Many thanks to all who have or who will participate in this project, especially Rodney and the Georgist Guild.

Like its sister city, Arden, also in the state of Delaware, Ardentown was founded as an experimental community, an attempt to start a community based on the ideas of Henry George.

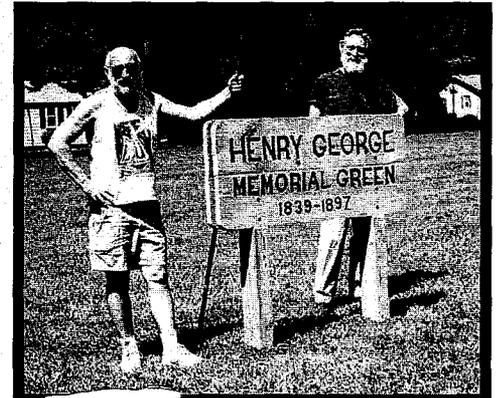


Arden was begun by two Philadelphians, the sculptor Frank Stephens and architect Will Price. Both artists followed the political-economic ideals of Henry George and the socio-aesthetic principles of English artist William Morris, one of the founders of the *Arts and Crafts* movement of the late 19th century. Morris believed in a return to craft production, good utilitarian design for the common person, and a return to the values of simple village life.

The Single Tax movement was near the height of its popularity in the 1890s and Stephens and Price came to Delaware during a Single-Tax campaign to win control of the state legislature in 1895-1896. Georgists believed that by winning control of local political machinery, they could put their principles into action and thus become a beacon to the rest of the nation. They even published a Single-Tax newspaper, *Justice*, in Wilmington, Delaware.

While the state-wide campaign failed —

many Single-Tax advocates were in fact jailed during the run of the campaign — Stephens and Price continued to pursue their vision of founding a community that would exemplify the



Bob DeNegrís and Mike Curtis

teachings of Henry George and be a guidepost for the rest of the world. They purchased farmland in New Castle County and designed a town that emphasized communal space and encouraged the immigration of people from all economic levels and walks of life. In Arden, there is a tax on land values only, not on improvements to land.

Residents are prey to all other state and federal taxes, including income taxes. However, the real estate tax levied by the county and the school district is transformed by the Ardens into a tax on the value of land only. This means that no matter how valuable a house or other buildings are, the building value will not effect the tax liability. If a plot of land remains undeveloped, it is still taxed at market rate; there is no discount for idle land.

Twenty-two years later, Frank Stephens and his son Donald founded Ardentown in the same spirit as Arden and today both communities continue to prosper.

