

Game of Monopoly Originally Devised by Arlington Woman

**Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips Now
Working on New Amuse-
ments**

By Margaret Troxell

A little Dresden China lady living in a doll house—that's what we found the other day when we went looking for Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips, one of the most versatile Arlingtonians and an expert in one of the most unusual professions—the inventing of games of skill. We almost missed 2309 North Custis Road, but on closer inspection we found a gate with the number above it and a rambling flagstone walk leading up to a tiny white, one-story house with touches of apple green.

And when we rang the bell—we were quite sure then we had mistaken our way into a toy shop. A dainty little lady with snow white curly hair and rosy cheeks welcomed us cordially. Could this be the woman who is credited, and rightly so, with the invention of the original game of monopoly? We were amazed.

It was a young girl's deep love for her father and unconsolable grief at his death that indirectly kindled the spark of inspiration for devising complicated games and then simplifying them for other people's entertainment. Elizabeth Phillips was born Elizabeth Magie in the town of Macomb, Ill. She was the daughter of James K. Magie, a newspaper man and an ardent admirer of Henry George, the "single taxer", who died in the late eighteen nineties.

Sometime before his death he handed the book by Henry George, "Progress and Poverty", to his daughter and urged her to read it. Being quite young and finding more interesting things at the moment, she put the book aside and after his death took it up and studied it thoroughly, feeling that she owed at least that to her father.

She became so interested in the division of income among land, labor and capital that she struggled for several years trying to work out a scheme for a just and proportionate division. One day she was working with feverish haste and felt that she had just reached a solution when she heard a newsboy shouting "Extra!" in the street. She graphically remembers how she jumped to her feet, suddenly sure that Henry George was dead. And she was right.

It was some time later that she produced the game and had it patented under the name of the "Landlord's Game". When Monopoly came out on the market, Mrs. Phillips received letters from her friends congratulating her on her good fortune, but Monopoly had been put out by another party. Just about a year ago she sold her patent to the Parker Company, which makes Monopoly sets.

But we're getting a bit ahead of our story. Elizabeth Magie met and married Albert Wallace Phillips, some



Mrs. Elizabeth Phillips

years her senior. For some years Mr. and Mrs. Phillips conducted an entertainment service, with her as the main attraction with her clever and varied dramatic readings. In between times she found time to teach dramatic art. Mr. Phillips died about six months ago.

Mrs. Phillips still appears occasionally on some local club or church program, and the spirit of her performances has not dimmed with the years. One of her best known and always remembered acts is her impersonation of the "typical American boy". In such disguises she has frequently fooled her friends, and at one time tested her ability to such an extent that she surprised herself by actually mystifying her own husband. He had no idea that the boy who kept him at the door until he completely lost his patience and his temper was his own wife.

Mrs. Phillips works many hours during the day and often far into the night on her games, and at present is deeply immersed in ideas for a new game which she is keeping strictly secret and which will be brought out next year by Parker Brothers. Other games that have come from her inventiveness are "Business", an advertising game; "Mock Trial", a card game; "King's Men," a checker game; and "Bargain Day," a board game.

This busy little woman finds time for many things and one of her prized possessions is her rock garden. Miniature though it is, there is none other quite like it anywhere in the United States, because it is built on the remains of old Fort Morton. Mrs. Phillips refused to ever have that "humped" section of her property leveled, and it is the last trace of one of the forts that protected Washington during the War Between the States.

Margaret
Troxell, now 81
years old (+)
is now waiting
for a letter
from me which
I will write
this week. She
said on the
phone last
Sunday that
she will see
what she can
remember
about Mrs.
Phillips. She
may know
others that
knew her.