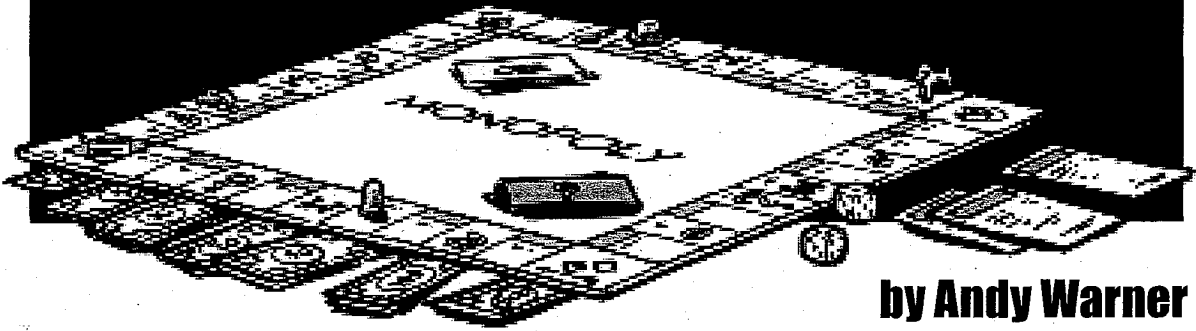


# A BRIEF HISTORY OF MONOPOLY

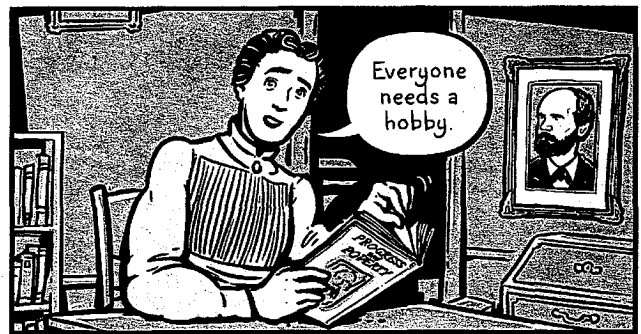


by Andy Warner

**The original version of Monopoly was the brainchild of a feminist radical anticapitalist woman from Washington, D.C., named Lizzie Magie.**



Magie was a big fan of Henry George, a Progressive economist who wrote about the negative social impact that land monopoly had on rent.

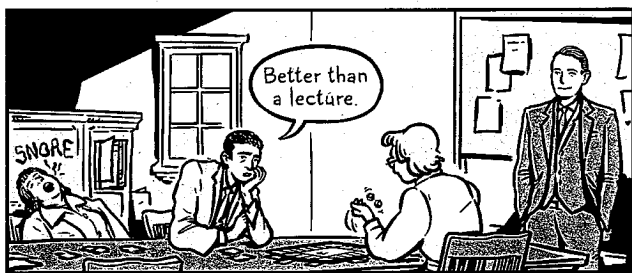


Magie had an unorthodox idea for how to teach George's economic theories to the masses.

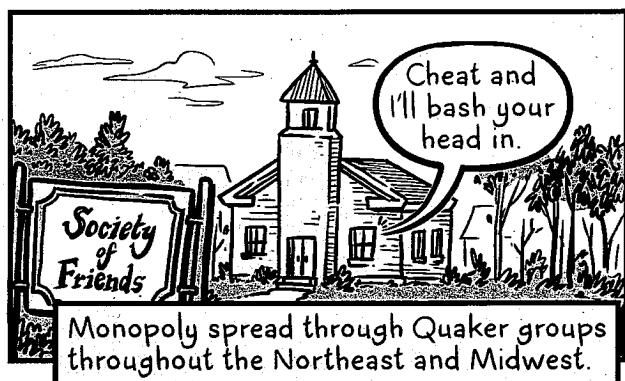
In 1903, she created "the Landlord's Game," which had players running around a board gobbling up property and charging rents.



An economics professor and prominent socialist named Scott Nearing came across Magie's game and taught it to his classes.



At some point, one of these boards was introduced to a Quaker congregation.



Magie patented the game and began distributing it herself.



His students at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Toledo began making their own boards so they could play at home.

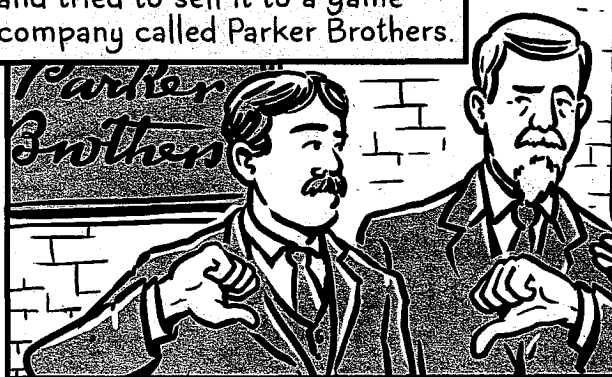
The Quakers made their own boards, changed the rules a bit and renamed the game Monopoly.



## Magie tried to reassert control.

She renewed her patent in 1924 and tried to sell it to a game company called Parker Brothers.

Parker Brothers



OK... so the progressive economist, Henry George, theorizes the usefulness of a "land value tax"....



They rejected it as "too political."

Homemade copies of the game continued to spread.

Some Quakers in Atlantic City made a version using their own street names.

Hey, I live on Mediterranean Avenue!

It's a nice place, dammit!



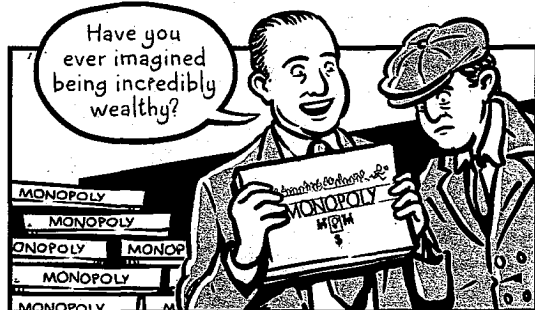
That Atlantic City board was brought to Philadelphia, where an unemployed man named Charles Darrow came across it.



I wonder if there's a way to make this fake money real....

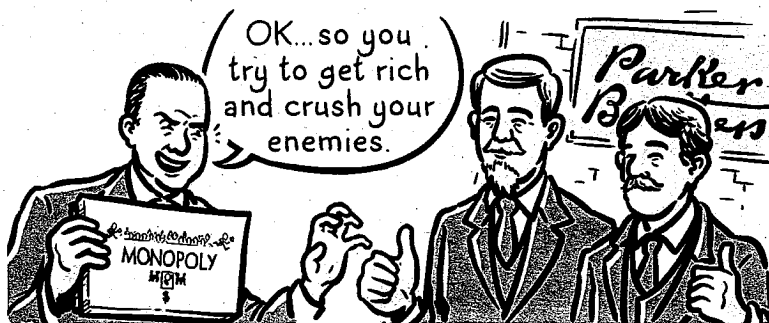
Darrow produced his own version of the Atlantic City board and marketed it as Monopoly.

Have you ever imagined being incredibly wealthy?

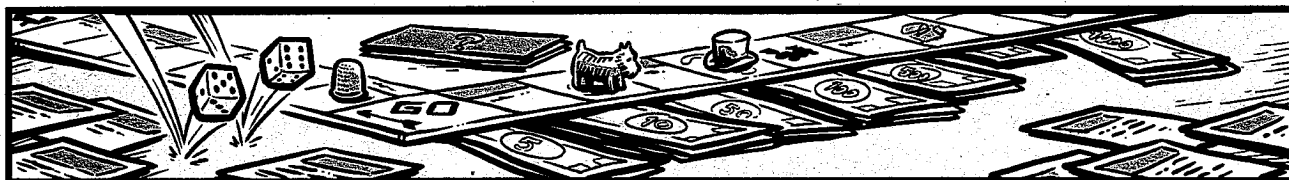


Scrubbed of Magie's politics, Darrow's version came across as a celebration of capitalism, the opposite of its original intent.

**Darrow sold his version of the game to Parker Brothers.**



Americans were eager to get the grinding Great Depression off their minds and play at being wealthy. People bought the game in droves.

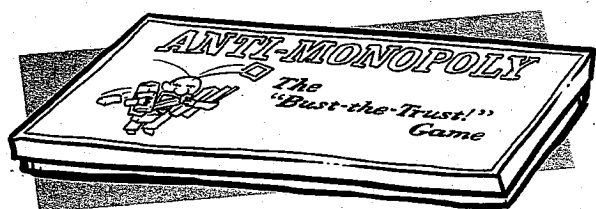


When Magie began to make noise about the rip-off, Parker Brothers quietly bought out her patents and pretended nothing ever happened.



## BRIEFER HISTORIES

Magie's story was only uncovered in 1973 after Parker Brothers sued to stop a satirical game called Anti-Monopoly.



Parker Brothers lost the suit.

In 1904, Magie held a stunt auction where she "sold herself as a slave" to protest women's low wages.

Check out my board game, too!



[thenib.com/brief-history-of-monopoly](http://thenib.com/brief-history-of-monopoly)