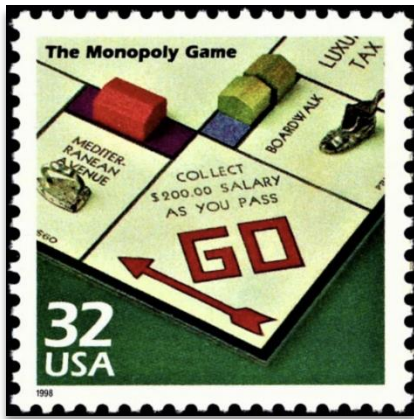


One of a kind Topicals: MONOPOLY

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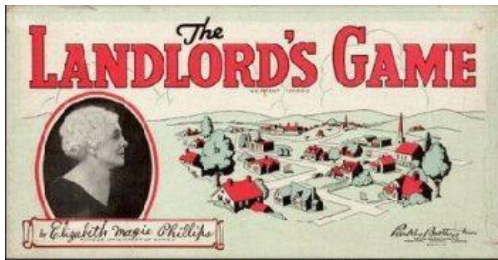
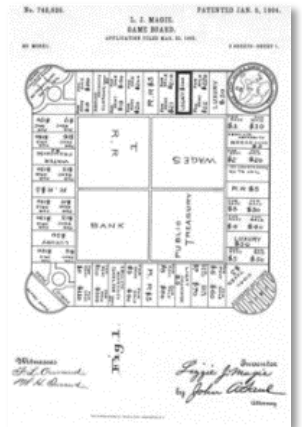
I am sure that everyone reading this article has played the board game Monopoly at least once. The first and only postage stamp commemorating “The Monopoly Game” (Scott #3185o) was issued in 1998 on the “1930s Celebrate the Century” souvenir sheet.

Monopoly is one of the world’s favorite board games of all time and was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in 1998. Since being formally marketed in 1935, more than 250 million copies of Monopoly have been sold. Monopoly is based on real-life places in Atlantic City, New Jersey, but has been and is truly an international phenomenon. The game has been translated into 47 languages, sold in 114 countries, and played by more than a billion people worldwide.

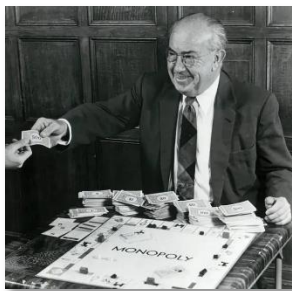


Elizabeth J. Magie

The history of the game is quite interesting. The person generally credited with creating the game at his kitchen table was Charles Darrow. However, the story starts in 1903 with Elizabeth J. Magie, a Quaker, feminist, anti-monopolist, patent inventor, poet, and outspoken critic of the civil inequalities of her times. She created a game she called “The Landlord’s Game,” which was intended to demonstrate the evils of concentrated land ownership. She hoped that players would reject the game’s winner-take-all strategy, resulting in one player



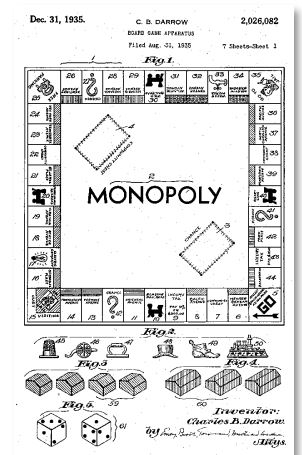
owning all the lands while everyone else goes bankrupt. She took her idea to Parker Brothers and was rejected because the game was too political and educational. Her game was patented, U.S. Patent 748,626, Jan. 5, 1904, and self-published beginning in 1906. Magie created two sets of rules: an anti-monopolist set and a monopolist set (used in the current Monopoly). Magie patented the game again in 1923.



Charles Darrow

The story of an unemployed salesperson, Charles Darrow, coming up with Monopoly at his kitchen table is not likely true. Charles Todd of Philadelphia recalled the day in 1932 when his friend, Esther Jones, and her husband, Charles Darrow, came to dinner. The Todds introduced Darrow to The Landlord's Game, playing several times. After that night, Darrow went on to distribute the game himself as Monopoly. In 1934, after 30 years of adaptations by many people, Charles Darrow took Monopoly

to Parker Brothers, who rejected the game due to 50-plus issues, such as the length and complexity of game play. But Darrow was no quitter. He created hand-crafted versions of the game, with the first game board being a circle but using the colors of the properties that are still used today. Once he had raised enough capital from the sale of the artisanal games at \$4, he had 5,000 units professionally printed. The first 5,000 quickly out sold through a Philadelphia department store.



Parker Brothers

Parker Brothers saw the quick retail success and the mistake they had made. The company reached out to Darrow in 1935 to negotiate a licensing deal. On Dec. 31, 1935, Darrow was issued the patent for Monopoly (US Patent 2,026,082). The game quickly was selling 5,000 units a week. When Parker Brothers found out that Darrow was not the sole inventor of the game, it bought the rights from the owner of another Monopoly precursor, The Fascinating Game of Finance, for \$10,000 in 1935, and, in 1936, from Ms. Magie for \$500 for The Landlord's Game.



In 1936, Monopoly was being licensed outside the United States. In 1941, the British Secret Intelligence Service had the licensed manufacturer of the game in the UK create a special edition for WWII POWs in Germany that was distributed by fake charity organizations. Hidden inside these games were silk escape maps, compasses, files, real money, and other objects to be used were they to escape.

Hasbro

Hasbro acquired Parker Bros., and thus Monopoly, in 1991. Before the Hasbro acquisition, Parker Bros. issued only two versions, a regular and a deluxe. In 1994, Hasbro granted a license to USAopoly to begin publishing a San Diego Edition of Monopoly, which has since been followed by more than 300 different versions of Monopoly, including "Star Wars," Pokemon, "Game of Thrones," and, of course, our favorites, the post office versions. There are three USPS versions: U.S. Stamps, Love Stamps, and Wonders of America Stamps Editions. In 2021, an Australia Post Edition was sold.



Monopoly Man

The Monopoly Man was based on J.P. Morgan, the banker who financed the construction of railroads and founded many major corporations including General Electric.

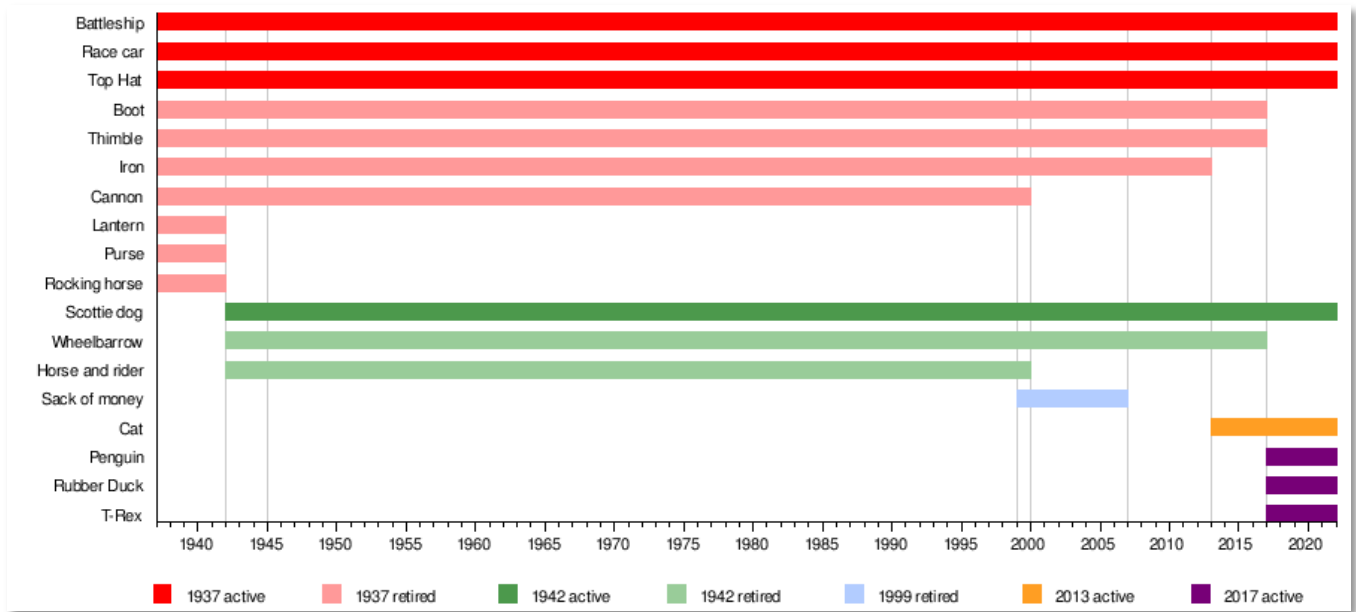


Tokens

The original game included eight board tokens that were inspired by Charles Darrow's niece and were created to resemble her charm bracelet figures. The number of tokens, and the tokens themselves, have changed over time (see chart). In 1943, the game included 10 tokens, which included the battleship, boot, cannon, horse and rider, iron, racecar, Scottie dog, thimble, top hat, and wheelbarrow. These tokens remained the same until 1999. After 1999, the tokens played "musical chairs," with changes being made up to April 2022 when the thimble returned, replacing the T-Rex that had been added in 2017.

The tokens used in the US Stamp Edition are; mailbox, eagle, mail truck, Priority-Mail box, coil of Love stamps, and a post card.





Other Interesting Facts

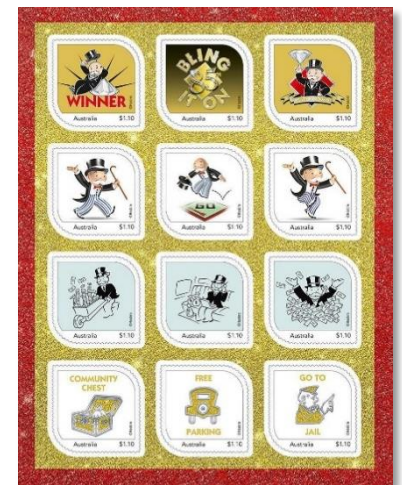
- The amount of money in Monopoly’s bank is probably less than you think; the total bank is \$20,580.
- It can take a while to play. A typical game should last around 60 to 90 minutes, but the longest game on record lasted 70 straight days.
- The probability of rolling doubles to “Get Out of Jail” is $1/6 + 5/36 + 25/216 = 91/216$, or about 42%.
- The original Parker Bros. Monopoly game sold for \$2. Today, you’ll pay about \$18, and \$40 for special editions.
- In 1988, the most expensive Monopoly set in the world was created by San Francisco jeweler Sidney Mobell and cost \$2 million.
- The top three most landed-on spaces in a traditional game are Jail, Illinois Ave., and Go.
- According to Natalie Fitzsimons, the 2015 UK Monopoly champion, at the end of the game, it's best to sit in jail and collect money from the other players rather than land on their properties and end up owing money.
- Monopoly has been banned in the former USSR, China, and Cuba for its capitalist principles.



Only other Monopoly Stamps



In March 2021, Australia Post issued a personal stamp pack commemorating the 85th anniversary of Monopoly. The sheet contains 12 unique stamps issued in a very nice folio, with each stamp showing a classic image from the game. While the stamps are cool and valid postage, they are not listed by either Scott or Gibbons, leaving the U.S. #3185o as the only “Monopoly” postage stamp issued.



In Conclusion

Next time you sit down to play Monopoly, I hope you feel prepared to educate your fellow players with a bit of cool and unique information about the world’s most popular board game of all time. I also hope you find and are playing one of the philatelic-related versions of the game. Don’t go bankrupt!!

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