

Jan. 2, 1964

Mr. Vince Leonard
WRCV-TV
Philadelphia, Pa.

Dear Mr. Leonard,

I listen to your news program practically every evening. Last Tuesday at about 6:12 P.M. I saw someone interviewing Charles Darrow, the "inventor" of the game Monopoly. I hope you will be interested in reading the following. I do not know who invented the game but I can tell you how it came into the hands of Mr. C. Darrow. In newspaper accounts in 1933 there were conflicting statements. One was that a lady in Virginia, in Norfolk, I think, invented the game. Another version was that the game was devised by a Princeton Economics professor to demonstrate the principle of monopolies. At least he used the game in 1932 and one of his students took it to Indianapolis during a vacation and gave it to Ruth Hoskins of that city. At that time, she was teaching in Atlantic City at the Friends School, so after vacation in Indianapolis she took it to Atlantic City where several Friends got together, changed the names of the streets from Indianapolis to Atlantic City ones. Among the group were Cyril Harvey, now at Wm Penn Charter School and my brother Jesse, now deceased. My brother also changed some of the street values (just as they are now) to better enable a monopoly to occur in a reasonable length of playing time. He gave us the game in the fall of 1932. We still have the houses and hotels he made for us. When we got back to Westtown my wife seriously considered changing the street names to Philadelphia ones but could not find anyone who knew comparative values there. We were newly married and being anxious to entertain friends she made a copy of the game as received and that is the way it has remained ever since with a very few minor changes. We still have that diagram in our possession. That winter, 1932-33 we gave many monopoly parties here at Westtown School. Among the many friends to whom we introduced the game were Charles and Olive Todd. Mr. Todd at that time was manager of the Emlen Arms Apartments in Germantown. Mr. Todd has since then been manager of the St. James Hotel in Phila., the Lake Placid Club, the Hershey Hotel and the owner of the Henderson Hotel in Aiken, S.C. He is now retired and living in Aiken.

The Todds were friends of the Darrows, so gave them the game. Mr. Todd also had his secretary type several copies of the rules which until then had been given orally. He gave a copy to the Darrows and one to us. We frequently visited the Todds. One evening they took us over to the Darrows where we six played the game on a circular diagram Mr. Darrow had by that time made to fit his table.

It was not too long after that that Mr. Darrow "invented" the game and later made a business arrangement with Parker Brothers. The newspaper accounts were correct in saying that he was an engineer out of work, who thought a lot about what he could do to improve his financial situation but were incorrect in saying he invented Monopoly. He had it handed to him on a silver platter, so to speak, and was smart enough to see the possibilities in it. After the game was patented (or copyrighted, I do not know which) those of us involved in the sequence of transferal were naturally quite irritated but felt we could do nothing about the matter because we had not invented the game either, even though, we had had a part in making the game what it is today.

About six years ago there was a celebration in Atlantic City in honor of Mr. Darrow. For about a week the sign Monopoly Square was placed on one of the streets, Park Place, I think. In the account of the affair in the Atlantic City Press Mr. Darrow was reputed to have said that he named the streets Atlantic City ones because of his fond memories of his childhood vacations there. If my wife had changed the street names to Philadelphia ones as she almost did, his "fond memories" would have vanished!

There is nothing to be gained by writing you this letter except, perhaps, to vent my feelings and point out an example of the fact that everything in this world is not what it seems to be. I hope you have not been bored by this statement of facts all of which could be verified at least as far back as Ruth Hoskins' part (teaching in Haddon Heights, I believe, unless retired.)

Very truly yours,

Eugene R. Raiford

C.C. Mrs. Charles Todd
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