



In heyday, Arden Forge made fine ironwork, such as andirons, sconces.



Turning out jewelry and silver occupied this young woman in the early days.



Patrons bought, and residents bartered for, Weave Shop's fine linens, wools.



Caning and basket weaving were other crafts for which Arden was noted.

be right under the noses of his old enemies in Delaware. With his own money and some of Price's, and a loan from millionaire soap manufacturer Joseph Fels, who had a deep interest in the single-tax movement, Stephens purchased a 162-acre farm north of Wilmington.

Stephens drew up a deed of trust that established Arden as a single-tax enclave along the lines that George

had proposed: there would be no private ownership of land; the land would be held in trust by three trustees, who would grant 99-year leases to residents. The trustees would determine the value of each parcel and set the land rent—the single tax—to be paid annually. (This duty was soon to be taken over by elected assessors.) No other local levies would be assessed. As time went on and land values rose,

rents would increase—so the wealth created by the community, reflected in the rising value of the land, would be shared by the community. Residents could sell their houses but not the land. Upon the sale of a house, the land lease would be transferred to the new owner.

It was one thing to draw up a document governing a patch of empty acres; it was quite another to fill those acres with a living population. Turning to the ideas of the English reformers John Ruskin and William Morris, Stephens envisioned a community of artists and artisans who would support themselves in modest comfort, producing fine objects. In this village of tidy cottages and shops and forges, of genial fraternity and sorority, the true coin of the realm would be art. Accordingly, Stephens drew up a manifesto of principles: "The Arden craftsmen are a company of men and women who believe with the great English craftsman and prophet William Morris that 'all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing and be of itself pleasant to do' and which should be done under such conditions as would make it neither overwearisome nor overanxious. They believe also with Ruskin that men need not be baited into a shop like moths into a candle and that there are those who will buy what is useful without being ill-designed and dishonestly made even though its cost is more than that of factory goods."

The program required the proper setting. Will Price laid out the village, devoting nearly half of the land to greens, forests, paths and roads. He arranged house lots and roads to follow the contours of the land rather than the grid of a draftsman, and knitted the town together by a network of paths in an early example of separating vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Price's carefully groomed rustic setting and half-timbered cottages brought to life the medievalist spirit of William Morris. The spirit of Shakespeare hovered over the enter-