

prise as well. One of the first communal building projects was an open-air theater for Shakespearean productions.

After a slow start, Arden took off. Some people were merely summer residents, living in tents; others, more permanent, commuted by rail to jobs in Philadelphia or Wilmington. But true to Stephens' vision, a cadre of stay-at-home artists and artisans went at their happy toil. The forest rang with the music of hammers. In the medieval fashion advocated by Morris, most of the artisans were organized into guilds. There were potters, stained-glass craftsmen, silversmiths, woodworkers, printers and furniture makers. The Weave Shop was begun with one employee who made wool and other sturdy fabrics. Eventually it had about 30 weavers who made fine linens. Stephens devoted his attention



Arden's swimming hole was created by damming a creek in a leafy glade. Upstream pollution and development destroyed it 30 years ago.

to the Arden Forge, which produced lamps, lanterns, door latches and hinges, fireplace tools, and other works of iron. Cash-poor Ardenites could not afford to buy their own products, so the guilds depended on the New York, Philadelphia and Wilmington carriage trade. Members of the duPont family were occasional customers, and it is said that stage and screen stars Lillian and Dorothy Gish visited Arden to buy wool.

Stephens welcomed all comers; one did not have to declare allegiance to the thoughts of Henry George to take up residence. As a practical matter, putting down roots in Arden was cheap because you could *not* buy land. Most of the residents did their own construction and other work, a self-sufficiency that pleased Stephens.

Fred Whiteside, later well known

in Delaware as the perennial Socialist candidate for governor and State Senator, inadvertently created one of the enduring myths about Arden when he built a tree house as a retreat for Sunday-morning reflection. The Delaware press expanded this single tree house into headlines and stories proclaiming that Ardenites lived in trees.

The tree house affair was nothing compared with the cyclone of publicity generated by the presence in Arden of America's most famous Socialist, Upton Sinclair. The muckraking author arrived in the spring of 1910, three years after Helicon Hall, his own experimental colony in New Jersey, had mysteriously gone up in flames. Although widely celebrated as author of *The Jungle*, Sinclair had an aversion to spending. Arden seemed a perfect place to live cheaply and write.

He settled into a humble compound of three tents with his wife, Meta, their son, David, a secretary (with whom Will Price fell in love) and Mary Craig Kimbrough, who would become Sinclair's second wife. "How many of the so-called necessities can men dispense with when they have to!" he exulted in his autobiography. "I bathed every morning of that winter in Arden with water in a tin washbasin and a newspaper spread upon a tent floor." In 1911, with funds from the sale of a novel, he hired Stephens to build him a two-story cottage, which still stands.

Into his Eden, Sinclair invited the serpent in the form of Harry Kemp, the "Tramp Poet," who traveled with hoboes and worked the Great Lakes ore boats. In his memoir *Tramping on Life*, Kemp describes finding "toy