

WORKSHEET / INVENTORY Midwest Miniatures Museum

Accession Number: MF 7, D8

Name of Object: Brackenwood Dale Fantasy Tree House

Source: Mary Fisher

Address: Florida (?)

Method of Acquisition: Donation

Date: March 2007

Special terms of Acquisition: None

Listed on NMT inventory (check one) Yes / No

Value: \$15,000.00

Authority: Unknown

Date: 2000

Location: MM Goad Room

Physical Condition: good

Conservation Treatment: none known of

Date:

Description of Treatment:

★ Description of object (set, pair, structure, materials, etc) nearly old tree of _____ clay, field stone chimney, wood shingle round pointed roof, back open to new 3 floors living space, fire place, table & chairs, bathroom on lower floor, 10 child figures (1 reading book) 4 child-size wood fairies, small cottage in roots lower left, wood & other creatures, 2 dogs, 1 cat, rounded bunny, clay-paper-fabric-wood - 3000 hand applied leaves

Artist/Designer/Manufacturer: Rik Pierce

Date of completion:

Frogmorton Studios

Place of use within the Midwest Miniature Museum as of the date of: Goad Room as of 9-10-09

Association with Person, Place, or Event:

Association with a Social, Ethnic, Etc. Group if any:

Markings or Inscriptions: none found

Measurements: octagon wood base approx 38" x 38", approx 45-46" high

Provenance: Mary Fisher collection 2000, donated to MM March 2007

Support Materials: NMT inventory on file @ MM

PHOTO

Style: Fantasy-Tudor-Medieval

Social Function:

Compiler: B. Dunlap 9-10-09

Date:

Comments/Notes: some leaves lost from shipping from Florida
flying child from upper left tree bough missing end of 2008

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varying architec-

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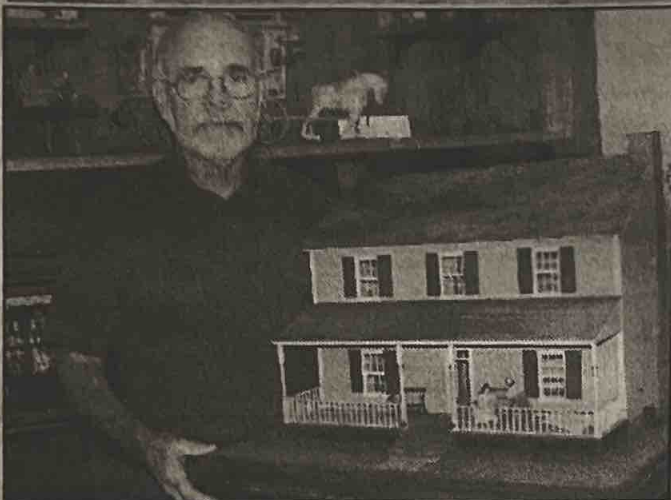
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A Southern farmhouse, called Walnut Grove was built by museum curators Ron (above) and April Gill and is in half-inch scale.

Tiny toys in this small-scale toy shop are a delight to the young and young-at-heart at the new National Miniatures Trust Museum in Hickory Corners.

more Car Museum officials thought it would be a good match too. Since Gilmore's is only open six months out of the year, the Miniatures Trust Museum has the same schedule.

"Francis (who donated her collection to the Hickory Corners museum) has always dreamed about having a museum in Michigan," Gill said. "There are miniature museums around the country, but we've never had any here in Michigan. Our closest one is in Indiana and one is opening in Kentucky... This is the result of years of effort, and it was years getting it here."

"We're affiliated with the

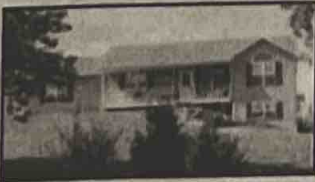
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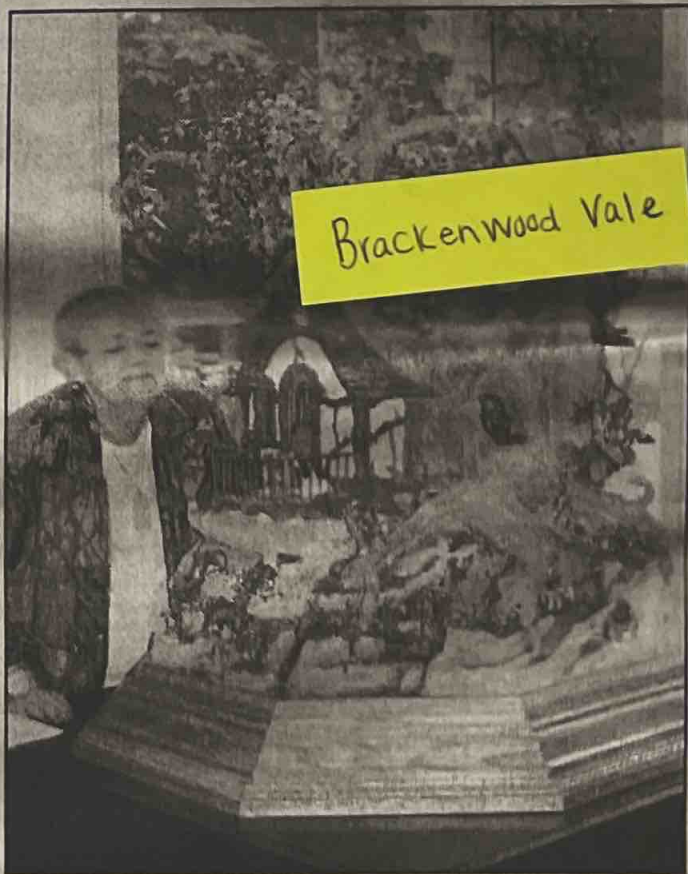


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sides delighting visitors with
the visual beauty of unique
miniature homes, furniture,
people, foods and even tiny
sterling silverware and
miniature bagpipes, the mu-
seum is educational as well.

"Miniatures introduce
people of all ages to aesthet-
ics, architecture, design, his-
tory, mathematics, sociology
and personal expression,"
says a museum brochure.

The museum opened in
May and will close for the
season Oct. 31. Hours are 9
a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday
through Friday and 9 a.m. to
6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday
and on holidays. Admission
is \$4 per person or \$2 per
person for those who have a
ticket to the Gilmore Car
Museum. Children under six



A whimsical, miniature treehouse in the museum was created by California artist Rik Pierce, and donated to the museum by Mary Fisher, who grew up in Detroit. Curator April Gill enjoys looking at the water-fall and moat around the treehouse.



\$299⁹⁵

One of the first display areas visitors see is "The Silver Room," on loan from Francis Light, who has collected silver for many years from most all of the silver-smiths in the United States and Europe.

brick building out here in the back."

A miniature treehouse in the museum was created by California artist Rik Pierce, and donated by Mary Fisher, who grew up in Detroit. It's a whimsical type of treehouse and the display includes a waterfall and moat around it.

Fisher, an artist and philanthropist, donated a substantial collection of miniatures to the museum, including many items in half-inch scale. She made the donation "in the hope that the museum will become a study center for educators and school children interested in art, history and design," the museum's brochure says.

Another unique attraction is a Southwest/Mexican adobe house. It was made and furnished by Francis Light and includes pottery and rugs distinctive to the Southwest style and a courtyard and fountain.

The Southwest architecture is one of many different styles, including German, Scottish, Irish and Japanese architecture, featured at the museum.

"The main focus of our museum is architecture - to show the different types of architecture around the country and hopefully the world," April Gill said. "It took her (Francis Light) years to get this together.

It's all the little knick-knacks. It takes a lot of research to find out what they would have in the Southwest."

A German renaissance house in the museum is patterned after a real wealthy merchant's house in 1477. It's a fancy home by the Baltic Sea. There is a table with a beautiful tablecloth, miniature crystal objects, needlepoint rugs, an interesting staircase and all sorts of adornments.

A charming MackIntosh house, popular in Scotland, is half-inch scale.

"The original plans are housed in the Red House of

Continued next page

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became more locally focused. The museum is part of a Barry Community Foundation endowment, but funds its operations through mem-

wood Vale is a two-foot square quilt shop created by an artist in Ann Arbor. The creators wanted to represent as many patchwork patterns

care. "I think the nicest thing anyone ever said about the miniatures is when we had a show at the Kalamazoo In-

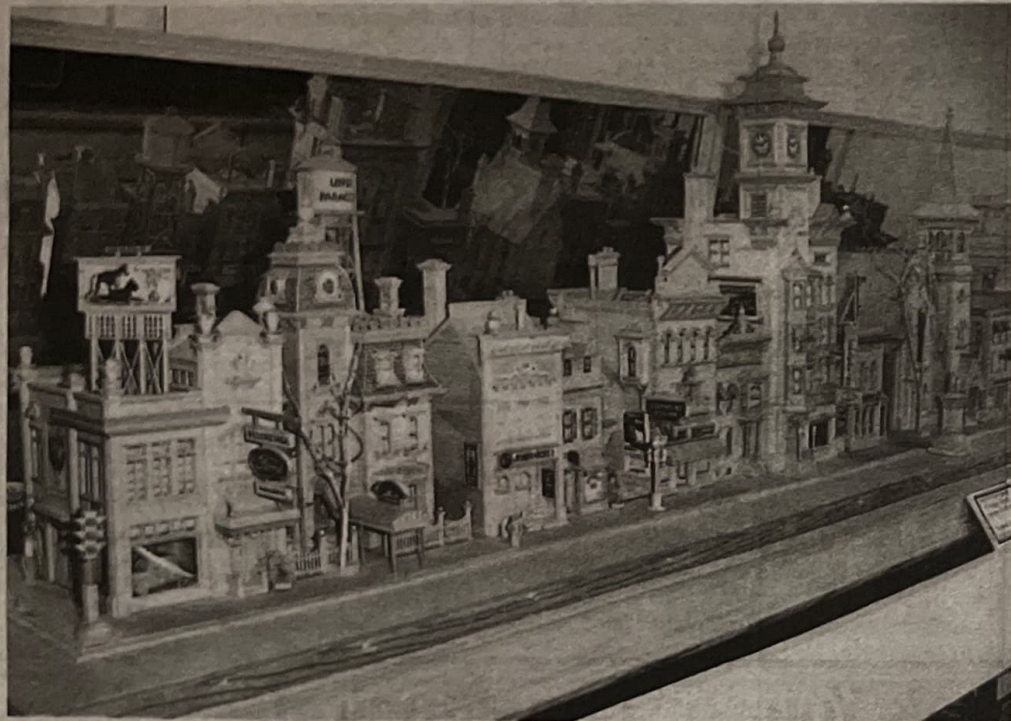
a collection of miniature greenhouses and solariums. A large collection of Noah's Ark-related miniatures are housed in the water closet, which Light pointed out is very appropriate.

Another cabinet is full of miniature works of silver. One of the silversmiths studied with Faberge. A miniature silver dressing table, chair and mirror are exact replicas of those owned by Russia's Katherine the Great. A cabinet is full of miniature pieces of cut crystal and hand-painted china. Another cabinet contains a miniature suit of armor with cleverly placed mirrors, giving the illusion of a infinite number of knights in the hall.

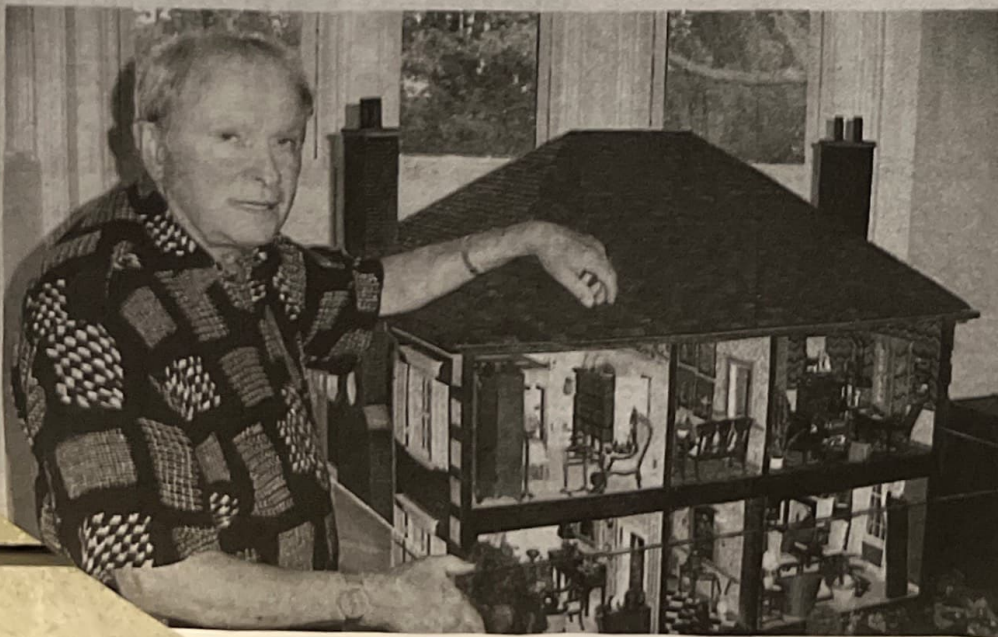
Opposite the numerous cabinets is a replica of an old Irish cottage with farm animals and border collies. The roof is thatched and weighted down traditionally with stones and rope.

"The style of how they do the thatch varies from one area to the next," said Light.

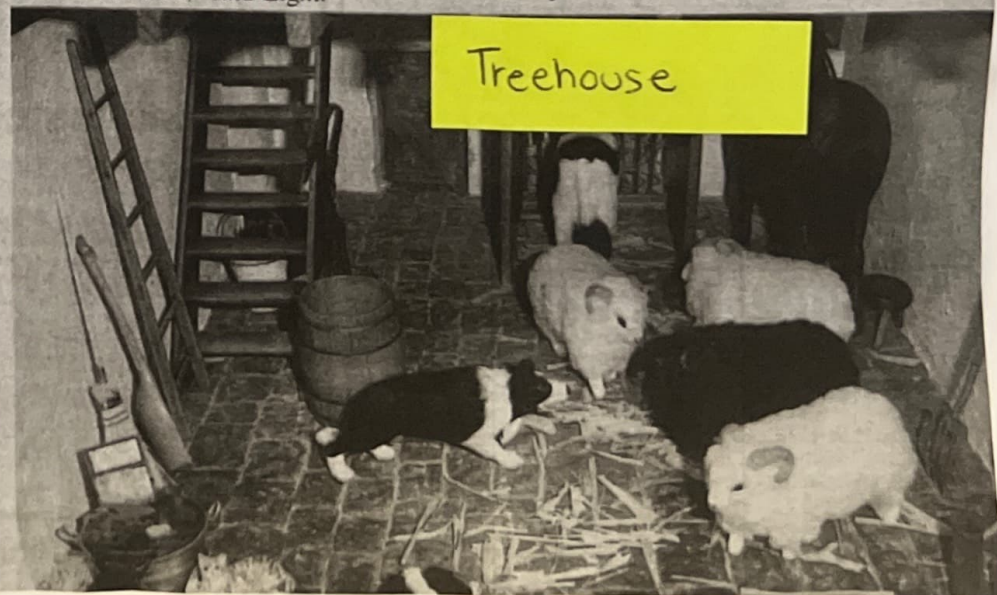
Williamsburg in Virginia, **Continued next page**



Part of a 10-foot long Main Street, these buildings and many more are intricately carved pieces of wood.



A four-foot treehouse made of paper clay dominates the entryway of the Midwest Miniatures Museum in Hickory Corners.



Treehouse

Miniatures museum scales down to everyday life

by David DeDecker
Staff Writer

Visitors may feel like Alice down a rabbit hole or Gulliver on his travels as they step inside the historic farmhouse nestled within the grounds of the Gilmore Car Museum. The Midwest Miniatures Museum is the only miniatures museum in Michigan. Although housed on the Gilmore grounds, the miniatures museum is not part of the Gilmore. Visitors wanting to see the museum this year should plan to go before the end of October, since the building is closed during the winter.

Francis Light is one of three women founders of the Midwest Miniatures Museum, which opened under the auspices of the National Miniatures Trust and was originally called the National Miniatures Trust Museum.

This is the fifth year the museum has been open, two of which were affiliated with the trust. The museum evolved with the viewpoints of their changing board and became more locally focused. The museum is part of a Barry Community Foundation endowment, but funds operations through mem-

berships, donations, gift shop sales and admissions.

Displays in the museum range in scale from 1:12, or one inch being equivalent to 12 inches, all the way down to 1:44.

"There are dozens of reasons for making little stuff,"

Brackenwood Vale

things from everyday life."

A paper-clay tree house named Brackenwood Vale by miniaturist Rik Pierce welcomes visitors. Fairies hide behind every fern and leaf. Children play with pets in rustic rooms.

"Kids particularly like it, adults too, because it is like a mystery story," said Light.

She explained that many of the people who work in miniatures have also worked in the movies — old movies.

"If you were going to have a submarine sink a battleship, you build the battleship and film it exploding and burning down on water," said Light.

Just opposite of Brackenwood Vale is a two-foot square quilt shop created by an artist in Ann Arbor. The creators wanted to represent as many patchwork patterns

as possible, so they digitally transferred the patterns onto paper towels that are already quilted.

"Then they put fabric on the back of the paper towels to give it some weight so that it hangs realistically," said Light. "That's one of the problems with miniatures; the drapes don't drape because they just don't have the weight to fall into folds."

In the next room, running along the entire wall is an all-American town carved from wood. It took the Ohio carver more than 20 years to complete. Minute churches, storefronts, movie theaters, pharmacies, and billboards are carved to exacting detail.

"He got the idea of doing a town, downtown in this case, when he picked up a tablet of graph paper and drew a facade," said Light. "Then he got out his knife and went to work."

In displays called "Box Rooms" are tiny chairs and sofas with delicate needle-point work for upholstery. Bedspreads and rugs are stitched with precision and care.

"I think the nicest thing anyone ever said about the miniatures is when we had a show at the Kalamazoo In-



Every piece of this living room has been meticulously selected for historical accuracy and handcrafted detail. Even the tiny chandelier works.

stitute of Art and a man said 'That house is a three-dimensional history book' and it turned out he was the head of the history department at Western Michigan University," said Light.

The museum also displays a collection of miniature greenhouses and solariums. A large collection of Noah's Ark-related miniatures are housed in the water closet, which Light pointed out is very appropriate.

Another cabinet is full of

"Sometimes the rope looks like embroidery on the roof."

The museum also features several scaled-down toy shops with tiny toys of all kinds. A replica of the carpenter's shop at Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia,

and a New Mexico adobe house are also both intricate in detail.

In the middle of the northernmost room is a more modern house built by Al Dickerson, an interior de-

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07/19/2016