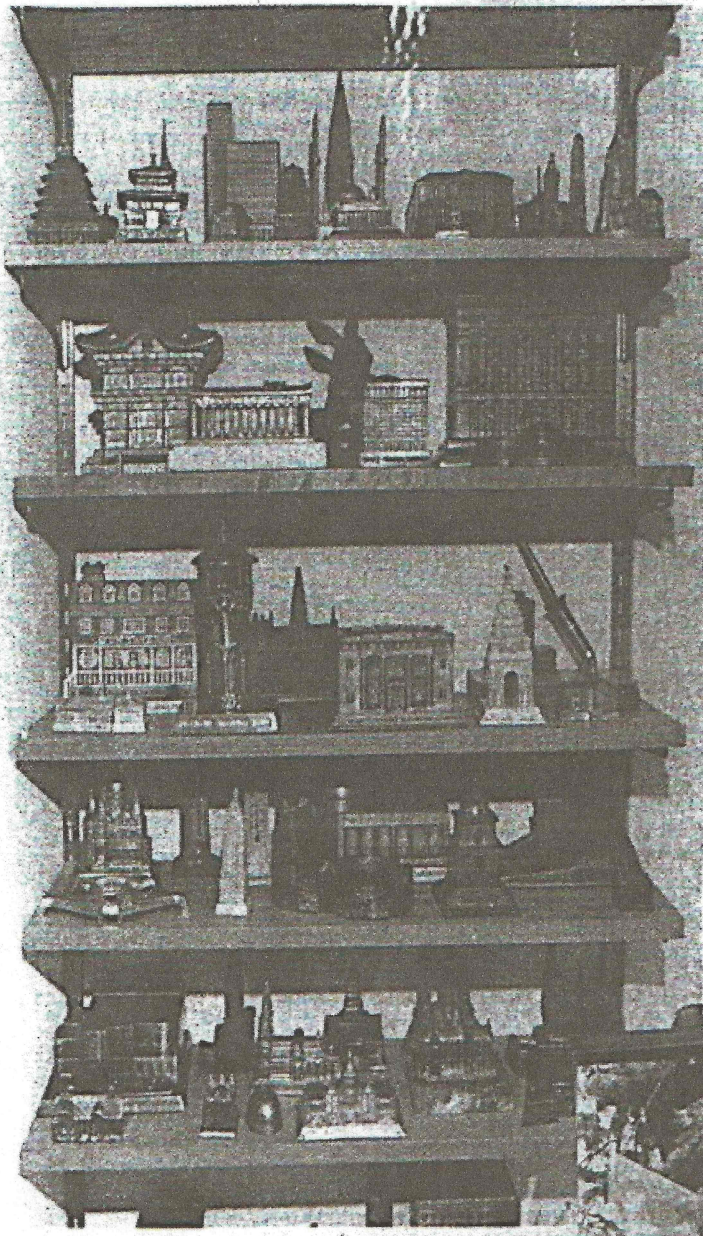


Dort & Tom Brown, the “Lewis & Clark” of Souvenir Building collecting



Dort and Tom Brown were pioneers in the collecting and cataloging of Souvenir or Miniature Buildings. In 1977 Dort researched the buildings in Tom's collection and published the first of her 2 books with photos and specifics of Tom's miniature buildings along with descriptions of the actual buildings. Tom passed away in 1991, before the formation of The Souvenir Building Collector Society. Dort Brown was a member from the SBCS beginnings in 1994 until her death in 2008.

Dort's daughter, Laurie, provided the images and text that memorialize one of the SBCS Founders.

Dort and Tom Brown look over just a small part of his collection of miniatures. The Wells Fargo building is a copy of the one located in Columbia State Park. In the photo below are more of the miniatures—on the center shelf at the left is a replica of a Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, where the U.S. Marine Corps first recruited in 1775.



Their real estate is in miniature

By ELEANOR DOYLE
Staff Writer

Imagine owning a piece of the rock such as Charlemagne's favorite residence, the Aachener Dom in Germany!

How about Castillo de San Marcos in St. Augustine, Fla., the oldest fort standing in the United States!

So . . . they don't show you too much.

Well, how about Pullman Bank and Trust which started in Chicago in 1883? Or the Woolworth Building in New York, once proclaimed the "world's highest building?"

THESE ARE among the "holdings" of Thomas J. Brown and they all have been carefully chronicled by his wife, Dort Fratzke Brown, in her first book.

Lest anyone get the idea Tom Brown is one of the world's tycoons, the title of Dort's book gives a clue to the actual circumstance: "Souvenir Buildings, A Collection of Identified Miniatures" (\$5.95, P.O. Box 22474, Sacramento, CA 95822).

For years, the Brown family has referred to the miniatures as "Tom's real estate—the affordable kind" and his acquisitions, started five years ago, now number 150 buildings and monuments of the world.

Junk shops, souvenir and antique

Actually, it was the Commercial National Bank of Shreveport, La., that inspired his collecting mania.

"I think it was about 20 years ago that I found the replicas in a Sacramento junkshop," said Tom. "It's an inkwell and when Dort was trying to research its history, we determined it was probably pre-1920. The present bank personnel had never seen one of the inkwells which is a reproduction of the original 10-story white brick building, built in 1911. They've requested a picture for their historical files."

Brown's tiny banks are matched in quantity by replicas of some of the world's most noted churches. These range from St. Peter's in Rome and the Gothic Reims Cathedral in France, to Sir Christopher Wren's Renaissance masterpiece, St. Paul's Cathedral in London, and the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City.

WHILE MOST of the collection reflects dull metal tones, a stand-out item is the colorful Tun Tavern in Philadelphia. This was a waterfront tavern in 1775 and the first recruiting site for the U.S. Marine Corps.

"The innkeeper, Robert Mullen, is said to have been commissioned in recognition of his recruiting services," explained Dort.

Junk shops, souvenir and antique stores, person-to-person bartering have been the source of the Brown real estate for a man who once was an avid bottle collector.

IN THE PREFACE of Dort Brown's book, which took her two years to research, she writes:

"Prices have ranged from 25 cents (too few) to \$55 (a painful decision). Average price was \$3 to \$4. If the price was right, we purchased duplicates, in the hope of swapping with other collectors."

Tom Brown explains, "These miniatures really are more than just replicas because many of them have a utility value—inkwell, paperweight, salt and pepper shakers, pencil holder, incense burner, jewel box. One even holds a clock."

Among the salt shakers is a reproduction of Mark Twain's home in Hannibal, Mo., and a paperweight is the Little Brown Church in Nashua, Iowa. This was the house of worship inspired by a song and envisioned by a young physician, William Pitts. When it was painted for the 1864 dedication, Pitts decreed it should be a brown color "because brown paint's the cheapest."

SINCE FINANCIAL institutions favor give-away miniature banks—with an eye on future deposits—the Brown collection has a preponderance of these.

Dort.

It is fitting that the miniature is a ceramic bottle with a bisque finish. The roof is a soft green, the chimney and walls, brick red; people on the porch are dressed in blue and green.

Researching the collection became a labor of love for Dort, who, when she commenced the project, was unprepared for just how much labor would be entailed.

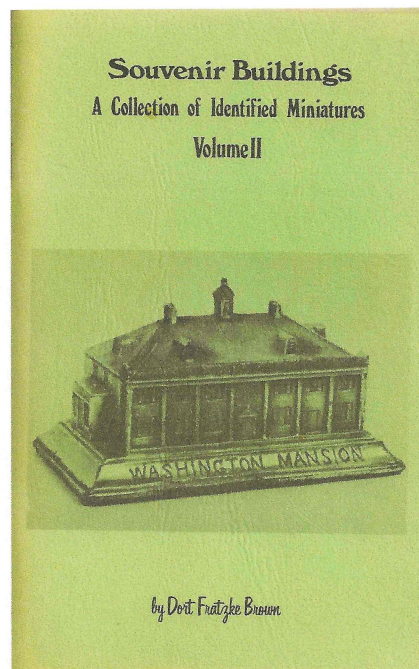
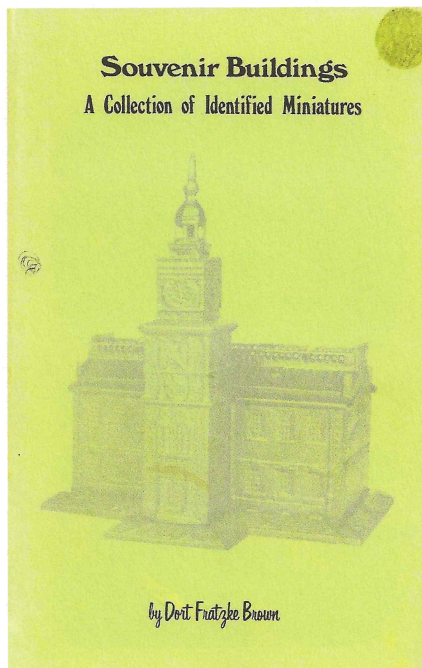
HER BOOK GIVES pertinent information on each building. Although some was easily available due to the historical prominence of the edifice, after all, who really knows about Lawn Savings in Illinois, Rapides Bank and Trust in Louisiana, or Brown and Bigelow in Minnesota?

"These were the challenges," she reported, "and often it took a great deal of correspondence and endless long distance phone calls to get me what I needed."

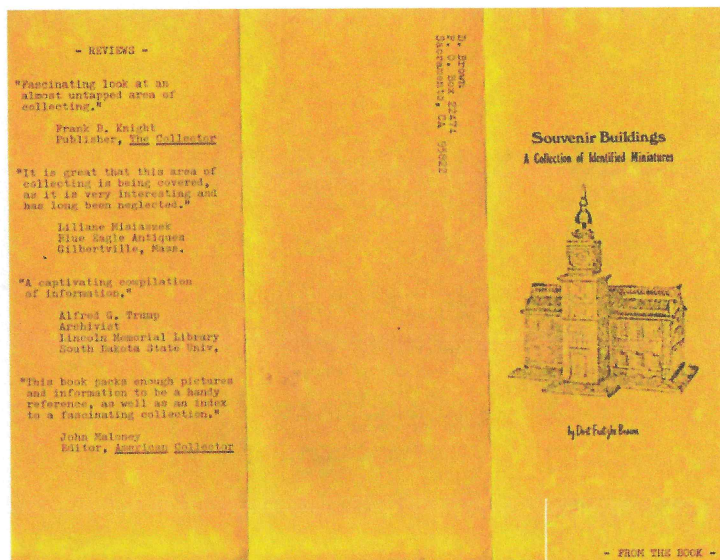
Some of the reviews of her book have made the effort more than worthwhile. For instance:

From a New York bank executive: "This should be in the Guinness Book of Records under most unusual book about most unusual collection of edifices."

FROM FRANK B. Knight, publisher of The Collector: "Fascinating look at an almost untapped area of collecting."



Dort Fratzke Brown's well-researched books, **Souvenir Buildings, A Collection of Identified Miniatures, Volumes I and II**, from 1977 and 1979, documenting Tom Brown's collection are the seminal publications on souvenir buildings.



Order form for Dort Fratzke Brown's first book on Souvenir Buildings.

- FROM THE BOOK -

- ABOUT THE BOOK -

This book takes the reader on an intriguing A-Z photographic journey around the world.

Beginning in Germany, you "visit" the Aachen Dom - the Round Church of Charlemagne, on to the Lourdes Basilica in France, the Taj Mahal in India, and back through historic United States sites such as Fort Dearborn and Mark Twain's Home.

The "tour" ends at the Jacobus Mosque in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Made for various purposes, the building replicas are coin banks, incense burners, inkwells and more.

An exciting collectors' find!

- ABOUT THE AUTHOR -

California writer and collector, Dort Fratzke Brown, gives credit for this collection to her husband.

"Collecting Tom's 'real estate' - the affordable kind - has taken us to flea markets, antique shops, barns, you name it. Perhaps the book will inspire your own investments in 'real estate'."

PLEASE SEND _____ COPIES OF **Souvenir Buildings** @ \$3.95 _____ COPIES bulk rate (25 or more) 4.50

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OBITUARIES

Obituaries on this page are written and paid for by the families or funeral homes. They are edited minimally by the Mountain Democrat. E-mail or fax obituary submissions to obits@midemocrat.net or (530) 622-7894. Include contact information with all submissions.

Dorothy Evelyn Brown

April 9, 1920 — Sept. 6, 2008

Dorothy Evelyn Brown (Fratzke) of Placerville, went home to be with the Lord on Sept. 6, 2008, after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Dorothy "Dor" was born on April 9, 1920, in Cottonwood, Minnesota, on the family farm. She graduated from Mankato State in Minnesota, with a teaching credential, which she used to teach in a one-room schoolhouse. Later, she moved to Southern California where she met her future husband Tom on a blind date in 1947, and they were happily married for 44 years, until his passing in 1991. During her later years, she took creative writing and computer courses, volunteered at the Clothes Closet and County Museum in Placerville, and was an active member of First Lutheran Church.

Dorothy is survived by her sister, Phyllis of Alexandria, Minn.; brothers Harold (wife Lois) of Cottonwood, and Charles (wife Donna) of Northfield, Minn.; and numerous nephews and nieces. She is also survived by daughters, Laurie (husband Ed) of Magalia, Calif. and Marti (husband David) of Clarksburg, Calif.; and nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Dorothy traveled all over the world, including Europe, Mexico, Alaska, and China. Over the years, she collected old bottles, banks, miniature buildings, and many friends. She will be remembered for her sense of humor, card-playing skills, wise counsel, notes of encouragement, emails, whimsical poetry, birthday parties, her gracious spirit, and a zest for life, with each day lived purposefully in the love of Christ.

A celebration of her life will be held at First Lutheran Church, 1200 Pinecrest Court in Placerville, on Saturday, Sept. 13, at 11 a. m., with lunch to follow. Contributions may be made in her memory to snow-line Hospice of El Dorado County, 6520 Pleasant Valley Road, Diamond Springs, CA 95619, or Lutheran Bible Translators, P.O. Box 2050, Aurora, IL 60507.

Arrangements were entrusted to Chapel of the Pines Funeral Home.

