

DOLLHOUSES AND MINIATURES ENCHANT

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC'S HOLIDAY VISITORS

For Immediate Release

WASHINGTON -- "The Enchanting World of Dollhouses and Miniatures," opening Dec. 14 in National Geographic's Explorers Hall, is an exhibit of 24 creations composed of miniatures ranging from rare antiques to limited edition pieces by today's finest craftsmen.

The popularity of dollhouses and miniatures has increased dramatically over the past decade, although they have been around for centuries. Found in ancient Egyptian tombs as well as the castles of Europe, they have always been a delight for both adults and children.

For the first time in Washington, a house created by famous miniaturists, Noel and Pat Thomas, will be on public display. "House on Loomis Lake" is in the Pacific Northwest Carpenter Gothic style and features every detail of a house left standing for years in a damp climate: growing moss, a weathered screen door, and newspapers used for insulation in portions of the interior.

The magic of Christmas morning comes alive in a living room and kitchen decorated for the holidays with a lighted tree, fireplace, and candles, and filled with holiday treats and carefully-wrapped gifts.

Other displays include furnished Victorian, Williamsburg and contemporary houses, a tinsmith shop, a bakery, a rare Nürnberg kitchen, a greenhouse, and a doll shop.

(MORE)

12/84

DOLLHOUSES AND MINIATURES (PAGE TWO)

William Robertson, 29, a leading craftsman in miniatures, is guest curator of the show. He creates tiny replicas of antique furniture in a home workshop he designed himself using a variety of specialized tools he also built himself. For the past three years he has been working on "Twin Manors," a fully furnished American Georgian style dollhouse for the Miniature Museum of Kansas City. Twin Manors' Georgian dining room is exhibited with dessert settings for six made of real china, crystal, and silverware.

Some of Robertson's limited edition replicas of antique furniture on display include:

- * A Hepplewhite mousetrap (1790), smaller than a postage stamp and containing 77 pieces of rosewood, boxwood, ebony, Cuban mahogany, Honduras mahogany, walnut, cherry, satinwood, pernambuco, and brass. It awaits its victim - a 1:12 scale mouse.
- * A games table (1775) with a needlepoint top made of 33,000 stitches handsewn by Robertson's mother.
- * Robertson's 8-inch grandfather clock, complete with 1/4-inch, 14-carat gold key to unlock the case, keeps perfect time if wound every other day.

A videotape of Robertson work will run continuously at the exhibit.

"The Enchanting World of Dollhouses and Miniatures" can be seen in Explorers Hall through February 17, 1985. Explorers Hall at 17th and M Streets, N.W., is open Monday through Saturday and holidays, except Christmas, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. For further information, call 857-7588.