



# America's Doll House: The Miniature World of Faith Bradford

*William L. Bird*

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From the Star-Spangled Banner flag to Dorothy's Ruby Slippers, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History is home to some fascinating objects. In fact, one of the most fascinating of these, and one of the most popular, is itself a home. On the museum's third floor sits a five-story dollhouse donated to the museum by Faith Bradford, a Washington D.C. librarian, who spent more than a half-century accumulating and constructing the 1,354 miniatures that fill its 23 intricately detailed rooms. When Bradford donated them to the museum in 1951, she wrote a lengthy manuscript describing the lives of its residents: Mr. and Mrs. Peter Doll and their ten children, two visiting grandparents, twenty pets, and household staff. Bradford cataloged the Dolls' tastes, habits, and preferences in neatly typed household inventories, which she then bound, along with photographs and fabric samples, in a scrapbook. She even sent museum curators holiday cards written by the Dolls. In *America's Doll House*, Smithsonian Institution curator William L. Bird, Jr. weaves this visual material and back-story into the rich tapestry of Faith Bradford's miniature world. Featuring vibrant photography that brings every narrative detail to life, *America's Doll House* is both an incisive portrait of a sentimental pastime and a celebration of Bradford's remarkable and painstaking accomplishment.

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