

**A Time To Reap
Bottle Village Information
May 1985**

At the age of 57, Grandma Prisbrey began to build her fantastic Bottle Village, filling one third of an acre of land in Simi Valley with houses, wishing wells, shrines, fountains, cabanas, and other sculptures all made of colorful bottles and cement. The many buildings and pieces are interconnected with a mosaic walkway of tiles, bits of ceramid, costume jewelry, toy guns, sunglasses and myriad other everyday objects.

Using only those objects which we have discarded, having been collected on numerous trips to the local landfill, Grandma created sculptures and buildings such as the Television Picture Tube Fence, the Leaning Tower of Bottle Village, the Head Lamp Rose Garden, the Parade of Dolls, the Meditation Room and Cleopatra's Bedroom. One is struck by a strange sense of familiarity as we discover untold numbers of everyday household items that were once part of our daily lives, now preserved in an artistic setting.

The buildings themselves, created to house Grandma's various collections of found object art, sparkle in the sun and glow from the inside as the sun shines through the amber, green and blue bottles in all shapes and sizes. Such buildings and collections reflect the toys, tools, and celebrations of our contemporary lifestyle.

As a monumental folk art environment, Bottle Village reflects the spirit, determination and daily life experiences of an elder woman in the community. Grandma's stories, wisdom and feelings are imbedded in the structures at the Village and are there to be shared for all who visit.

A Time to Reap
Bottle Village Photo Log
May 1985
Black and White Glossies

There are labels on the back of each glossy, identifying the subject, photographer and date.

1. Tressa "Grandma" Prisbrey
by: Bob Dawson
date: 1978

Taken at the Village when Grandma still lived there
in her Royal Spartanette Trailor

2. The Wishing Well
by: Randy Harmon
date: 1978

Made out of blue Milk-of-Magnesia bottles and auto head lamps, the Wishing Well is situated in the middle of the Village on the west side. The remaining 4 feet of the 6 foot west wall can be seen directly behind the Wishing Well. The wall was finished with a 1 foot scallopedog green bottles and topped with a sentinel of original Mrs. Butterworth Syrup bottles.

3. Wall of Family Portraits
by: Amy E. Skillman
date: August 1981

This wall secluded a storage shed on the east side of the Village between the Meditation Room and the Bottle House. Grandma carefully cut photographs of her children and grand children to fit in the bottom of many of the bottles she placed in this wall. She also used a long paintbrush to color the bottom of other bottles, creating a kaleidoscopic effect in her walls.

4. The School House
by: Amy E. Skillman
date: June 1982

The School House is at the very back of the property and is set up much like an old school room, complete with desks, a lecturn and hundreds of books. The books range in topic from children's stories to college textbooks

textbooks. The photograph on the wall is of Grandma's son's Pacific Telephone work team in 1957. It is decorated with assorted seashells and polished agates.

5. Cleopatra's Bedroom
by: Amy E. Skillman
date: April 1985

Cleopatra's Bedroom is located on the east side, almost halfway back from the entrance to the Village. It is bordered by the mosaic walkway and Television Picture Tube Fence. The fence contains over 30 tubes, all decorated with various knick-knacks. In the foreground is a mosaic Spade. Grandma built a Spade, Heart, Club and Diamond in a row along the Television Picture Tube Fence. She says, "I musta done that when I come back from Las Vegas."

6. Courtyard Walkway
By: Amy E. Skillman
date: April 1985

Grandma's Mosaic Walkway runs almost the full 230 feet of the Village wandering in and out of buildings and around the many sculptures that dot the Village. Included in her walkway are ceramic tiles, irons, license plates, horseshoes, toy guns, sunglasses, stove top burners, scissors, and myriad other idscarded objects that she collected from the local dump.

7. Cleopatra's Bedroom
by: Amy E. Skillman
date: April 1985

Grandma rarely did anything the same way twice. In Cleopatra's Bedroom, for instance, the brown beer bottles used to create it are cemented with the necks facing out. The building next to it, The Rumpus Room, is made of green beer bottles whose necks all face in.

In many ways, Grandma's Cleopatra's Bedroom is her idea of the ultimate lady's boudoir. Inside there is a step of painted bottles leading up to a plattform which contains a large carved wooden double bed and two vanities. This upper section is separated from the anteroom by a screen of colorful beads. The room is decorated with various statues of exotic women, pillars covered with venetian blinds painted gold, a tree of airplane whiskey bottles, a garden of golf tees, and many stuffed animals. Today, during restoration, the building houses boxes of the interior objects from other buildings currently undergoing reconstruction.

A Time To Reap
Bottle Village Photo Log
May 1985
Color Slides

Slide Number
#7 by: Paulette Perlman
date: December 1983

Bottle Village is especially green in the spring when all the cacti and succulants begin to bloom. Grandma compares herself to the cactus saying "they are independent, prickly and ask nothing from anybody."

The Leaning Towar of Bottle Village stands watch on the mosaic walkway which meanders past the Rumpus Room, the Television Picture Tube Fence, and the Round House on to the back of the one-third acre of land. The Village contains 13 buildings and 20 distinct freestanding sculptures.

#8 by: Linda Taylor Lorr
date: early 1980's

One of the most favored structures at the Village is Gransma's Rarade of Dolls which, at one time, contained over 600 dolls. Grandma says 300 of them were stolen but the collection is still astonishing. The dolls were displayed on small glass platforms built into the bottle walls, in display cases, in a bird cage, on platforms which dot a large red satin heart, or in small window display boxes.

The Doll House is distinguished by its curved walls leading into the door, and its many blue Milk-of-Magnesia bottles.

#14 by: Amy E. Skillman
date: June 1982

Grandma says she could never leave the Village to go to church because "they'd steal ever'thing i'v got." Instead she bukl't small shrines around her Village. One shrine honors the worlds religions (Christianity, Buddhism and Judaism). In the Round House, Grandma inserted a gold arched window in a setting very reminiscent of a stained glass window. She also built a fireplace in the Round House which has a firescreen made out of intravenous feeding tubes.

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#21 by: Babe Kreiger (Grandma's daughter)
date: 1961

Grandma claims to have had 17,000 pencils which is why she first built the Pencil House. She needed a place to house her collection and her trailer was too small. The cement bricks were too expensive, so she decided to use bottles. She mixed the cement by hand until she "got educated to the trowel."

One thing lead to another and, within about 7 years, she had covered the entire one-third acre with her Bottle Village. One of the last buildings created was the Bottle House. When comparing the smooth surface and geometric design of the Bottle House to that of the Pencil House, it becomes apparent that Grandma had developed an eye for form and an awareness of structural concerns over the years.

#33 By: Babe Krieger
date: 1961

In its heyday, the Round House was a sight to behold! Grandma never had a round bed before and thought it would be appropriate for her Round House. So she decided to build one. She left the mattress and springs in the center and cut the plywood to go around it. The bed is draped with bollowy red fabric and covered by a silk handmade quilt. Grandma says it was a real task to make and she probably "used 7 different languages in the round when I designed and build that".

#35 by: Babe Krieger
date: 1961

The Round House is built about 3 feet in the ground. When Grandma was digging the dirt, a woman came along and said that was no job for a woman. Grandma responded "then I don't have to climb to high to put the roof on." The roof on the Round House was covered with shimmering broken bits of green glass which grandma carted up a ladder to their destination. Everything in the Round House is round: the bed, the headboard, the fireplace, the large marble-studded pillar in the middle. Grandma also built a low round bar which displays glass bottles with glass corks, plastic flowers, and a toothbrush tree. Outside the Round House is Grandma's Spring Garden made of bed springs and electric coils and industrial springs.

#70 by: Amy E. Skillman
date: June 1982

The visitor to Bottle Village is delighted and surprised at every turn of the head. Shapes, textures, and colors greet you in even the most basic elements of Grandma's construction. While many of the walls shimmer blue, green and amber as the light shimes through, other reflect the red, white yellow and blue of paint swirled into the bottom before being place in the wall. In this way,

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Grandma added even more color than was already available to her, suggesting an unending flow of creativity.

#71 by: Amy E. Skillman
date: June 1982

Grandma's pencil collection was her motivation for the Village. She claims to have been involved in politics in North Dakota and "had 17,000 pencils when I come from there." Since her trailer was too small, she decided to build a House for her collection.

Upon entering the Pencil House, the visitor is struck by the activity of color, lines and shapes. This radiating energy seems to characterize not only Grandma but most of the collections and sculptures at the Village.