



Dressed Fleas, Dinosaur Turds, Jack Earle the 8' 6" Giant's Ring, Model Planes, Boats and Trains, George Washington's Bridle Bit, Old Dish, Old Pencil, Quarter of a Million Tied-Up Stamps, Edison Light Bulbs and Record Machine, Roller Organs, Donation Box, 1907-41 Popular Mechanics, Porcupine Eggs, Petrified Beehive, Walnut, Acorn and Mastodon, more of Old Ironsides, Arrowhead embedded in Kneecap, Old Corset Stay (probably traveled many a mile), Cucumber Seed from Capitol Grounds, Wampum, Stereoscopes, Stuffed Hen, Embers from the Cliff House, Tube Beads, Oil Auto Lamps. Stinger.

Top: D.D. Smalley in his museum.

Insets: Smalley's business card.



D.D. SMALLEY was excessive to the bone. Even his name was excessive, notes Smalley aficionado Helen Fosdick: The initials stand for David David. A draftsman and mapmaker for the Southern Pacific Railroad, he threw himself into hobbies. He made robots, which performed for his guests. He

built large telescopes, for which he ground his own lenses. When he entered a painting show at the City Auditorium, he won first, second, and third place. He carved ships-in-a-bottle, airplanes, scenes of rural life, and complete balsa-wood train sets. He even hosted a radio show on which he performed as a one-man band and offered a prize to any caller who requested a tune he couldn't play.

There was a petrified beehive, an acorn from the White House lawn, and things that Smalley proclaimed to be "Porcupine Eggs." Kids could make the giant model train set whistle, or they could read any issue of *Popular Mechanics* or *Life* ever published. Visitors were asked to sign a guest book, and if they put a penny in the donation box, a mechanical monkey would tip its hat.

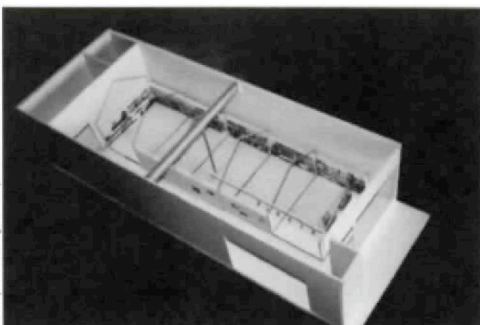
Smalley died in 1958. In 1994, Helen Fosdick and Smalley's grandson, Frank Davis, carefully stored the museum's contents in a barn in San Marcos. Someday, they hoped, the museum could be revived.

This fall, students from the Rice Building Workshop designed and built an exhibition unit for the museum — one that could both travel the country and recreate the strange charm of Smalley's attic. "The purpose of the Rice Building Workshop is to get architecture students involved in hands-on projects with real-world clients," says Danny Samuels, the workshop's director. "These clients and this project were fun. The students had a grand time."

On March 19, the exhibition debuts at Brazos Projects, the exhibition space next to Brazos Bookstore. For a year, viewers will be able to appreciate Smalley's dinosaur hip bones, his genuine Hawaiian grass skirt, and a ring that once belonged to 8'6" Jack Earle. — Lisa Gray

Small Wonders

Architecture students and Brazos Projects revive a folk-art museum



Model of the Rice Building Workshop's exhibition unit.