

HISTORY OF THE FIVE MINIATURE DOLL HOUSE ROOMS AND THEIR OWNERS  
THROUGH ~~SIX~~ GENERATIONS

Fredericke Frohman Ilfeld	about	1852
Laura Ilfeld Schoenberg		1872-1932
Edith Schoenberg Lang		1896-1986
Lilo Lang Waxman		1920-
Lora Waxman Goldberg		1945-2010
<i>Dillon B Waxman</i>		<i>1992</i>

July 1992

I am Lilo Lang Waxman , fourth generation owner of these miniature rooms before you. I was born in Germany in 1920. My great grandmother Fredericka Frohman Ilfeld was born in 1852 and owned the first play room, then a kitchen, now the school room . My grandmother was Laura Ilfeld Schoenberg sister of Ludwig who brought us to the United States. She was born in 1872. My mother, her daughter, who by then owned three rooms was Edith Schoenberg Lang, born in 1896. My daughter, Lora Waxman Goldberg is 5th generation owner, born in 1945.

It was tradition in my family for the past 130 years to set up these rooms with their contents every Chanukah until the end of that year--fix them up, the old and the new and then pack it all away again until the following year's holiday season. Therein lies the secret why these rooms kept this well for so many years.

Let us examine the kitchen now. The frame, large kitchen cabinet, table, chair and work table on the left, were built for my mother in the early 1900s. The oldest furniture in this kitchen, which was used by my great grandmother about 1860 are: the very small square table, the small kitchen cabinet on the left and the

meat block with cleaver and the two handled chopping blade. In the olden days meat was brought to the home in large slabs and cut into pieces by servants or mothers. Notice the spice cabinet hanging on the left wall. Names of spices, as everything else in the kitchen, are written in German. The vinegar and oil crocks were taken to the store to be filled, since naturally there were no ready-made packaged foods. See the egg basket on the left wall? It was used exclusively to carry home eggs bought in the country. See the basket filled with green chili from New Mexico? The containers marked flower, salt, sugar, and coffee are handy on the shelf. The scale in the upper left hand corner really works. See? Recipes were measured by pounds and grams, and ingredients were weighed rather than measured in cups and spoons as we do today. The egg timer on top of the large kitchen cabinet works and so does the oil lamp, which was used before electric lights were added to these rooms about 1925. Also notice the coffee grinder and the small iron. The iron dates back to 1880 and was manufactured by the American Machine Co in Philadelphia. Special brushes for certain dishes, pots, and pans were used as seen hanging on a neat rack on the right wall near the sink. Also handy is the rack with the three containers marked: "sand, seife, and soda" (sand, soap and soda). This combination was used as we do the modern day cleanser like Comet or Ajax, etc. See the towel rack on the very right in the corner next to the sink? It shows a gleaming fresh "Over-Towel" hand embroidered by my grandmother, Laura. This towel hides the used dish towels and washrags. There are special towels for glassware, china, and pots. Underneath this, hanging on the wall, is the shoe cleaning box filled with brushes and pastes of all kinds. Shoes were set outside the bedroom doors each night to be shined by servants.

Notice the large pot under the window. Open it and pull up the jars;..check the thermometer. This is a "canner for fruits and vegetables" bought in 1925, by my mother Edith for me. The cross stitch table cloth as well as the Coffee Pot Warmer, which is called "Cozy" were hand made by Grandmother Laura about 1900. Lift up the Cozy and there is the china Coffee pot. Next to it is the "Mr. Coffee" coffee maker that I just discovered and bought a few days ago. Just think--two utensils for the same purpose bought 90 years apart!

The stove on the right represents a wood and coal stove with the small coal bin, shovel, and wood basket. Notice the coals--they are made of cigarette filters, sprayed black. Looks like real coal, doesn't it? The heavy black iron round utensil on top of the stove is very interesting. It is a waffle iron. Fill it with dough, put it on the open flame, bake, turn over, and bake on the other side and presto--there is your waffle.

The table in the left hand corner was a housewife's dream. Not only did it serve as a work table, but come time for doing dishes--up goes the lid. There are your two bowls for soapy and clear water. Naturally, in 1925 when running water was installed, it became obsolete. See the sink on the right wall, turn the faucet, the water really runs. The large kitchen chair was also a timely invention. Turn it over and it becomes a necessary stepladder, used to reach all the utensils high up on the walls. The electric lights work, and the windows open and close. The heavy looking broom by the left window takes the place of an electric buffer. The beautiful cake plates, Wiener-Warmer and container for Marinated Herrings were acquired during my childhood in the 1920s. Now in 1992, I still have a large container like

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this miniature one, given to me by my mother, Edith, when I was married in 1939.

You can definitely tell the five generations by looking at the different utensils used for the same purpose. All pottery pots and bowls and a spoon made of brass (on the rack near the left window) were from my great-grandmother used in 1850-70. My grandmother did her cooking and baking in the white enamel pots. The beautiful gray enamel was the fashion during my mother's childhood about 1900, and the four pretty aluminum pots were the pride of the housewife in the early 1920s--my generation. The hors d'oeuvre plates, bread and butter, toaster, and the Corning Ware pots on the large kerosene stove outside the kitchen, I bought a few years ago for my daughter, Lora fifth generation owner. Oh! See the mice on the floor about to walk into the old-fashioned mouse trap? They came with the original kitchen.

Let's go on over to the dining room now. Most all the furniture is cherry wood and hand-carved. The green plush seats on the chairs are still the original ones when this room was made for my grandmother in 1880. The beautiful decanter and matching glass on the "mirrored piece of furniture" on the left is over 100 years old. Note the pewter tea set on the cocktail table. Isn't it adorable? Grandfather who reads a replica of the Post Dispatch and the teenager getting ready to knit or sew are acquisitions in recent years--around 1970s. Note the pillows and tiny dolls on the couch. They were hand crocheted by one of the mothers. Isn't that something!!! On top of the breakfront is a workable Dinner-Gong made of pewter which is very old. It was the custom whenever dinner was to be served to sound the gong and summon the family .

The electric coffee maker was acquired when I was a little girl, as was the radiator on the left and the vacuum sweeper in the

foreground about 1925. The grandfather clock really works, and it still keeps good time. The silver service (sterling dipped in gold) and the ornate candelabra on the desk I brought back from a trip to Lisbon, Portugal in 1975. The service tray is on top of the old fashioned radio which is really a workable music box. The roll-top desk on the right was hand carved in Mexico in the 1960s. It is a replica of the ones used in offices in the early 1900s. It was given to me as a present by Maury and Joy Schetzer. Drapes in the room are workable and can be drawn.

The bedroom was made for me, Lilo, in 1930. The window is modern, wide and large, instead of two small ones as in the other rooms. The bed linens were handmade by my grandmother and her housekeeper Lissie for my mother Edith. Note the pillowcases have buttons and the sheet is buttoned on to the green comforter. A tradition still practiced in Germany now--1992. The yellow telephone on the night table, the bible and the nursery set were bought for Lora in 1960. Notice the potty inside the night table. Before the acquisition of the fifth generation room which is the bath room, the potty was used at night when it was too cold for the dolls to use the "out house". Lora handmade the nursery rug and the two pictures on the wall. There is a radiator for warmth in this room also. Here too the window opens, curtains and drapes can be drawn open and closed.

The school room is the oldest room. The frame housed the original kitchen in 1860 and is the sturdiest of the four. The wallpaper is still the original. The map of the Rhineland on the wall, the workbooks on the benches, and the A B C's framed on the wall were done by me with Lissi's help when I was a little girl about 1925. The porcelain dolls are very old, and the largest (the teacher) belonged to my great-grandmother in 1860.

The Bathroom was handmade in 1964 for Lora Waxman Goldberg, by Mr. Tibor Weiss. His wife helped display these rooms when Temple Israel Sisterhood made a fund raising project out of this doll house display. The bathroom fixtures were bought at the Country Store at Jefferson Memorial. All are imports from Germany. The frame, with all the tiles, the lighting and the shower stall were done by Tibor himself.

Now move to the left side of the kitchen, where "company dishes" and so called "sterling silver" are displayed. The "company china" is still in its original box. If you examine the lid of the cardboard box you can readily guess its age, by the way the people are dressed: about 1860. Four generations of children played with these things, but everything is still in good condition. Notice the lavatory set on the shelf above-- soap and toothbrush container, eau de cologne, mouth wash (Odol), water pitcher and washbasin. Bath rooms were not common in those days, and this was used in its place.

Now let us look over the utensils hanging and standing on the pegboard on the bottom of the closet. The ice cream freezer on the right-- the crockery butter cooler, the spring form, were made during the last part of the 19th century. Look at the four different egg and cream whippers. The pewter knife and fork and the bone handled cutlery were called "poor man's silver" and are exact replicas of cutlery used about 1850-1880. Notice the crochet shopping bag and the red crochet pot holder made by one of the mothers or grandmothers.

In the year 1970 when I returned from a trip to N. Mex., I brought back the Indian rug and the minute "doll-house-room" representing an "Indian Trading Post". You can see this in the bedroom-nursery on the floor. I also brought home a miniature

(horse-hair basket) made by an Indian tribe from Durango at the Colo. New Mexico border. There is also a tiny black "signed bowl" made by the Indians of San Ildefonso, N. Mex. Check for both of these in the living room.

In 1936 prior to Edith Schoenberg Lang's immigration from Nazi Germany with her husband, Dr. Gustav Lang, my brother and me, she packed up the rooms in boxes and gave them to Frau Karl Geyer of Friedberg in Hessen, where she (Edith) was born. Frau Geyer who was Christian and once the secretary of Edith's father, Willy Schoenberg, kept all safely stored in her attic for 10 years without anyone, even her own family knowing. In 1946 after the second world war, my cousin Carl Ilfeld from Las Vegas, New Mexico was stationed with the U.S. Army in Frankfurt am Main. He contacted Frau Geyer and the miniature rooms were shipped as "his own goods" to our house on Groby road in St. Louis where I (Lilo Lang Waxman and family lived at that time). All arrived in fair condition but much was broken, buckled and needed restoration. We installed new linoleum floors in all the rooms. The unique kitchen "chair-ladder" needed repairs. The glue would not hold the rungs in place. So, Arnold took the chair to his dental office and drilled holes into the rungs and sides. We then inserted glue dipped brads into the holes and we again had a ladder that was as good as formerly.

Now look it all over again and enjoy it!