



Beginning in 1968 at the age of 75, Henry Warren worked on Shangri-La until his death nine years later. This village of 27 chest-high structures includes a mill, a church, several shrines, a town hall, a school, a dance hall, a motel, a jail, several houses, a Health Education and Welfare Department building, a hospital and The Watergate Hotel. All were constructed from rock he quarried nearby with the help of 84-year-old tenant and neighbor, J.A. Pennix. Between Warren's house and Shangri-La is a cement walkway paved with 11,000 Indian arrowheads. This North Carolina site is in good condition and is carefully maintained by Warren's widow and his younger sister.



Charlie Swaim, an expert on moonshining, makes a living keeping bees and breeding dogs. A self-taught expert on ancient history, Swaim has decorated his Appalachian Bee Farm in North Carolina with more than 20 murals depicting historical events, famous Indians such as Winnemucca and Sacajawea, and figures from ancient religious myths. The murals cover his barns, outbuildings, dog kennels, honey house and pest-exterminating-business buildings.



During his career as a building contractor, L.C. Carson had wanted to build a large church or a government building by which he might be remembered, instead of ordinary houses. As retirement age approached, he began building a city in the backyard of his South Carolina home. Using concrete, bits of ceramic tile, plumbing fixtures and other items left over from construction projects, he recreated the Colosseum in Rome, the Parthenon, St. Peter's, Ramses' Temple, the Sphinx and 28 other famous structures. The design of some buildings was based on archaeological conjecture and Carson's imagination, while others, such as St. Peter's, have been reinterpreted in terms of color and form according to the availability of materials in his scrap pile. The combined effect is monumental.



Butts Hill was built between 1937 and 1965 of cement, wood, mirrors, sea shells and other found objects by the late Jim Butts. A multi-story tower rises from dense undergrowth in the flat coastal plain of North Carolina and is covered with poems, historical references and quotations ranging in scope from Cicero to John Steinbeck. Gardens once surrounded the tower, and within their remains can be seen monuments, reflecting pools, models of ships, altars and an outdoor chapel. Small bridges dedicated to famous women and monetary problems connected the grounds to the nearby road. Plaques concerning nuclear power, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the nature of divine inspiration and the courtship of Miles Standish dot the site. Although much of the tower still stands, Butts Hill is in poor condition and probably only faintly recalls the range of Butts' imagination.



A cement birdbath and yard-object maker by trade, North Carolinian Herman Finney has enclosed his Realm of Fantastic Art in a building behind his regular outdoor sales area. Within the realm are a series of scenes ranging in size from several inches tall to larger than life. Horrific subjects dominate Finney's work and include people being eaten alive by vultures and alligators and visions of the Crucifixion and of Hell.

## Eight Nevada Sites Documented



Photo: © Seymour Rosen

With the aid of a \$2,500 grant from the Nevada State Council on the Arts, art therapist and Nevada resident, Susan Orr, has photographed eight environments and artists throughout that state.

By far the grandest, and the most complex site is Rolling Mountain Thunder's The Monument. Built of society's discards, including railroad ties, metal, concrete, antique tools and machinery, automobile parts and rocks on several acres of desert land in northern Nevada, The Monument is comprised of a number of buildings and freestanding concrete statues, tableaux and murals that pay homage to the American Indian. Explored in the various sculptural works are a range of human experiences: hope, despair, joy, history and spirituality.

Rolling Thunder, who was born Frank Van Zandt in Oklahoma and who is at least one-quarter Creek Indian, received an award in 1983 from the Nevada State Council on the Arts for his work at The Monument.

Begun in 1968, The Monument was extensively photographed by Orr a few weeks before a fire destroyed most of the site. Arson is suspected. (Thunder does not encourage visitors and is

sometimes inhospitable. Signs warn against trespassing. People seriously interested in visiting the site should contact Thunder in advance.)

Orr's photographs are among the few documentations of The Monument in its before-fire condition. These photographs along with those Orr took at seven other Nevada sites comprise the exhibit "Nevada's Irrepressible Art," which was on view in the Changing Gallery of the Nevada Historical Society in Reno through December 31, 1984. The photographs, donated by Orr to the Society, became part of their permanent collection.

In conjunction with the exhibit, four speakers presented lectures on selected topics related to the Nevada environments. Appearing were Hal Cannon, September 7; Susan Orr, September 11; Mike Reed, October 9; and Seymour Rosen, October 16. The Visions of Paradise film series (see story on page 9) was screened September 18 and September 25. For more information, contact the Nevada Historical Society, 1650 N. Virginia, Reno, NV 89503.

Source: Susan Orr;  
*Reno Gazette-Journal*

## Oregon Site Welcomes Visitors

In our last newsletter we foolishly said that the location of Rasmus Petersen's Rock Garden had been lost. We should have said the location was unknown to us. But now, thanks to several of our readers, among them Lloyd Herman of the Renwick Gallery and Audrey Moody of the Oregon Historical Society, we know Redmond, Oregon, is the home of the rock garden.

Started in 1925 by Rasmus Petersen, a Danish farmer who came to Oregon in 1906, the garden covers four acres. Petersen created castles, ponds, bridges and miniature buildings from a variety of rocks that he found within an 85-mile radius of the garden.

Petersen died in the garden in 1952, and today thousands of visitors come to the garden annually. Flowers, trees and large grassy areas enhance his rock designs.

The garden is open every day of the year and admission is by donation. Petersen's Rock Garden is located at 7930 S.W. 77th Street, Redmond, OR 97756.

Source: *Petersen's Rock Garden*

## Folk Art Environments Receive National Attention

Two magazine articles one in the August, 1983 issue of *Smithsonian* and the other in the July/August, 1983 issue of *Portfolio*, have brought several folk art environments to the attention of readers nationwide.

The *Smithsonian* article focuses on five sites: Pasaquan in Georgia, built by Eddie Owens Martin, who is better known as St. EOM, Fred Smith's Concrete Park in Wisconsin, Emanuele "Litto" Damonte's "Hub Cap Ranch" in northern California, Laura Pope's "museum" in Georgia (now dismantled) and Grandma Prisbrey's Bottle Village in southern California.

The article mentions, more briefly, S.P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden in Kansas, Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts and Mark Bulwinkle's place in northern California.

The *Portfolio* feature explores a single site: Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts.